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The Reifying Center Archive Process: Sustainable Writing Center Archive Practice for Praxis, Research, And Continuity

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THE REIFYING CENTER ARCHIVE PROCESS: SUSTAINABLE WRITING CENTER
ARCHIVE PRACTICE FOR PRAXIS, RESEARCH, AND CONTINUITY

by

ROGER AUSTIN

Under the Direction of Lynée Lewis Gaillet, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

A structured process to capture, sort, digitize, and curate a researchable history of a writing center has the potential to improve writing center administration with greater recall at both the local and global level. Maintaining a standard of practice from year to year with effective training, stable institutional partnerships, and evidence-based practice is already challenging. This is compounded by the continual erosion of accumulated memory and context for numerous administrative choices through the regular departure of tutors and administrators, posing further challenge to consistent practice, pedagogy, and policy. To preserve the programmatic memory informing countless decisions, relationships, and administrative expediencies, writing center administrators must establish a regular process to curate a

researchable archive of the history produced by a center's operation. Failure to do so risks the atrophy of critical memory every time a staff member leaves the writing center.

Adoption of the proposed Reifying Center Archive Process, or ReCAP, provides a robust archive for programmatic recall. Creating an archive will enable writing center administrators to delve into the history of how a center has operated in the past; as a result, the center is better insulated against operational missteps or rereading in the future. Beyond the clear benefit to individual centers, the eventual standardization of such an archive process has long-term potential to improve historically challenging efforts to collect and synthesize the work done in centers across multiple institutions at the regional, national, and global levels.

To promote the necessity of the ReCAP, this dissertation: reviews the scholarship that establishes the necessity of an archive-supported writing center; presents a case study of a large public university writing center; prescribes the literature-based archivist practices that will best sustain a writing center's materials for future research; outlines the ReCAP as a tool to digitally present the physical holdings of the writing center's archive; establishes a new standard for the organization of writing center materials within the ReCAP; and finally, tests these proposed practices by creating a prototype ReCAP archive for the case study center, the Georgia State University Writing Studio.

INDEX WORDS: writing centers, writing program administration, archival research,
programmatic memory

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ARCHIVE PRACTICE FOR PRAXIS, RESEARCH, AND CONTINUITY

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ROGER AUSTIN

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Georgia State University

2018

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2018

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ARCHIVE PRACTICE FOR PRAXIS, RESEARCH, AND CONTINUITY

by

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August 2018

DEDICATION

To Jessica, my enduring spring of encouragement:

“Maybe I'm amazed at the way you help me sing my song

Right me when I'm wrong

Maybe I'm amazed at the way I really need you”

Thank you for sharing the journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lynée, a mentor like no other.

Mary, who has always listened.

Cristine, Sarah, and Kelly, for helping me see the forest or the trees at the right times.

The impossible to enumerate tutors who remind me always what I love about the center.

And my students, whom I cannot believe I am lucky enough to know and teach.

Thank you.

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1 Archive Potential in the GSU Writing Studio and in Writing Center Scholarship

1.1 Introduction

As a former member of a large university writing center's administrative team, I know well the trials of maintaining consistent policy and practice with a continually fluctuating tutoring staff. My previous writing center experience has taught me that some centers benefit from the stability infused by long-term professional tutors, who smooth the transitions from semester to semester and help sustain consistent identity, practice, and lore in their writing centers. However, this resource is not available to the Georgia State University Writing Studio (referred to hereafter as the Writing Studio). Like many writing centers, the Writing Studio's staff structure aligns with the field's decades of compelling and thorough reflection on topics of peer tutor authority and collaborative writing relationships; as such, the primary source of our tutoring staff is the same student base we serve. Thus, staff turnover is the same perpetual challenge for Writing Studio administrators as it is for many writing center administrators (WCAs).

Even more impactful to the continuity of the Writing Studio, however, is that our administrative team is not exempt from these turnover pressures. In the administrative structure of the Writing Studio, regular administrative change is the norm due to the regular appointment of Associate Directors (ADs) from the ranks of graduate students. Because these ADs will inevitably serve only short periods before graduating, a few years can see an entirely new staff of tutors and junior administrators. Exacerbating the impact of staff attrition is the occasional replacement of the Writing Studio's Faculty Director as former directors shift their professional service obligations within the English department. These changes in directorship introduce

further risk of forgetting our learned experiences or unwittingly retreading the decisions of previous administrative teams.

Georgia State University is not a unique case; our scholarship is rich with stories of staff displacement and restructuring. Even where centers enjoy the stability of a long-term director, all leadership inevitably changes, so they too will face challenges to operational continuity. This means that eventually the valuable guidance provided by a center's history may exist only anecdotally; thus, the potential exists for chasms of continuity to separate practice as it *was* under previous administrators, practice as it *is* under current administrators, and practice as it *will be* when future administrators take the reins of a writing center. This continual relocation of a center's knowledge base from first-hand experience to second-hand awareness is vulnerable to fallibility of memory, selectiveness of philosophy, and inconsistency of record-keeping. If situated within institutions with systematic and continual turnover, including centers that may see entirely new staffs in spans as short as two or three years, a perpetual crisis of continuity emerges. This ephemerality of knowledge transfer fundamentally limits our growth both at the local level, and potentially in the field at large.

The bridge across this chasm, and progress toward better overall operation, lies in a writing center's archival practice. Through decisive action to formalize maintenance and curation of a writing center's archive in a standardized process, a center can make better-informed decisions on issues of practice and administration. Delving into the history of how a center has operated in the past, and committing to a comprehensive archival plan for a center's operation in the present, insulates a center against operational missteps or retreading in the future. Beyond the clear benefit to individual centers, a broader focus on archive processes has the potential to

improve our research community's efforts to collect and synthesize the work done in centers across multiple institutions at the regional, national, and global levels.

1.2 The Archive Gap in the Georgia State University Writing Studio

I have recently departed my role as Associate Director of the Writing Studio, where I served four years as one of this writing center's administrators. This administrative experience had been preceded by more than three years as a tutor in both the Writing Studio and University of Michigan-Flint's Marian E. Wright Writing Center. In both locations, I have seen risks to administrative continuity and retreading of pedagogical discovery due to regular staff turnover. Despite the expertise and tireless work of these centers' tutors and administrators, I know that both centers have, as I suspect have many others around the world, experienced operational challenges because of this experiential impermanence.

The catalyst that originally inspired me to consider the archive potential of the Writing Studio was a matter of policy. One of the Writing Studio's long-standing policies has been to dissuade instructor-required appointments. This was, for all my time tutoring and administrating, a gently-enforced and reactive policy: when a writer sought proof of session attendance, we emailed their instructor with a polite clarification of the policy and asked them to not penalize students for being unable to confirm their appointments with official Writing Studio documentation. After a finals week rife with writer requests for our tutors to sign on a draft paper, write a confirmation slip, or directly contact an instructor to verify attendance, I decided to examine why that policy was in place.

The emails we sent to well-meaning instructors clarified our standing pedagogical rationale: compulsory attendance risks sending the writer to the Writing Studio with the wrong

impression that the center is a place of remediation or “fixing bad writing.” Going further, our reasoning was that starting an appointment from this mindset leads to unproductive sessions with reluctant writers who only want “rubberstamp” confirmations. This contradicts the Writing Studio’s goal of supporting writer growth and promoting writer agency; if a writer visits because they are required to, that would undermine Writing Studio messaging that writers can self-assess their own writing process.

Yet from personal experience, I knew the collateral damage of our policy was also impeding two potentially useful required visit scenarios: introduction and extra credit. In my time tutoring at UM-Flint, I had seen scores of mandatory appointments that did not appear at all contradictory to the aims of writer agency because a handful of instructors believed in introducing the center as a resource to support effective writing. While the UM-Flint writing center did accept many correctively-motivated required visits – in which I did see the exact problems of disengagement, reluctance, and remediation shame the Writing Studio sought to avoid – I saw just as many writers open themselves to the reflective writing processes the writing center promoted because of their required visit. Thinking I would try to balance these two positions into a new middle ground approach, I set out to research the origins of the Writing Studio’s none-at-all policy before I changed it thoughtlessly.

It was then that I learned the consequences of having no process in place to document the rationale for formal policies in an official record. The entirety of the immediately-accessible history of the Writing Studio was contained in two places: a collection of plastic file boxes containing varied but disorganized papers, documents, and media; and a Dropbox cloud storage account, out of which the Writing Studio’s administrators worked, but which had also accumulated several years of the center’s digital holdings. Disorganized by years of working in

support of daily operation and expediency as they were, neither of these mediums lent themselves to easy research. Thus, years of knowledge were effectively inaccessible – knowledge which may have produced an answer to my question. No matter the actual impetus for its creation, the policy to refuse required visits now existed as a de facto position, supported only by secondhand invocations of precedent.

The Writing Studio's unfolding future has also underscored the exigence for an improved archive. The inherent transience of the Writing Studio's graduate administrators, who generally serve only a few years, along with a history of periodic changes to the Writing Studio's faculty director, has led to a completely new administrative team within the span of two years. It is important to note that this regular infusion of new perspective and experience is simultaneously one of the greatest strengths of the Writing Studio's leadership structure. New administrators introduce novel initiatives and question the value of existing policy and practice.

Thus, while new leadership will drive the Writing Studio forward to continued success, the accessibility of knowledge from prior years risks further degradation. This loss isn't a hard line, and is not a binary of knowing and not knowing. In the Writing Studio's case, the previous faculty director remains available in the department to consult should the need arise. Also, the departure schedule of Associate Directors tends to stagger, mitigating the potential for knowledge loss by blending departing and arriving leadership teams over time. However, as the individuals most directly familiar with the Writing Studio's ongoing initiatives, operation, and environment at a given time transition to other roles, or on to other institutions, the atrophy of recall will persist. This potentially entropic memory leak appears in the field at large, even with differences in administrative longevity from center to center.

1.3 The Archive Gap in Writing Center Scholarship

Several notable authors have greatly increased the resolution of field's history, filling in the broad gaps of how writing center services came into existence, as well as their metamorphosis from remedial laboratories into process-oriented centers of academic support (Carino ("Early Writing Centers"); Boquet ("Our Little Secret"); North; and Lunsford). Clearly, the field places great value on the overall history of writing centers in the context of higher education trends, but these voices are thus far unconcerned with the local benefit of knowing an individual center's history. While a prominent appreciation of broader historical perspective does exist within writing center research, there are no field-accepted resources that outline methods by which the Writing Studio can curate its archive.

To date, only two published scholars have directly suggested the benefits of archival review in writing centers. Stacy Nall writes persuasively about the opportunities a writing center misses by not systematizing a clear method to recall and review its history. Similar to the motive driving my own project, Nall concludes from her work within the Purdue University Writing Lab's archives that researching a writing center's accrued historical documents is far from a backwards-facing enterprise. To Nall, archives represent "dynamic constructions that WCDs [writing center directors] can proactively shape in order to ensure a sustainable institutional memory across generations of staff" (102). Nall remains focused on the application of sustainable institutional memory in relation to her own management of two projects within her center's history, but her 2014 *Writing Center Journal* article maintains the general argument that a writing center's future is better supported by standardizing access to its past.

What I find compelling in Nall's writing is her suggestion that a writing center history can directly address the same problem I noted in the introduction of this project, that of

administrative change. “[By] placing and inventorying [staff reflections, correspondence, and unpublished scholarship] in a centralized archive, WCDs can help ameliorate the loss of institutional memory that too often occurs during administrative and programmatic transitions” (103). Nall identifies institutional narratives as at risk for loss or fade due to a disruption of continuity. It is possible, as Nall also concedes, that access to a center’s recent history may endure if one or several of the center’s previous directors remain in contact, but that clarity of historical narrative degrades greatly when all that remains is “a fragmented paper trail to their centers’ histories” (105). Nall organizes several voices to build her case for sustained archival practice as a general benefit, but most notable among them is Muriel Harris, who suggests there are many opportunities available to WCAs to conduct programmatic research within their own walls. At length, Harris offers a striking justification for a maintained archive within a writing center:

... a research archive that's already in place offers an institutional memory to dip into, in order to understand the present center and its operation. ... archives are a useful resource to refer to when presenting the work of the center in various contexts (assessment studies, yearly reports, grant proposals, and so on), to use when questions about various procedures or policies arise, to consult when making various administrative decisions, and to use when comparing the present to past conditions (for example, when questions arise as to whether some aspect of the center has changed or is in need of change). It is also a means to start useful reflection on what the director hasn't looked at lately as well as what hasn't really ever been closely studied. ... the director of a writing center can find [themselves] caught on [a] daily treadmill of treating immediate concerns and small problems at the expense of taking a step back and looking reflectively at the larger picture of what the center is presently and where it should be in five or ten years. (“Diverse Research Methodologies” 14)

This represents only a small portion within Harris’ larger examination of research potential in the writing center, but it zeroes in directly on the potential benefit of maintaining a program archive.

It is my desire to create the process by which a center can reduce these reactionary tendencies Harris describes.

1.4 The Solution

As I've noted, the issue at the core of the Writing Studio's programmatic memory challenges is constant turnover of both tutoring and administrative staff, leading to an ongoing and consistent displacement of acquired experience, context, and operational rationale outside the immediate recall of their incoming counterparts. This effect is significantly compounded with the departure of each member of the administrative team, placing ever more distance between current administrators and the growing numbers of those who came before. While, as also noted in the introduction, the Writing Studio may contact many of these departed WCAs to conduct interviews or consult on specific past decisions, oral histories offer an inconsistently available and often incomplete solution. As I am seeking a consistent, evidence-based solution to the atrophy of writing center programmatic memory, I believe oral histories represent an imperfect *single* answer to the research needs guiding this project for three reasons:

- Previous administrators and staff may be inaccessible due to departure from the institution, retirement and relocation, and, in cases where the center has operated for many decades, mortality;
- For similar reasons, time may impact the ability for interviewed administrators to accurately recall finer detail, which may not improve the clarity of a center's history, and possibly introduce inadvertent errors;

- A local programmatic archive method will render writing center histories accessible based on what center administrators have demonstrably on hand, irrespective of perception, narrative, or awareness of external participants; and

While the current administration of the Writing Studio – or of any other center – may benefit from collecting and integrating knowledgeable oral histories concurrently, I assert that it is critical to conduct research on what is available and tangible, and provides hard evidence. WCAs, including those of the Writing Studio, should reference accrued archives of physical documents, media, and artifacts accumulated over the span of the center’s operation, as available. Researching the Writing Studio’s backlog of archived materials dating back to its founding in 1978 provides detailed, explicitly stated evidence of the center’s programmatic history, and will improve the Writing Studio’s ability to utilize that history for the benefit of present and future operation. Additionally, better awareness of gaps or unclear details in the physical archive may lead researchers to more productive, focused questions when conducting oral history interviews.

I propose that the Writing Studio will benefit from adopting a structured and ongoing method of retaining and organizing its existing and future materials archive. Thus, I offer a method of my own original design: the **Reifying Center Archive Process (ReCAP)**. The ReCAP is a new archival maintenance process intended to digitize a writing center’s collection of past and present programmatic materials, and systematically present the archive in the easily researchable medium of a wiki database. The ReCAP has the potential to improve the quality of local research, ultimately enabling better knowledge of the Writing Studio’s past and present to fortify its future, and better enabling the Writing Studio’s administrators and staff to contribute to the field’s scholarship. Furthermore, because there is currently no field-established process for

supporting and maintaining a researchable local archive, the ReCAP provides an ideal foundation for an archival organization method that, when refined, can eventually be shared and replicated for the benefit of multiple centers.

I have developed the ReCAP as an alternative to the Writing Studio's current system of archival organization. Currently, the Writing Studio archive exists as a collection of six large plastic file boxes, each containing several hundred pages of original documents and various other digital and analog media. Each box features multiple folders, sorted and labeled per an undocumented sorting method, completed by an unspecified Studio staff member at an unknown time preceding my tenure as Associate Director. The boxes feature no finding aids beyond folder labels, and the contents of each folder appear to be unorganized beyond a basic similarity of artifact type. In addition, there is no consistent chronological order at either the folder- or box-level.

I have determined that if the Writing Studio's archive is to remain indefinitely in this current format, two potential threats exist to ongoing access to the knowledge it contains:

- As a collection of physical originals, the current archive is at risk for loss due to a variety of threats: environmental damage such as fire, water leaks, or exposure to other damaging substances; lack of a system to track removal and return of materials may result in misplacement; and, although unlikely, theft or sabotage of potentially sensitive or valuable artifacts.
- A lack of systematic organization, finding aids, or comprehensive inventory may render useful knowledge inaccessible to future researchers who will have no other recourse than to manually review potentially thousands of documents, which is an investment of time with an exceedingly low certainty of useful return.

A Studio archivist could address the first threat simply by digitizing the entirety of the archive en masse, thus creating an identical set of digital surrogates as insurance against physical loss. Yet such undirected digitization would offer no significant improvement to the second threat condition. Thus, I have instilled in the ReCAP's design not only the act of digitizing physical originals, but also the adoption and maintenance of a controlled-access wiki as the primary means of organizing these surrogates. The prescribed ReCAP wiki offers numerous additional advantages outlined in later chapters, but it directly resolves the threat of loss of the Writing Studio's existing physical archive, and most importantly, dramatically improves the archive's navigability and future accessibility.

The need for the ReCAP is further evidenced by the incompatible purview of the only existing field-recognized project that explores writing center archive potential. At the time the ReCAP project was founded¹, the Writing Centers Research Project (WCRP) was focused explicitly on aggregating a limited sample of details from *multiple* centers' archived histories, and had maintained a mass-archiving project to collate vitals and materials of *many* responding writing centers. In a limited capacity, the WCRP does hold some of the same products broadly that the ReCAP does locally. The WCRP website also references the project's second focus, the collection of many centers' vital statistics and operating details via the WCRP Survey, which further underscores its emphasis on *field-wide* research instead of on *local* histories or processes.

¹ When I revisited the original Writing Centers Research Project site in June 2018, it was inactive. The only existing websites now explicitly affiliated with the WCRP are the Writing Centers Research Project Survey, hosted by the Purdue Online Writing Lab Research site ("Writing Centers Research Project Survey"), and the Writing Centers Research Project page hosted by the University Writing Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock ("Writing Centers Research Project"). The UA Little Rock website does offer a list of nearly 500 donated artifacts held by the WCRP, but neither site explains the donation process once featured on the original WCRP website.

The observed differences of maintaining a centralized repository of archived writing center histories and operational statistics disqualifies the WCRP as a model for this project. Thus, while the ReCAP initiative does overlap with some of the same goals the WCRP once supported, the ReCAP project's strength lies in its *distributed* workload. By completing the ReCAP, the Writing Studio benefits locally, immediately, and continually from improved retrospective and future research power, and maintains the local workload of organizing and managing its individual archive. However, the Writing Studio's completion of the prototype ReCAP initiative will also render a model for a potential field-wide boost in the perceived value or potential for archival organization. It is therefore critical for archival curation in the Writing Studio to happen at the local level instead of aggregation with multiple other centers' materials and knowledge.

Finally, if the Writing Studio or any other writing center with a preexisting physical archive adopts the proposed ReCAP project, the accessibility of researchable knowledge expands significantly. This may guide viewers to pursue unanticipated research topics, projects, or initiatives with both local and field-wide exposure, and with a greater range of primary research materials available from inception.

1.5 Project Outline

The remaining chapters of this dissertation establish the scholarship-verified need for improved archival practice in writing centers; the digital archiving model best suited to retain and organize these materials; the methods of creating the structure of, and standards for, the ReCAP; and finally the test implementation of the ReCAP on the Writing Studio's large, long-lived physical archive. At its conclusion, this project will have established support and evidence

that the adoption of the Reifying Center Archive Process and its accompanying archive wiki will enable several critical short- and long-term benefits:

- The Writing Studio will better know the gamut of its pedagogical and operational history, and possess evidence to support or reevaluate existing tutoring practice and center policy;
- The Writing Studio will better know its historical status within Georgia State University, in Atlanta, and the academy overall, and can thus more effectively articulate its history of service, theory, professional work, and community collaboration;
- The Writing Studio will better know its history of available resources, strategic planning, and internal data, granting an improved potential to set development goals for the center, its administrators, and its staff; and
- The tested ReCAP and prototype wiki will serve as examples to refine and improve the process, setting the stage for additional scholarship, and ultimately the potential for more participating centers to replicate the refined process.

With this first chapter serving as the introduction to the project, the rest of the dissertation will be communicated in the following three body chapters, and one final chapter reflecting upon the project's outcomes.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I present literature that provides a foundation for the necessity of the Writing Studio archive, lessons to help the WCA create the archive, and the promise of the wiki as a suitable mode to host and maintain local archives. Due to the scarcity of existing writing center scholarship on the value of archival maintenance, the first task is to highlight where WCAs have expressed need for programmatic research without recognizing

the potential of local archives, and to draw upon the similar experiences of writing program administrators (WPAs) who have. The review of WPA literature conveys the professional pressures and needs common to both WPAs and WCAs, demonstrating that benefits of structured archive practice for the former apply equally well to the latter. Writing program administration has already begun exploring the potential benefits of archive research and practice, and these authors condense experience and advice from WPAs who have either directly gained from archival research and thus modeled useful outcomes, or who have themselves documented challenges that an improved program archive could directly benefit. Finally, writing center scholarship showcases a handful of WCAs who also note challenges that would directly benefit from the adoption of a standardized archive process such as the ReCAP.

The second half of the literature review continues documenting the lessons of the archives, pivoting to the archivist's role in creating a navigable, objective, and sustainable archive. I source lessons of effective archive curation, coding, and maintenance from both the perspective of the archivists who make the act of research possible, and researchers who delve archives in search of histories on a variety of topics in the fields of composition and rhetoric. Finally, the recent rise of wikis and other user-curated, internet-accessible databases showcases untapped potential to resolve the challenges of creating a locally-maintained programmatic archive. Scholarship-derived lessons for curating an effective research archive also blend excellently into support for wikis as the ideal organization medium for the ReCAP archive.

The third chapter of the dissertation documents the methods I created and implemented to construct the first iteration of the Reifying Center Archive Process and its accompanying wiki. Starting first with an explanation of my conceptual process to create a system that would satisfy

my objectives for the ReCAP, I explore the steps I followed to organize the materials of the Writing Studio's archive for digitization.

This process required me to create a new method that would arrange the ReCAP wiki's contents in a structured system beyond simply transferring the physical collection to an online space, and with categories that represent the specific topic needs unique to local writing center history and operation. This required the consideration and ultimate exclusion of several ill-suited models found in writing center scholarship, thus demanding that I synthesize a new provisional tagging structure. This method instills the disorganized physical originals with a navigable, intuitive presentation of the surrogate archive.

Extracted from a condensed meta-synthesis of over 170 chapters of writing center scholarship aimed at both tutors and administrators, these topics produced both categories and subcategories, which became the provisional tags and subtags of the prototype wiki. The tagging system is critical to the functionality of the ReCAP wiki and is designed to describe the Writing Studio's operation based both on the literature from which they are derived, and my experience as an administrator in the center. My newly-created tagging structure produced the necessary organization that enabled the project to move forward as the first Studio ReCAP archivist to quickly sort unprocessed materials into the archive.

The third chapter concludes with an explanation of how the tools and functionality commonly found in web-accessible, closed-access wiki services directly enable the creation of the ReCAP archive. I explore the wiki's operation and utilities as methods of archive curation, connecting the service directly to the scholarship's value for navigability, objectivity, and sustainability. The research-derived provisional tagging structure, when combined with the wiki-

provided tools and service, makes the creation of the Writing Studio's prototype ReCAP wiki possible.

The fourth, final body chapter of the dissertation comprises two parts. The functional, live Reifying Archive Center Process Wiki was created as a working prototype, and is accessible for review by the committee. It is presented here as an analysis in which I explore the effectiveness of my proposed process from two perspectives: first as the archivist who created the prototype wiki with its available tools and methods; second as a researcher with a sample research question answered by the contents of the prototype wiki.

In the first analysis, I provide examples of how the upload, description, curation, and maintenance of over 130 documents and media from the Writing Studio's physical archives is enabled by the methods and tools outlined in chapter 3. Using screen captures from the prototype ReCAP wiki, accompanied by explanations of their utility, this portion of the chapter demonstrates the functionality of the system. The selection and presentation of materials included in the sample ReCAP provides a sense of the process' larger potential as an archival tool.

The second analysis of the chapter returns to the prototype ReCAP wiki, but now from the perspective of a Studio researcher with a question to showcase the archive's emergent research potential. I pose a sample research question concerning the Writing Studio's history to the wiki, and in constructing the short sample narrative the results enabled, show how even the limited number of artifacts contained within the nascent ReCAP wiki prove its worth as a useful resource for future Writing Studio researchers.

In the concluding chapter of the dissertation, I evaluate the effectiveness of the ReCAP system in action, noting both successes and opportunities for improvement in later iterations of

the Writing Studio ReCAP. I also reflect upon the conceptual changes the dissertation has undergone since the initial prospectus. Furthermore, I assess the realistic future of the ReCAP's scalability and standardization to other users, as well as long-term potential for the project to mature into a searchable online repository of aggregated ReCAP-derived histories.

1.6 Urgency of Need

I have recently ended my fourth and final year as a graduate Associate Director of the Writing Studio. Due to unusual circumstances, both I and the Writing Studio's other Associate Director concluded our positions at the end of June 2017. We took with us a combined seven years of experience in this writing center, leaving our faculty director of two years with two highly qualified, yet ultimately inexperienced junior administrators. At the same time, a long-time faculty member and past director the Writing Studio also left the institution, removing from immediate recall a significant *eight* years of local experience spanning 2003-2011. The exact risk that inspired me to take on this project was realized: a staggering 15 years of combined programmatic memory exited the institution overnight, and knowledge of the Writing Studio's work from years prior is now at risk for further degradation.

It is my hope that creating and adopting the ReCAP will not only help the GSU Writing Studio stem the tide of this memory loss, but also better prepare the center for future growth and service, and serve as a potential model for more writing centers to do the same.

2 Review of Literature: Necessity, Lessons, and the Archive Solution

The conditions unique to the Georgia State University Writing Studio are alone effective motivators to create the Reifying Center Archive Process (ReCAP), but there are motives beyond the needs of one writing center and the insights of one administrator. If the ReCAP is to be truly reliable as a resource for this project, and potentially in the future as a model for other centers, a wider base of experience and scholarship that supports its creation is needed. This chapter reviews the literature that has served as a framework for establishing the ReCAP's necessity, potential, design, and organization.

The review begins with a brief confirmation of writing center literature's continued inattention to local archives as a source of research and reflective practice. This necessitates building an interdisciplinary bridge to our pedagogical neighbors in writing program administration, that we may transfer comparable lessons to fill in our own gaps. The review then further solidifies the imperative of establishing and curating programmatic archives by collecting examples of unfulfilled research needs, both where archival information is created anew and where pressures common to writing centers could be addressed if such knowledge were more accessible. The final phase of the review explores the practices a program archivist must internalize to create an archive that is navigable, objective, and sustainable, as well as potential strengths of wikis as the chosen mode for hosting and viewing the ReCAP.

2.1 Why the Writing Center Archive is Necessary

As I started the process of establishing broader justification to maintain a programmatic archive beyond the needs I saw in the Writing Studio, I looked first to the writing center field's

scholarship. It quickly became clear that the only voices explicitly calling for WCAs to maintain a researchable archive of their writing centers' histories came from Stacy Nall and Muriel Harris, as discussed in the first chapter. I needed to expand my search to further validate the potential that waited within the Writing Studio's archive, especially if I hoped to suggest that local potential also existed globally.

2.1.1 The Writing Center Administrator as Archivist

While several writing center scholars come close to calling for archive curation, these contributors ultimately never arrive at the conclusion to structure the archive as a regular site of retention for research. Instead, they focus on the act of programmatic research, unaware it would be easier if researchable access to the archive had existed to begin with. Writing center scholarship as a field has been searching for ways to entrench expanded research practices for well over a decade, to build a canon of theory that relies more upon data and less upon anecdotal experience. However, the capacity to do so already exists within most writing centers, and it remains untapped due to the pressure of operating day to day. Elizabeth Boquet confirms that WCAs tend to bend to the expediency and pragmatism of making decisions in the moment, often at the expense of local curation of theory (33-34). The pressure of timeliness is harsh; we reiterate many administrative tasks every day, then reopen our centers, our offices, and email inboxes the next morning to do it all again, rarely thinking of any one task as representative of worthwhile theory craft. These decisions create the very research opportunities WCAs need: every day that a program supports writing instruction, it also creates an observable history. Similarly, every day a center operates, that center creates its own researchable archive. Thus, Nancy Grimm calls on administrators to cast research as a "featured character" of writing centers, and provides a series of suggestions as to how. WCAs should structure mission

statements to include knowledge making and sharing; schedule non-negotiable time for research; restrict the impact of daily urgencies upon long-term priorities; form collaborations with other WCAs or professionals; and broaden the WCA's scope of publication topics (Grimm 56). Boquet and Grimm both cast in stark relief the constant struggle of research amidst the immediacy of operating a writing center, and while they never call for the founding or upkeep of a local archive, their observations clearly indicate that a WCA would be wise to prioritize programmatic research. A codified archive curation process as an established duty of administration is the answer to sustaining knowledge and expertise for effective recall, thus capturing the data Boquet seeks and providing the protected research time Grimm suggests.

Fortunately, we may see a burgeoning appetite for local historical research in writing centers, similar to what has been taking place in rhetoric, composition, and writing program administration in recent years. The 2016 *Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors* places heavy emphasis on center-based research, which is a positive note to strike considering its role as a tutor training text. In a genre which has largely focused on introducing novice tutors to pedagogy and policy, the *Oxford Guide* alludes to the same strengths of archival research found in the Nall and Harris works mentioned earlier. Authors Fitzgerald and Ianetta suggest that writing centers often house many types of "ephemera" that are useful in constructing a retroactive history, though they offer no specific guidelines on how such a repository should be organized (231-2). Fitzgerald and Ianetta articulate the benefit of structured archiving practices, but leave tutors without guidance beyond simple imperative.

With so few clarion voices calling out for writing center archive work, or even for the type of research that such a project would support, the next best choice is for writing center administration to look to writing *program* administration – work that is different in location but

not in kind. In “Are Writing Center Directors Writing Program Administrators?” Ianetta and five other writing center professionals directly and substantively tackle the topic of WPA-WCA similarity. Their joint exploration ultimately produces a handful of unifying statements, and a legitimate claim of overlap between the two fields. Ianetta et al. offer four conclusions:

- WCAs share a set of common texts with WPAs in and out of writing center studies;
- Viewing WCAs as WPAs builds connections between local knowledge and the wider community of scholar-teachers inside and outside of writing centers;
- Scholarly expertise in program administration needs to be grounded by firsthand experience;
- Experience needs to be both informed by and renewed in the professional community of WPAs. (37-8)

Within Ianetta et al.’s collaboration, clear examples of parity emerge: a WCA applies theory to determine policy or pedagogy, seeks grants, produces scholarship, and manages institutional relationships (18-19); the pedagogical backgrounds of many WCAs often place them in the best position to professionalize as a WPA (30-31); both roles require grounding in their respective histories and theory to be effective (32); and, like writing center administration, writing program administration is better thought as an amalgam of *many* roles that manage the multiple needs of a writing program (35). This paints a nuanced picture of the WCA and WPA as professionals who must be well-informed in the theory and history of their work, both locally by their own program, and more broadly by their field’s scholarship.

Returning briefly to Muriel Harris’ call for archival work in “Diverse Research” offers a final compelling link between the fields. Positioned significantly as the inaugural chapter of *The*

Writing Program Administrator as Researcher, Harris points directly to the working similarity between WPAs and WCAs: “Like other writing program administrators, the director of a writing center can find [themselves] caught on the daily treadmill of treating immediate concerns and small problems at the expense of taking a step back and looking reflectively at the larger picture of what the center is presently and where it should be in five or ten years” (“Diverse Research” 14). The WCA and WPA are both at the mercy of the many daily needs that simply keep their center running. The unending stream of tasks that arise with immediate need for attention, such as staffing, scheduling, training, and tutor development, tend to push aside the more critical, yet less imminent projects. Such failure to retain a record of these decisions and the pressures that inspire them is one of the points of knowledge atrophy reflected in WPA experiences. The WCA’s strongest ally, and best source for transferrable lessons when implementing a programmatic archive process, resides just down the hallway in the WPA’s office.

2.1.2 The WPA Archivist’s Lead

WPAs mark the trailheads that WCA archivists must travel with a collection of literature that demonstrates the imperatives and benefits of maintaining a program archive. WPAs show us that archive curation, and the research curation supports, can solidify the recall of expedient decisions, expand the value and utility of the administrator’s work, render the contexts of that work more visible, and raise the standing of administrative work to that of researcher.

One of the most compelling voices for WPA programmatic research, and a bridge back to Harris’ argument for WCAs’ status as WPAs, comes from Shirley Rose and Irwin Weiser, who propose the large-scale implications and guidance necessary for a WPA to assume dual roles of researcher and archivist: “Too often programmatic research and the development of program archives are not activities that WPAs consider as integral to their positions. We believe that

WPAs who do not include these activities as conscious parts of their jobs are underestimating the value of their work and perhaps making that work harder and less satisfying than it might otherwise be” (275). Rose and Weiser suggest that the positioning of a WPA can be instrumental in bringing satisfaction to the job. As they work, WPAs are able to think dually about everything that crosses their desktop, both in its utility to the immediate needs of the program, but also its positioning in the archives for later review and interpretation. A WPA is uniquely qualified to know the “sites of inquiry,” meaning the points of contact or artifacts produced, and the “participant subjects,” or the people who produce and interact with the business of the program (279). In essence, the modern WPA is already doing half of the work required of an archivist when they interact with the documents, communications, and other time-situated ephemera of a program in operation. The next logical step is to establish a process by which the WPA records this work in an organized archive. Because Rose and Weiser see time as a critical factor in the success of writing program administration, and because it is a consistently limited commodity to allot to their numerous and varied duties, WPAs should create a systematic process to capture and index the artifacts produced. It is apparent that one shared experience emerges to more strongly bind WCA and WPA archivists than any other: the pressure of time. “Writing program administration is very much a job based on dealing with the immediate,” observe Rose and Weiser, “The immediate need to hire someone to teach, the immediate need to complete a required report or a budget request, the immediate need to address a student complaint or an instructor’s problem” (275). Just as with writing centers, Rose and Weiser also note the dilemma of a job so tasked with timeliness: “Research, on the other hand, is often thought to be a contemplative activity, demanding, above all, large chunks of time that WPAs typically can’t find” (275). Without a conscious commitment to set aside time and resources for this “large

picture” work, a WCA is merely a reactive local expert instead of a reflective researcher. When writing alone in a contribution to the pair’s edited *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher*, Rose explicitly states the benefits of archival research to WPAs as also favorable to scholarship. Rose argues that program administrators are *best* suited to tell the story of their program, situated as they are at the nexus of operation, decision, practice, and assessment (111-12). This undeniably powerful positionality situates the WPA as “gatekeeper” of programmatic knowledge and communication. Few theorists are in so strong a position to see large-scale outcomes of praxis, or to respond to those outcomes with agility. It is a natural conclusion, then, to systematically record the data this position produces.

Rose also notes the benefit of researching and maintaining a department’s history as a positional ability unique to the WPA. WPAs are key holders to a department’s operations; as such, they are advantaged with a point of view that allows them a broad perspective on the interaction of many moving parts, along with the ability to drill down and examine fine detail. Rose also attributes better-informed scholarship to the upkeep of an archive, a benefit which is scalable to the field of writing program administration at large (108-9). In practice, a collection of historical lessons aggregated from multiple WPAs makes for better generalization of movements or trends over time, adding to the collected knowledge and theoretical grounding for administrators’ futures. Archival research plays a powerful role in externalizing this deep undercurrent of theory and research. Karen Bishop sees historical documentation as a way forward in efforts to elevate the perception of a WPA’s work to that of researcher. WPAs produce no shortage of documents that seem procedural or dismissible as unremarkable or workaday, but are in fact theory-situated. Teaching observations, budget reports, performance reviews, and departmental communications are all contextual to the theory and programmatic

culture that inform them. Taken one at a time, they seem insignificant, but in aggregate, they paint a picture of the program in its theory-informed practice. To harness the power of these artifacts, Bishop calls for a sustainable and teachable method of WPA documentation to make sense of and standardize the maintenance of the archives (52). With archival upkeep, an administrator is better situated for strategic planning. By having these details organized and collected, it is not only easier to derive quantitative meaning from hard data, but the qualitative context of trends and administrative decisions are also enriched. Without organization of archival efforts, access to a program's archive suffers and ultimately threatens its continuance.

L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo reaffirm the challenge of retaining administrative histories in the face of time constraints, and acknowledge one of the casualties when this balance skews under the pressure to act: informal decision-making often occurs in ways that are never recorded. "Trade-offs, and unexplained accommodations are common ... memos on teacher-student ratios, salaries, working conditions, professional development and the like are rarely seen as important historical documents: rather, they are the ephemeral, disposable documents of everyday administrative work" ("Why Administrative Histories?" xx-xi). Like Boquet cautions above, when these documents are left to pile up without category or notation – and sometimes not physically at all, as in the case of verbal decisions – the potential for knowledge atrophy appears. Thus, future administrators may think their decisions or accommodations are unique or untested, ignorant of a lost trove of past decisions and rationales that have been discarded. To potential detriment, the administrator unwittingly revisits previously-settled scenarios or precedents. At best, this is needless retreading; at worst, this promotes inconsistency of practice or policy.

The WPA who accrues and records data continually can redeploy it cogently and confidently with short notice. Such immediate recall is invaluable to building and sustaining the

relationships that impact a writing program's status. It is essential to maintain an accessible archive of the program's work because timely recall is a crucial factor in communicating how effective, valuable, and theoretically-derived a writing program appears to outside review. Affirming this, Mirtz argues that WPA historians have a greater understanding of the value of their current work through the aid of historical precedent. Noting that WPAs often lack lead time when faced with prejudicial narratives about their work, Mirtz suggests the need for a preexisting system to expedite both retention and recall. Enacting a clear, standardized system provides the WPA a distinct advantage: "being able to describe her work to non-WPAs in terms that they may more readily accept" (Mirtz 121). A program administrator with an accessible history can show trends, responses, initiatives, and results at short notice, with both broad and focused views. This evidence elevates the status of the administrator's efforts with a strong connection between theory and practice, combating assumptions that WPA work is merely managerial.

Some WPAs have already demonstrated the promise of archival work to support the position's research significance by unearthing histories dating back nearly a century. Barbara L'Eplattenier tells us that WPA work *is* intellectual work and that a WPA must engage in their program's archives to give the truest sense of its scope. L'Eplattenier draws this conclusion when comparing the paucity of historical information about writing program administration faculty, or their positions within their institutions, yet notes that artifacts demonstrating their work do exist. L'Eplattenier interprets these materials to indicate that the immense organizational challenge of running first-year writing programs dates back to before the term "writing program administrator" was in use: "The size and structure of these programs suggests the need for a person who acted like a full-time writing program administrator, whether or not he or she was actually *named* WPA or its equivalent. As anyone who has worked in such a program

knows, it cannot simply be run out of someone's back pocket" ("Finding Ourselves" 134). The weight of this task has not abated, and L'Eplattenier argues that WPA work is still intellectually undervalued, despite the clear and long-standing demands upon such a position to wield "...both practical and theoretical knowledge. The development of administrative histories is both a validation of contemporary scholarship and a logical extension of the contemporary work that has led to the recognition of writing program administration as a scholarly endeavor" (136). This archive-derived history of institutional status contributes directly to the case for the WPA to undertake the maintenance of, and research in, the archive. Archives are a legitimizing tool for the WPA – and therefore the WCA – to validate their work, both in theoretical rigor and in depth of history.

This self-evaluative potential is shown in action by Laura Davies, who describes a common challenge to a WPA in practice: delayed results. Inspired by a need to evaluate her specific program's practice, Davies assembled a 25-year history to study the use of instructor portfolios in evaluation. By delving into and simultaneously organizing the archives of the program, including myriad internal documents, correspondence, and oral histories, Davies retroactively gave shape to the first fifteen years of an initiative that started in 1986. Davies concludes that despite evidence of the eventual disbandment of the portfolio initiative, the act of assembling a history of the system was valuable, and will serve as a reference source for future inquiries about the portfolio program (106). A writing program regularly enacts policy that naturally takes years of data to produce recognizable trends, and that data is not immediately generalizable; multiple cohorts must be assessed before an impact can be deduced. Having a thorough inventory of the program's past initiatives may produce relevant information, improving the design of new undertakings, or even obviating unnecessary or ineffective work.

Even if no similar pedagogy or policy has been attempted before, the WPA's archiving efforts are still potentially invaluable when another administrator needs data for a comparable project. Charting the histories of past and current initiatives through conception, implementation, revision, or dissolution adds to the writing program's storehouse of contextual knowledge.

The growing imperative emergent from this collection of WCA- and WPA-situated calls to establish archives, or from projects that have looked to program archives to answer questions, is that knowing the history of a writing program will improve its practice and standing within the institution. With these clearly stated potentials in mind, we can go further by exploring scenarios of unfulfilled need that can be addressed effectively by the writing center's local archive.

2.1.3 Unfulfilled Need

Elsewhere in writing center and writing program scholarship, there are opportunities for archive-derived knowledge generation that administrators may leave unfulfilled. A writing center archive has the potential to improve the assessment of the center's effectiveness, establish goals for the center's future, and externalize to department and institution administrators the work the center does, thus raising the status of the center, or providing data to support the WCA's case for tenure or promotion.

Muriel Harris details a series of common challenges for WCAs. These pressures further establish the need for self-awareness and programmatic research as a tactic to secure institutional respect or legitimacy. Somewhat grimly, Harris acknowledges the struggle for legitimacy in seeking tenure review. Harris assumes an abiding hostility or ignorance from review committees, and soberly cautions that while a WCA tenure candidate should prepare for a disappointing outcome that sends them to a new institution, they should also wage a "hearts-and-minds" relationship campaign with institutional or departmental partners ("Solutions" 71). The center's

archive can play a pivotal supporting role in this effort, recording the actions and outcomes of the administrator's efforts, which can be deployed in official review materials, but also in conversations with partners who may help rebalance the scales against the biases Harris observes.

Joyce Kinkead and Jeanne Simpson similarly argue that WPAs are more closely situated to higher university administration than they may think, and should resist romantic notions of their work as intrinsically – or self-evidently – positive. Writing centers have the potential to interact with every student in the institution, so there is need to track the progress of their program's efforts on many fronts, including assessment, retention, accreditation, and productivity. The WPA who can externalize these details to external administration can demonstrate their program's value more easily, and the writing program that continually archives and maintains this information can fulfill these demands to externalize more easily in turn. Kinkead and Simpson make the simple appeal that the informed WPA who can articulate their program's success in detail benefits politically: "Consider that a president, provost, or dean spends considerable time in fund-raising activities and needs academic 'stories' and big dreams to share with potential donors. It's the WPA's job to provide content for these stories and dreams to the administrator and give her the opportunity to make the school and the program look good" (79). Thus, the WPA who understands their audience of higher administration can better situate an argument of their program's value and utility, relying less on intrinsic worth. An archive can render more concrete, reportable data that externalizes the work and merit of the program's operation.

While there is negativity surrounding the status concerns of WCAs, there too we can find the imperatives that suggest an administrator undertake documentation of its work and research.

Margaret Marshall approaches the legitimacy of writing centers as sites for intellectual work with pessimism. Alleging that WCAs have no control in how their work is “detached” from its significance or intellectual capital by “explicit and hidden institutional practices,” Marshall nonetheless claims that the work a writing center does must be captured and documented; more importantly, the documented evidence must be “evaluated using criteria very similar to that employed in evaluating other features of faculty labor” (75). Marshall reiterates what Nall, Harris, and numerous WPA researchers above list as types of work a center must capture, and also suggests the Council of Writing Program Administrators policy statement on “Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration” be updated to include the work of WCAs since it applies to both positions:

- It generates, clarifies, connects, reinterprets, or applies knowledge based on research, theory, and sound pedagogical practice;
- It requires disciplinary knowledge available only to an expert trained in or conversant with a particular field;
- It requires highly developed analytical or problem solving skills derived from specific expertise, training, or research derived from scholarly knowledge;
- It results in products or activities that can be evaluated by peers (e.g., publication, internal and outside evaluation, participant responses) as the contribution of the individual's insight, research, and disciplinary knowledge.

The evidence necessary to support or advance each criterion listed here is retrievable or recordable from a sufficiently organized programmatic archive and is manageable by a WCA-archivist. Marshall’s pessimism aside, a writing center with this information on hand is undoubtedly better-advantaged in proving the site’s – and the administrator’s – scholarly capital.

Even in scholarship not paired directly with research production, the urgency to record and retain is clear. Related to Grimm's earlier advice to structure mission statements to include knowledge-making and -sharing, Robert Barnett speaks directly to the need of a writing center to create clear goals and objectives statements as a better fixative of outcomes, and offers samples of his center's statements on certain topics. For example, on student retention, Barnett explains, "We should also establish formal mechanisms for assisting students likely to encounter academic difficulty. Remedial and tutorial services are critical, and their effectiveness should be regularly assessed" (196). Two more of Barnett's statements call for the center to develop partnerships with the institution's WAC program, and to increase "collaborative work with and accommodate the needs of all faculty" (199). Such language should be paired directly with details on which specific evidence the center's administrators or staff will seek for assessment, such as tracking center attendance in groups who stay enrolled versus those who leave the university, or visits by students enrolled in classes taught by faculty who have participated in center-led workshops. Assessment may include coding language in email exchanges, or sorting writing center visitors by major before and after such accommodations are implemented, but these mandates must ultimately have research plans attached. The effectiveness of a center's call for better practice or outreach is obfuscated if *nothing* is tracked, turning a mission statement into unexamined ceremony. The longer such data are retained, the stronger and more reliable the center's baselines grow to evaluate changes to policy or practice.

LaFrance and Nicolas suggest institutional ethnography as qualitative programmatic research-derived tactic to define the status of WCAs. Using keywords to describe the spectrum of practice and duties between a theory-steeped academic and task-oriented staff allows WPAs to reframe their work to better represent its rigor and contribution to scholarship. LaFrance and

Nicolas emphasize the value of an institutional ethnography as pertaining to standpoint, social coordination, and institutional discourse, but also ruling relationships (138-140). Articulating this internally may aid in externalizing the work and worthiness of a WCA as a WPA. Keeping this benefit clearly in mind through such an ethnography may allow the administrator to better position themselves on the same plane as other WPAs if they can differentiate between the work they do as scholarly or academic, and the work other staff does as support or operation. Such an ethnography is better supported by an archive of artifacts and documents that track with the theory-grounded attributes of the administrator's work.

In additional defense of qualitative data, Brad Peters makes a case for narratological interpretation of writing center research and recorded history to "...help writing center directors identify and understand local strategies that reflect and lead to future, rhetorically effective decision making and problem solving" (104). Peters describes how, as a newly-minted Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) administrator, research and reconstruction of a series of discarded memos, correspondence, and budget requests explained the rise and downfall of previous WAC iterations, and better contextualized the local writing center's relationship with those events. With that knowledge, Peters was better able to appeal to, and secure support from, critical personnel that increased engagement from new stakeholders. The reconstructed archive, even if more meager than the author would have liked, allowed better decision making from an informed position. This suggests that even an archive early in its reorganization is more actionable than one with no organization at all.

Actively supporting this kind of recall is directly beneficial to other research needs in writing center administration. Neal Lerner presents expanded writing center research as a means of empowering WCAs to take on a word they may find intimidating: assessment. Lerner explains

that the word is often wielded by external actors who can complicate a writing center's mission or even threaten its existence. Instead, Lerner advises WCAs to see assessment not as what is done *to* them, but instead as what they should already be doing for themselves. A writing center that assesses participation, student needs, user satisfaction, campus writing environments, and outcomes positions itself to better endure external assessment of its funding, efficacy, and community value. Lerner does not exclude the benefits of qualitative research on writing center work, but cautions that centers that avoid quantitative or statistically-measurable research do themselves a disservice: "Statistical evidence also lends itself to short forms, perfect for bullet items, PowerPoint presentations, and short attention spans—in other words, perfect for appeals to administrators and accrediting bodies" (59). WCAs who have the long view of their center's statistical existence supported by utilization numbers, student ratings, fulfillment of student wants, and outcomes from student visits can more confidently endure external assessment pressure. A well-maintained archive can immediately produce the quantitative context of a writing center's strength with short, compelling facts that better resist outside narrative bias.

The literature thus far presented has focused on laying the foundation for the ReCAP's necessity by highlighting the voices who specifically call for archive or programmatic histories, or by showing unrealized potential that a researchable archive can fulfill. However, simply establishing necessity is not enough. Because no model currently exists to scaffold such a local archive project, still more lessons must be sourced from those who know best the opportunities and challenges of curating and using a researchable archive: archivists and researchers.

2.2 How to Build the Writing Center Archive

Consulting scholarship about archival work would seem a natural choice to glean lessons about constructing an archive, but Ramsey, Sharer, L'Eplattenier, and Mastrangelo tell us in the introduction to *Working in the Archives* that “publications that do directly address methods for archive research in rhetoric and composition are few” (2). Publications that address methods for archive *maintenance* in rhetoric and composition are fewer still. The majority of archive scholars frame their audience as fellow researchers with their own set of honed research questions. This assumes that the reader is prepared to travel to archive sites and sift through shelves in search of a missing puzzle piece they suspect is waiting to be found, or conduct interviews to construct a narrative of the past. Scholarship lacks clear details on how to harness a pre-existing collection of materials when there is only an awareness of the potential answers contained within.

Serving as effective archivists depends upon our experiences as administrators of individual writing centers. That position enables us to know the context of what we include in the archive, and to anticipate potential research value. Our overall vantage as administrator already parallels the necessarily holistic view taken by the archivist, so we are similarly in a better position to anticipate and fulfill the needs of the researcher (Glenn and Enoch “Drama” 329-30). Brereton states clearly in the introduction to the *College English* “Archivists with an Attitude” issue that “foresight” is integral to the role of the archivist (575); all researchers who will work with the holdings of our archives in the years to come will depend upon our understanding and position now. Much like our fellow researchers who at first delved archives with “little codified information” to guide their practice (Gaillet “Archival Survival” 29), I too must define the methods as I go. Fortunately, these researchers have left us with critical insight to structure the goals of a local program archive.

The remainder of this literature review will assemble support for how a writing center's archive should manifest. The scholarship of archivists and archive researchers supports three key characteristics to successfully manage a local writing center archive: it should be *navigable*, *objective*, and *sustainable*. These traits are verified by the experiences of archival researchers who have shared the lessons, challenges, and successes of their work with others in the field, and are therefore what the local program archivist should emulate for their collected materials. The literature also supports the proposed ReCAP's mode to store and present these holdings for later research: a controlled-access wiki, curated by the program administrator and selected staff.

The wiki format directly supports all three attributes listed above – navigability, objectivity, and sustainability – more completely than any alternative presently available to the field. Wikis offer flexibility in structure; are highly customizable; are fundamentally characterized by their ease and frequency of updating; offer fine control over access and modification; and are resistant to the pitfalls of inventorying a fragmented collection of disparate artifacts. The common conventions of wiki authorship are compatible with the goals of updating and objectively conveying the holdings of a local archive while protecting its integrity and navigability. Despite a decade of commercial use in niche-interest reference databases and Wikipedia, the worldwide online user-curated encyclopedia, the potential for wikis to serve as a mode of local archive management is underrepresented in scholarship. Therefore, this review gleans details of wikis in other settings that offer transferable lessons for programmatic histories, or which concern archive databases broadly.

2.2.1 *Navigability*

One of the overarching themes in the experiences of archive researchers is navigability, or accessibility, of the archive's holdings. Broadly speaking, documents and artifacts should be

both organized into intuitive categories and easily located with finding aids. The structure of the archive should make links between related items easy to follow and explore. Such “wandering” in the archive is a common and desirable byproduct of primary archival research, but researchers also don’t want to wander aimlessly (Mastrangelo and L’Eplattenier). An intuitively structured archive complements the knowledge of the researcher who does not find material “by accident,” but instead by following informed hunches of what should be available based on what has already been found or referenced in other resources (Gold 43). Similarly, the researcher should also find the keywords of the archive flexible enough to help them produce unique results from different search strings or new research questions, thereby enabling the premeditated wandering that often produces new and helpful results (Gaillet “The Unexpected Find” 150). The WCA archivist maintaining the local archive should work with these needs in mind, providing richly searchable databases that can accommodate both the focused visitor who knows exactly the artifact they seek, and the informed wanderer who will explore a variety of conceptual angles to get to the information they suspect resides within the archive.

To accomplish this, materials included in the archive must be coded with the demands of both browsing *and* targeted finding in mind. Because each item included will be coded and linked to searchable terms, categorization is key. Grant-Davie explains that in coding data, it is necessary to manage, sort, and simplify information for researchers, enabling them to share patterns with readers, and to provide “researchers with a perspective from which to view the data, so that the coding can directly address their research questions” (272-3). However, in order to render the patterns produced manageable and generalizable, it is also necessary that the “taxonomy must be somewhat reductive” (277). Tirabassi recognizes the same idea from the researcher’s role, citing an archivist’s “principle of categorization” as the goal of rendering the

archive's holdings navigable through finding aids and categories that anticipate the researcher's needs (175). Especially helpful to the goals of the WCA researcher –the intended beneficiary of this archive – is that effective coding and categorization enables quick answer-focused searches that externalize the work of the center in simple “nuggets” that are accessible to external audiences (Glau 296). This responds directly to specific calls for internal writing program research, fulfilling the need for categorization as a means of immediate accessibility.

Alexandra Chassanoff's study of how historians interact with primary texts in digitally-available archives offers insight into what researchers of a digital archive may prefer in its design and offerings, but also how to help users better acclimate to viewing and using databases of digitized surrogates for real-world artifacts. Chassanoff's conceptual limitation regarding digital archives assumes a broad database with multiple types of archived topics or categories, which leads to user difficulty in attaining a larger view of exactly how much material is held on a given topic. The author suggests that in a physical archive space, visitors can see the entirety of an archived topic at once, effectively seeing the forest before the individual trees. Chassanoff believes this is preferred because “users require a tremendous amount of information to discern both context and relevance. In the absence of a physical browsing space ... it can be difficult to comprehend both the coverage and extensiveness of the resource” (463). However, the archive researcher preferences inventoried by Chassanoff's study also reveal that digital archive viewers are likely to source non-textual media such as “works of art, oral histories, photographs, sound recordings, film recordings, and video recordings more frequently online than in person,” and that the quality of these digital surrogates is of high importance, both for the reliability and accuracy of the information derived, and in the potential for artifacts to be republished in scholarly work (468-70). This means that the digital archivist must provide a finding aid that

helps the viewer see the limits or boundaries of the holdings as a whole in addition to merely providing search functionality. Additionally, a programmatic archive, which will inherently be limited in scope and topic, and which will be contextually familiar to likely researchers, should alleviate Chassanoff's concern.

Writing in 2011, when the term "Web 2.0" was often used to describe the ongoing paradigm shift in internet usage habits and expectations from user-as-consumer to user-as-curator *and* -contributor, Sigrid McCausland explores the potential for users to eventually supplant the role of the archivist as primary mediator of content. McCausland poses the potential drawback of users finding researchable content solely by digital means without the help of the archivist as a contextualizing agent, but notes the potential strength of drawing on users' growing appetite to contribute to and strengthen an archive (315). McCausland also establishes the necessity of designing and, if necessary, modifying digital finding aids and organization according to user needs and feedback (314). Meanwhile, Tiffany Walsh and Christopher Hollister detail a wiki-based archive project that, while different in content from that of a writing center archive, nonetheless exhibits its potential utility. Working in service to a library sciences course, Walsh and Hollister created a closed wiki system that allowed students enrolled in the course to upload their final projects into a user-maintained wiki space. Like McCausland's archive researchers, the authors see within their students a "Web 2.0"-informed desire to produce content collaboratively and propose pedagogical strengths of wikis to effectively harness that desire (Walsh and Hollister 392-3). Users expect content to be reactive to their curation wishes, allowing the selection, exclusion, and modification of information streams. The collaborative information generation possible in an archive wiki will appeal to an expanded staff of writing center archivists who inevitably expect some flexibility of design and content.

2.2.2 *Objectivity*

Another goal of the archivist is to strive for impartiality when presenting materials. The archive should be a space for researchers to visit and see within its holdings the component details of the stories they wish to uncover – not to have those stories told to them by the archivist. The ideal archive’s categorization, labeling, and descriptions are free of the archivist’s judgement or interpretation.

It is no accident that the words “strive” and “ideal” are included above, considering the archivist is producing researchable knowledge for others (Bloom 286). Because the positionality of the WCA archivist is ultimately so greatly informed by their roles both as WPA and as an eventual researcher of the same archive they are creating, the strain on impartiality is significant. This is the double edge of Glenn and Enoch’s above purported strength of the archivist’s holistic view; when viewing the archive as a whole, the temptation to interpret trends is strong.

Researchers depend upon this impartiality, however, as they are aware of the interpretive missteps possible in a journey into the archive. This pressure can be as simple as the future WPA researcher’s need for direct, objective data unburdened by analysis (Glau 296), but the implications can reach far deeper. It is impossible for the researcher to be truly free of agenda when reading through the archives, informed as we all are by biases and preconceptions (Gaillet “(Per)Forming Archival Research” 42). A similar caution to the reader to be aware of their own biases appears in Grant-Davie’s advice in coding data for research, because search objectives and selection biases make extracting truly “raw” data impossible (274). An archivist will recognize the challenge of even simply labeling a document or photo because deciding how to accurately describe its content is an unavoidably interpretive act. Simply put, the archive cannot always provide an answer to the question “What is this a picture of?” and maintain objectivity

(Finnegan 120). This potential peril of interpretation broadens to include something as seemingly innocuous as engaging with typographical errors: no matter how well-reasoned, interpreting the intentions of a document's authors is an inherently rhetorical act and should be undertaken with extreme care (Mailloux 586). Gaillet even cautions that *archivists* may make the simple error of indexing a name incorrectly in a digital archive, thus rendering the name of a key figure invisible unless the researcher has the notion to actively compensate for a *potential* typo ("The Unexpected Find" 150). Finally, the implications of improper interpretative acts can be as significant as publishing the work and history of past WPAs without proper ethical considerations for the scrutiny the publication may invite upon their legacies (McKee and Porter; Lamos). Thus, we see the potential for interpretive missteps within the act of researching the archive; therefore, in the act of curating of the archive's holdings, archivists should not add to researchers' burdens by inducing their own biases. While the lesson above may be that true objectivity is impossible, it is the archivist's duty to strive for the best approximation possible.

Simultaneously, the primary goal of archival research *is* to ultimately support a new interpretation of historical artifacts, so the objectivity of the archive is also essential to primary research. Connors tells other researchers that archives "remain inert until interpreted," and the historian must perform that interpretation to capitalize on the primary research value unique to the archives (18). Gaillet similarly affirms that archives are a valuable primary source for creating knowledge ("(Per)Forming Archival Research 39), a sentiment echoed by Belsey, who prefers to conduct primary readings before secondary in order to preserve the researcher's interpretive agency (164-5). Belsey also advises that no single textual analysis can ever be the "exhaustive" or ultimate interpretive authority (169), a conclusion that resonates with Glenn and Enoch's assessment that uncovering an "objective truth" or getting a reassembly of history

“exactly right” is impossible (“Invigorating Historiographic” 11). The presence of the objective archive is critical to maintaining this potential for primary research and interpretive agency, especially when considering the inevitability of subsequent readings of the same document. The archive must exist as an dispassionate space to make these repeated examinations possible without requiring researchers to rely upon the inherently interpretive and biased readings performed by researchers before them. Ultimately, the local program archive should be the same experience for each visitor, leaving the difference to appear only in the works derived from it.

Isto Huvila establishes the strength of a digital archive as a means of decentralizing the work of archivists, which may mitigate archivist bias. While Huvila’s intended application is to unite physical artifacts that are geographically separated with a database of digitized surrogates, the author noted two strengths adaptable to the goals of a locally-maintained wiki archive system. Huvila specifically describes a wiki-based digital archive as being a user-participatory system that both decentralizes the archivists’ task, and provides more potential to contextualize the significance of a given artifact or topic page (24-25). Opening the act of composing a wiki-based archive’s content to a larger user base – one which Huvila takes care to indicate must itself be restricted to trusted editors – allows for greater linking of knowledge or context between artifacts. Interlinking has the potential to grow the depth of knowledge available to those participating in the archive as it proceeds with ongoing “iterations of continuous use, development and evaluation with the aim of nurturing participation and evolving the archive” (Huvila 32). So long as standards for contribution and curation are established and maintained, the participatory nature of an archive shows promise as another check on any single contributor inadvertently injecting bias into artifact descriptions.

Wikis have a long-established trend of prioritizing objective communication over interpretation by presenting details as-is. The ideally short and summative nature of a wiki article acts as resistance to narrative-building, which, as demonstrated above, is counterproductive to unbiased primary research. In addition, each artifact that enters an archive wiki without being attached to a specific research project is more likely to be presented as objectively as possible. While the researchers above are correct that there is folly in the idea that one can “purely” record material in the archive without the influence of bias or interpretation, the lack of a narrow, topic-specific analytical motive helps maintain the broadest possible usefulness of the materials. An archivist’s lack of specific need, or application to an overarching narrative, is key to this preservative effect.

2.2.3 *Sustainability*

Finally, the success of a local program archive as a source of administrative insight and primary research is dependent upon how well it is maintained and its ability to endure. Archived materials should be both updated and as current as possible, and measures must be taken to ensure the security and protection of the archive’s holdings. The researchability of the archive depends upon its navigability and objectivity, while the value of the archive as a source of knowledge grows with each document or artifact included. Kesner designates the act of “collecting appropriate papers or records for permanent preservation” as one of the three primary objectives of archival work and maintenance (101). Ongoing accumulation of more artifacts has a compounding effect on the potential quality of research, supporting an imperative for the program archivist to continually update the database: possible outcomes grow with each addition.

One of the strengths of archive access is the malleability of analysis, which allows for multiple legitimate histories to be told; as such, a more current archive leads to a greater possible number of stories. Those possibilities compound when more potential points of interpretive dissonance appear in the form of a greater number of artifacts and potentially relevant information. Mortenson describes the fortune of stumbling upon a single news article which catalyzed “hours” of research, ultimately validating the premise with which the project began (46-47). However, Glenn and Enoch also advise researchers to be open to the discovery of unanticipated materials to tell a more complete story (“Invigorating” 24-25). Each time the archive is updated, a new opportunity to either validate or *invalidate* history appears, increasing the potential breadth and insight of research.

Progressive updates enabled by the wiki archive directly improve the navigability covered above, and the effect is more pronounced within the programmatic archive due to the more restricted range of topics it contains. As Gold writes, the act of finding relevant materials within an archive is not purely accidental (43); as a researcher assembles a collection of leads and clues, the presence of materials that exist but have not yet been viewed becomes more evident. The updated archive makes quicker and more confident contextual finding and linking possible. This is the principle of cross-referencing Tirabassi lists as an essential step in archival research (171). An updated archive wiki also better supports Connors’ notion of deliberate wandering or “play” that researchers do within the archives (23). The archivist that keeps the archive current improves the possible breadth and depth of inquiry, allowing researchers to find an end to their research and write a history – even if that history is not *the end*.

Maintaining an updated digital archive also mitigates the difficulties posed by the “hidden” archive; these “invisible” materials are the unprocessed artifacts that have not yet been

inducted into the officially viewable holdings, and thus may languish. Graban, Ramsey-Tobienne, and Myers see both strength and risk in digital repositories:

Because most archives house more unprocessed than processed collections and are constrained by budget or labor the digital archive simultaneously expedites and conceals the availability of materials ... We understand and appreciate that material process[ing] will influence both what gets archived and what historical narratives we construct from archival aids. (234)

To make these historical narratives the most detail-inclusive, the limbo between acquiring a physical artifact and making it digitally visible must be as short as possible. However, digitization itself does not uniquely predispose the archive to torpor. What Graban, Ramsey-Tobienne, and Myers ascribe to digitization is, in fact, a matter of inattention, as there is nothing fundamental about a digital archive that predisposes it to fragmentation. Writing alone, Ramsey suggests a further complication: digital archives are imperfect due to the difficulty of representing certain artifacts that depend on physical detail or texture (83-84). However, that some artifacts admittedly translate poorly to digital representation does nothing to diminish the value of materials that do translate well. Worries about the “invisible” archive and incompatibility of certain artifacts do nothing to undermine digitization as a useful mode of programmatic archiving, so long as the archivist is committed.

The second component to the maintenance of the archive is its capacity for protection. The archivist has a duty in the curation of an archive to protect its materials from damage, vandalism, or loss. Digitization presents an advantageous level of protection to an archive’s holdings; in contrast to risks of invisibility, Ramsey also attributes safety from both loss and theft to a potential strength of digitization (81). The benefit of this safety is especially salient when

Samouelian notes that digitized archives can act as “surrogates” for documents that are more sensitive to damage, or which are already in a state of decay (43). These preservative measures align strongly with Kesner’s preservation objective (101). While simultaneously providing greater access to a larger number of viewers, digitization preserves original materials from wear and tear, ensuring longevity.

The adoption of a digital archive does not preclude the maintenance of its physical analog. In fact, the physical originals of a wiki archive must be preserved both as the ultimate backup in case of a total loss of digital surrogates, and as a physical presence available to the researcher who prefers access to a tangible source. Folsom claims that *physical* archives are inherently reifying agents that improve access to knowledge of a given topic, and that databases (such as this wiki would create) risk undermining that effect (1577). Yet the notion of archives as reification also appears in Manoff’s suggestion that digitization and databases offer unique expansions of access to history that might not be possible otherwise (386). Contrary to Folsom, the reification of a center’s knowledge to improve its practice and sustainability is the most important goal of the ReCAP project; while physical materials are invaluable to the experience of an archive, and are in fact better preserved as a result of wiki surrogate usage, there is nothing more reifying of knowledge than ensuring it is readily accessible. Indeed, in a 2007 *First Monday* article charting the ever-growing role of technology and its implications for the future of physical archive spaces, Richard Cox underscores the practical strengths of scanning some documents for later retrieval as digital surrogates. “A good flatbed scanner can beautifully digitize a wide range of materials that are too fragile (or indeed, too valuable) for general use. By digitizing the most endangered, most important or simply the most used documents, an archives [*sic*] is also taking an important step in safeguarding, if not the physical artifact itself, at least its

virtual memory.” In the context of formal research archives, a digital surrogate has the obvious merit of prolonging the potentially finite life of physical objects, but also in expanding its ease of retrieval.

Focusing on wikis as they apply to management of a library’s virtual references, Jeremy Frumkin’s contribution to a digital libraries journal notes a key strength of wiki sustainability for a writing center archive. First, wikis offer ease of access and editing, and integrity of updates: “Wikis also archive every version of every page, thereby allowing a user to see the history of any particular page of content. This combined ability of providing an easy method to edit the content of a web page while maintaining an accessible history of the page makes the Wiki a very intriguing tool to facilitate communication, collaboration, and web site administration” (18). Given the anticipated design of the ReCAP wiki, this level of protection is appealing, as the wiki will likely grow to depend upon the curation efforts of multiple archivist-researchers who need to trust that their research source is viable and enduring.

The preservative strength of wikis as a collaborative workspace was realized early in their insertion into public and academic consciousness, and applies easily to the upkeep of a local archive. Core features of wiki systems include: the easy creation of links between pages or articles within the database; the ability to maintain security by setting levels of user access; page revision tracking and histories, which offer “protection against vandalism or unintentional loss of content;” and search functionality to find content amidst published pages (Wei et al. 2005). These attributes offer a high level of control and customization to the curator(s) of a wiki-supported database, which if organized under an established set of guidelines, can instill confidence in users that the database is a reliable reference.

The role of preservation works in another beneficial way, effectively addressing the call for archival researchers to exercise caution in exposing the work of past WPAs (McKee and Porter; Lamos). Access to archives can be restricted for physically sensitive materials *and* topically sensitive subjects. The ReCAP archivist has the power to render materials accessible or inaccessible as the situation warrants, even denoting materials off limits to external-bound projects as necessary. This preserves both internal research value and knowledge of materials while protecting previous administrators from uninvited scrutiny.

Elizabeth Yaker, speaking on the unfolding transition to the “Digital Curation” of archives, observes that the definitions of the term found in archive scholarship can be sorted into “...several core concepts and activity areas,” including:

- (1) Life cycle/continuum management of the materials perhaps even reaching back to the creation of the record keeping system.
- (2) Active involvement over time of both the records creators and potentially digital curators.
- (3) Appraisal and selection of materials.
- (4) Development and provision of access.
- (5) Ensuring preservation (usability and accessibility) of the objects.

All of these activities are over time and in the long term. Given this scope, digital curation is becoming the umbrella term for digital preservation, data curation, and digital asset and electronic records management. (Yaker “Digital Curation” 338)

Yaker explains elsewhere that this relocation to digital sites of archive curation offers unique collaboration between archivist and researcher by allowing the viewers of digital documents to suggest tags to improve future searching and sorting, and also to comment on these items with details and context that may enhance official descriptions already written by the archive’s curators (“Inviting” 161). This echoes what Frumkin suggests: that wikis may make archives more participatory by allowing users to leave comments about their research experience in the archive with the relevant articles, which can be useful both to future viewers and to curators (21).

This suggests that the role of the archivist is ultimately unchanged in the type of work to be done, but merely expanding in the location of where it is done – one that offers new opportunities for contextualizing the contents of the archive.

Finally, Walsh and Hollister predicted the wiki produced by their students would endure as a researchable archive: “There is now a permanent online show case of students’ research projects that can be used to promote the educational role of the libraries” (396). That course-based wiki realizes, in a limited capacity, a ReCAP project goal: leaving the wiki archive to persist and grow across multiple iterations, continually allowing new users to arrive and add content as a reference source for the future.

Ultimately, the process of moving archivist methods from the physical realm to digital platforms is a matter of locus more than it is a fundamental change in practice. There are differences only in the unique abilities offered by digital spaces, but the goals and needs of archive curation remain fundamentally the same and unimpeded by moving to a closed-access wiki. As is true of any archive project, the onus is on the writing center archivist to maintain the consistency of the archive’s navigability, objectivity, and sustainability. The only limiting agent is the dedication of the archivist and their ability to dedicate the time and resources necessary.

2.3 Taking Action

The scholarship collected here underscores the unfulfilled need for, and compelling potential of, the proposed Reifying Center Archive Process to fully connect the Writing Studio to a knowledgebase that enhances administrative success. Writing center theorists have already noticed that the archives are unutilized; WPAs have already shown the benefit of harnessing their own archives; writing center administrators have already outlined exactly where better archival

knowledge stands to benefit center operation; archivists and researchers have already established the standards that a local writing center archive might adopt; and finally, scholars in the digital humanities have already outlined the potential strengths of a digital archive.

All that remains is to take action in the Writing Studio archives to transform this theory into a digital archive process that is demonstrable, replicable, and methodical.

3 The Methods Underlying the Writing Studio's Prototype ReCAP Wiki

The end goal of the Reifying Center Archive Process initiative is to render accessible and researchable potentially dozens of unique topics that describe the work of the Writing Studio at different times and in different circumstances, while doing so objectively as a neutral reference. Thus, I established the perspective of the ReCAP as the role of archivist instead of researcher, and in doing so, focused the ReCAP as a potential source of many answers, not a single narrative. I needed a structure that would provide access to those answers quickly and simply. I discarded several modes that would have initially improved the condition of the Writing Studio archive:

- Retain the physical boxes as they were, reorganized and with a constructed finding aid document that inventoried specific types of artifacts or documents;
- Copy all the physical documents into a bound set of surrogates with a similar finding aid as above; or,
- Digitize all physical holdings and store surrogates locally in a writing center computer, with each file labeled and sorted into digital folders, again with a finding aid document to aid researcher navigation.

While each of the above options supported the goal of objectivity by avoiding analysis, none of these options satisfied my goals of navigability and sustainability.

The digitized surrogates would be quicker to browse than the physical originals or bound physical surrogates, but a researcher would still need to open and skim dozens or scores of files based on limited document labels in the finding key's description. All three options presented the same vulnerable reliance on a single finding aid document to inventory the materials both

succinctly and completely. Given the volume and variety of holdings in the center's archives, such a document would continually struggle to balance useful detail and manageable length.

While the local digitized surrogates at least featured the benefit of easier backup and quicker update, it was still a challenge for all three proposed archive modes to be effectively curated or secured. Adding new materials to a collection of originals or surrogates is slow, requiring shuffling of artifacts and amendment of the master finding aids. Keeping the original archives as the primary point of access risks further degradation each time an artifact is handled; both the physical originals and physical surrogates are sensitive to loss from accidental damage or disaster, and even a digitized copy is vulnerable to the same threats if no backup is kept off-site. All three modes are vulnerable to mishandling or intentional corruption, and misplacement of physical items is an easy oversight if temporarily removed by a researcher. Even a digital copy can be accidentally moved or deleted, and will grow more difficult to repair depending on the length between backups. In essence, simple digitization and organization alone was not enough. I would have been simply relocating the same challenges of the physical archive and only minimally improving researchability. I had to provide tools or points of access that mitigated these problems.

Leaving behind these imperfect solutions, I arrived at my ultimate resolution: a writing center archivist-maintained wiki. As covered in the previous chapter's review, wiki systems offer flexibility in structure; are highly customizable; are fundamentally characterized by their ease and frequency of updating; offer fine control over access and modification; and are resistant to the pitfalls of inventorying a fragmented collection of disparate artifacts. Wikis are compatible with the goals of updating and objectively conveying the holdings of a local archive while protecting its integrity and navigability.

I have tested the adoption of a controlled-access wiki, which I curated as a former administrator of the Writing Studio. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the attributes built into the ReCAP's web-based wiki directly support a writing center archive's goals of navigability, objectivity, and sustainability. I have constructed the chapter to function as a guide. First, I document the method by which I organized the materials on hand into a structured and navigable inventory, including the synthesis of relevant, representative writing center scholarship to support the Writing Studio's provisional tagging and organization system. Then, with the organized archive materials ready to digitize and upload, I demonstrate the utility of common wiki tools as methods to directly support the ReCAP's goals of navigability, objectivity, and sustainability. Each of these criteria are uniquely supported by the wiki system, and collectively fulfill the expectations set forth by archivists and researchers in the previous chapter's review of literature. Finally, with the methods of the ReCAP validated, I offer a concise enumeration of the steps that produced the prototype ReCAP wiki, presented as a process that may be adapted by future Studio administrators, and potentially by the administrators of other writing centers.

Once I had completed my writing center's first ReCAP wiki in this manner, I had established an immediately useful tool for our administration's sustainability now and in the future, providing easier, more detailed access to the operational context and accumulated knowledge of a 40-year-old writing center. The replication of these detailed methods is critical to the success of the ReCAP as a powerful research tool in the Georgia State Writing Studio.

3.1 Organizing the Writing Studio Archive to be Digitized

The first step in the process to impose order on the Writing Studio's archives was to conduct an informal orientation exercise to become familiar with the types and variety of

artifacts contained within the many plastic boxes. This process was invaluable before I ever tried to create a categorization structure, as I didn't know enough about what the archive contained to be confident enough to label, much less organize it.

The archive existed in an already partially organized system of labeled folders and subfolders, sticky notes, and groupings that suggested a previous Studio worker had undertaken some sort of prior organization project. Working when the center was closed for a semester break, I allocated several full days to unpack, review, and restore the contents of each box. I annotated a working file tree with short descriptions of each folder's and subfolder's contents and replaced them in the order and orientation in which they originally appeared. Once I had completed this first pass through the archive simply as an observer, I knew immediately that I needed external justification for any organization scheme I would impose.

3.1.1 Synthesizing a Working Category System

With this initial review and sorting complete, but before digitization and uploading to the wiki, I focused next on how to categorize and sort the materials of the archive in a verifiable manner. Standardization of these categories was necessary if I was to objectively code the archived work of my writing center. Unfortunately, it is challenging to process existing writing center scholarship into a set of categories. To do so in an adequately representative way would dramatically exceed the goals of the project, which is to demonstrate the worth of a digital programmatic archive. To externally source an established list of categories, I considered but ultimately discarded several options:

- The International Writing Centers Association provides an official writing center bibliography as a resource. It was last updated in 2009, and features topics

skewed more toward a broad list of subjects common to writing centers, and less toward a programmatic or administrative perspective.

- Rebecca Moore Howard provides an extensive list of dozens of composition-related bibliographies, hosted by McGraw-Hill, including a lengthy writing center list. It features no subcategorization at all, and Howard pointedly cautions against considering the lists representative, current, or comprehensive.
- The Writing Centers Research Project is also concerned with retaining and organizing documents and artifacts found in a writing center archive. However, the WCRP's recently removed labeling system was too granular and focused on individual document types, skewing toward the aggregation of *multiple* centers' operations. Considering the WCRP's stated goals of preserving early writing center history at large, the project understandably isn't concerned with situating any one donated artifact within the story of the source writing center. The WCRP's labels alone can't account for the topic considerations of operating a local writing center as they seek only a small handful of specific document types.
- I also considered adopting the categorization of two published texts that attempt to synthesize large collections of writing center scholarship into groups as a reference for researchers: Murphy, Law, and Sherwood's *Writing Centers: An Annotated Bibliography* and Babcock et al.'s *A Synthesis of Qualitative Studies of Writing Center Tutoring*. Using either of these texts would incur the opposite problem of the WCRP's tags: both groupings are overly broad and focus only on capturing the topics that merit publication without the context of local application. Describing the whole of writing center scholarship (pre-1996 and pre-2012,

respectively) at a glance neatly sorts the topics that our *scholarship* covers, but that doesn't translate to a complete picture of local operation. Because both texts intend to create a quick reference to broader scholarship, their labels won't adequately describe the concerns of a given local center.

None of these candidates ultimately fit the use case of the ReCAP, which is to categorize the various aspects of the Writing Studio's program in operation. I still needed something external to enable artifact and document sorting, but I needed it to be locally situated in a way no pre-published set of categories could describe. I chose to conduct my own meta-synthesis of a collection of recent and relevant texts that address two conceptual criteria: *administrating* and *tutoring* in a writing center from a local perspective.

To uncover generalizable trends from these writing center texts, each chapter, article, or section is a point of data to be coded as a category. While the use of multiple sources guarantees there will be some overlap – such as both *The St. Martin's Sourcebook* and *The Longman Guide* containing chapters explicitly geared toward the topic of tutoring English language learners – each chapter is different. The difference can be more pronounced, such as in Rafoth's *A Tutor's Guide*. Chapters on tutoring technical and business writing (Briam), creative writing (Bishop), advanced writers (Zemliansky), science writing (Greiner), and graduate-level writing (Ellis) all address a different tutoring scenario and may overlap very little on the surface. Leaving those as separate data points can, as Grant-Davie explains, lead to “as many categories as there are units of data, and the data would include only a single example of each category. Therefore, to be both manageable and useful as a means of observing patterns in the data, a taxonomy must be somewhat reductive” (277). This type of meta-synthesis requires the process to be reductive enough to produce trends, so the data of these chapters must be “negotiated” (Grant-Davie 273).

As before, my positionality as a Writing Studio administrator guided the negotiations necessary to maintain categories. This is essential to organize the archive with identifiable trends that resonate with the experience of Writing Studio administrators, but also in contexts that resonate with *most* writing centers.

I decided the best way to non-arbitrarily isolate topics that would generate the organizational categories for the Writing Studio's prototype ReCAP, yet still potentially align with common local discussions among many writing centers and their administrators, I would look to a sample of contemporary writing center scholarship found in administrator-focused texts and tutor-focused primers. I collected a total of 12 texts that cover recent tutoring and writing center scholarship, dating as far back as 1999 with Myers-Breslin's *Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers*, to as recent as Fitzgerald and Ianetta's 2016 *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors*.

First, five texts were selected to represent tutor training guides. These manuals and anthologies are required or suggested reading in many tutor training courses, and in introductory or ongoing training programs for tutors when courses are not offered. Even for directly-hired tutors who may have no formalized training period to introduce them to the profession, these texts help tutors develop a theoretical lens to focus the work they do in-session. Two are authored primers written as a holistic look at all of the information a new tutor needs to know: Ryan and Zimmerelli's *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, and Gillespie and Lerner's *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Two are edited collections of articles: Rafoth's *A Tutor's Guide* and Murphy and Sherwood's *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*. Finally, Fitzgerald and Ianetta's recent *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors* is essentially both types of book in one volume, split between a comprehensive pedagogy manual and an edited collection of

topic-focused articles, similar in structure to *Tutor's Guide* or *Sourcebook*.

Taking stock of the literature aimed at WCAs is more difficult. Administrative scholarship is more intensive not just in degree, but topics also range further in kind. As I covered in the second chapter, writing center directors handle operational issues of budget, training, and staffing, but also the more significant issues of pedagogical development, managing institutional status, and maintaining their own faculty or professional status. Whereas a tutor's role is well-defined as the purveyor of their center's services, the administrator occupies many roles: trainer, tutor-in-chief, promoter, researcher, accountant, technologist, faculty liaison, upper administration liaison, and now, historian and archivist. The texts aimed at a WCA are less likely to be generalist, as any one of these roles alone is enough to sustain a book's worth of inquiry. Only one commonly-available text within in the past ten years is a generalist guide for administrators: 2010's *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*. The next multi-topic book aimed at WCAs is significantly more dated, and not even aimed solely at writing centers: 1999's *Administrative Problem Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers*. The remaining handful of texts directed at administrator audiences focus in greater depth, on fewer topics: *The Center Will Hold* (2003), *Everyday Writing Center* (2007), *Facing the Center* (2010), *Before and After the Tutorial* (2011), and *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers* (2013). This topic-focusing makes sense; administrators need to, at varying times during their appointments, concentrate in more detail on a specific need, and generalist texts will be insufficient. The topic-focused texts I selected for this analysis can lend themselves to broad application, but this is admittedly imperfect. A field with as many practical and theoretical pressures as writing center administration doesn't sort itself neatly into categories, but effort must be made to quantify the collected experience of numerous WCAs if the ReCAP's material categorization is to be

representative.

In total, this collection yielded 179 individual chapters or articles ready to be sorted, and each was coded with a brief, general description of its central topic. To render visible the trends of the writing center topics that administrators care to either teach tutors or to discuss in scholarship, I then grouped these chapters into general themes. The first round of sorting produced more than 30 “rough” labels to describe chapter topics or primary focus in a few words. Organizing an archive with nearly three dozen categories would quickly render it unnavigable, so based on my knowledge derived from three years of experience as a tutor and four years as a graduate administrator, I began fusing topics into broader categories. From that streamlining, nine groups emerged that provided the needed balance between detail and generalizability, minimizing overlap and remaining distinct enough to allow identifiable difference:

Table 3.1, Breakdown of coded tutor- and administrator-focused scholarship chapters.

| Provisional Categories | Total Chapters |
|--|-----------------------|
| Pedagogy and tutor education | 48 |
| Center status and institutional relationships | 34 |
| Center policies and services offered | 22 |
| Outreach to and collaboration with external groups | 30 |
| Strategic planning and funding | 15 |
| Hiring and staff development | 12 |
| Centers as sites of scholarship | 9 |
| Internal research and assessment | 5 |
| Centers as tutor communities | 4 |

Unsurprisingly, the single topic writing center tutors and administrators discuss most is pedagogy of tutoring and education of tutors. Perhaps equally unsurprising is that topics of

institutional relationships and a writing center's status come in at second place. What ultimately emerges is a lean collection of terms to categorize the topics our field cares most about, which should therefore adequately convey *most* of the archival work done by Writing Studio tutors and administrators, thereby defining the tags of the ReCAP.

From this analysis of decades of tutor- and administrative-facing scholarship, I adopted this series of preliminary categories that should encompass the local-level work writing centers do. I *do not* claim that this process so perfectly encapsulates local writing center work as to recommend these categories for adoption at scale across the field; in fact, suggestions for a significantly larger-in-scope, multi-center research project designed to imbue a revised set of categories with that level of authority can be found in the concluding chapter of this dissertation. What these categories *do* provide is a *provisional* scaffold of topics that work in the scope of this single-center pilot ReCAP, allowing me to carry out the real work of the project: sorting and managing the Writing Studio's archive.

Pedagogy and Tutor Education

Unsurprising to anyone familiar with writing centers and their core purpose, the most represented category seeks to define or guide the practice of tutoring, or to prepare novice tutors to sit down at a writing center's tables. Four dozen chapters across nine texts cover tutoring pedagogy from multiple angles: agenda setting, responding to difficult tutoring sessions, time management, listening strategies, *kairos*, observation, reflection, the writing process, and grammar, among many more topics.

The most common goal of these texts is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the tutoring process to tutors-in-training or students enrolled in tutoring theory and pedagogy

courses. Hundreds of pages are dedicated to enculturating students to the fundamental goals of writing tutoring in the introductory chapters by Gillespie and Lerner, Murphy and Sherwood, Fitzgerald and Ianetta, and Ryan and Zimmerelli. Furthermore, each of these texts situates the role of the tutorial within an examination of *process theory*, preparing tutors to guide writers with an understanding of the most ubiquitous approach to composition theory in the past half-century. Beginning here has an immense impact on the developing tutor's understanding of both the utility and significance of a writing center session to writer development.

These texts are also heavily concerned with tutors' desire to be highly prepared and able to respond to a variety of specific scenarios and environments. As above, the tutor handbooks provide generalist chapters to respond to a variety of situations, but specific focus is high for difficult "what if" problems, such as working with emotionally distressed writers (Atostinelli, Poch, and Santora), discouraged writers (Kraemer Munday; DeCheck), and reluctant writers (Harris). The authors expand on recommendations for specific groups, such as writers in remedial or "basic" courses (Baker) and pedagogies specific to online tutoring scenarios (Ryan and Zimmerelli; Bell; Cooper, Bui, and Riker). These topics are supplemented by a variety of single-issue chapters that appear throughout the selection, demonstrating more overwhelmingly than anything else that administrators and tutors alike want to be as equipped as possible to deal with the widest variety of tutoring scenarios, underscoring the field's respect for the power in our tutors' hands.

Center Status and Institutional Relationships

Unlike this dissertation's primary focus on building capacity for local histories of individual centers, the collected texts provide broad introductions to the inception and maturation

of writing centers as a discipline in the academy. Topics here are concerned primarily with defending the work of writing centers to external critics. Tutoring primers and readers are less concerned with current assessment of institutional relationships, but the single largest theme in administrator-centered scholarship focuses on the status of centers and administrators within their institutions. This difference in coverage compared to tutoring texts is expected, as these are topics that are generally outside of the concerns of a writing center tutor.

In fact, the institutional status topics within admin texts sort almost entirely into two foci: managing relationships with faculty outside the writing center, and navigating the sensitive position of the writing center as it is perceived by college or university administration. The fewer faculty-focused chapters cover many of the daily relationships a WCA is concerned with, including: North's oft-referenced pair of "Idea of a Writing Center" and "Revisiting" articles, which concern the way a center's work has been misunderstood as unduly influential on student autonomy; Fitzgerald and Stephenson's or Healy's calls for writing centers to forge relationships with faculty throughout the institution; or Doe's suggestion that centers should seek alliances with non-tenured faculty, who may share similarly precarious statuses. These, among several other topics, show the discipline's mindfulness to faculty partnerships as a means to expand the reach of a writing center.

The majority of articles within this group are focused on connecting the work of writing centers to central or higher administration within our institutions. These topics range quite far, including advocating for a tutor's ethos as a beneficial addition to teaching perspectives (Fallon); writing centers as partners in campus initiatives, including curriculum design and enrollment (Koster; DeCiccio; Bowles and Castner Post); and research and academic honesty (Isaacs; Koch Jr.; Moore Howard and Hamler Carick). The most common topics, however, concern the

management of the center's *status* within the perception of higher administration. These topics cover historical representations within the academy (Gillespie and Lerner; Lerner), navigating the organizational structure of the institution (Nelson and Garner), and writing centers' overreliance upon assumptions of intrinsic worth (Grutsch McKinney *Peripheral Visions*). Several chapters focus on ensuring the survival of the writing center amidst administrative resistance or threats to funding (Speck; Maid; Whalen; Simpson; Mullin et al.). Clearly an abiding preoccupation of writing center administration is ensuring survival in the face of institutional challenge, undervaluation, or skepticism. As a result, a center is likely to have generated a number of archive-worthy artifacts that will represent this quest for status.

Center Policies and Services Offered

With the above topics of pedagogy and institutional status combined totaling nearly half of all chapters in this analysis, the topic tags now begin to narrow in number and focus. The topic of center policy is closely tied to the pedagogy covered earlier, in that the reasons for policy adopted in a center are often pedagogically-derived. However, the considerations in these chapters tend to be produced by theorists talking directly to other scholars about the considerations or ramifications of a specific stance or service the center may or may not offer.

Most notable within these discussions is the topic of tutor or center authority in the writing process of visitors, with the gamut of the directivity debate playing out in a handful of the field's favorite articles to cite (Carino; Corbett; Brooks; Shamon and Burns). The inclusion of these topics in common texts fulfills two purposes. First, they serve as an introduction to a long-running debate on one of the most fundamental policy positions a center can take, informing practices from writer engagement strategies, to session time management, and even

minutiae as fine as the degree to which a tutor should mark on a writer's paper. This topic also instills a sense of agency on the part of initiated tutors, as the debate will often mirror each tutor's own negotiated balance of session directivity.

Topics of policy also encapsulate the discussions by which writing center administrations decide to adopt or expand new practices or modes of tutoring, including online tutoring services (Bell; Ryan and Zimmerelli; Gillespie and Lerner); new genres or modes of composition (Sheridan; Murphy and Hawkes; Grutsch McKinney "New Media"); and the spatial or environmental design considerations of centers (Peterson Haviland and White; Hadfield, Kinkaed, Peterson, Ray, and Preston).

This category also contains discussion of accommodating disabilities (Neff; Hitt; Rapp Young; Paoli; Hawkes), noting the impacts of center design or policy that may make unintentionally ablest assumptions about the usability or suitability of services offered. Authors in these sections encourage the codification of disability-minded policy to better expand the service of the center to more writers. These chapters ultimately manifest the considerations in our scholarship for the impacts of policy on the writers we serve. The archive of a center is likely to contain the visible negotiations of local adoption or modification of policy, thus externalizing the center's internal debates.

Outreach to and Collaboration with External Groups

The potential overlap between categories is again visible with a collection of chapters that covers two primary types of work a writing center does to promote diversity in its visitors: appeals to attract more visits from underrepresented majors or genre writers, and the writing center's obligation to examine its role in discourse and inclusion of minority identities.

First, this category details the work a center does to expand its role on campus beyond groups that are likely to take advantage of its services. These chapters cover attempts to attract visitors or establish departmental partnerships with more closely related programs, such as creative writing and technical writing (Briam; Bishop), but also with students in the sciences or technically-minded fields (Johnson, Clark, and Burton; Greiner; Amicucci), or students from advanced courses or graduate study (Zemilansky; Ellis). A writing center may undertake these initiatives in part to expand its presence in the campus community as well as to enrich tutors through a broader range of experience in writing skill and situations.

The second motivation for writing centers to engage in outreach is to combat the perpetuation of privilege in the academy. Topics here detail writer agency in the face of normalizing or exclusionary pressure, and how writing centers unwittingly extend that pressure to the tutoring session. Covered topics are racial and ethnic identities (Barron and Grimm; Denny; Weaver; Geller et al.), gender and sexuality (Denny; Doucette; O'Leary), and English language learning communities (Gillespie and Lerner; Mozafari; Nan; Severino; Ritter; Dyer and Modey). The writing center may undertake outreach efforts to either attract utilization from these groups or to specifically improve how well its services meet their needs; traces of these efforts may be visible in the center's archive.

This topic is also where the first notable gaps surface in what this collection captures, leaving out sub-category detail that is nonetheless relevant to the Writing Studio. As the number of constituent chapters for each tag decreases, I speculate on the potential holdings covered by these categories from the perspective of Studio administration. In the case of writing center outreach, for example, I see the potential to capture projects that promote writing center service in non-traditional settings; this may include community partnerships to support tutoring in local

pre-college institutions, or volunteer service coordinated by the center to provide tutoring to non-academic or non-traditional populations. A secondary benefit of these projects may be to raise the status of the writing center as a community partner, which often aligns with administration or university goals and strategic plans.

Strategic Planning and Funding

This category covers the development of a writing center through strategic planning or structured management choices. The emphasis here is on better positioning a center to achieve its primary goals of supporting tutoring, and covers a variety of logistical considerations.

The strategic planning-sorted chapters cover a range of logistical considerations, beginning with establishing writing centers where none exist (Gillespie and Kail; Dornief), or expanding an existing center's infrastructure or locations (Town Abels; Mendelsohn; Kraemer Munday). More broadly, these chapters also include advice on developing a center's strategic plan for growth and sustainability (Childers "Designing"; Lowe), including budget management and seeking funding lines for the center's future (Schreiber; Houston). One of the more substantive components of this category highlights the differences of developing and supporting a writing center in settings not as ubiquitously covered by the discipline's scholarship, including community colleges (Gardner and Rousculp), small colleges (Stay), and secondary schools (Childers "Bottom Up"; Childers "Getting Beyond"). Overall, the topics here should cover anything that either defines support of the center in the short- or in long-term, or enables the center's operations. This is the majority of the non-tutoring and non-scholarship work a writing center does, and the archive should have an abundance of traceable budget-, development-, and growth-related materials.

Hiring and Staff Development

Writing centers are well-known as loci of professional and experiential development for administrators and junior administrators alike. Chapters within this category specifically target the need for expanded course offerings in writing center theory and administration (Pemberton “Tales”; Jackson, Lavernz, and Law), the cultivation of writing centers as beneficial spaces for graduate students (Snively, Freeman, and Prentice), and the capacity of the field for professional development (Wallace and Lewis Wallace). This section also covers the necessity of co-mentoring and collaboration between WCAs themselves as a source of continued professional development (Gillespie, Hughes, Lerner, and Geller; Inman and Sewell), and the conscientious development of the WCA’s role and ethos (Dvorak and Rafoth; Geller et al.). Finally, this topic covers the potential staffing lines of a writing center, including undergraduate and graduate peers (Harris), faculty tutors (Pemberton “Staffing”), and professional tutors (Strang). This category also has room to show how centers develop future administrators; in centers where directors assemble larger administrative teams, mentorship and modeling is helpful for graduate administrators who work with faculty directors. This may leave archive records of the deliberate administrative guidance that is invaluable to a junior WCA.

Centers as Sites of Scholarship

Overt calls to produce critical research or externally visible writing center scholarship are lightly represented in the chapters included here. Nonetheless, critical research is a rapidly growing expectation of writing center theorists and administrators, and thus worthy of capture going forward.

Tutors, especially those working in centers as peer undergraduates, have access to a valuable opportunity that is uncommon in the humanities: critical scholarship. Several chapters in this collection express the imperative for a writing center to promote research to its staff, and call for that research to be published. Fitzgerald and Ianetta's *Oxford Guide* is the most vocal of all texts on this topic, introducing the need for and potential benefits of research within the writing center. These needs are also echoed by Ryan and Zimmerelli, Pemberton's "The Writing Lab Newsletter" and Grimm. However, Fitzgerald and Ianetta mainly grapple with the question of *how* to externalize writing center research, including matters of theory, historical research, and the role of empirical evidence. Writing center archives should retain knowledge, or at least traces of publications and presentations undertaken by center staff. A repository of all such scholarship adds to the center's accessible knowledge.

Internal Research and Assessment

While only two subtopics are notable within the sparse five chapters comprising the next category, *internal* research is still easily differentiated from the topic of writing centers as sites of external research and scholarship.

First and foremost, a writing center that researches its own space and work is more reflective and more responsive, and thus more likely to make decisions of pedagogy and policy that are informed by evidence. Only two unique chapters make the appeal for such internal research as a means of writing center assessment (Lerner; Hawthorne), and two more round out the category with topics of sustaining a writing center's history (Ferucci and DeRosa) and drawing useful guidance from limited historical documents (Peters). Yet the benefits make a compelling case by virtue of an archive's very existence; recall that the core goal of the ReCAP

process is – from rationale, to organization, to prescribed process – to improve the internal knowledge base of the writing center as a source of history and sustainability.

This internal research should result in ineffective policy being abandoned quickly, and more importantly, positive policy remaining. It is critical that a writing center know which research projects have been undertaken in the past via this internal documentation, as well as what results those projects produced, so it is better able to guide future research initiatives. This is manifest both in establishing which projects may promise interesting returns, and in charting where future work may go astray if similar approaches have already been tried. Finally, a research-aware Writing Studio won't waste tutor or administrator time redeveloping existing research, freeing the center to expand into new projects. This continually enhances the pedagogical and operational strengths of the writing center.

Centers as Tutor Communities

The final category houses only four chapters, yet I suggest that this nearly ineffable component of a center's history is one of the most personally valuable to staff, contributing in part to what Kinhead and Simpson describe as the sense of intrinsic self-worth: the writing center as a locus of community. Working outward from the direct examination of two chapters that expressly describe the center as a source of community and belonging for its tutors and staff (Murphy; Ryan and Zimmerelli), and from the sources that explain the overall wants and values of tutors in writing centers (Haviland and Trianosky; Geller et al.), the WCA knows the role of the writing center in tutor identity and relationships. Beyond the mission of tutoring and academic support at the heart of a writing center mission, these spaces provide experiences that largely define tutors' time in an institution – something often specifically sought in university

mission statements as “signature” or “core” experiences that add value to students beyond education and employment. Simply put, writing centers incubate highly-valued relationships based on a common mission, and these relationships leave behind traces for the archive.

The topics covered by scores of unique chapters of writing center scholarship, when distilled into unifying categories, provided me with scholarship-supported descriptions necessary to imbue the ReCAP with a *provisional* structure to support the core of the wiki’s organization: tags and sub-tags. To arrange a higher level of sorting, I first created three main-level *tags*, each accompanied by a simple guiding statement. Each category above is then included as a *sub-tag*, accompanied by a short description and example artifact types. Thus, using this prototype set of tags and sub-tags as a sorting tool, I processed archived artifacts first broadly, then with finer precision, finally positioning the Writing Studio’s backlog archive for upload into the prepared ReCAP wiki.

3.1.2 The Provisional ReCAP Tags

Tutoring: Artifacts that manifest the work we do to run a writing center session, prepare tutors to tutor, establish the pedagogy and practice of the center, or in any way directly foster positive writer growth.

- *Pedagogy* – Artifacts that codify tutoring procedures for staff; document the education of tutors through training procedures or academic coursework; indicate how training is maintained or supplemented over time; or denote how tutors reflect upon their actions and positioning after tutoring. Examples: training manuals, tutor reading lists, post-session reports, and writing center theory course materials.

- *Policy* – Artifacts that establish policies we set for the operation of the center, the guidelines we set for the services we provide, and communication of these policies to others. Examples: writing center service handouts, correspondence with faculty, and session guidelines presented to tutors and/or visitors.
- *Outreach* – Work centers do to expand service to underrepresented student identities and disciplines, and collaborations to support external writing communities both on- and off-campus. Examples: advertising flyers, news clippings, student resource fair materials, and communications with campus and external writing communities.

Presence: Artifacts that manifest the center's outward face, establish the status of the center or its scholarship, or communicate our work to others.

- *Institutional Relationships* – Communications with or artifacts produced by collaborations with external faculty, institution administration, or accrediting bodies, which may cover topics of effectiveness, the center's place in organizational structure, or assessment partnerships. This sub-tag also incorporates research done in preparation for reporting the work of the center and the reporting documents themselves. Examples: annual reports, correspondence with administrators or faculty, and materials fulfilling accreditation standards.
- *External Scholarship* – The presence created by visible academic work the center produces, including scholarship published and conference presentations given by administrators and staff. Examples: conference presentation materials, responses to calls for proposals, and published scholarship.

- *Center Community* – Events, policies, and initiatives supported by administrators or staff to foster the internal sense of community, camaraderie, and culture that unites the individuals working in the center. Examples: details of center-organized social events, tutor photos, and tutor biographies.

Development: Artifacts that manifest the non-tutoring logistical work that enables daily operations and expediencies, facilitate internal assessment of the center’s efficacy, or otherwise support the non-academic needs of the writing center.

- *Staff Development* – Artifacts of recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and professional development of tutoring, support, and administrative staff in the writing center, and the logistic management of their positions. Examples: hiring announcements, tutoring contracts, performance reviews, payroll records, and administrator feedback.
- *Strategic Planning* – Initiatives or actions to grow the center’s future capacity, regular operating budgets, and sustainability efforts to support the center’s logistic needs and existence. Examples: projected or requested budgets, grant requests, and blueprints of proposed or actual remodeling of center spaces.
- *Internal Research* – Products of internally-focused research projects on topics of center effectiveness, and data generated or collected by the writing center to assess tutoring practice and center policy. Examples: internal metrics or appointment tracking, visitor or tutor survey results, and reports generated by scheduling systems.

3.2 Supporting the Writing Studio Archive with the Wiki's Tools

These provisional ReCAP tags, now ready to merge with the Writing Studio archive's digital surrogates as they are uploaded, constitute the first half of the ReCAP's organizational tools. The second half, or final method of constructing the ReCAP wiki, lies in using the functionality and tools that are available in the wiki system. Organized within established archivist needs for navigability, objectivity, and sustainability, I present the tools and traits afforded by wikis as methods unique to the mode and confirm their support of the Writing Studio's digital archive. This chapter closes with a condensed list of steps that guided the ReCAP method to serve as a reference for forthcoming Studio administrator-archivists as they continue the process indefinitely.

3.2.1 *Applying the tools of the wiki for archive navigability*

Wikis feature several tools that are directly useful to the organization of the Writing Studio ReCAP, offering readymade finding aids to researchers visiting the archive.

Page and artifact tagging organizes the ReCAP wiki. The ReCAP's wiki allows the curator to affix *tags* as a tool to label materials based on pre-defined topic similarities, and such categorization is a key trait of effectively organized archives (Tirabassi). Because I cultivated tags beforehand, the structure was readily available both for me and for researchers who will engage in subject-based searching. A tag, as established in the development of the ReCAP's provisional structure above, is sufficiently broad enough to capture many individual artifacts that are relatable to a similar topic, but also narrow enough to differentiate *dissimilar* topics from each other. This balance of coding granularity and overview is a feature researchers need to maintain perspective (Grant-Davie). Because I have affixed topics with a variety of unifying tags that will overlap with different pages within the wiki, visitors will see multiple relevant results at

once, potentially exposing them to a broad view of a subject before they continue narrowing their focus. This may also lead to some of the serendipitous, yet premeditated happening-upon researchers have described as invaluable to finding unexpected materials that expand or strengthen their projects (Mastrangelo and L'Eplattenier; Gold; Gaillet "The Unexpected Find"). Wei et al. specifically suggest the potential of wiki databases to enable meaning-making through this type of crosslinking (205). The tag system is the core of the ReCAP's functionality and is absolutely critical to its potential as a useful tool for researchers.

Topic articles organize similar artifacts. The main page articles of a wiki, which I designated in the prototype ReCAP as *topic articles*, offer a simple process to coherently and succinctly summarize the information available on a specific topic or artifact type. In wikis, these articles customarily balance comprehensiveness with brevity. I wrote topic articles to describe potentially relevant information and summarize the contents or details of a given document or artifact, but did so without supporting conclusions or editorializing. Through this process, I enabled brief review of potentially in-depth topics, allowing the researcher broad vantage points from which to browse large quantities of information quickly. When visiting researchers find an artifact they wish to access directly, topic articles link the viewer to the artifact's digital surrogate. Beyond the universal benefit of finding a digital reproduction quickly and remotely, this can also imbue more delicate artifacts with the same accessibility as any other item. Researchers and archivists both recognize easy accessibility as one of the key objectives of effective archive management (Ramsey 83; Kesner 101). The ReCAP wiki's ability to present all materials in the same manner, regardless of fragility, grants a compelling level of researcher access.

Keyword searching connects researchers with materials they expect to find. This is a familiar action to any researcher who has visited other online databases. Wei et al. recognize this as an indispensable tool to wiki hosting services, as it offers users the ability to search the contents of a wiki's holdings, returning results based both on the wiki's pre-defined tags and relevance to text found within topic articles (205). Through composing effective topic articles as outlined above, I have provided the raw searchable content that researchers can use to locate documents they do and *do not* expect to find. Style guidelines of wikis commonly call for descriptive text and tagging to accompany even the most fragmentary topic or most isolated media file, meaning even unique artifacts with minimal visible connections may appear in search requests. This supports the answer-focused researching purported to be one of the defining strengths of a visit to an archive (Glau; Gold).

Article linking connects researchers with materials they don't expect to find. If the archivist anticipates perceived topic similarity and links two pages within the same wiki, this helps researchers to "stumble upon" the unforeseen archival finds that can potentially expand their research. As the number of relevant articles within a topic continues to grow, future editors of the Writing Studio wiki archive can create clickable links within multiple topic articles. As topic articles grow in number and curators note connections to other pages within the wiki, linking to the relevant page – or even a specific paragraph – becomes easier. This linking system will potentially foster a weblike maturation of the wiki as a resource; subsequent archival delves will improve as more inter-article or inter-artifact links are established. This is consistent with Yakel's stated strengths of digital databases as a means of supplying and preserving researcher access to materials ("Digital Curations" 338).

Because these tools are available, the content of the Writing Studio's wiki archive is highly navigable, easily shareable, and more immediately reactive to the user's needs when navigating or browsing (McCausland). Digital database researchers also note that robust digital access allows quicker and high quality connection to materials with virtually no restriction on researcher location (Chassonoff; Cox). This level of navigability expands when digital reproductions of non-document physical artifacts are presented with the same relative ease and interactive fluency as any other artifact housed within the archive.

3.2.2 Adapting wiki traits to support archivist objectivity

Wikis have a long-established goal of prioritizing objective communication over interpretation by presenting details as-is. The ideally short and summative nature of a topic article acts as resistance to narratives that are counterproductive to unbiased primary research. Each artifact enters the Writing Studio ReCAP wiki without being attached to a specific research project, and is thus more likely to be presented as objectively as possible, an attribute noted as critically necessary by researchers who explore collections with their individual intentions in mind (Bloom; Glenn and Enoch "Invigorating"). When constructing the wiki's topic articles, lack of need for an overarching narrative was key to my preservative efforts.

Topic articles are apolitical. The wiki-enabled role of objective archivist will be of notable benefit to future administrators of the Writing Studio, especially if they enter the role when they are still enculturating themselves to Georgia State University. The value of describing artifacts and documents at face value is clear: a new Studio administrator will naturally wish to assemble knowledge of the center's past, and viewing materials that are described *as-is* – without narrative or agenda – offers access to the Writing Studio's history without the potentially imperfect recall of others within the department or program. Moving the Writing Studio's

artifacts into a ReCAP wiki is a release valve on the pressure of defining; the new administrator can maintain the editorial detachment of reading each document exactly as it appears. This also mitigates ethical concerns of interpreting the work of previous administrators years or decades later (McKee and Porter), while still relying on the restricted access of the wiki to keep information from being broadcast or broadly accessible (Lamos). Thus, future Studio administrators can refer to the ReCAP wiki to rapidly assemble a neutral history to review internally for immediate benefit, but without the political risk of narratively describing a program they didn't participate in.

Wiki topics articles are not narratively-driven. The individual representation of artifacts for each wiki entry maintains the objectivity of the archivist while still directly supporting the researchers who will view these items later. Future researchers benefit from viewing a document without the lens of a previous researcher's need or interpretation. Accurate representation of documents as-is without the need for interpretation up-front directly improves the potential quality of research accuracy (Chassonoff). When the ReCAP's holdings are presented as-is, all artifacts remain compatible with multiple projects. Furthermore, since the Writing Studio archivist will not select what to present based on relevance to a specific application, there is no gatekeeping effect; therefore, all artifacts are relevant, so all artifacts will be uploaded and available for future research.

The wiki archive is protected by edit histories. Wikis passively strengthen the quality of the system the longer they operate. Changes are noted and retained each time the document is edited, creating a trackable history (Frumkin). This enables the Writing Studio's managing archivist to assess or supplement the quality of contributors' work, or roll back mistakes in article style or content accuracy. Critical to the need for objectivity, these edit histories also

provide wiki administrators with the ability to review changes side-by-side, with markup of even subtle changes, allowing a codified, convenient method of intervention to prevent the accidental induction of narrative. The longer the Writing Studio wiki operates, the more secure it will grow against “wiki-turfing,” the practice of disingenuously editing or propagandizing via a wiki to benefit an ill-intentioned party. This is a critically useful feature that assists in maintaining the security and continuity of digital archives, as noted by Yakel (“Digital Curation” 338). Since each edit will identify the date and editor of a change, as well as previous revisions of the article, it is easier to maintain accuracy and objectivity.

The wiki archive enables diverse curation. Simultaneously, wikis offer archivists the potential of multiple curators, which may afford greater resistance to unintended narrative (Lamos; Huvila). The inclusion of additional “junior” archivists to join the Writing Studio’s managing archivist prevents the gradual skew that may arise from a single curator’s unintended and undetected interpretive acts when composing details as simple as labeling or artifact description. Additionally, because the wiki system offers the ability to rank levels of responsibility or access, the additional curators and topic article composers can contribute to the archive’s work without accessing more sensitive information.

Impartiality must remain the Writing Studio archivist’s primary goal. This prevents interpretive missteps for researchers who look to the ReCAP wiki as a source of primary materials that are compatible with many research projects. Multiple archive scholars stress the impact of archivist neutrality or objectivity, requiring an inherent “inertness” from the archive (Connors 18; Gaillet “(Per)Forming;” Belsey; Glenn and Enoch “Invigorating”). The ReCAP wiki hosts artifacts without analysis or narrative. This allows archivists to maintain a neutral

presentation of the archive's materials and remain separate from political considerations or previous researchers' conceptual frameworks.

3.2.3 Ensuring sustainability through wiki tools

The Writing Studio's need to keep materials up-to-date and protected from a variety of threats is made easier by organizing a program archive with the ReCAP wiki. Researchers like Manoff and Yakel suggest that access is critical to the success of an archive or a digital database; therefore, preserving access and sustaining the wiki archive as an enduring research tool are equally crucial goals.

Frequent updates scale the wiki consistently. As new information becomes available or additional artifacts are located and digitized, topic articles will naturally scale to be more complete. Brief topics that at first seem to be isolated or anomalous can easily expand as more documents are incorporated, or can be merged with larger articles as their context becomes clearer. Also, updates are simple to add over time. The Writing Studio's appointed archivist can digitize, upload, and edit artifacts and topic articles in an ongoing process that matches the availability of their time, in either longer sessions specifically dedicated to archive work, or during momentary breaks from other administrative duty. Thus, the task of archiving can fit within time that is convenient. Such ease of updating may alleviate procrastination, as archivists are under less pressure to archive a whole topic or a complete set of artifacts amidst the time constraints of administration or tutoring. Furthermore, the composing archivist is aware that the ReCAP structure enables the depth or detail of a topic article to grow over time with future updates, or as more artifacts are digitized, so the pressure to create an artificially substantive entry is lessened.

The archiving process can be shared with multiple archivists. Adding to the objectivity benefits noted above, researchers purport that the inclusion of multiple curating archivists can have a positive effect on the persistence of updating or uploading events, thereby growing the archive more consistently (Yakel “Digital Curation;” Huvila; Wei et al.). An administrating archivist can grant authorial access to a research assistant or Studio tutor to continue the process of annotating artifacts or editing topic articles. The wiki service offers page-by-page permissions as an alternative to full access, so editing privileges can even be granted for a single page to enable a junior archivist to work on one topic article’s contents. As the Writing Studio wiki becomes more updated and therefore stylistically consistent, it will be easier to model standards for trusted authors and editors, potentially accelerating the rate of the archiving process.

Past artifacts and current materials are unified. The ongoing and chronologically-neutral mode of adding artifacts as time permits not only allows the archivist to make steady progress in assembling the past, but equally supports the addition of updates from present Studio operations or projects. Because the wiki format presents materials without narrative, there is no need to assemble the contents of topic articles in chronological order. Thus, the archivist is free to include current events, policies, practices, or undertakings of their center as they occur, and return later to the same article to add more content from archived materials.

An archive wiki is always its most current iteration. Because the Writing Studio’s history is made accessible in a process of continual updating, the archive is always visible as its most current version, and currency of materials is a key researcher expectation when delving into the archive (Mortenson). While updates to the wiki’s holdings may necessitate updating research projects as new information is available, the wiki archive itself is never retreaded. As a result, the investment of time spent digitizing and uploading is never devalued by future work. A further

effect of this currency is that the archive becomes a usable source of research almost immediately; with digitization and topic articles covering even a few dozen artifacts, valuable and research-worthy trends and history may emerge. While researchers do note the absolute essentiality of an archive's completeness (Gold; Tirabassi; Glenn and Enoch "Drama"), unprocessed holdings are made more visible in a digital archive. This mitigates concerns that the "invisible" archive may contain materials that would benefit or hinder a research project, and better informs researchers on what may be available physically (Graban, Ramsey-Tobienne, and Myers). Materials coded but not yet uploaded or summarized can be made visible by a single page within the wiki that inventories the physical holdings that await digitization.

The wiki protects against knowledge loss. High resolution scans provide redundancy for sensitive items contained within the archive. While it may be a preference for the archive researcher to physically interact with the actual document or artifact, the digitization of these items insures against the loss of knowledge in the event of physical misplacement or catastrophic damage, providing a tool that provides the "permanent preservation" sought by Kesner (101). Thus, the wiki Studio archive provides protects knowledge by maintaining a collection of "surrogate" digital versions of archived materials, ensuring fulfillment of the researcher's need for *enduring* access (Walsh/Hollister). The benefits of duplication expand with the ability to periodically back up the component files contained within the wiki, further decentralizing artifacts from both their physical origins and a single digital existence. In the event of a chosen wiki service shutting down unexpectedly, the Writing Studio can still have a recent version of the wiki to import to a new system².

² A diligent archivist can monitor the trends both in wiki services and file format changes. At the date of this writing, the PDF remains the overwhelming standard of maintaining the readability of a document across multiple platforms, but as standards inevitably change,

The wiki's digital "surrogates" prolong the life of physical originals. One of the less tangible benefits of embracing the above strengths of a digital archive is preservation of the physical originals, an ongoing concern for curators of traditional, tangible archives (Samoulien). Each time a page is handled, an artifact moved, or a photograph shuffled, it risks degradation or damage. While many Writing Studio documents are no more sensitive to damage than a new sheet of copier paper, the value of these objects to the future must be nonetheless preserved. For casual viewers of the document, or for the researcher undertaking their first delve of the archive, the digital archive transmits the same knowledge without risking physical damage. This reduces wear on some of the Writing Studio's more sensitive artifacts from its more distant history, such as audio tape, or deteriorating typing paper and "ditto" copies. This directly improves the longevity during casual perusal, maintaining physical originals for future researchers who want to experience the ineffable qualities of examining sensitive Studio materials in person.

The Writing Studio can be confident in the durable protection and sustainability enabled by relocating the contents of a writing center archive to a ReCAP wiki. The contents of the archive will be safer from a variety of threats to knowledge and consistency, and the process inherently eases the work of maintaining timely updates that ensure the value of both in-process and completed archive digitization.

3.3 The Steps of the Reifying Center Archive Process

As a final organizational aide, in the ten steps below, I have synthesized the methods I originated to assemble, tag, upload, and compose the ReCAP wiki. These steps snapshot the

the archivist can decide when it is time to convert between an aging format and the new standard, thus extending the life of the digital archive.

process I followed in organizing and creating the prototype ReCAP wiki, and while they will be refined further after planned additional research, I believe the basic structure and steps will endure in future iterations of the process. These steps are composed with the intention to be concise, direct, and easily replicable, so that future Studio archivists can follow these methods and achieve similar results.

1. After gathering the archive's holdings and conducting an orienting review of the contents without changes, my first step was an initial round of sorting and coding each artifact. Moving as quickly and deliberately as possible, yet keeping like documents together (e.g., staff photos; annual reports; tutoring reflections), I filtered each document through one guiding question: "what story does this item tell?" Keeping in mind the pressing need for simple, organized categories, the working "answers" to that guiding question were:
 - A. *The tutoring work we do;*
 - B. *How we present that work to the institution or the academy; or*
 - C. *How we develop the capacity to do that work*
2. Based on those answers, and working from the tag system established in my pilot literature synthesis above, I was confident in placing the artifacts in one of three top-level categories: *Tutoring, Presence, or Development*. Once I had sorted every item in this first pass, I began sub-categorizing each item further within its constituent three sub-tags per the structure above.
3. During the sorting process, I inevitably found a handful of items that didn't self-evidently fit within the ReCAP's main or sub-categories. I set these artifacts aside temporarily, allowing them to remain uncategorized. I took great effort to do so sparingly, and resisted the temptation to invent a new category to respond to a false sense of immediate need.

4. Once I had processed each item twice by sorting everything into the top-level and then second-level categories, I revisited what I set aside for one final attempt at sorting. Reflecting on the overwhelming amount of material I had already catalogued more easily, I was then more comfortable categorizing these once-uncertain items, seeing context or connections that were less immediately visible before. During this prototype ReCAP sorting, I successfully reconciled all materials within the pre-established tags and sub-tags.
5. I digitized all artifacts using means available to me at the time³:
 - A. The Writing Studio possessed a high-resolution multi-function scanner to digitize paper documents as PDFs. I utilized the auto-feed scanner function for durable, standard-sized documents; I individually scanned sensitive, fragile, or irregularly-sized documents on the system's flatbed scanner.
 - B. To digitize photos, I used the Writing Studio's flatbed scanner at high resolution for larger, fragile, or irregularly-sized photographs; for newer, durable photos of a smaller, standard size, I utilized my own compact, auto-feed photo scanner.
 - C. I digitized oral history recordings with an inexpensive audio cassette-to-USB player, and used freeware audio editing software *Audacity* ("Audacity") to encode the recordings as MP3 files.
 - D. While no video recordings were included in the pilot ReCAP, the format can be handled by the Writing Studio's on-hand complement of Apple MacBook Pro Retina laptops, each of which are installed with Apple's video editing software, QuickTime Player.

³ Method of digitization is at the discretion of the archivist and is determined by resources available. Based on long-lived standards, recommended digitized file types are: Adobe PDF for paper documents; JPEG for images; MP3 for audio; MP4 for video.

6. I created an “Academic Basic” account with the service PBworks⁴ (“EDUHub”), setting the Workspace Security to “Only people I invite.” I then uploaded all collected digital files into the main database.
7. With all documents sorted, digitized, and uploaded to the ReCAP wiki, I began composing topic articles for each artifact type. I summarized the visible content of these artifacts objectively without interpreting meaning or significance. I made descriptions as specific to the individual artifacts as possible to improve the detail of keyword indexing for future researchers.
8. Based on the pre-determined tag from the physical sort, I used the wiki’s tagging system to affix only two tags to each topic article or artifact: a top level tag and a sub-tag (e.g., *Tutoring and Outreach*; *Presence and External Scholarship*; or *Development and Internal Research*).
9. I used simple but descriptive names for topic articles, ultimately enacting three levels of organization to provide ample detail to best enable future research (e.g., Tutoring > Pedagogy > *Training Manuals*; Presence > Institutional Relationships > *Annual Reports*; or Development > Strategic Planning > *Grants*).
10. Finally, I created one separate page titled “Unprocessed Archive” that lists materials not yet uploaded or represented by the ReCAP wiki. The page should be updated as the digitization and uploading process continues, resulting in continuity between the ReCAP-

⁴ Choice of wiki-hosting service is at the discretion of individual archivist. During the test implementation of the ReCAP, I utilized a free Education account hosted by PBworks, which allowed up to 2 gigabytes of data to be stored in a closed-access wiki; larger storage capacities and expanded features are available in paid subscriptions.

available materials and the unprocessed archive, mitigating concerns of the “hidden archive.”

4 Viewing the Sample Studio ReCAP Wiki as Archivist and Researcher

As discussed in previous chapters, the core goals of the Reifying Center Archive Process are to help the administration of the Georgia State University Writing Studio organize the contents of its unexamined physical archives into a researchable medium, and to establish methods that may be adaptable to multiple centers throughout the field. The goal is to enable fulfillment of specific research questions quickly, confidently, and with the best possible understanding of how topics developed over time. To assess the usability of the ReCAP, I tested the process on the backlog of physical archives held by the Writing Studio. I created the digital archive, containing materials drawn almost exclusively from physical holdings of the Writing Studio's archived materials, stored within a PBworks wiki. The sample ReCAP contains 98 PDFs of scanned or digital documents totaling 316 pages, 30 scanned photos, and 4 audio files. The contents are distributed throughout the wiki among 39 topic article pages.

Because the most likely users of the ReCAP wiki are current and future administrators of the Writing Studio, it's beneficial to show the implementation of the new digital archive from the perspective of two roles: the administrator-archivist who uploads and curates the Writing Studio's digital archive, and the administrator-researcher who will view its materials. First, the working ReCAP wiki is repackaged here in a more static form to showcase the same methods and tools established in the previous chapter. The focus in the first analysis of this chapter is to visualize the tools available to the Writing Studio archivist, showing real, accurate functionality in a prototype of the ReCAP wiki archive with a selection of documents and artifacts. The second part of this chapter is designed to communicate the potential of the ReCAP wiki for local researchers. Even in its nascent form, the Writing Studio's ReCAP wiki already contains several

robust and detailed topic articles that demonstrate the research potential of a wiki-mediated archive. This perspective is framed around a sample research question.

4.1 The Archivist and the Sample ReCAP Wiki

I completed construction of the actual working sample ReCAP as partial satisfaction of the dissertation project requirements; however, this portion of the chapter renders excerpts from that prototype into static documentation of its critical functionality, portraying its core qualities. To best orient the reader to the process, the samples are presented in linear order, mirroring the act of creating, uploading, and writing the ReCAP wiki. I then shift analysis to how the ReCAP's tools and methods assist in navigating and searching the archive, and finally to the resources and functionality available to sustain it.

4.1.1 Constructing the ReCAP

Digitizing. The process begins with digitizing the materials to be uploaded. This example showcases photo originals alongside their digitized counterparts. The original artifacts (figure 4.1 and figure 4.3) are scanned at a medium resolution of 200 dpi (dots-per-inch) as a balance between legibility of fine detail and file size. The resulting digitized versions (figure 4.2 and figure 4.4) retain the legibility of both printed text and handwritten marginal comments, providing a reliable surrogate of the physical original.

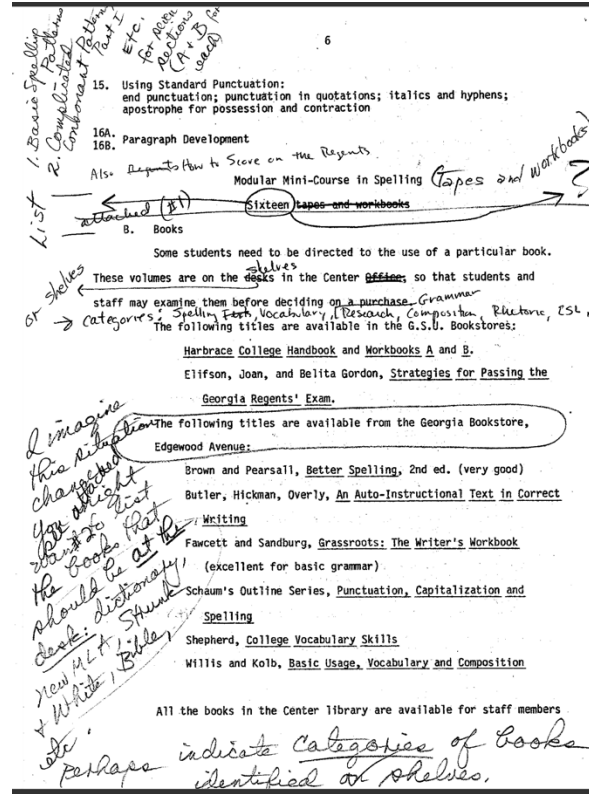
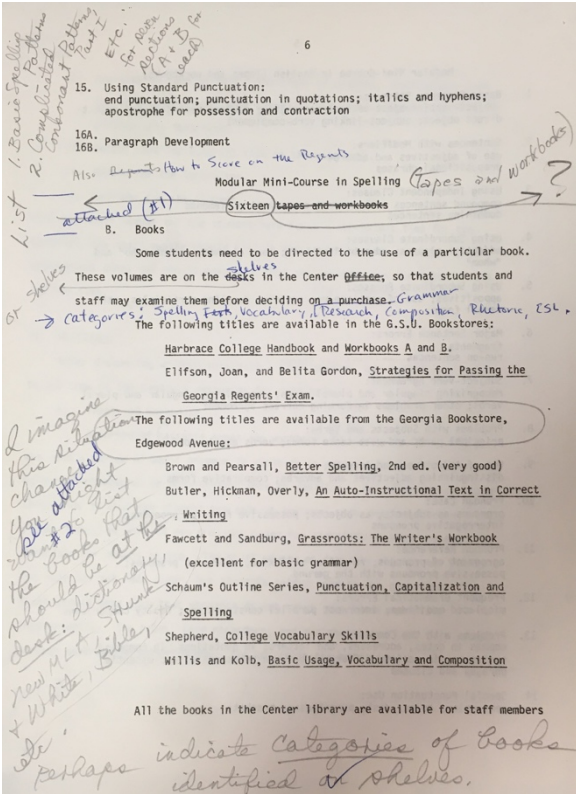


Figure 4.1, left. Photo of original Staff Handbook with handwritten marginal notes.

Figure 4.2, right. Scanned version of Staff Handbook page.

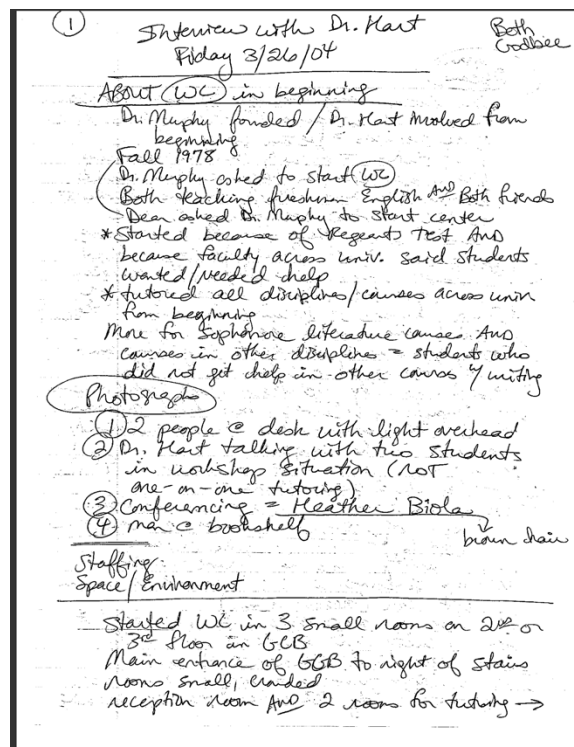
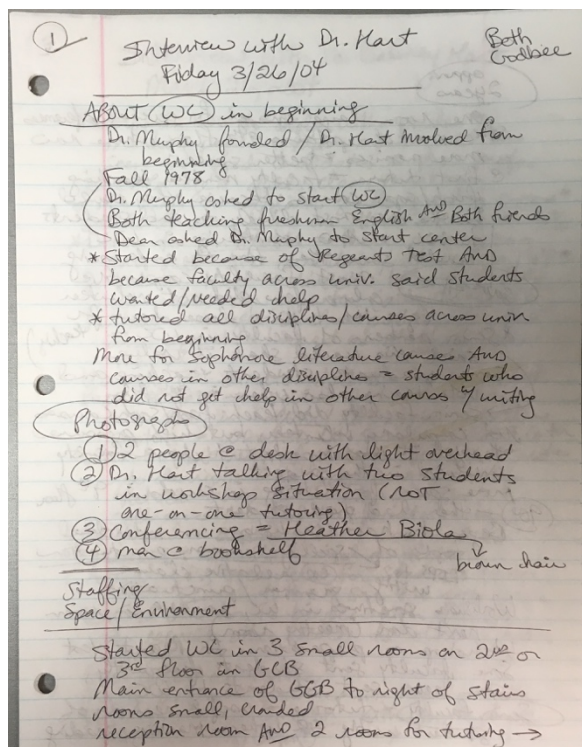


Figure 4.3, left. Photo of original handwritten notes from interview with Dr. Hart.
Figure 4.4, right. Scanned version of interview notes.

Uploading. Once originals have been digitized, they can be uploaded to the wiki's database. Document file names are labeled as concisely, yet descriptively, as possible. In the "Pages & Files" tab of the wiki, the archivist clicks the "Upload files" button (figure 4.5) and selects the file to be uploaded (figure 4.6).

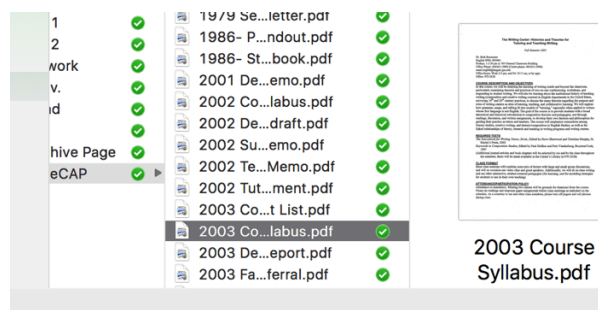
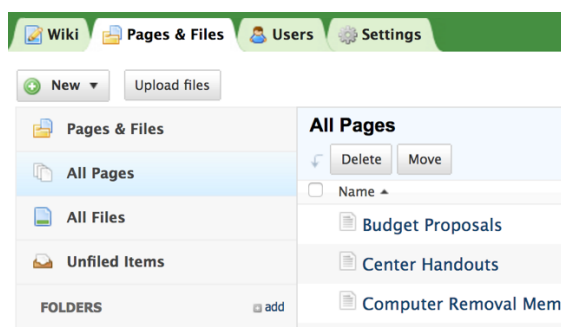


Figure 4.5, left. File uploading link.
Figure 4.6, right. Selecting document to be uploaded.

Creating new pages. Whenever possible, files are connected to pages as links. In most cases, these pages should be topic articles, which are written as concise descriptions of artifacts and organized under a common, refined topic. In this example, the archivist clicks the “Create a page” link at the top right (figure 4.7), which prompts the archivist to label the page, then redirects to the Editing view of a newly created wiki page (figure 4.8).

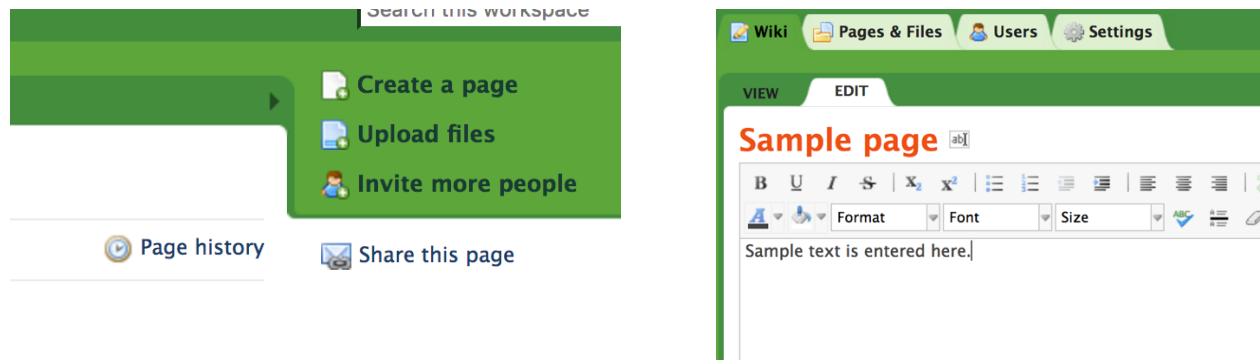


Figure 4.7, left. “Create a page” link.

Figure 4.8, right. Editing view of a new wiki page.

Topic articles. Topic articles are the primary feature of the ReCAP wiki, and should strike a balance between detail and brevity. In the finished topic article examples below (figure 4.9 and figure 4.10), the pages summarize the contents or details of documents or artifacts, but do so without supporting conclusions or a pre-determined analysis.

The screenshot shows a Wiki page titled "Center Handouts" with a green header. The page content includes:

- A paragraph: "The center had produced a series of handouts in the form of brief fact sheets, new visitor guides, or pamphlets designed to explain services and policies. These handouts are either offered for taking from the center, left with classes during informative visits from administrators or tutors, or passed out during public events."
- Section: **1986* The Writing Center Handout**
 - Text: "This [fact sheet for 'The Writing Center'](#) provides brief information on the location, hours, mission, services, and in-center resources available for writing tutoring and Regents' Exam preparation. No specific date of publication/update is presented, but being named as the Writing Center suggests this was written during Dr. Patricia Graves' directorship, which started in 1986."
- Section: **2004 Writing Across the Curriculum Handout**
 - Text: "This fact sheet was prepared for the ['WAC Faculty and Writing Consultant Workshop'](#), dated August 17th, 2004. The document provides vital details on the Studio's operating hours and location, the Studio's motto, and mission statements. The handout answers several identified 'FAQs,' including student preparation, how students benefit, and the Studio's policy on grammar help. The document also offers suggestions on how the Writing Studio can integrate with the Writing Across the Curriculum program going forward."
- Section: **2005* Trifold Handout**
 - Text: "A trifold brochure of the Writing Studio's services titled ['Your writing process is unique...'](#) presents information and answers questions of the Studio's targeted population: students. The content appeals to potential visitors by explaining how they Studio may help them, profiling the staff"

The right sidebar contains a "Navigator" section with a list of items including "Starred P", "BW Phot", "Color 4x", "Budget P", "Center H", and "Compute".

Figure 4.9. Example of "Center Handouts" topic article.

The screenshot shows a Wiki page titled "Writing Center Courses" with a green header. The page content includes:

- A paragraph: "Administrators from the writing center have periodically taught classes on writing center theory and pedagogy to graduates and undergraduate students. These courses are designed to either prepare those enrolled to eventually enter a writing center as a tutor, or to supplement the training of tutors already working in the writing center. Writing center theory courses are also often offered as beneficial to students in other composition-related fields of study or future writing instructors."
- Section: **2002 ENGL 8900: "The Writing Center"**
 - Text: "Taught by Center for Writing and Research Director Marti Singer, this graduate-level [ENGL 8900 course syllabus](#) emphasizes the writing center as a place for improving writing skill: "More than a course in helping students with 'grammar' or usage, the course will focus on strategies for communicating issues of good writing: from organization and development to logic and following the assignment.""
 - Text: "The syllabus lists response papers, a midterm exam, a research/conference proposal, and a journal as the primary graded assignments."
- Section: **2003 ENGL 8900: "The Writing Center: Histories and Theories for Tutoring and Teaching Writing"**
 - Text: "Taught by Writing Studio Director Elizabeth Burmester, ['The Writing Center: Histories and Theories for Tutoring and Teaching Writing'](#) syllabus emphasizes the integration of writing center history and theory within in the contexts of composition, literary, and creative writing, and seeks to "provide students with a broad theoretical and historical introduction to composition theories and philosophies for guiding their practice as tutors and reachers."
 - Text: "This syllabus lists in-class writing, response papers, a bibliographic essay, and a portfolio as the primary graded assignments."

The right sidebar contains a "Navigator" section with a list of items including "Starred", "BW Phc", "Color 4", "Budget", "Center", and "Compu".

Figure 4.10. Example of "Writing Center Courses" topic article.

Tagging. Working from the practices prescribed in the previous chapter, the archivist adds the next feature critical to building the ReCAP wiki's navigability: tags. The wiki system offers two methods of tagging. To tag the topic article pages in the first example below, the bottom of the Edit view of a wiki page presents a link to "edit tags" (figure 4.11). Clicking this opens a prompt that allows the archivist to affix tags to the page by typing each tag separated by a comma (figure 4.12). The archivist should select from the tags already in use, which both speeds the tagging process and ensures consistency by preventing mistyping errors. While it is possible at this stage to create and affix new tags, as a best practice, archivists should avoid doing so. The ReCAP tags designed in the third chapter and installed here in the prototype are meant to provide the best overall representation of the topics the Writing Studio archive may encompass; adding more tags risks degrading the navigability of the wiki by inducing too much granularity in its content coding.

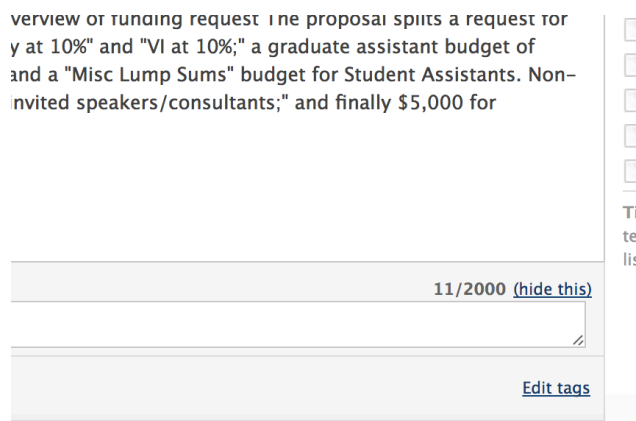


Figure 4.11. "Edit tags" link visible at bottom of page editing view.

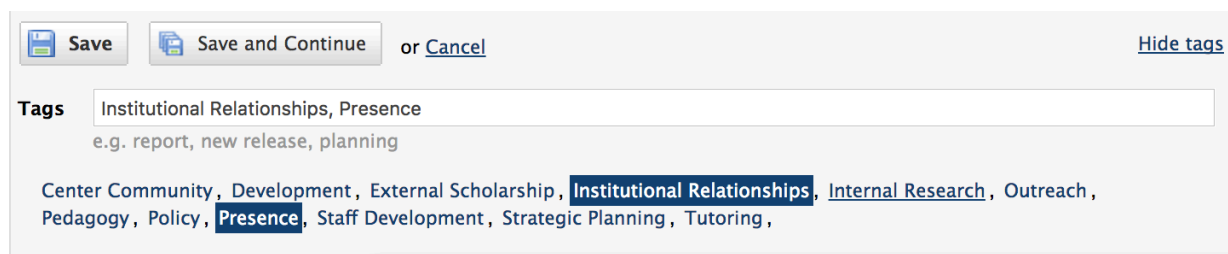


Figure 4.12. Tag assignment and modification options for topic article.

The second method of tagging within the ReCAP wiki applies to individual files. A file's tags should match the tags of the topic article page on which it appears. Tagging files also increases the visibility of individual artifacts in the archive by ensuring individual files appear in search results (discussed under *Navigating the ReCAP Wiki*). To tag individual files, the archivist opens the individual file's page (figure 4.13) and clicks the "Add Tags" link visible to the right (figure 4.14). This same method is used to modify a page's existing tags.



Figure 4.13, left. Individual file page already uploaded to the ReCAP wiki.

Figure 4.14, right. Tagging functionality for files.

This process is repeated for all materials as the archivist is able, allowing the archive to grow incrementally with each artifact uploaded and topic article created. Incremental growth intersects directly with the ReCAP's sustainability, as an administrator will find a process comprised of many smaller acts highly compatible with an unforgiving schedule. The ReCAP is always in its most complete iteration as each artifact is added and tagged, and each item is

immediately accessible via the finding aids that help researchers navigate the archive. A system that is easily updated and immediately valuable is dually beneficial, which will continually renew archivist motivation to maintain the regimen of ReCAP updates.

4.1.2 Navigating the ReCAP Wiki

Currently, locating desired materials from a simple list of the prototype archive's initial holdings is easy. As the ReCAP wiki archive grows to incorporate hundreds, and eventually thousands of individual components, utilizing the following built-in features as finding aids to navigate and search for materials will become increasingly important.

Front page. Upon entering the ReCAP wiki, the viewer is presented with the front page (figure 4.15), also known as the home page. The front page offers a brief introduction to the wiki, a clickable bulleted list of tags, a link to the ReCAP Guidelines page, and a link to the Unprocessed Archive page. The researcher can return to this page at any time, and from anywhere within the system, by clicking the "Wiki" tab at the top left of the page.

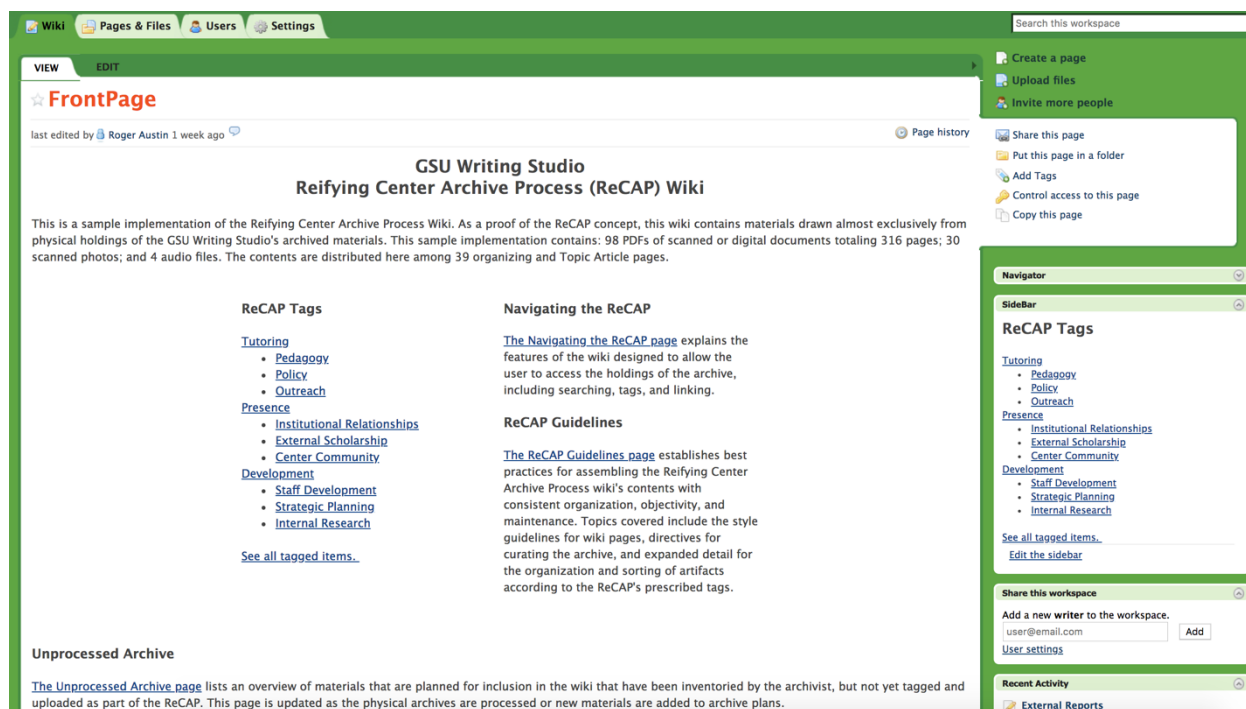


Figure 4.15. ReCAP wiki front page.

Search box. Visible at the top right of every page within the wiki, the search box allows the researcher to enter terms to search within the archive's holdings. This tool searches within the text of wiki topic pages and file names⁵. For example, typing the term “budget” without pressing enter produces three immediately visible “live” results: two file names and one topic article (figure 4.16). These results are immediately selectable, enabling the researcher to go directly to the chosen page or item.

⁵ Some services, like PBworks, offer the ability to include searchable text in compatible uploaded files as a feature of a premium service subscription.

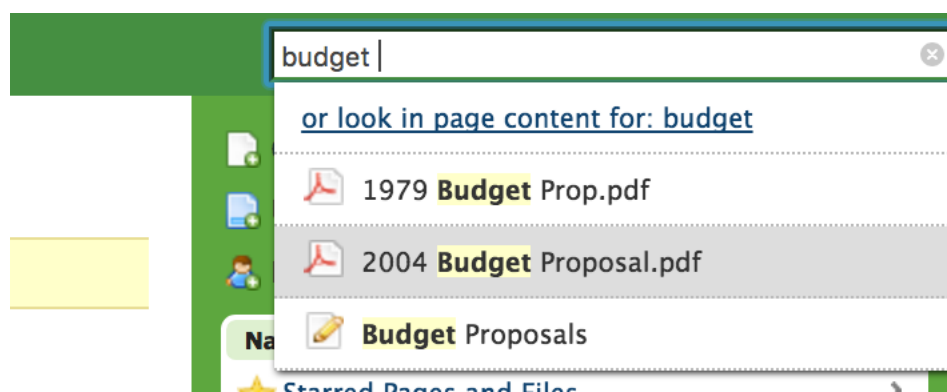


Figure 4.16. Search box functionality.

Keyword searching. Instead of directly selecting from the live results, the researcher can also select “look in page content” (or simply press enter) to search within the text of topic article pages. Searching a keyword in this manner redirects the user to a new page that lists results of the search in page names, file names, and a sample of relevant text describing the materials on the topic page (figure 4.17).

Tag searching. The researcher can further refine results by forcing the search system to look only within archivist-specified tags. In the image below, entering “pedagogy” after a “tag:” search engine modifier returns only results that have been tagged in this manner (figure 4.18). However, tag-specific search functionality is accessible in several other, more intuitive ways.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

Search this workspace

Upgrade your workspace for the ability to also search within your files.

Tip: use quotes to group terms, - to exclude terms, and + to include them! ([Learn more](#))

memo

[Computer Removal Memo](#)
A brief **memo** from the Department of English Chair Robert Sattelmeyer to Arts a Classroom Building presents the En...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 52 minutes ago

[Marti Singer Interim Memo](#)
document is a **memo** to the English department from Dr. Marti Singer, announc begins by announcing that t...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 36 minutes ago

[1976 Regents Memo.pdf](#) 305.5 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months, 1 week ago

[1978 Academic Memo.pdf](#) 171.2 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months, 1 week ago

[1978 Regents Memo.pdf](#) 252.9 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months, 1 week ago

[2001 Dept Memo.pdf](#) 141.6 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months ago

[2002 Summer memo.pdf](#) 156.8 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months ago

[2002 Tech Memo.pdf](#) 108.0 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months ago

[2003 Memo to tutors.pdf](#) 241.7 KB
[Roger Austin](#) uploaded 3 months ago

[Memos to Tutors](#)
enter. 2002 Summer **Memo** A brief document titled "The Center for Writing Sumr
pages that uki

Figure 4.17, left. Keyword search results.

Figure 4.18, right. Search restricted to tags only by using the “tag:” operator.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

Search this workspace

Upgrade your workspace for the ability to also search within your files.

Tip: use quotes to group terms, - to exclude terms, and + to include them! ([Learn more](#))

tag:"pedagogy"

[Handbooks](#)
Handbooks are guides prepared for reference by center employees, covering com desk/reception roles, but most often ...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 40 minutes ago

[Memos to Tutors](#)
Writing center administration routinely provides tutors with memos or brief direct 2002 Summe...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 34 minutes ago

[Tutor Journal](#)
The Tutor Journal was a 2006* project that utilized the WC Online Writing Center of reflections are ...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 16 minutes ago

[Tutor Reports](#)
As an ongoing practice of self-assessment, the writing center has required the co tutor reports. The...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 14 minutes ago

[Writing Center Courses](#)
Administrators from the writing center have periodically taught classes on writing those enrolled to event...
[Roger Austin](#) edited 3 hours, 13 minutes ago

Tags sidebar. Similar to the search box above, every page within the wiki features a sidebar visible on the right side of the page. This sidebar displays a bulleted list of the ReCAP’s prescribed tags identical to the list visible on the wiki front page (figure 4.19). Similar to the “tag:” search modifier above, clicking one of these tags redirects the researcher to a separate results page with all wiki contents marked with that tag (figure 4.20).

SideBar

ReCAP Tags

Tutoring

- [Pedagogy](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Outreach](#)

Presence

- [Institutional Relationships](#)
- [External Scholarship](#)
- [Center Community](#)

Development

- [Staff Development](#)
- [Strategic Planning](#)
- [Internal Research](#)

[See all tagged items.](#)

[Edit the sidebar](#)

Pages tagged 'Strategic Planning'

[Budget Proposals](#) ([edit tags](#))

[Computer Removal Memo](#) ([edit tags](#))

[Suggestions for the Improvement of Instruction in Freshr](#)

Files tagged 'Strategic Planning'

[1978 Academic Memo.pdf](#)

[1979 Budget Prop.pdf](#)

[2002 Tech Memo.pdf](#)

[2004 Budget Proposal.pdf](#)

[2008 Online startup.pdf](#)

[See all tags](#)

PBWORKS [PBworks / Help](#) [About this works](#)
[Terms of use / Privacy policy](#) [Contact the owner](#)

Figure 4.19, left. Tags sidebar, visible on every page of the wiki.

Figure 4.20, right. Filtered results page after clicking “Pedagogy” tag.

All tagged items. A “See all tagged items” link appears at the bottom of the tags sidebar, as well as at the bottom of every tag-filtered search result. Clicking this link redirects the researcher to a single page that shows all file and page names contained within the archive sorted by all tags (figure 4.21). Each item listed here is a clickable link to the indicated artifact or page. This page can be effectively used as a total index of the entire archive’s holdings. This makes the entire archive visible in one location, and is continuously updated with every artifact uploaded or page updated.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

Tags on this workspace

Center Community
 Used on Photos of Staff, Thank You Notes, bookshelf.jpg, conference-1.jpg, conference-2.jpg, IMG_0002.JPG, IMG_0003.JPG, IMG_0004.JPG, IMG_0005.JPG, IMG_0006.JPG, IMG_0007.JPG, IMG_0008.JPG, IMG_0009.JPG, IMG_0010.JPG, IMG_0011.JPG, IMG_0012.JPG, IMG_0013.JPG, IMG_0014.JPG, IMG_0015.JPG, IMG_0016.JPG, IMG_0017.JPG, IMG_0018.JPG, IMG_0019.JPG, IMG_0020.JPG, IMG_0021.JPG, IMG_0022.JPG, IMG_0023.JPG, IMG_0024.JPG, IMG_0025.JPG, IMG_0026.JPG, working-students.jpg

Development
 Used on Budget Proposals, Center Honors, Computer Removal Memo, Correspondence with Etta Stewart, Guiding and Planning, Oral Histories, Staff List, Suggestions for the Improvement of Instruction in Freshman English, Tutor Agreements, Tutor Portfolios, Visitor Research, 1978 Academic Memo.pdf, 1979 Budget Prop.pdf, 1979 Letters re remediation.pdf, 2002 Tech Memo.pdf, 2002 Tutoring Agreement.pdf, 2003 Contact List.pdf, 2004 Budget Proposal.pdf, 2004 D Hart typed.pdf, 2004 D Hart written.pdf, 2004 M Murphy written.pdf, 2005 Job Assignments.pdf, 2005 Tutoring Agreement.pdf, 2005 Tutor Portfolio.pdf, 2006 Tutor Portfolio guidelines.pdf, 2007 Workshop with notes.pdf, 2008 Online startup.pdf, 2016-17 Contacts.pdf, Hart_1.mp3, Hart_2.mp3, Murphy_1.mp3, Murphy_2.mp3

External Scholarship
 Used on In Academic Publications, 1979 Pub. WLN.pdf

Institutional Relationships
 Used on Campus Services, Center Handouts, External Reports, Faculty Referrals, Marti Singer Interim Memo, Regents Exam, Writing Clinic Opening, 1976 Regents Memo.pdf, 1978 Fall Report.pdf, 1978 Opening Announcement.pdf, 1978 Regents Memo.pdf, 1986- PR handout.pdf, 2001 Dept Memo.pdf, 2002 Dent Report draft.pdf, 2003 Dept Report.pdf, 2003 Faculty Referral.pdf, 2004 Self-Study.pdf, 2004 WAC handout.pdf, 2005 Fact Sheet.pdf, 2005- Trifold handout.pdf

Internal Research
 Used on Oral Histories, Visitor Research, 2004 D Hart typed.pdf, 2004 D Hart written.pdf, 2004 M Murphy written.pdf, Hart_1.mp3, Hart_2.mp3, Murphy_1.mp3, Murphy_2.mp3

Outreach
 Used on Flyers, In Media, 1979 DHart news clip.jpg, 1979 Services Newsletter.pdf, 2004- Flyer City.pdf, 2004- Flyer Let's Talk.pdf, 2004- Flyer Workshops.pdf

Pedagogy
 Used on Discussion, Handbooks, Meeting Minutes, Training and Orientation, Tutor Journal, Tutor Reflections, Tutor Reports, Writing Center Courses, 1986- Staff handbook.pdf, 2002 Course Syllabus.pdf, 2003 Course Syllabus.pdf, 2003 Memo to tutors.pdf, 2003 Tutor Report Samples.pdf, 2004 Tutor Report Samples.pdf, 2006 Tutor Journal.pdf, 2009 Online workshop.pdf, 2015 Course Syllabus.pdf

Policy
 Used on Memos to Tutors, Online Tutoring, Policy on Tutee Conduct, Time Limits, 2002 Summer memo.pdf, 2007 Policy on Tutee Conduct.pdf, 2007 WCenter Tutee Conduct.pdf

Presence
 Used on Campus Services, Center Handouts, External Reports, Faculty Referrals, In Academic Publications, Marti Singer Interim Memo, Photos of Staff, Regents Exam, Thank You Notes, Writing Clinic Opening, 1976 Regents Memo.pdf, 1978 Fall Report.pdf, 1978 Opening Announcement.pdf, 1978 Regents Memo.pdf, 1979 Pub. WLN.pdf, 1986- PR handout.pdf, 2001 Dept Memo.pdf, 2002 Dent Report draft.pdf, 2003 Dept Report.pdf, 2003 Faculty Referral.pdf, 2004 Self-Study.pdf, 2004 WAC handout.pdf, 2005 Fact Sheet.pdf, 2005- Trifold handout.pdf, bookshelf.jpg, conference-1.jpg, conference-2.jpg, IMG_0002.JPG, IMG_0003.JPG, IMG_0004.JPG, IMG_0005.JPG, IMG_0006.JPG, IMG_0007.JPG, IMG_0008.JPG, IMG_0009.JPG, IMG_0010.JPG, IMG_0011.JPG, IMG_0012.JPG, IMG_0013.JPG, IMG_0014.JPG, IMG_0015.JPG, IMG_0016.JPG, IMG_0017.JPG, IMG_0018.JPG, IMG_0019.JPG, IMG_0020.JPG, IMG_0021.JPG, IMG_0022.JPG, IMG_0023.JPG, IMG_0024.JPG, IMG_0025.JPG, IMG_0026.JPG, working-students.jpg

Staff Development
 Used on Center Honors, Staff List, Tutor Agreements, Tutor Portfolios, 1979 Letters re remediation.pdf, 2002 Tutoring Agreement.pdf, 2003 Contact List.pdf, 2005 Job Assignments.pdf, 2005 Tutoring Agreement.pdf, 2005 Tutor Portfolio.pdf, 2006 Tutor Portfolio guidelines.pdf, 2007 Workshop with notes.pdf, 2016-17 Contacts.pdf

Strategic Planning
 Used on Budget Proposals, Computer Removal Memo, Correspondence with Etta Stewart, Guiding and Planning, Suggestions for the Improvement of Instruction in Freshman English, 1978 Academic Memo.pdf, 1979 Budget Prop.pdf, 2002 Tech Memo.pdf, 2004 Budget Proposal.pdf, 2008 Online startup.pdf

Tutoring
 Used on Discussion, Flyers, Handbooks, In Media, Meeting Minutes, Memos to Tutors, Online Tutoring, Policy on Tutee Conduct, Time Limits, Training and Orientation, Tutor Journal, Tutor Reflections, Tutor Reports, Writing Center Courses, 1979 DHart news clip.jpg, 1979 Services Newsletter.pdf, 1986- Staff handbook.pdf, 2002 Course Syllabus.pdf, 2002 Summer memo.pdf, 2003 Course Syllabus.pdf, 2003 Memo to tutors.pdf, 2003 Tutor Report Samples.pdf, 2004 Tutor Report Samples.pdf, 2004- Flyer City.pdf, 2004- Flyer Let's Talk.pdf, 2004- Flyer Workshops.pdf, 2006 Tutor Journal.pdf, 2007 Policy on Tutee Conduct.pdf, 2007 WCenter Tutee Conduct.pdf, 2009 Online workshop.pdf, 2015 Course Syllabus.pdf

Figure 4.21. "All tags on this workspace" page.

Page linking. As a method of enhancing the web-like linking between related but distinct topics, the archivist can anticipate and include links within one article that redirects the researcher to other articles. In the examples below (figure 4.22 and figure 4.23), a researcher may be interested in both handouts and flyers produced by the Writing Studio, although they are tagged differently. The researcher can follow the provided links to move between topics of potential interest.

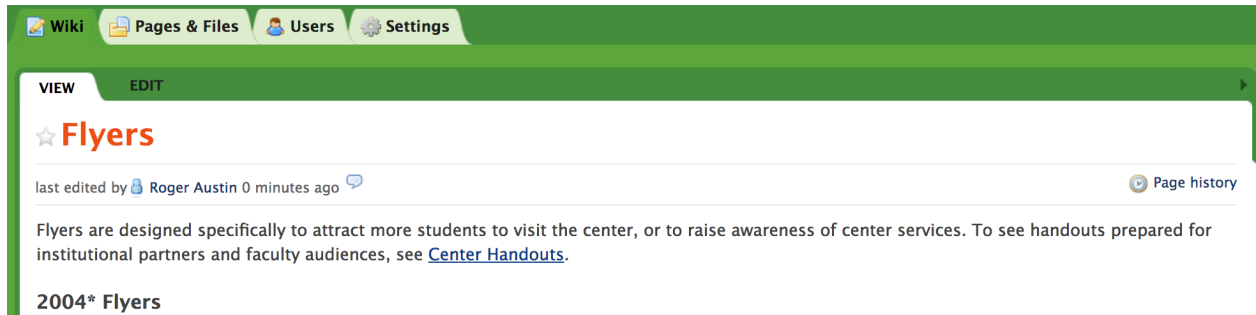


Figure 4.22. Link to “Center Handouts” topic article from “Flyers” page.

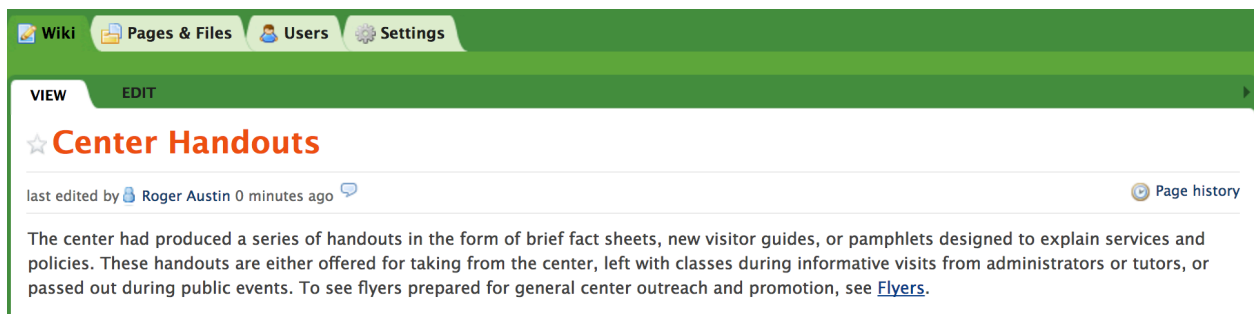


Figure 4.23. Link to “Flyers” topic article from “Center Handouts” page.

Pages and files. As a final method of navigation, the researcher can view a paginated list of all topic articles and artifacts held within the wiki by clicking the “Pages and Files” tab visible at the top of every wiki page (figure 4.24). However, this mode does not provide the context of tags or subtags, and file names alone may not provide enough useful detail.

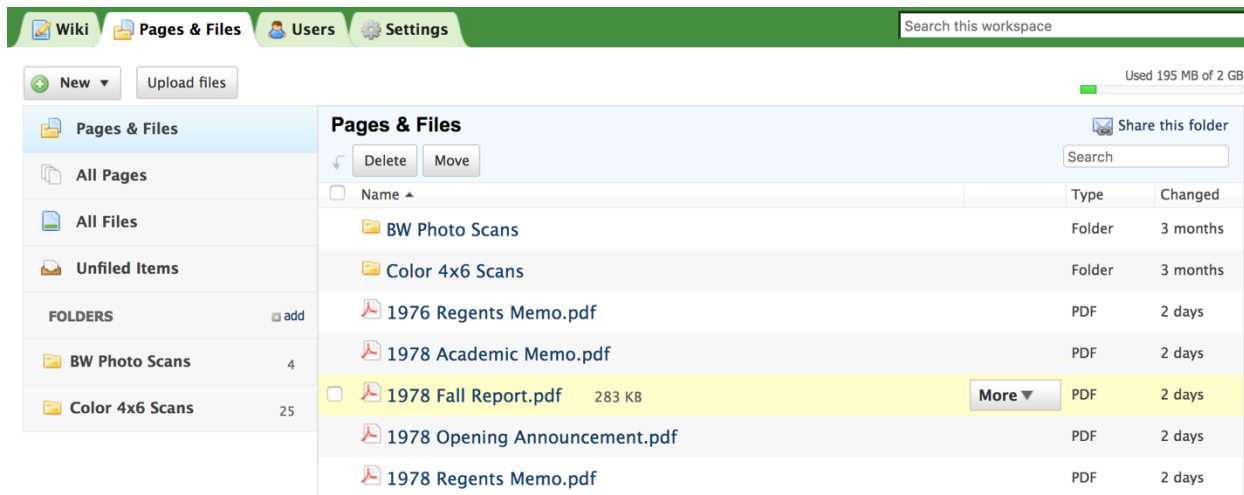


Figure 4.24. View of all pages and files uploaded to ReCAP wiki.

The variety of finding aids present in the ReCAP wiki are common to many wiki subscription services such as PBworks, but also unique to the design choices instilled in the process. By curating a system with multiple methods to both locate materials intentionally *and* find artifacts unexpectedly, Studio archivists will support a valuable research resource that connects researchers to necessary detail. Researchers accessing the ReCAP wiki's holdings can quickly locate whatever they seek, beginning the research process almost immediately at the act of discovery.

4.1.3 Sustaining the ReCAP Wiki

With the wiki assembled, updated, and navigable to the researcher, the archivist must also commit to sustain the archive's security and upkeep. The ReCAP wiki offers several tools to help archivists curate and protect uploaded materials and topic articles.

Change notes. Each time Studio archivists create a new page or edit an existing article, they may enter a brief note to summarize the change (figure 4.25). These change notes are saved throughout each successive modification, improving a future viewer's understanding of what was altered between different versions.

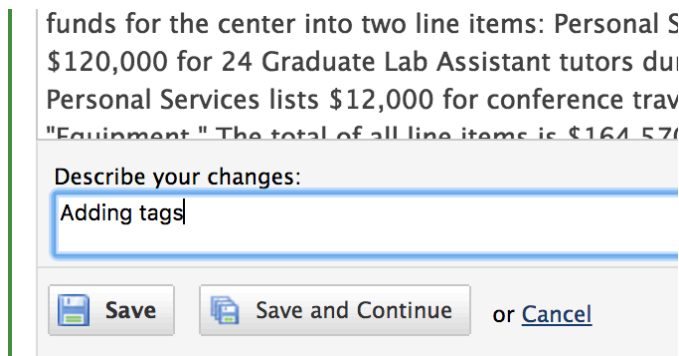


Figure 4.25. “Describe your changes” prompt.

Page history. A critically useful capability of wikis is a system to track, view, and even revert changes to pages that have been edited. Every page within the wiki contains a “page history” link at the top right (figure 4.26). Clicking this link displays the Revisions page of the topic article, which records the date, time, and author of each change to the content, as well as change notes entered at the time the page was modified (figure 4.27). The archivist can revert to older iterations of the page by clicking the red “X.” In addition, selecting two of the displayed options and clicking “Compare” allows the archivist to view an annotated version of the page content that marks additions and deletions (figure 4.28). In this manner, the administering archivist can more easily control the quality of revisions if collaborating with multiple writers, and remove any ill-intentioned attempts to modify the archive’s contents.

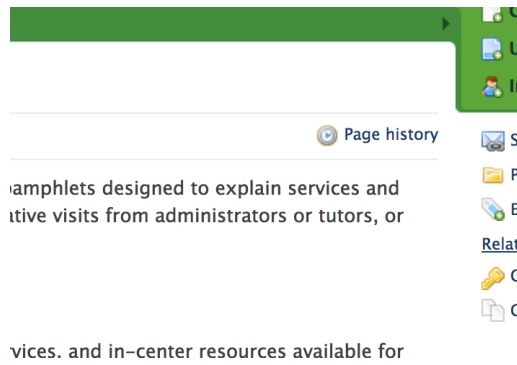


Figure 4.26. “Page history” link, visible at the top of every wiki page.

The image shows the 'External Reports' article page. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with 'Wiki', 'Pages & Files', 'Users', and 'Settings' tabs. Below the navigation bar, the article title 'External Reports' is displayed, followed by 'Created by Roger Austin 3 months, 1 week ago'. The 'Revisions (6)' section is shown, with a 'Compare' button. The revision history is as follows:

| Revision | Description | Timestamp | Author | Status |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | Added 2004 Fact Sheet | February 11, 2017 at 4:47:01 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ (Current revision) |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Added 2004 Self-Study | February 11, 2017 at 4:36:48 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ |
| <input type="radio"/> | No description entered | February 11, 2017 at 2:50:13 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ |
| <input type="radio"/> | Linked omitted annual report document | February 11, 2017 at 1:21:06 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ |
| <input type="radio"/> | Added 2002–03 Center for Writing and Research Annual Report | February 11, 2017 at 1:18:40 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ |
| <input type="radio"/> | Created page; made first entry | February 5, 2017 at 3:40:58 pm | Roger Austin | ✗ |

At the bottom of the revision history, there is another 'Compare' button.

Figure 4.27. Overview of revision history for “External Reports” topic article.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

Comparing versions of External Reports

Showing changes between [February 11, 2017 at 1:18:40 pm](#) (~~crossed-out~~) and [February 11, 2017 at 4:36:48 pm](#) (underlined)

A document titled "Report for Fall quarter, 1978" summarizes the status of two primary services provided by the Writing Clinic in the semester of its founding. The document is authored and signed by Marguerite Murphy, Director. Murphy first provides information on sections of "ENGL 025, the new upper division course in remedial composition," including the instructors teaching, attendance, and satisfactory completion totals. A "S" grade is given to students who are "probably now able to pass the Regents' Test."

Murphy also reports on the inaugural term of the Writing Clinic's operation as a tutoring center. The report lists the teaching staff involved in the operation of the Clinic, enthuses about the early "brisk" business the center experienced, and provides statistics on the numbers of appointments seen during the term.

The report finishes with planned changes or improvements in the following semester, and a specific note of thanks to Dabney Hart.

2002-03 Center for Writing and Research Annual Report

Dr. Marti Singer, Director, ~~this annual report summarized~~ the "Center for Writing and Research Annual Report 2002-03" summarizes the operation of the

The document features extensive marginal comments; the annotations seem focused not on correction or editing, but on highlighting important information or concepts contained within. Examples include "(Before WC) Began 1975 with 3 MA students to support ENGL 101/102)," "1990's move to computer lab," and "*Key goals = to serve both the university and the ATL community."

The conclusion of the document takes special care to focus on the significance of naming and attitudes for the writing center, justifying both "The Center for Writing and Research" and Singer's emphasis on the center as a space for scholarly work and positive discussion about the work tutors do.

A second version of this report also exists. It features minimal differences in format and no apparent changes to the body of the text, but is appended with an email from Michael Galchinsky to Elizabeth Burmester. Galchinsky offers several responses to help with preparations for or to meet the requirements of a "self-study committee." These suggestions including modifying stated goals, a plan to add a post-doctorate Associate Director position, a calculation correction, and a factual correction of funding coding.

2004 Service/Education Center Review Survey: Self-Study

This Spring 2004 Self-Study report prepared by Director Elizabeth Burmester for the Georgia State Service/Education Center is a comprehensive accounting of the center's operations. Subjects covered by the self-inventory include: center history, organizational structure within the department, interdisciplinary focus, funding history, goals and objectives, service and outreach efforts, service provided, and center publications/presentations. Burmester also provides lists of staff working in the center between 2002-2004, and a partial accounting of appointment statistics from 1985-1988 and 2002-2004.

[Back to revisions list](#)

Figure 4.28. Revisions view, showing two versions of a topic article.

Security. The "Settings" tab at the top of the wiki allows the archivist to control sensitive features that protect the archive's holdings from unwanted viewing or editing. The archivist may elect to make the wiki visible to the public, require potential viewers to request access, or even restrict views to pre-selected visitors (figure 4.29).

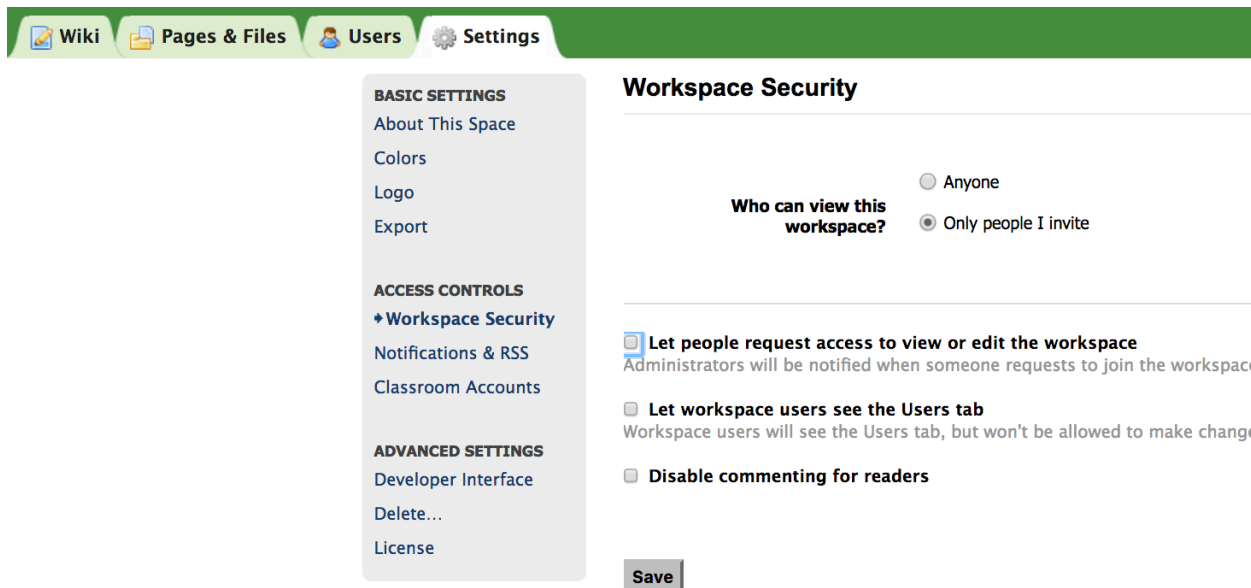


Figure 4.29. Security settings panel of wiki.

Tiered permissions. The “Users” tab, also at the top of the wiki, enables the archivist to invite new participants or manage the access of existing users (figure 4.30). In the example of the Writing Studio ReCAP wiki, users may be granted access to: read only a single page; read the entire archive without editing; edit individual pages; edit or modify the organization of the archive’s files; or serve as an administrator with total control over all wiki settings, content, and functionality (figure 4.31). These features offer the archivist finite control over access, allowing differentiation between junior archivists, readers, editors, and even users who need only a single page’s information, allowing the administrator of the archive to restrict visibility of particularly sensitive information. Administrators can also grant page-level access from a link directly on the right side of an individual page’s view by clicking “Control access to this file” (figure 4.32).

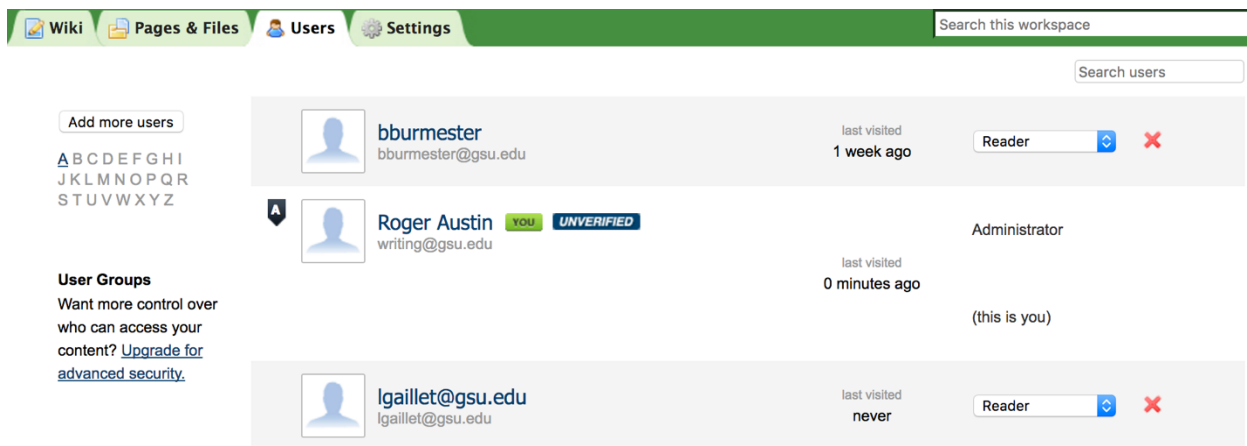


Figure 4.30. “Users” tab, showing authorized viewers and editing permissions.

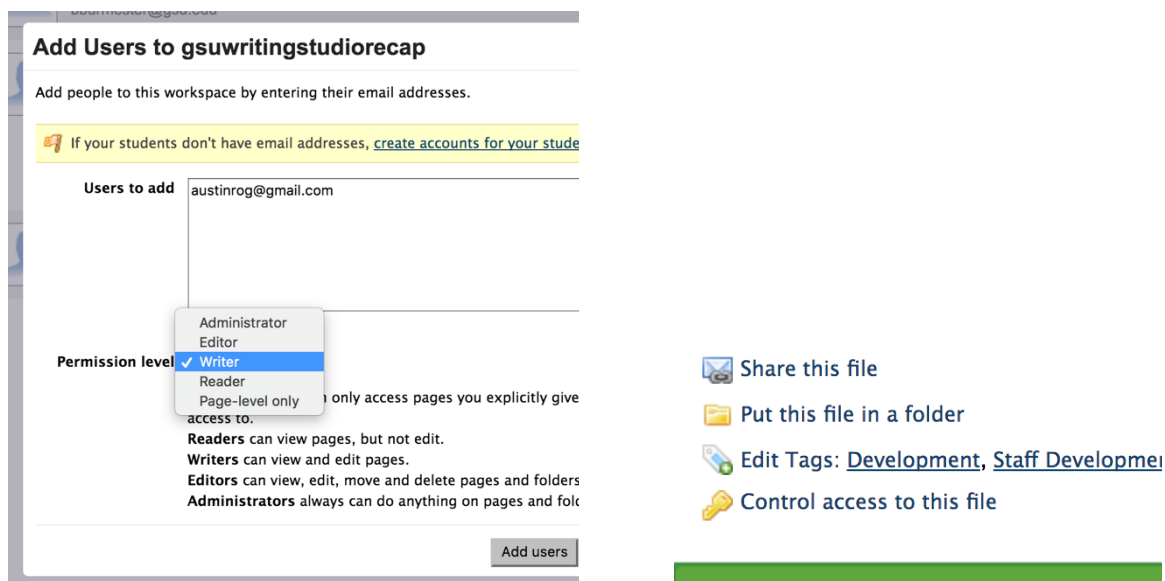


Figure 4.31, left. Permission level prompt.

Figure 4.32, right. Alternative access to individual page permissions prompt.

Unprocessed Archive. Accessible from the front page of the ReCAP Wiki, the Unprocessed Archive page lists inventoried materials that are planned for inclusion, but not yet tagged and uploaded (figure 4.33). This page must be manually updated as the physical archives are processed, or as archivists plan for new unprocessed materials.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

VIEW EDIT

☆ Unprocessed Archive

last edited by Roger Austin 1 week, 3 days ago [Page history](#)

Note: Because this sample ReCAP has not yet sorted all documents according to the Tutoring/Presence/Development tag structure, the labels reflect the last known organization of the boxes after earlier iterations of the sorting activity.

Status/Relationships - BOX A

- **Folder: Correspondence**
 - **Sub-folder: Murphy Correspondence (external)**
 - **Interesting Docs:** Letter to Etta Stewart discusses the state of GSU's remedial writing instruction and the center's much more remedial role (1978)
- **Sub-folder: Correspondence (suppliers)**
 - Receipts from purchasing books for use in the center
- **Sub-folder: Communication to Department; Ext Faculty/Staff**
 - A handful of documents that communicate the center's operation or needs, spanning 1976 to 2010, possibly setting the stage for the opening of the center and how it is discussed in the department; communications to and from faculty regarding student progress, the center physical location/condition leading up to and during renovation; some communication with external faculty that shows we were offering class visits/presentations since roughly 2010?
 - **Interesting**
- **Sub-folder: Student Referral**
 - 2 documents: Claire Summers Fall 2004 ENGL 1102 syllabus recommending the Studio; Professional Development Plan KH 3410/3420 Fall 2007 recommending faculty require students to attend Studio workshops and get proof of attendance
 - **Folder: Outward Facing** (working title)
 - **Sub-folder: Handouts and Facts/Vitals References**
- **Sub-folder: Annual Reports**
 -
 - A slightly different document very similar to an AR, labeled as GSU Service/Education Center Review Survey English Department Self-Study, Spring 2004 - answers a series of questions about the center
 - **Interesting:**
- **Sub-folder: Writing Clinic Archive**
 - Mostly clippings from newspapers about the efficacy of Reagent's Exam, but brief mention of the Writing Clinic in *The Signal* and a 1979 "Special Services Newsletter" listing the "Writing Lab" among other academic services
- **Sub-folder: In Newsletters**
 - The center mentioned in one 1979 and two 1986 *Writing Lab Newsletters*
 - A 2004 IWCA newsletter, but no clear/prominent mention of center
 - **Folder: Writing Community** (originally a category of its own, but it may now fit better under Status)
 - **Sub-folder: Marketing/Fliers**
 - A small collection of fliers and signs advertising center services (as both Center for Writing and Research and Writing Studio); a variety of appeals to help with

Figure 4.33. Unprocessed Archive page.

Exporting. Also accessible from the “Settings” tab, the archivist can package the pages of the wiki for export (figure 4.34). This functionality, if paired with regular backups of all artifact files, protects the ReCAP wiki from threats to its continuance. All ReCAP pages are exported in HTML format in a single compressed file, which can be easily recopied to a new wiki hosting service. In the event of the PBworks service shutting down or becoming otherwise unsuitable to continue hosting the Writing Studio ReCAP, the process of relocating to a new provider will be minimally disruptive.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

BASIC SETTINGS
 About This Space
 Colors
 Logo
 Export

ACCESS CONTROLS
 Workspace Security
 Notifications & RSS
 Classroom Accounts

ADVANCED SETTINGS
 Developer Interface
 Delete...
 License

Your request has been queued. Your export will be available in a few minutes.

Export your workspace

PBworks can generate a Zip file containing the contents of this workspace. It may take a while for the download to be ready. If your workspace is very large, you may have to download several Zip files to obtain a full export.

Once you generate an export, you will be able to download it for up to one week. You can generate a new export at any time, but you must delete the existing export before you can generate a new one.

| Export description | Status | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Current pages only | Complete | gsuwritingstudiorecap_2017_05_19.1.zip (84 KB) <input type="button" value="Delete this export"/> |

Figure 4.34. Export functionality of ReCAP wiki.

ReCAP Guidelines. The final tool the archivist maintains to aid in the upkeep and navigability of the archive is the “ReCAP Guidelines” page. Accessible as a link on the front page, users are directed to a list of three brief guides: “Curating the ReCAP Wiki” (figure 4.35), “Tagging Artifacts and Topic Pages in the ReCAP Wiki” (figure 4.36), and “Style Guidelines for the ReCAP Wiki” (figure 4.37). These guides establish best practices for assembling the ReCAP wiki’s contents with consistent organization, objectivity, and sustainability.

Wiki Pages & Files Users Settings

VIEW EDIT

☆ ReCAP Guidelines

last edited by Roger Austin 43 minutes ago Page history

The following guidelines establish best practices for assembling the Reflective Center Archive Process wiki's contents with consistent organization, objectivity, and maintenance. Topics covered include the style guidelines for wiki pages, directives for curating the archive, and expanded detail for the organization and sorting of artifacts according to the ReCAP's prescribed tags.

Curating the ReCAP Wiki

Observe the following archiving and curation directives to best support the research value of the ReCAP.

Ensure Navigability

- Use tags to efficiently sort topic trends into clickable filters
- Write concise topic articles that summarize critical information for easy reading
- Effective tags and topic articles directly support successful keyword searching
- Embed cross-article links to support both premeditated searches and "wandering"

Promote Objectivity

- Describe artifacts "as-is" to resist pre-selected narratives
- Exclude secondary description of primary material to promote impartiality
- Digitize and upload all items in the archive to allow all possible conclusions to surface

Maintain Updates and Security

- Add updates quickly and asynchronously at archivist's convenience
- Delegate archive uploading to trusted collaborators to maintain growth
- Include both past artifacts and recently completed projects
- Maintain one wiki page that concisely inventories unprocessed artifacts
- Use edit histories to protect the consistency of the archive's voice
- Grant access via tiers to protect sensitive content and prevent sabotaging edits
- Complete the digitization as quickly as possible to protect against physical loss

Tagging Artifacts and Topic Pages in the ReCAP Wiki

Figure 4.35. "Curating" guide on ReCAP Guidelines page.

Tagging Artifacts and Topic Pages in the ReCAP Wiki

Tutoring

Artifacts that manifest the work we do to run a writing center session, prepare tutors to tutor, establish the pedagogy and practice of the center, or in any way directly foster positive writer growth.

- **Pedagogy** – Artifacts that codify tutoring procedures for staff, document the education of tutors through training procedures or academic coursework, how this training is maintained or supplemented over time, and how tutors reflect upon their actions and positioning after tutoring. Examples: training manuals, tutor reading lists, post-session reflections or reports, writing center theory course materials.
- **Policy** – Artifacts that establish policies we set for the operation of the center, the guidelines we set for the services we provide, and communication of these policies to others. Examples: writing center service handouts, correspondence with faculty, session guidelines presented to tutors and/or visitors.
- **Outreach** – This sub-tag covers the work centers do to expand service to underrepresented student identities and disciplines, and collaborations to support external writing communities both on- and off-campus. Examples: advertising flyers, news clippings, student resource fair materials, communications with campus and external writing communities.

Presence

Any artifact that manifests how the work of a center faces outward to others, establishes the status or the center or its scholarship, or communicates what we do to those not in our centers.

- **Institutional Relationships** – This sub-tag includes communications with or artifacts produced by collaborations with external faculty, institution administration, or accrediting bodies, and may cover topics of effectiveness, the center's place in organizational structure, or assessment partnerships. This sub-tag also incorporates research done in preparation for reporting the work of the center and the reporting documents themselves. Examples: annual reports, correspondence with administrators or faculty, materials fulfilling accreditation standards.
- **External Scholarship** – the presence created by visible academic work the center produces within the academy, including the scholarship published and conference presentations given by administrators and staff. Examples: conference presentation materials, responses to calls for proposals, published scholarship.
- **Center Community** – This sub-tag captures the events, policies, and initiatives supported by administrators or staff to foster the internal sense of community, comradery, and culture that unites the individuals working in the center. Examples: details of center-organized social events, tutor photos and biographies, tutor reflections.

Development

Anything that manifests the non-tutoring logistical work that enables daily operations and expediciencies, facilitates internal assessment of the center's efficacy, or otherwise communicates the non-academic needs of the writing center.

- **Staff Development** – Artifacts of recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and professional development of tutoring, support, and administrative staff in the writing center, and the logistic management of their positions. Examples: hiring announcements, tutoring contracts and reviews, payroll records, administrator feedback.
- **Strategic Planning** – This sub-tag includes initiatives or actions to grow the center's future capacity, the internal costs we maintain with regular operating budgets, and the sustainability options we seek in the form of external grants. Examples: projected or requested budgets, grant requests, blueprints of proposed or actual remodeling of center spaces.
- **Internal Research** – Products of the internally-focused research projects on topics of center effectiveness, and data generated or collected by the writing center to assess tutoring practice and center policy. Examples: internal metrics or appointment tracking, visitor or tutor survey results, reports generated by scheduling systems.

Figure 4.36. "Tagging" guide on ReCAP Guidelines page.

Style Guidelines for the ReCAP Wiki

Use the following formatting guidelines to maintain consistency of the ReCAP's appearance and navigability. For reference, many of these style attributes are utilized on this ReCAP Guidelines page.

Page Introductions

If a page contains multiple entries or components that fit within the Topic Article, begin with a short description of the overall tag without describing specifics from individual artifacts. Use "Normal" for Text Format and Font.

Artifact Descriptions

Each file/digitized artifact should appear as link to a Topic Article page, and each artifact should be described under its own subheading within the relevant Topic Article. The link to the artifact file should be presented in the first sentence of each subheading, in quotation marks with the same title that appears as the heading of the source artifact, if present (e.g., "Writing Center Report Spring 1988"). If the title of the artifact is vague, or none is present, editors should create a link with a phrase that is as succinctly descriptive as possible.

Subheadings

For each subheading one level below the Topic Article title, format the title of the subheading with "Heading 3." If it is necessary to further differentiate within a subheading, each subheading title two levels below the Topic Article title should be formatted with "Heading 4." If absolutely necessary, a third level of subheading should be formatted with character underlining.

Emphasis

To maintain the objectivity of the article, avoid the use of special character formatting (such as italics, underlining, bold type, or strikethroughs) to convey author emphasis. Reserve use of italics to indicate publication titles.

Bulleted Lists

Utilize the wiki's native bullet formatting function to maintain consistency of bulleted lists.

Links

Each first reference of an archived artifact in a Topic Article should link directly to the identified artifact. All links to websites outside the ReCAP should be set to [open in new window](#). With the exception of the wiki's sidebar list of ReCAP Tags, links to pages or documents contained within the wiki should not open in a new window.

Figure 4.37. "Style" guide on ReCAP Guidelines page.

The descriptions and screen captures above render the features of the Reifying Center Archive Process wiki as a means of organizing and conveying the archived artifacts of the Georgia State University Writing Studio's history. This repackaging into a highly interactive wiki system offers only snapshots of the prototype implementation of the Writing Studio ReCAP project, but the wiki's potential as a tool for archivists is nonetheless clear, even from this relatively small fraction of the center's holdings. Using the ReCAP's orderly system to digitize, organize, and present the contents of the Writing Studio archive is a superior alternative to maintaining the Writing Studio's current collection of physical originals without organization. Furthermore, the ReCAP wiki's flexibility in updating the surrogate archive quickly and continuously, and objectively presenting its contents with searchable, tagged, unifying articles, is superior to a raw digital archive. Such a database, if it were to be digitized and retained locally with manually-updated finding aids, only relocates the same navigational and research challenges of the physical archive. The prototype Studio ReCAP wiki is now ready for a sample delve that will assess its effectiveness as a researcher's resource.

4.2 The Researcher and the Sample ReCAP Wiki

The prototype ReCAP wiki is primarily intended to establish the tools and methods of constructing and maintaining the archive for research, as well as its ease of navigation. While this prototype's collection of 132 documents and media does not yet represent the full content of a "complete" Studio archive, it nonetheless demonstrates the ReCAP wiki's burgeoning potential as both a research resource and as a practical tool that supports administrative precedent and decisions. I had no premeditated intent when selecting which materials to digitize and upload to the first ReCAP wiki; yet even this limited archive provides useful information for future Writing Studio researchers with questions about the center's past. To showcase this potential, I posed one sample research question to the ReCAP wiki: Starting from the center's official founding as the Writing Clinic in 1978, how has the Georgia State University Writing Studio's tutoring ethos – its philosophy of service – changed?

Because cross-linking multiple sources will be more productive once more diverse materials are uploaded to the wiki archive, I restricted my research to the three topic articles that accumulated the greatest number of artifacts relevant to this question: "Tutor Reports," "External Reports," and "Planning and Guidance." Each page is easily accessible via the methods covered under *Navigating the ReCAP Wiki*, as are its multiple constituent artifacts. In aggregate, these pages produce reasonable, evidence-based answers to the question of the Writing Studio's ethos over decades. Similar to the archivist viewpoint, this research question is answered in part by images taken directly from documents visible on the ReCAP wiki, but also by an analysis of rhetoric and stated historical detail. Based on what is gleaned from these three topic articles, I conclude this section with an analysis of how these archive excerpts demonstrate the evolution of the center's tutoring ethos.

4.2.1 External Reports: What has the center communicated to external stakeholders?

Writing center administrators generate periodic external reports to communicate to external stakeholders the status, needs, or development of the writing center. These reports are often directed at funding bodies or higher administration, but audiences may change based on an individual center's budgeting model or its relative position within a program, department, or college. Audiences may also include programs or departments outside the center's home department or college, or potentially even external organizations.

While more documents may yet exist that could further expand this topic, the "External Reports" page already offers a rich trove of detail about the center's status, pedagogical choices, critical administrative decisions, and conditions that affect its present and future. The first report, written by Marguerite Murphy, summarizes the accomplishments of the "inaugural" Fall 1978 quarter of the "Writing Clinic" (1). The majority of the content summarizes two primary services offered in the center's founding term: teaching the "remedial composition" course ENGL 025, and daily tutoring of walk-in and instructor-referred students who are "deficient in writing skills" (Murphy, Marguerite 2). Murphy also communicates the already high demand for the service, including demonstrable need for more staff coverage.

The narrative tone of "1978 Fall Report" continues with a separate undated memo, but suggests its origin is also Fall 1978 by stating the center was opened "at the beginning of this quarter." The "N.D. Opening Quarter Memo" is similarly geared toward communicating the center's status to an external audience. The significant number of proposed edits and minor revisions suggests this is a draft version not yet ready for dissemination. The author begins with context – or perhaps justification – of the center's founding, citing precedent at other institutions, including in Georgia. The memo communicates one of the founding center ethos statements

regarding the issue of naming the service: "... guided by the department chairman ... we chose to use the name 'Clinic' rather than 'lab.' A laboratory implies the use of students as subjects for experiment, while a clinic sees the student as a patient whose writing needs diagnosis, prescription, and treatment" ("N.D. Opening"). From that point, the memo tracks very similarly in focus as the report above, reiterating the ENGL 025 program, tutoring services, and plans for workshops and resources focused on improving Regents' Exam performance. As before, the language choices in this heavily edited document seem focused on emphasizing the Clinic as a solution to "deficiencies" in "basic" skills ("N.D. Opening").

The archive then leaps forward nearly 10 years to Spring 1988. The "Writing Center Report Spring 1988" briefly covers the previous winter quarter, and is again focused on communicating the operational status of the center. The author highlights the Center's staffing levels from English and "paid Graduate Lab Assistants," an increase in total hours open, numbers of consultations conducted, and the contributions of two volunteer tutors. The 1988 report also communicates the addition of reference resources in the center; boasts of prominent organizations and businesses reaching out to the center's "Grammar Hotline;" and anticipates the imminent arrival of "four more computers" to join a well-received first ("1988 Spring"). Conspicuous is the lack of mention of ENGL 025, as well as efforts to assist writers with the Regents' Exam. The report may show the center at a point of transition; it's unclear if the change in language communicates that the Writing Center has shifted away from an ethos of remediation, or if this is simply a feature of a single-page report that was never intended to cover those aspects of the center's operation. The impending addition of more computers may prove significant, however, when viewed in the context of the next report over 14 years later.

The “2002-03 Center for Writing and Research Annual Report,” situated at the end of Marti Singer’s interim directorship, provides some of the most robust historical insight currently available in the archive. The report’s “brief history” spans the entire timeline of the center to-date, starting as early as 1975, three years prior to the center’s founding. Singer then worked as a graduate student, employed by the English department to conduct individual tutoring, but departed shortly thereafter. The report then briefly covers the center’s founding and existence in the 1980s, based upon what Singer learned from oral histories and “sketchy historical memos” – perhaps the same memos covered earlier (Singer 2). The interim director then recounts the 1990s operation of the center, during which the space apparently functioned unintentionally as a de facto computer lab. While tutoring was offered, Singer relates that the available history of student sign-in does not indicate whether utilization was for computers or writing assistance. This computer lab existence continued after Singer’s 2000 return to the department and until 2002, when Singer was asked to serve as interim director of the center while a search was conducted for a permanent director (2).

- Singer’s interim directorship ushered in significant change to the center. Guided by a robust set of goals to transform the center’s space, its work, and its presence, Singer introduced several administrative practices that endured over the next 15 years:
- the majority of tutoring staff was converted from English instructors and faculty to stipend-supported graduate students, allowing a significant increase in the hours of available tutoring coverage;
- training expanded significantly, and now included a credit-bearing course covering tutoring theory and pedagogy;

- the physical space was changed to remove the computers and better support concurrent one-on-one tutoring;
- the center welcomed tutors from external appointments to both expand interdisciplinary tutoring and support English language learners;
- the center secured an expanded budget separate from English spending; and
- an Associate Director was appointed, setting precedent for future junior administrative positions.

Most telling is the decision to rebrand the then-named “Writing Center” as the “Center for Writing and Research,” which Singer believed would communicate the goal of the space as “an academic center where students and professors could find a location to do scholarly research” (8). This was a statement against the prevailing assumption of writing centers as spaces of remediation – a continuing challenge Beth Burmester notes in a future report only two years later. Even though the name did not endure longer than two years before changing once more to the current “Writing Studio” moniker, it defines the center’s intended ethos alignment at that time. It is also the most specific, precise name of all those the center has borne in its four-decade history, though the name’s impermanence may betray an ultimate misalignment with unstated defining pressures.

The most commonly-targeted audience for the Writing Studio’s external reporting is the English Department, which funds and supports tutoring operation. However, the center may be called upon to communicate its work, development, or operations to other entities both inside and outside the institution. This may include proposals to secure additional or project-specific funding; reports to accrediting or membership organizations; and statements to other departments within the university that share compatible educational goals. In February 2004, several months

after Beth Burmester took over as the director, the Writing Studio produced a response to the GSU Service/Education Center Review Survey in the form of a self-study report. This draft version of the report reiterates some of the same information as Marti Singer's 2003 Annual Report, including: the general history of the center to-date; the administration's goals for development of the center's services and staffing; and some of the conceptual moorings for the center's interdisciplinary and tutoring ethos, including the strengths of "reciprocal learning" in one-on-one tutoring (Burmester "2004" 2). A great deal more budgetary information is found in this self-study, including initial costs and budgets of the original Writing Clinic; the center's recent (but partially unsuccessful) efforts to restructure its funding model to expand its autonomy and support for increased staffing; and overviews of the center's utilization numbers at several points in its lifespan.

Burmester further outlines the development challenges facing the center as institutional, administrative, and financial, specifically suggesting the center is "still largely perceived to be remedial" by instructors and students both in the English department and in the larger university community (Burmester "2004" 4). The self-study communicates: a desire for the Associate Director to better support Studio operations by reducing teaching loads; unfulfilled needs and opportunities for post-MA and post-doctoral tutoring; plans for improved consistency and researchability of utilization and visitor data; and calls for "increased funding for salaries... to recognize the intellectual labor and physical expense of teaching multiple one-on-one sessions with student writers" (Burmester "2004" 5). Burmester closes the self-study with an inventory of the center's activities from 2002-2004, including tutoring, graduate advising, graduate courses, presentations, professionalization, and workshops. Aimed as it is toward an audience outside the English department, Burmester's report shows the 2004 center is still renegotiating its identity in

the initial years of a new administration, and has identified its most critical challenges. Considering that the self-study's audience is another Georgia State program associated with serving students who need greater academic support, the language is direct and clearly isolates issues the Service/Education Center may find compelling.

The final document included in this page of the ReCAP wiki is a January 2005 Fact Sheet, the first such visible report to name the center "The Writing Studio." The document leads off with an updated list of visit statistics, then continues almost exclusively with the goal of communicating achievements of the center and its staff, such as awards, presentations, publications, and post-Studio career paths of departed staff. The final page describes funding dispositions of the entire Writing Studio staff at the time of the Fact Sheet's preparation (Burmester "2005" 8). Unfortunately, the document provides little explicit information about the center's philosophy or ethos at this stage, but considering the focus on professional accomplishment and scholarly production, Burmester's intent may have been to implicitly communicate the center's continued dedication to elevating the status of the center's tutoring and its staff.

This small collection of outward-facing reports makes clear that Georgia State's writing center has, at least at the times visible in the included documents, attempted to craft clear messages about its ethos for external audiences. Often this message is a form of image management or public relations, as the center has, for its entire lifespan, needed to appeal to a department with significant control over its budgetary and operational future. In all cases, however, the message has included how the center views its duty to students and other visitors.

4.2.2 *Tutor Reports: How have the forms supporting or directing tutor ethos changed?*

Tutor reports have been a common practice in the Writing Studio for well over a decade, though the form they've taken has changed significantly over time. Because these documents are designed to be brief yet comprehensive, samples here are better represented as images.

The first appearance of a tutor report is in summer 2002, where a minimalist attempt to capture tutor feedback appears as a few simple prompts covering less than a half-page (figure 4.38). Titled with a shorthand "Center for Writing" sometimes used to refer to the Center for Writing and Research, we see that the administrators were looking only for basic vitals of the session such as student name, course information, time tracking, and a tutor signature, along with two lines to summarize the session's focus.

**Center for Writing
Tutor Report**

Name of Student _____

Course _____

Worked on/comments:

Time in and out _____

Signed _____
Tutor

Figure 4.38. "2002 Summer Tutor Report (Blank)"

With Marti Singer's name change to Center for Writing and Research now in place, the next two undated versions expand on this initial 2002 form significantly. The design is similar, but now seeks more information about the session's context. The report now seeks to establish

the type of document being tutored and the instructor, and has an open space labeled “ESL,” but the most significant change is a series of nine pre-defined prompts for the focus of the session (figure 4.39). With the inclusion of grammar, syntax, and diction as potential issues to be addressed, this resonates with the above external report statements highlighting a lingering philosophy of the writing center as a space of remediation.

Center for Writing and Research Data Sheet

Student _____ Tutor _____ ESL _____ Date _____

Type of Document (Circle one):

Paper _____ Regents _____ Testing _____ Resume _____ Application _____

Proposal _____ Letter _____ Memo _____ Other _____

Focus of Session:

Development _____

Organization _____

Grammar _____

Syntax _____

Style _____

Diction _____

Research _____

Tone _____

Logic _____

General Comments: _____

Figure 4.39. “N.D. Data Form (Blank)”

The next visible iteration of the document, the “GSU Center for Writing DataSheet,” is again undated, but based on similar details, it is presumably situated at a similar time (“N.D. DataSheet”). The pursuit of greater reported detail expands significantly, including more than 20 unique pre-defined, multiple-choice prompts for the tutor to document the session. This perhaps shows a greater desire for more concrete, quantitative response selection, which would possibly add to the administration’s understanding of what types of training tutors need. However, the data collection may indicate the center’s effort to quantify some logistical concerns, such as how

many hours before the assignment is due, how many times the center had seen the specific document, and page counts. When considered alongside an expansion in the number of prompts focused on documenting the paper's maladies or errors – with critical descriptors such as when a student “does not know” style format or audience; “inappropriate” voice or tone; or “errors” in grammar or punctuation – the administrators seem, at this stage, to have placed an emphasis on the center as “fix-it shop” (figure 4.40). Considering writing center scholarship's long preoccupation with the dichotomy of process teaching versus product coaching, this may suggest an unfolding shift back to documenting a writer's products.

| GSU Center For Writing DataSheet | |
|---|---|
| Date | begins with prepositional phrase |
| Course prefix/number | |
| Student's name | demonstrates understanding of parallelism yes / no |
| Student's email - | |
| Tutor's name | understands how to use modifiers yes / no |
| Purpose of session | |
| - Paper's Topic | diction (select all that apply) |
| Genre - | nominalization / verbosity / circumlocution / redundanc |
| personal essay / argumentative essay | / wrong word |
| research essay / lab report | |
| book review / movie review | sentence variation |
| summary / ethnography | relies on simple / sentences uses too many complex, |
| thesis / other | compound sentences / mixes the sentence structure to |
| | suit the situation |
| Style sheet | |
| APA / Chicago / MLA / Turabian / | Grammar in general |
| Other / Does not know | no errors / 1 or 2 per page / 1 or 2 per paragraph / 1 or 2 |
| | per sentence |
| # of pages | Specific issues (select all that apply) |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 more | subject-verb agreement verb tenses verb form |
| Hours till due | articles predication coordination incomplete |
| <1 - 2 / 3 - 5 / 5 - 7 / 24 / 48 | sentences runons |

Figure 4.40. “N.D. DataSheet (Blank)”

It's worth noting that without any completed versions of the above undated documents, it is possible that the “Data Form” and “DataSheet” designs were merely potential candidates for use in the center that never saw implementation. However, their similarity in content to completed report forms in samples discussed below lends confidence to their importance.

The content emphasis shifts significantly with the appearance of the “N.D. Tutor Report.” This document was likely created after the versions discussed above, considering its design similarity to 2003 versions examined below. The design choice seems focused on better organization of the same essential components for feedback, now asking the tutor respondent to “choose as many as needed” for the focus of the session, and offering many more predefined options (figure 4.41). Minor changes in phrasing or organization notwithstanding, the document is still heavily focused on recording a writer’s errors. For example, the list of “Grammar” issues offers the greatest single number of choices.

Center for Writing and Research
Georgia State University

TUTOR

Tutor _____ Student _____ Date _____

Type of session: ___ simple/brief ___ comprehensive/multiple issues addressed ESL _____

TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (check one)

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ___ Paper | ___ Resume | ___ Personal Statement |
| ___ Regents' Exam | ___ Proposal | ___ Testing |
| ___ Letter | ___ Application | ___ Creative Writing |
| ___ Memo | ___ Abstract | ___ Presentation |
| ___ Annotated Bib | ___ Purpose Statement | ___ Other |

FOCUS OF SESSION:
(choose as many as needed)

Prewriting

___ brainstorming
___ outlining
___ comprehension

Research

___ choosing sources
___ internal citation
___ works cited
___ MLA style
___ APA style
___ Chicago style
___ Plagiarism
___ incorporating research

Editing / Proofreading

Diction

___ word choice
___ wrong word
___ overly academic

Grammar

___ comma splice
___ apostrophes
___ shift in tense
___ fused sentence
___ s/v agreement
___ articles
___ prepositions
___ unnecessary commas
___ needed commas
___ syntax
___ parallelism
___ fragments

Composing / Revising

Development

___ examples
___ explanation
___ details
___ intro
___ conclusion

Organization

___ transitions
___ par. unity
___ par. coherence
___ order of ideas
___ no guiding thesis

Style

___ overly academic
___ conversational
___ inappropriate tone
___ flowery language
___ repetition
___ passive voice

Logic/Argument

___ contradictions
___ fallacies
___ lack of support

Figure 4.41. "N.D. Tutor Report"

In Fall 2003, however, a dramatic shift in the focus of the tutor report form emerges. In "2003 Tutor Reports," we see a series of completed reports that show two key philosophical framings that document the center's movement to a process-focused model (figure 4.42). First, the number of predefined options is significantly reduced, and now emphasize determining the focus of the session based on where the writer is in the process, including planning, drafting,

revision, or editing, and with matching predefined choices. The second key change is a move back to open responses that prompt the tutor respondent to “summarize what you and the student accomplished in this session,” the tutor’s strategies that were most effective, and planning for subsequent sessions. Critically, the form also asks the tutee to “describe what you’d like to focus on in this session,” which connotes a philosophical shift away from tutors as the default directors of a session’s focus.

Fall Semester 2003

TUTOR REPORT FORM FOR RETURNING STUDENTS, OR STUDENTS WITH STANDING APPOINTMENTS

Tutor's Name Beth Burmester Dept. English

At what stage is student in their writing process? Prewriting Draft Revising Editing

Check off all areas relevant to this session:

Planning or brainstorming ideas for a paper or assignment

Rough draft of an assignment: Developing or expanding on:

thesis logic/argument organization/arrangement style format (APA, MLA, CMOS)

academic form/genre conventions developing ideas/examples other

Revision of a draft to clarify:

thesis logic/argument organization/arrangement style format (APA, MLA, CMOS)

academic form/genre conventions developing ideas/examples other

Editing a final draft:

sentences word choice verbs citation format

transitions punctuation spelling

other grammar: (identify)

Date Oct 21

Description of Assignment or what student is working on:

Mark summarized his progress from our last meeting - which was impressive!

Figure 4.42. “2003 Tutor Reports (Sample)”

The tutor report design seems to withdraw from that philosophical shift only a few months later, however, with the 2003 Fall “Final Exam Week Tutoring Form,” visible both in completed and blank versions. While a reduced form of the writing process prompt remains, the form once again features the nine predefined foci found in the 2002 Data Forms, and the addition of two open-ended prompts asking tutors if they focused on explaining assignment requirements or a discussion of course readings (figure 4.43). This may imply that the center experienced

some difficulty when implementing a more process-focused, student-led report form earlier in the semester, although it is unclear if the challenge was internal or external.

Which parts of **writing process** did this session cover? (*Check all that apply*)

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prewriting/discussing ideas, conversation | <input type="checkbox"/> revising (changing ideas, structure, logic) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> composing a draft (sentences, paragraphs, thesis) | <input type="checkbox"/> editing (syntax, diction, grammar, style) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> documentation and use of sources (APA, MLA) | <input type="checkbox"/> self-correcting and proofreading |

FOCUS OF THIS SESSION: (check off and/or describe)

DEVELOPMENT _____
 ORGANIZATION _____
 GRAMMAR _____
 SYNTAX _____
 STYLE _____
 DICTION _____
 RESEARCH sources quotations citations APA MLA other: _____
 TONE _____
 LOGIC _____

Did you focus on explaining assignment requirements? Specific genre conventions/format?

Did you focus on a discussion of course readings/reading comprehension?

Figure 4.43. “2003 Fall Finals Week Tutor Report (Blank)”

Finally, tutor reports dated even later into 2004 show a further reversion of the document format. A completed report dated July 2004 shows reuse of the “N.D. Tutor Report” form above with no changes (figure 4.44). The poor quality of the images may suggest it had been recopied multiple times, and thus may have been used as a temporary measure; however, this explanation is unlikely. The same content and overall design reappears in documents throughout the Fall “2004 Tutor Report Samples;” this report format is identical to the 2002 Data Forms, except that “Center for Writing and Research” has been replaced by “The Writing Studio,” indicating the readoption of this format was intentional (figure 4.45).

Center for Writing and Research
Georgia State University

TUTOR

Tutor: ORIANA SARA Student: DAISY WALKER Date: 11/3/04

Type of session: simple/brief comprehensive/multiple issues addressed ESL _____

TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (check one)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Statement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regents' Exam | <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Testing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Application | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memo | <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Bib | <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

FOCUS OF SESSION:
(choose as many as needed)

Prewriting

- brainstorming
- outlining
- comprehension

Research

- choosing sources
- internal citation
- works cited
- MLA style
- APA style

Editing / Proofreading

Diction

- word choice
- wrong word
- overly academic

Grammar

- comma splice
- apostrophes
- shift in tense
- fused sentence

Composing / Revising

Development

- examples
- explanation
- details
- intro
- conclusion

Organization

- transitions
- par. unity

Style

- overly academic
- conversational
- inappropriate tone
- flowery language
- repetition
- passive voice

Logic/Argument

- contradictions
- fallacies
- lack of support

Figure 4.44. 2004. Reuse of "N.D. Tutor Report" in 2004 in "Tutor Reports (Sample)"

The Writing Studio
Georgia State University

READER

Reader's Name Jessica Bremner

Date 9/2/04

Type of session: simple/brief comprehensive/multiple issues addressed ESL

TYPE OF DOCUMENT: (check one)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Statement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regents' Exam | <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Testing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Application | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memo | <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Bib | <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

FOCUS OF SESSION:
(choose as many as needed)

Prewriting

- brainstorming
 outlining
 comprehension

Research

- choosing sources
 internal citation
 works cited
 MLA style
 APA style
 Chicago style
 Plagiarism
 incorporating research

Editing

Diction

- word choice
 wrong word
 overly academic

Grammar/Usage

- comma splice
 apostrophes
 shift in tense
 fused sentence
 s/v agreement
 articles
 prepositions
 unnecessary commas
 needed commas
 syntax

Composing / Revising

Development

- examples
 explanation
 details
 intro
 conclusion

Organization

- transitions
 par. unity
 par. coherence
 order of ideas
 no guiding thesis

Style

- overly academic
 conversational
 inappropriate tone
 flowery language
 repetition
 passive voice

Logic/Argument

- contradictions
 fallacies
 lack of support

Figure 4.45. 2004. Writing Studio name update to "N.D. Tutor Report" in "Tutor Reports (Sample)"

This tentative analysis of only a few short years of tutor reports suggests the center was engaging in redefinition of its ethos or philosophy, and possibly facing some difficulty in that process. Considered in the context of the external reports analyzed above, it's possible there was conceptual friction between the center administrators' attempts to cast the center's responsibility as supporting complementary instruction of the larger writing process, and perceptions that the services should remain focused on producing better writing products and remediating unskilled writers.

4.2.3 Guiding and Planning: How has the center planned its growth and development?

The final page pertaining directly to defining the center's ethos is "Guiding and Planning," which contains a handful of documents that set up the center's operation and goals. Unlike annual reports or other external-facing documents, these may be intended as an internal reference, or as a list of guidelines for the administrator(s) to enact or pursue. These documents can be both short-term and long-term in nature, ranging from enumeration of daily duties and expediencies, to something as in-depth as a multi-year strategic plan for the center's growth.

Three documents stand out as explicitly guidance-oriented. The first is a two-page document titled "Tasks for the Director of the Writing Clinic." As a self-described task-oriented document, these items include: start of quarter duties; registration; Clinic duties; "Short Courses" (with no further detail); Regents' Readiness Review; Time of the Regents' Exam; other duties for [English] 025; and end of quarter duties ("N.D." Clinic Director Tasks"). The majority of the enumerated tasks seem oriented to the daily upkeep or management of the center, such as maintaining staff schedules, managing documents, ordering supplies, and promoting the center. However, there are references to more development-minded tasks, such as renewing funding sources, implementing "Operation Follow Through," and coordinating with the Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

The next, shorter document is more focused on the long-term operation of the Clinic. Briefly titled "Plans and Projects," this outlines five development-oriented projects: "Assistance in Passing the Regents' Test;" "Elimination of Transfer problems;" goals for managing the center; training goals; and "Additional Projects." Some of the itemized objectives are clearly geared toward improving the overall operational success of the center, such as improving tutor training, expanding staffing and hours of operation, better supervision, and promotion to the

larger university. Most of the document, however, details objectives that focus on multi-pronged support for Regents' Exam success; tightening allowances for transfer credits; and "some kind of attack on the problem of non-native speakers" ("Clinic Plans and Projects"). This is consistent with other remnants of the center's remedial and corrective ethos visible in its external reports.

The most detailed development strategy for the center appears in a Summer 2003 plan as Beth Burmester assumes the directorship of the Center for Writing and Research. This document features marginal annotations from an unnamed reviewer, who, given the temporal context, is likely outgoing interim director Marti Singer. Burmester outlines seven specific goals for the center: center promotion; hosting events; research plans in the center; planned outreach to other GSU programs; planned outreach to the larger campus and Atlanta community; new sources of funding; and long-term planning.

Two goals, however, are highly developed. The first goal, "Publicizing the Center" outlines numerous on-campus advertising objectives, plans for direct contact with faculty, and expanded tours of the center (Burmester "2003" 1). The second most prominent goal, "Conducting and Using Research in the Center" features three types of objectives to encourage a stronger research identity for the center. Burmester outlines creating writing center theory- and administration-focused coursework and independent study materials; promotion of journal and reference resources in the center; encouraging tutor subscription to the WCenter professional listserv; and inspiring tutors to seek publication in professional media, or presentation at professional conferences (Burmester "2003" 2).

While documents that guide the center's planning or goals are fewer in number, they do ultimately provide needed insight to the center's ethos in the two different time periods visible here. The Writing Clinic was oriented clearly on its corrective origins in fixing problems;

however, the Center for Writing and Research (only months before renaming to the Writing Studio) had goals more aligned with its identity as a locus of improved tutoring practice and research support, ultimately focused on the center's status as theory-supported and -producing.

4.3 The Center's Evolving Ethos

Analyzing these 18 documents succeeds in forming a viable picture of the center's ethos as it has evolved since its founding. One of the most interesting and distinguishing characteristics visible at each stage is the center's alignment with the *field-wide* ethos of writing centers at a given time. To begin, the center was founded at the end of the 1970s with a strong writing product-oriented identity formed around correcting writing mistakes, or treating "ailing" writers' maladies. While it's reasonable to connect this to higher education's generalizations about "basic" or remedial writing needs at a time of rapidly-growing enrollments, this tone could also be a product of the "Writing Clinic," like many similar startup tutoring programs of the time, attempting to present itself as a verifiably useful, problem-focused tool to address an unfulfilled need.

The "Writing Center" ethos does shift perceptibly in the mid 1980s; however, detailed insight is difficult to glean from the short document available in this time frame and the general dearth of artifacts from the 1980s and 1990s. However, other details support that the center was indeed in a transitional state from its "clinical" beginnings to its professional research emphasis in the 2000s. Its more neutral "Writing Center" namesake alone conveys that the space was not only a place of treatment or skill drilling, but a locus of a requisite collegiate activity. The rhetoric produced at that time seems to leave behind the language of writer affliction, and the "sketchy" details mentioned in Marti Singer's passing note of this change to "Writing Center"

may suggest that neither “Clinic” nor “Lab” were ideal titles for the staff most intimately connected to the center’s work (Singer 2). This change in rhetoric strikes a resonant tone with the field’s mid-1980s Northian “Idea” shift, when many center administrators were attempting to reclaim the definition of writing centers’ missions from higher administration or external faculty.

Unfortunately, the Writing Studio’s archive shows a significant gulf in the 1990s, with no document explicitly dated in the archive’s holdings between 1988 and 2001. This may be due to the center’s staff, as Singer describes, spending “the summer months of 2002 clearing out the whole space” (4). The greatest level of detail is, unsurprisingly, available in numerous documents dated 2002 and later.

The pursuit of a named research identity in the early 2000s conveys that the Center for Writing and Research was, on one hand, trying to shed persistent notions of the center as a space of writer remediation. On the other hand, this research identity may be a response to a trending critique in the field’s scholarship from the end of the 1990s throughout the 2000s that suggested writing centers had become self-important, iconoclastic spaces that were convinced of their own intrinsic worth, and unwilling to examine dogmatic assumptions concerning tutoring practice. Singer’s invitations to writers *and* professors to enter the space to conduct research side-by-side may imply a philosophical effort to position the center as an accessible, universal resource, and perhaps more importantly to the interim director, a research-steeped space. This may even explain the tutor report forms’ seeming backtrack to error- or problem-focused tutoring, despite brief glimpses of a more process-focused philosophy; Singer, and later Burmester, may have felt a desire to signal the center’s movement away from criticism of the field, as well as rededication to helping writers isolate and improve their skills. Singer’s removal of the accumulated

computers in favor of a return to more one-on-one tutoring also signals administrative understanding that the space is ultimately dedicated to building skill in writers.

I gained no surprising lessons from this first research delve of the Writing Studio's fledgling ReCAP wiki. This is to be expected because I tutored and administrated in the Writing Studio for a total of five years, and during that time assembled much of this history osmotically. What I did gain was a more cohesive, higher resolution perspective of how the Writing Studio I know so well in its present state has over time grown through mindful decisions of essential actors. Additionally, each such decision was irreducibly necessary to guide the Writing Studio to where it is now, approaching its 40th anniversary on October 1st, 2018. However, the goal for this sample research question was to gather ReCAP wiki-sourced data as a proof of concept, and in that the ReCAP succeeded. If so small a sample archive – only 132 artifacts and documents – generates useful historical context for one of the defining characteristics of the GSU Writing Studio's history, the potential for a complete ReCAP wiki archive is indeed promising.

4.4 Conclusion

Having concluded this prototype creation and subsequent research delve of the Writing Studio's new ReCAP wiki archive, I'm confident the newly-developed process shows great potential for implementation. While I discuss limitations and suggested improvements in the next and final chapter, I nonetheless see this prototype as a success in its intended application and output.

From the Writing Studio archivist perspective, the ReCAP wiki's intended tools function just as I'd predicted. Each of the materials included in the database is easily located through multiple tools, including searches, tags, and indices. The topic articles that describe the archive's

contents maintain an objective voice because they are written without a predefined research application in mind. The process of uploading and updating the wiki's contents is intuitive. Finally, the tools that sustain and protect the wiki's contents act largely passively without close monitoring by the archivist, but offer robust curation when the need arises. This chapter's static representation of the working ReCAP wiki shows the prototype functioning as intended.

Meanwhile, a Studio researcher's test is equally encouraging. While a need for expedient fact-finding of past operational details may have been the catalyst, I've shown the prototype exceeds that initial task by demonstrating the ReCAP wiki's potential to answer more nuanced research questions. Acting as a researcher, I found the wiki's dozens of scanned artifacts were organized into a navigable resource that made finding and reading a series of relevant documents simple. This dramatic reduction in time spent searching reduced the timeframe between formulating a research question and constructing a response. While the strength of this response will no doubt improve as more materials are added, the sample narrative above demonstrates the prototype ReCAP wiki functioning well for a researcher's needs.

For both the Writing Studio archivist who creates and curates it, and the Writing Studio researcher who will look to it for knowledge, the Reifying Center Archive Process constitutes a valuable resource to support programmatic knowledge and informed administrative action in the Georgia State University Writing Studio.

5 Conclusion: Reflections and Potential

At the beginning of this dissertation project, I originally planned for the ReCAP acronym to mean not “Reifying Center Archive Process,” but instead “*Reflective Center Archive Profile*.” The switch from “Reflective” to “Reifying” was more representative, as I had always intended the project to create a method to render a writing center’s abstract history and lore more verifiable and concrete. It took me a much longer time, however, to realize how much significance I had unwittingly instilled in the last term, “Profile.”

I started the project with a conceptual assumption that became a source of frustration: I believed I could simply roll up my sleeves, delve through all the archived documents, photos, artifacts, and media present in my center’s holdings and construct what I heard myself calling a “narrative” that comprehensively described the past of the Georgia State University Writing Studio in a document that was clear, decisive, and reproducible. I believed it was only a matter of applying enough time and focus. Essentially, I thought the center’s materials could answer one big question: “What don’t I know?”

As the project progressed and I attempted to harness the knowledge contained in thousands of disparate items the Writing Studio had generated over nearly 40 years, I grew aware that the task I had set myself was unwieldy. Viewing the archive wasn’t the problem; what frustrated me was the inevitable impasse I had set up for myself by trying to create a complete, single narrative of the center’s history. Worries of incomplete detail, overgeneralized conclusions, and unnavigable research dead ends contributed to an ever-worsening sense of impossibility. My greatest source of anxiety, however, was that I doubted my right to tell a

complete or fair story of a writing center that had existed for 34 years before I stepped across its threshold for the first time.

In hindsight, I believe I lost perspective of the fact that the whole process started with the single motivation of answering one question: uncovering the rationale for the Writing Studio's required visit policy. While I realized that the archives were a potential site of answers for this question, I let the idea stray too far. As both Gold and Gaillet ("The Unexpected Find") each caution against, I was looking to the Writing Studio's archive too broadly and without distinct research questions. Hoping to unearth a whole history, I didn't realize the potential that existed to improve the archive's ability to generate answers. Instead of starting with the question of "what don't I know," the framing of the project should have remained focused on the enticing potential of the archives to at *any* time produce the answer to the question "what would I like to know about *topic X* or *issue Y*?" I had started looking at the archive not as source of answers, but as a generator of an impossibly large and cumbersome narrative.

By switching the conceptual framework of the Reifying Center Archive Process to the role of archivist instead of researcher, I resolved the problems the quest for a "Profile" narrative had created, relieving myself of several stressors that had impeded the progress of this project:

- I no longer debated over which artifacts were worth including in my research, because a writing program archive should include everything possible;
- I no longer fretted over how to best communicate the breadth of the Writing Studio's archive, because by design, a wiki easily expands to include ever more content;
- I no longer struggled for a system to impose order on the notoriously complicated and multi-threaded workings of a writing center, because a wiki offered

convenient, established tools that would make finding and understanding the relationships of artifacts easier; and

- Most importantly, I no longer worried about telling a complete narrative of all the years the center had operated, because such a project is better told as numerous smaller stories, each with a different focus or research question, and a wiki archive would support each story equally well.

After researching and creating the ReCAP as it has been outlined in the preceding chapters, I am more confident than ever that the information obscured in the Writing Studio's file boxes is an untapped source of knowledge waiting to be harnessed, and that the ReCAP offers a manageable method to do so.

5.1 Strengths of the Prototype ReCAP

The prototype ReCAP wiki features some clearly successful outcomes of the proposed process. Even with the reduced sample of physical archive artifacts I digitized and uploaded – only 132 objects out of the *thousands* of pages and artifacts contained in the plastic file boxes, several topic articles are already taking shape as my desired product: a resource that offers answers to a Studio administrator's targeted questions, but which also offers easy access to a deeper well of primary materials for longer research projects. In practice, I see that the wiki format effectively balances all three of the key archive attributes I set out to support.

5.1.1 Navigability

The navigability of the Writing Studio ReCAP wiki is by far its most compelling strength. The default structures of a wiki database are highly compatible as a means of hosting a surrogate archive, with the tag structure providing the greatest single benefit. Beyond its obvious

function as a robust finding aid, my set of provisional tags orients readers within the archive without overwhelming them with dozens of overly granular labels. The ever-present tag sidebar allows quick navigation to any of the Writing Studio's tagged materials from anywhere else in the wiki, filtering results so readers can return to broad view of a single tag at any time. Finally, the "See all tagged items" page supports the quickest overview of the entire ReCAP archive possible, presenting the reader with a rapid digest of topic and artifact names, visually representing the type of knowledge found within.

The search functionality of the wiki offers the perfect complement and alternative to the tag system, allowing researchers to look for any topic they can put into a search string. This supports keyword or phrase-based searching, which obviously cannot be incorporated into the tag structure. So long as the archivist continues to write focused, detailed topic articles that describe the tagged artifacts, custom search strings may produce more relevant results than browsing via tags alone, and can also ameliorate possible perceptions of the archive's predefined tags as limiting.

5.1.2 Objectivity

Upkeep of the archive's objectivity is critical to its mission as a resource of primary research. The ReCAP wiki system alleviated my concerns of becoming too opinionated or interpretive of the center's history, which, as I said above, troubled me as I struggled with the scope of this project.

The topic article pages, which communicate the overwhelming majority of the archive's knowledge, are crucially neutral, yet still information-dense. Moving the reader through a rapid digest of a topic without preamble, analysis, or conclusions from the archivist is the best possible protector of the researcher's ethos. When I chose the wiki format to host the archive, I was

drawn to the prevailing standard of neutral topic description found in many successful wiki systems around the internet. The preference for simple and concise descriptions without analysis that is commonly found in wikis perfectly modeled an objective voice for me as the writer of topic articles.

Most importantly, the ReCAP wiki system alleviated my anxiety over the possibility of errant analysis. When originally planning this project as a research product profiling the center's history, I anticipated the immense risk of misrepresenting a past I had no part in. It's natural to look at a handful of documents and move forward with my own informed estimate of previous administrators' rationale, but committing an analysis of those details to print was intimidating. As familiar as I have become with the Writing Studio's history, I still feel only generally aware of large spans of its past. I was worried that I would inevitably misrepresent the intentions or products of another's work from 40, 20, or even 10 years ago. The ReCAP wiki's structure for simple "as-is" descriptions of the past, while not perfect, allowed me to move forward with my goal of communicating the greatest amount of information as fairly, yet completely as possible.

This strength of neutrality is manifested in the sample research analysis posed at the end of the preceding chapter, in which I assembled a descriptive answer to a simple question about the center's past tutoring ethos. In essence, I bypassed a microcosm of the intimidating task of creating an entire Studio narrative inherent to the original "Profile" ReCAP. By creating the "Process" ReCAP, thus promoting objective access to relevant materials, I was more quickly and equitably able to describe a portion of the Writing Studio's past within a relatively short working period.

5.1.3 *Sustainability*

Moving the ReCAP into a wiki immediately structured the practices to upkeep and safeguard the archive, alleviating my worry of establishing arbitrary technology or procedures to retain materials and products of the process. Creating a wiki for the ReCAP automatically provides the structure that duplicates, stores, and protects archive materials off-site, preserving knowledge in cases of physical loss, and makes data backups easy to produce on a regular schedule. Moving to a wiki also resulted in the unanticipated but beneficial system of user access control: with the wiki-enabled ReCAP, archivists have the option to enroll collaborators or research assistants to whom they can redistribute their workload, as well as invite viewers for limited reading and research access. Additionally, the protective challenges of moving to a wiki are mitigated by equally strong systems to isolate and roll back changes at the discretion of the administrator.

Any new process must be replicable, and this is where I find that that the wiki-enabled ReCAP excels. In my original plan to produce a single narrative, I foresaw the difficulty of asking later Studio administrators to update the planned “Profile” document when it was likely that very little information would change between iterations. I anticipated that the anxiety I experienced for the initial “Profile” task would understandably deter others to produce follow-up ReCAP documents. By recasting the project into the role of archivist, and then into the wiki-based ReCAP, I eliminated these concerns. Prescribing the ReCAP as a database means an immediate perception of value to the administrator archivist’s time commitments. With only 132 documents and media uploaded to get the wiki archive started, its reference and research value is already palpable, thus validating the time I devoted to the act. As I added each document and topic article, I perceived that the scope and utility of the archive expanded immediately. At a

time in the future where most – or all – of the Writing Studio’s archive is digitized and available in the wiki, it will be perpetually improved, meaning there will never be duplication of effort. Thus, if the Writing Studio adopts the ReCAP as an ongoing administrative duty, it will produce immediate and ongoing utility instead of a long road before a usable product emerges. Critically, this means there is no sense of obligation to indefinitely repeat an unwieldy task for little subsequent improvement.

At the conclusion of the ReCAP prototype, I’m reassured that the project shows merit and exactly the potential I hoped it would. When I reviewed the archive during preparations for the wiki’s analysis in Chapter 4 and again in writing this reflection, I noted a benefit I had not anticipated: I felt a sensation of spatial awareness developing within the archive, bordering on an almost tangible sense of navigability. Like intuitively traveling within a city after learning local landmarks, reviewing the archive leads almost osmotically to understanding relationships between tags and topics. Rendering this level of detail so accessible, and in a manageable hierarchy, is the best approximation of the internalized recall a long-time administrator depends upon.

5.2 Opportunities to Improve the ReCAP

As is to be expected for any prototypical project, the sample ReCAP also exhibited potential weaknesses that may need to be resolved before the process advances to the stages of expanded application, formal adoption, or in the long-term, promotion to other writing centers via publication.

5.2.1 Tags

While the provisional tag system remains the core of the ReCAP wiki's strength, and I have formatted the tag sidebar in a way that shows hierarchy of tags in categories and sub-categories, I wonder if new adopters of the process or invited visitors to a ReCAP wiki will understand the relationships as fully as is necessary. For example, is the hierarchy between Tutoring and Pedagogy evident, or is the separation in category between the Institutional Relationships and Strategic Planning intuitive? This may be resolved by implementing a simple decimal system that clearly labels subtags as subordinate to a larger tag; e.g., 2.0 for the top-level Presence tag, and 2.3 for its Center Community sub-tag.

Also, the tags prescribed in the fourth chapter may present a conceptual difficulty for later archivists. As confident as I am in connecting these topics and categories from tutoring and administration resources to the Writing Studio, I still experienced several instances where I could reasonably code an artifact or topic article with multiple tags. This introduces an undesirable subjectivity in the process: multiple Studio administrators could tag the same item differently. I underscored the importance of maintaining the integrity of the tag system in the fourth chapter as the best alternative to allowing unchecked propagation of dozens of "perfect" tags with only one or two artifacts each. Still, any future iteration of this process must include an appeal for ReCAP adopters to resist modifying the tag system, or offer a solution to this problem that I have yet to conceive. Ultimately, I believe in the overall strength of the tag system proposed; *most* of the Writing Studio's materials will fit into these tags easily, so for now, I ask future Studio archivists to accept the imperfection of predefined tags to avoid the risk of hyper-granularity.

5.2.2 *File naming standards*

The primary mode of locating artifacts within the ReCAP wiki is through tagged topic articles. However, naming those files presented some concerns as the process of adding them continued. Keeping in mind earlier archivist cautions regarding the ambiguity of labeling, I initially settled on a format starting with a year and 2-3 words that described the item, such as “1986 Staff List” or “2008 Session Stats.” If no original year could be confidently determined, I settled on “ND” as shorthand for “no date” instead, as in “ND Center DataSheet.” In cases where the source document was clearly titled, naming was a simple matter. However, where no attributed title could be found, or the artifact’s purpose was vague, I became less confident in affixing a descriptive label.

The impact of this naming anxiety is minimal now, as I experienced it only a few times during this prototype process. However, I anticipate this anxiety could manifest as more materials are added to the wiki. Text documents will always be easier to label and summarize, but photos and other non-verbal media may increase this effect. In future iterations of the ReCAP, I will establish a research-derived standard for labeling, and include it in the wiki’s provided style guide.

5.2.3 *Searching within documents*

Conscious as I am of researchers’ tales of the consequences of archivist mislabeling or descriptive error, I can see potential for expanding the keyword search functionality to the text contained within documents. In the case of PBworks, the premium educational subscription (priced at \$109 per year as of this writing) allows the system to index and render searchable text within PDFs. On one hand, this has the potential of allowing researchers to find a specific word contained within a document, but not within a topic article description, greatly expanding the

content that is searched. Furthermore, this could help bypass the impact of archivist error in labeling or description.

On the other hand, this would require the additional cost and logistical strain of using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to convert writing on physical documents into index-ready text⁶. This software is available at varying levels of cost and accuracy, and places the archivist in the awkward position of screening each document carefully for encoding errors. This introduces both a significant increase in time commitment, as well as the potential to make typographical errors or interpretive mistakes. Finally, adding document transcripts into the search index increases the total searchable text significantly, which risks diluting the value of search returns when compared to the descriptive, refined topic article text alone.

5.2.4 Sustaining the cost and effort

The pilot ReCAP project found ample space to upload its starting collection of surrogate artifacts with the PBworks free educational use license, which includes two gigabytes (GB) of storage. With the current size of the ReCAP wiki totaling 206 megabytes (MB), this prototype has already used more than 10% of the available space. It's reasonable to assume that as the Writing Studio ReCAP grows, it will inevitably reach a point where the free service will no longer be sufficient to maintain the ReCAP. The same premium educational license available from PBworks mentioned above also includes a total of 40 GB of storage, which, considering the size of the partial archive, seems more than sufficient for the needs of the Writing Studio's

⁶ I tested the usability of OCR with a workaround on one page, "Suggestions for the Improvement of Instruction in Freshman English," by manually pasting the software-transcribed text into the wiki page. The OCR software used was low-cost, and did produce a few transcription errors I felt confident in amending. Many more such documents would have to be similarly processed to realize the value of including their text in the search index.

ReCAP for the foreseeable future. Still, this does present a recurring cost that must be accounted for in the Writing Studio's limited technology and supplies budget, which may require future administrators to seek alternative funding sources. If the ReCAP's future includes advocating its adoption in multiple centers, this is a cost that may not be equally sustainable to each center.

Additionally, no matter how promising the returns, adopting and sustaining the ReCAP does represent a commitment of time and manpower. Especially during the initial review of materials and sorting into the ReCAP's organizing categories, the administrator must not be overwhelmed by the size of the entire project, and trust in the benefit of knowledge the ReCAP wiki will begin producing early in its development, as has been seen in the Writing Studio's prototype. Even though the WCA is notoriously lacking in time, incremental resources spent organizing and digitizing the archive will pay returns in more informed practice, greater research potential, and better responsiveness in externalizing the center's – and administrator's – theoretical status.

5.2.5 Recording undocumented knowledge

The final potential challenge to the ReCAP is uncertain levels of commitment to update the wiki with the informal discussions, decisions, and policies that are common to writing center administration. When a center first adopts the process, there may be policies or practices in place that, like my catalyzing example of required visits, have no identifiable origins. If inconsistent documentation never produces verification of that history, the administrator-archivist may have to create the first uncited entry in a new topic article, such as my example on Studio session timing standards for undergraduate and graduate writers (“Time Limits”). Furthermore, center staff may want to record the verbal decisions, rare exceptions, unique accommodations, and other fleeting administrative actions that may ultimately establish precedent, but doing so may

risk transforming the ReCAP archive into a living workspace for unfinished projects, which can quickly erode its utility.

The ReCAP has limitations, but the axiom to not let the perfect preclude the good applies here. The ReCAP is, at its core, a method to mine a rich vein of history that will touch on nearly every aspect of the Writing Studio's tutoring and operation in the present. Knowing more about the past of a writing center, even if many gaps remain once the last artifact is uploaded, enables an administrator to make better decisions for that center's future.

5.3 The Future of the ReCAP

Nearing completion of the dissertation yields many options for the ReCAP's future. There are practical applications that will render immediate local benefit to an individual writing center, as well as longer-term projects to propagate the ReCAP as a tool for others to benefit from. After resolving the challenges noted in the previous section, I have determined a potential path for the future of the Reifying Center Archive Process.

5.3.1 Research and update provisional ReCAP tags

The step most likely to pay useful dividends for the long-term vitality of the ReCAP is to instill the tagging system with more robust, evidence-validated justification for existing or modified tags. While the provisional tags used in the Writing Studio-specific prototype ReCAP are functional enough to showcase that the process works and accomplishes its goals, I intend to create a permanent framework. As outlined in the third chapter's methods, there are no external, published, or otherwise accepted standards that can adequately support categorization of a local writing center in operation.

To take the ReCAP further, I will pursue an original qualitative research project designed to produce evidence-based, field-verified tags. I will conduct a brief survey of all writing centers affiliated with the International Writing Centers Association. To avoid researcher selection bias, and to secure the greatest number of responses possible, I will email all member writing centers of regional IWCA affiliates (“About/Affiliates”), asking for a response to an internet-hosted survey. The introduction will briefly communicate the purpose of the survey as determining field-generated tags for the description of a writing center’s archived work or materials. Because the field’s scholarship inadequately categorizes a local writing center’s work, I anticipate that I should prime respondents with the same top-level categorization that I created for the provisional tag structure: Tutoring, Presence, and Development. A draft version of the survey is included as an appendix to this dissertation (Appendix), but is highly speculative at this stage, so I may adopt changes prior to dissemination. The final version of the survey will also request confidential identification of the respondent center to protect against duplicate responses, and may request demographics for possible emergent themes or future research.

5.3.2 Expand pilot ReCAPs

There is potential to build a working community of similarly-minded writing center administrators who perceive the same need for archive upkeep in their writing centers. I intend to submit presentation proposals regarding the completed ReCAP project, targeting future Conferences on College Composition and Communication or the International Writing Centers Association Conference. I hope to expand contact with interested administrators here, similar to the contacts I gained after my 2016 CCCC and 2017 CCCC IWCA Collaborative presentations. If I can arrange for several writing centers to pilot the revised ReCAP process concurrently, I may be able to propose a better-tested, improved process for other centers to consider. I also

hope to be able to implement the ReCAP in my next writing center administrative position, gaining the experience of the process' utility in a center of which I have no prior knowledge or experience. Such a test may yield more fine-tuning of the process, allowing me to better generalize its utility to multiple centers.

If a second round of piloted ReCAP projects can be similarly analyzed, lessons learned from a multi-center perspective on the method may finally solidify the ReCAP as a viable model for writing center archive research. The results of that collaboration may then merit a publication which advocates for wider adoption of the ReCAP, and in time, lead to the final long-term goal of this project.

5.3.3 Founding a multi-center ReCAP sharing process

While the most compelling benefit of the ReCAP is its immediate impact on local recall and research, one large-scale concept has remained in place since the very beginning of this project, which would capitalize on the strengths of a standardized practice adopted by multiple centers. If the ReCAP can survive through the pilot phase in several writing centers, and I can produce a refined set of replicable practices, the ReCAP has long-term capacity to support widespread aggregation of information about multiple writing centers. In the long term, I can visualize standardized ReCAP wikis as a method to easily collect specific topic article pages for one archive researcher to delve into one subject, but at a significantly larger scale. Recalling the original catalyst for the whole project, a single researcher could gather the histories of required visit policies from multiple centers, complete with artifacts charting the rise, development, or abandonment of the policy in the writing center field at large. This type of archive-supported research has limitless potential to move the field of writing center studies to more evidence-

based practice over time, and the results of such research could effectively produce precisely the “narrative” type of knowledge that was the original conceptual framework of this dissertation.

The future of the Reifying Center Archive Process is not a single action, but a combination of every project listed above. Also, the order of these steps to realize the ReCAP’s future is only tentative; for example, I may seek to update the tagging structure sooner than the first publication, or I may gain the opportunity to implement another pilot ReCAP sooner than a presentation at CCCC or IWCA. Since the ReCAP is an original method that fulfills an unrealized gap in writing center theory, I believe it still requires development before its total utility will be realized – possibly to a degree even I have not yet considered. However, I think what has been presented here reveals immense potential to support improved writing center archival scholarship.

5.4 A Final Reflection

To continue to improve as theory-validated spaces, writing centers must record their tutoring practice, their status in the academy, and their development with evidence and improvement derived from their own histories. While the ReCAP will never be a panacea for all centers, and does not yet merit large-scale promotion, it is an encouraging step along the path to a more evidence- and research-based writing center. Imposing navigable order on the Writing Studio’s disparate collection of archived knowledge to render it researchable required commitment from me as a writing center administrator to become a writing center archivist. Archiving the writing center may seem on the surface like another demand on the time and resources of a program already lacking in both, but it is a rewarding process that promises to repay that investment in profound ways.

The potential that may be less obvious from the short ReCAP prototype, yet is far more beneficial, is to view the results from the perspective of an administrator new to the Writing Studio. The impermanent nature of the Writing Studio's administrative staffing means that an entire new administrative team may yet again take over within the next few years, but it's also conceivable that the Writing Studio may someday have another new faculty director after a national search. With expanded historical context made accessible by this simple prototype, it is easy to imagine the benefit of a fully researchable archive to a director who is new to the Writing Studio, to the English Department, and to Georgia State University. This power will only magnify the longer the ReCAP-enabled archive persists, and the more researchable material it accumulates. The Reifying Center Archive Process offers the Writing Studio precisely the tools needed to stanch the loss of program memory, unearth unknown historical context to enhance the center's current operation, and to strengthen its status into the future.

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Appendix: Description of Local Writing Center Archived Material

To assist in refining categories that effectively portray writing centers' local archives, please provide 2-3 word descriptions that broadly describe the individual aspects of your center's Tutoring, Presence, and Development, as described below. Please include no more than 5 terms per category. Do not list individual types of documents or artifacts.

Tutoring: running a writing center session or any work that directly fosters writer growth

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Presence: how the center faces outward to others, or is viewed by those not in the center

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Development: non-tutoring work that enables center operation, both short- and long-term

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Optional: If the terms Tutoring, Presence, and Development **do not** adequately capture the overarching activities of your center, please provide up to three additional terms that do.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.