



Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

Volume 9 | Issue 2

Article 4

2020

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Recommended Citation

Campbell, Jessica R. (2020) "Reaching Across the High School-College Divide to Represent the Other: A Meta-Analysis of the Literature," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol9/iss2/4>

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Reaching Across the High School-College Divide to Represent the Other: A Meta-Analysis of the Literature

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As writing teachers, we know the power of details. Historically, though, in characterizing each other's work, high school and college writing instructors have often forgone this basic quality of good writing. We lean on broad assumptions and generalizations about what happens in each other's universe. We analyze each other's professional documents from a distance. We use standardized test scores as proxies for teaching and learning. We extrapolate conclusions from our own inter-institutional experiences.

When *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education (T/W)* launched in 2012, the need to fill in the details was its warrant. Inaugural contributors Kirk Branch and Lisa Eckert (2012) justified the utility of the journal as a "professional compass," a tool all writing teachers could use to navigate "cross-institutional listening and learning" (p. 21). Having been both a student and teacher of writing in middle school, high school, undergraduate, and graduate contexts—a cross-institutional body myself—it never ceases to amaze me how disconnected and random, the pedagogies I've experienced, and, often, enacted, in each of these contexts are. However, the randomness is not random at all. Rather, it is a deliberate function of the organizational, political, and logistical silos that separate high school and college writing pedagogy, ensuring that the two intricately connected fields don't, in fact, connect. As we work towards shared understandings about our writing pedagogies in order to better serve our mutual students over the arc of their education, where in the existing literature—from the shallows of presumption to the depths of collaboration—have we travelled to know each other? In what ways have we already reached across the great divide? And, where can we go from here?

A History of Specialization and Isolation

Anniversaries call for sentimentalism, and the 2011 centennial of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) was no exception. Among the celebrations, several of NCTE's journals published special features reflecting upon their own place huddled under the NCTE umbrella. *English Journal* published the results of member surveys over the years. *College English* curated articles from the 1920s and 1930s featured in their precursor: *English Journal's* "College Edition." *College Composition and Communication (CCC)* published a two-issue symposia inspired by their "special relationship" with NCTE, "especially given NCTE's historical roots located in an intersection between high school and college" (Yancey, 2010, p. 635). And while the centennial was certainly a moment to celebrate, it was also a reminder of the fraught politics of specialization; the tensions between high school and college writing instruction have caused many a professional splintering over the course of NCTE's existence.

NCTE and *English Journal* were respectively established in 1911 and 1912 in protest against the elitism of college entrance exams. By 1928, though, NCTE's membership included enough college instructors that *English Journal* began publishing a "College Edition" to address postsecondary issues such as how to prepare English PhD students to teach freshmen writers (Schilb, 2011). By 1939, this special issue spun out into what is today *College English*. Within the decade, though, a new cohort of college composition instructors found themselves an ill fit with both *English Journal*, which brands itself as a "journal of ideas for English language arts teachers in junior and senior high schools and middle schools," and *College English*, which brands itself as the "professional journal for the college scholar-teacher." *College English* makes space for "rhetoric-composition" but only as one topic among a longer list that also includes literature, critical theory, and linguistics. By 1949, The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and its journal, *CCC*, were born, carving out a dedicated space for college instructors to focus on the teaching of writing.

However, just as composition instructors found their footing, the role of the composition instructor "slid quite quickly from teacher to administrator" (Strickland, 2011, p. 61). The *CCC* of the 1950's might have rendered a journal like *WPA: Writing Program Administration* redundant. However, by the 1960's the administrative tasks within composition programs had become a kind of professional secret kept caged by the ample attention *CCC* devoted to writing pedagogy. When the *WPA* launched in the late 1970's, administrators of composition programs were legitimately boxed out of *CCC* and in need of a professional space of their own.

As the century turned, worn niches existed within NCTE for high school teachers (*English Journal*), high school teacher educators (*English Education*),

college English faculty (*College English*), and composition instructors (*CCC*), with writing program administrators having found a home within *WPA*, a non-NCTE publication. Ironically, this was the same moment when specialized professionals felt the itch to connect. In reality, of course, whether out of institutional scrappiness or individual drive, many educators and researchers have long embodied intersections that cut across camps; there are high school teachers who teach college composition, there are English educators who teach college English, and there is every combination in between. Yet, the formal taxonomy of our professional organizations and journals is built upon specialization, and specialization often comes at the expense of breadth. Aspiring to celebrate the breadth of NCTE members' knowledge of K-16 writing pedagogy, a special interest group (SIG) formed within CCCC: the English Education/Composition Connections SIG. On the SIG's 10th anniversary, which coincided with NCTE's 100th, Jonathan Bush, a founding SIG co-chair, and Erinn Bentley, announced the anticipated launch of *T/W*. We are, then, just at the dawn of clearing professional spaces to discuss writing pedagogies that span the K-16 experience.

Method of Vetting the Literature

The goal of this meta-analysis is to establish a baseline taxonomy of how high school and college writing teachers and teacher educators understand and represent what happens in each other's classrooms. Multiple parameters were used in curating the literature published in the relevant NCTE journals—*English Journal*, *College English*, *English Education*, and *CCC*— and the relevant non-NCTE publications of *WPA* and *T/W*.

This study looks exclusively at research published after 2010. The introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that year marked a deliberate, if imperfect, collaboration amongst various stakeholders to calibrate what high school students needed to know in order to be college and career ready. The obsession with college and career readiness drove the developers of the CCSS to enlist the input of both college and professional organizations to develop standards relevant to all postsecondary pathways (Rothman, 2012, p. 13). This mutual concern regarding the explicit orientation of high schools towards college and career readiness pushed high school and college educators into dialogue with each other in a novel way. If “dialogue” is an overstatement, then the CCSS at least made our work theoretically and politically relevant to each other in new ways.

This meta-analysis culls from a short list of publications, which offers a snapshot of the conversations transpiring within the predominant professional forums. There are certainly relevant channels of exchange beyond these journals; however, these are the primary outlets for literature regarding writing pedagogy.

Two series of search terms¹ were used in systematizing the collection of literature, with the aim being to capture what college-centric publications have published about high school writing instruction and what high school-centric publications have published about college writing instruction. Using the electronic search engines ProQuest Central and Education Research Complete to search within each publication (and using *T/W*'s own search engine), the initial search yielded 852 results from *English Journal*, 174 from *English Education*, 151 from *CCC*, 110 from *College English*, 60 from *T/W*, and 16 from *WPA*. The vast majority of these results, however, only mentioned the “other side” in passing—a footnote or a bibliographic reference—without offering any substantive discussion. Articles are only included here if their authors made a bona fide effort to either understand or represent the other.

Findings

The presentation of findings adheres to the same structure used by Morgan and Pytash (2014) in their meta-analysis of literature regarding the preparation of pre-service English teachers. The findings are organized in thematic clusters, with each cluster offering an overview of relevant research, including a table identifying representative studies, as well as a description of the contributions and limitations of the research in so far as it has—or hasn't—yielded a cross-pollination of insights between high school and college writing teachers and teacher educators. The thematic clusters that became apparent upon review of the literature are:

- **Document analysis** of the CCSS and the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (“Framework”)
- **Studies of the efficacy of standardized high school exams** in predicting students' preparedness for and performance in college writing
- **Discussions of literacy narratives**, as both the autobiographical projects composed by college students and the biographical studies of writers conducted by researchers, which offer descriptions of students' writing experiences in various educational contexts
- **Reconnaissance studies** in which researchers gather information from and ask questions of their high school/college counterparts

¹ Within the college-centric publications—*College English*, *CCC*, and *WPA*—the search parameter was: “common core” OR “learning standards” OR “high school” OR “secondary school” OR “college readiness.” Within the high school-centric publications—*English Journal* and *English Education*—the search parameter was: “common core” OR “learning standards” OR “college” OR “college transition” OR “college readiness.” Within *T/W*, which defies categorization as exclusively high school- or college-centric, the search term was “high school” AND “college” in order to capture articles that bridged both spaces.

- **Descriptions of collaborations** orchestrated across high school and college sites

Document Analysis

The moment of publication of a key professional document serves as a convenient peg for interdisciplinary conversation, much in the same way NCTE’s anniversary offered a peg for collaboration. Given the limited extent of sustained engagement, being opportunistic about engaging each other when a key document is published is an easy, low-stakes way to cross boundaries. Documents are assertions of values, and there is utility in taking each other’s words seriously.

Since 2010, the most notable documents that have generated interdisciplinary buzz are the CCSS and the Framework, which was itself a collaborative effort to respond to the CCSS. Both of these documents were taken up by writing teachers and researchers of all levels. This cluster of literature (See Table 1) tends to either justify (O’Neill, Adler-Kassner, Fleischer & Hall, 2012), interpret/expand (Johnson, 2013; Kelly-Riley, 2017; Sullivan, 2012), or challenge (Gilbert, 2014; McComiskey, 2012; Olsen, 2013; Summerfield & Anderson, 2012) the document being analyzed. The distinct professional orientations towards the documents is telling, with the most notable distinction being how much power the authors vest with the words themselves as opposed to with the professionals tasked with translating those words into action. That is, the conceptualization of who holds agency—classroom educators versus policy makers—shifts in the literature, with those in closest proximity to students imagining for themselves the greatest degree of autonomy and with those furthest away assuming greater power in policy and curriculum.

Regarding the CCSS, for example, compositionists at the college level writing about the CCSS tend to conduct a purist reading of the documents, investing heavily in the words on the page and either praising or critiquing the way the CCSS—as separate than the teachers enacting them—will impact instruction in high school. For example, Fleming (2019), a college English professor, builds out a critique of the way in which the CCSS cast persuasive writing as distinct from and less important than argumentative writing. While he does offer a vignette grounded in a high school English classroom, he also employs the following language:

- “The CCSS is not actually a curriculum, that’s still left up to states and school districts” (p. 521).
- “...an online search turned up hundreds of resources, written for ELA teachers, that adopt the position laid out above” (p. 523).
- “As for preK–12 ELA teachers, I don’t blame them for the view of argument and persuasion described here. They’re getting it, obviously, from official

channels like the CCSS, which is getting it, at least in part, from college teachers and scholars” (529).

In each of these snippets, which admittedly are not central to Flemming’s concern about the diminishment of the persuasive arts in preK-16 education, we nonetheless sense the emasculation of the high school English teacher. The high school English teacher, here, is rendered as the passive receptacle of curriculum, which is created not by teachers but by “states and school districts,” and of teaching resources, “written for”—not by— “ELA teachers,” and of ideas which teachers are not developing for themselves but “getting” from the CCSS, from college teachers, and from scholars. In this way, Fleming’s treatment of high school English teachers as passive recipients of the CCSS is representative of a commonplace in the postsecondary literature.

Authors from secondary backgrounds, however, tend to invest more heavily in writing about the treatment of the CCSS by teachers and teacher educators. In “Common Core State Standards: The Promise and the Peril in a National Palimpsest” (2013), targeted for an audience of high school educators, Applebee opines that “the CCSS offers a strong and well-intentioned vision of the knowledge and skills needed by a college- and career- ready high school graduate” (p. 25). That said, Applebee is clear that the danger of the CCSS is in their implementation by teachers, particularly if the intent of the CCSS becomes distorted by pressures to teach towards the standardized tests designed to assess progress towards the CCSS. Gilbert (2014) demonstrates how high school teachers can resist the standards (and, presumably, the assessments used to measure them) in “A Call to Subterfuge.” Relegating the standards to “peripheral guidelines,” Gilbert forces personally meaningful pedagogy into a space that would otherwise have been filled up by CCSS. Both of these authors, representing high school English teachers and teacher educators, render the high school teacher as agentive over whether and how the CCSS are enacted.

The response to the Framework generated a more robust conversation at the college level than the high school level, and despite the college-level tendency to interpret the CCSS literally, the Framework responses seem more apt to interpret the document as a symbolic gesture whose effect might range from useful—Sullivan (2012), for example, lauds the habits of mind as shifting the emphasis from test score growth to character development—to harmful—Summerfield and Anderson (2012), for example, bemoan the way in which the Framework deepens the divide between high school and college education.

Journal	Researcher(s)	Summary/Conclusion
<i>CCC</i>	Johnson (2013)	The Framework is a satisfying answer for the narrowness of the CCSS; whether or not the Framework impacts policy broadly, it is positioned to reframe the conversation of college readiness within the field.
<i>WPA</i>	Kelly-Riley (2017)	The CCSS's dedicated writing strand is a watershed moment that elevates the treatment of writing in secondary classrooms to unprecedented heights.
<i>College English</i>	McComiskey (2012)	The CCSS and Framework are each incomplete documents; the only way the Framework rhetorically succeeds is as a bridge between high school and college writing.
<i>English Education</i>	Olsen (2013)	English teacher educators are obliged to critically engage the CCSS, not write them off.
<i>College English</i>	Sullivan (2012)	The Framework's habits of mind are more vital for students' preparedness and success in college than other typical indicators, like standardized test scores.
<i>College English</i>	Summerfield & Anderson (2012)	Given its assumptions about secondary writing instruction, the Framework actually deepens the divide between secondary and college English teachers.

Table 1

Contributions and limitations.

As a portfolio, these analyses offer an array of interpretations and implications that individual readers can carry with them into action. Critical analysis in the style of Gilbert (2014) or Olsen (2013) offer particularly generative models of taking documents with a heaping dose of salt. The danger is when these documents are examined as somehow representing—or dictating—the totality of experience in a certain educational contexts. When we myopically focus on the ink on the page, forgetting that words only *mean* when taken up by real teachers and real students, we risk flattening out each other's expansive pedagogies into two-dimensional maps.

Testing College Readiness in High School

“College Readiness,” the contested and complicated term that it is, is represented differently by different stakeholders. High school educators' conception of college-readiness, at least in terms of writing ability, is largely shaped by CCSS, their own experiences in college composition courses, stories from former students, and college writing textbooks (Burdick & Greer, 2017). Composition instructors' conception of college readiness also draws from a confluence of sources. Strangely enough, though, the quest to prepare high school

students to be college ready *before* entering college is made futile by the frequent framing of college writing as an undoing of high school writing. Even so, postsecondary institutions aim to gauge the “college-readiness” of their incoming freshmen via student performance on standardized writing assessments administered in high school.

One strand of research tests whether high school standardized exams are valid proxies for college readiness. The literature acknowledges that leaning on these exams is a no-cost, no-effort way for colleges to sort students into (or out of) first-year composition. However, there is consensus among the five representative studies in this category (See Table 2) that these standardized measurements of writing ability are a simplistic solution that do not actually measure students’ ability to engage with college-level writing in all its fullness.

Two particular studies addressing this tension were conducted by Isaacs and Molloy (2010) and Warren (2010). Isaacs and Molloy critique the practice of exclusively using the SAT writing section for student placement in writing courses. The authors note that despite “wide-spread distrust” of the SATs to measure writing ability and despite anecdotal proof that the SATs are poor predictors of college performance, it remains the primary placement mechanism. The authors propose a replacement procedure in which SAT scores are used for preliminary placement, with students being reshuffled during the first couple of weeks of coursework. Warren crafts a similar critique of the practice of allowing students to place out of first-year composition if they earn a score of 3 or more on their AP exam. Warren advocates for college writing programs to take a hands-on approach in molding the content of AP courses by partnering with local high school English teachers to bend the high school AP curriculum towards college writing program goals.

Journal	Researcher(s)	Article Type/Data Source	Summary/Conclusion
<i>College English</i>	Hassel & Giordano (2015)	Comparative study of 54 college freshmen's high school standardized test scores and college academic performance	The two standardized exams misplaced freshmen writers at the same rate, failing to accurately capture students' who would benefit from developmental writing.
<i>College English</i>	Huot, O'Neill & Moore (2010)	Historical research	High school performance—not a standardized test score—is a better predictor of success in college.
<i>College English</i>	Isaacs & Molloy (2010)	Study of the final "College Writing" grades of 1,867 students who entered college with an SAT-Writing score of 410	The SAT-Writing should be just one indicator for placement, with college writing instructors subjectively orchestrating a "replacement

			procedure" during the first weeks of class.
<i>English Journal</i>	Larson, Kurtyka, & Miller-Cochran (2017)	Analysis of International Baccalaureate diploma program (IB) and interviews with 13 IB high school graduates	The IB sufficiently prepares high school students in the habits of mind necessary for college.
<i>CCC</i>	Peckham (2010)	Comparison of writing samples for 211 college freshmen who took both a locally-developed writing assessment and the ACT essay	Different assessments used in isolation would lead to different freshmen writing placements.

Table 2

Contributions and limitations.

With the notable exception of the IB curriculum and exam (Larson, Kurtyka & Miller-Cochran, 2017), this research offers a troubling portrait of high school standardized exams as proof of “college readiness.” Huot, O’Neill, and Moore (2010) conclude that high school GPA is a better indicator of college readiness. Peckham (2010) shows a low correlation between student performance on the ACT Essay and on a locally developed writing assessment offered through a college. Isaacs and Molloy (2010) discover an arbitrary relationship between SAT-Writing scores and students’ grades in College Writing. Yet, the pragmatic utility of standardized exams looms large.

This category of research is also significant because of how institutional representations of college readiness—via AP coursework, for example—impact students’ perceptions of college writing (Burke, 2019). That is, in the same way colleges use these exams to understand students, students are using their experiences with these exams to understand college. As such, it is important to build out our understanding of how these exams and related curriculum impact students’ expectations of college writing and how those expectations might be disrupted in college.

The limitations of this research are twofold. First, these studies rely on students having access to the tests and a curriculum informed by the tests. As such, using these tests as proxies for students’ general writing experiences in high school results in an anemic portrait of what college readiness looks like for many students who do not have access to these tests. Second, the research resists centering these tests in college placement strategies at the same time the research centers these tests, perpetuating their privileged position as the dominant symbol of college readiness. All of the researchers featured here are working within contexts that actively use these tests to sort students; they are therefore working within a framework that assumes these tests are indicative of students’ writing ability until proven otherwise. The conclusions offered in this cross-section of research make

clear that we have reached a moment when the burden of proof should be reversed to fall on those perpetuating the usage of standardized tests as proxies of college readiness.

In Students' Own Voices: Writing Across Time and Context

There is one contingent who serves as a natural bridge across the high school-college divide: students. “Literacy narratives” have become commonplace in first-year writing courses. Alexander (2011) frames the aim of the literacy narrative as being to “prompt students to explore and reflect on how their past experiences with language, literacy, and schooling inform their perceptions of themselves as writers and literate beings” (p. 609). Literacy narrative as a genre is traditionally designed to: (1) ease the transition to college by having students draw upon the readily available material of prior experiences (Lindquist & Halbritter, 2019); (2) encourage students to critically analyze the literacy practices of themselves and others (DeRosa, 2004); and (3) serve as a “bridge” to academic writing (Hall & Minnix, 2012). These projects serve as fodder for a body of research that centers students’ literacy experiences in prior educational settings: 218 dissertations have featured literacy narratives as of 2013, 136 of which had been produced since 2008 (Lindquist & Halbritter, 2019). These autobiographical class projects—as well as biographical studies of students’ literacy histories conducted by researchers (Ruecker, 2014)—have pollinated college spaces with student-generated accounts of high school. Research that centers students’ voices (See Table 3) connects educational contexts via the students who move through them.

Journal	Researcher(s)	Article Type/Data Source	Summary/Conclusion
CCC	Alexander (2011)	Discourse analysis of the literacy narratives of 60 freshmen	Composition instructors need to be cautious in framing literacy narratives as a solicitation of archetypal narratives of literacy successes.
CCC	Blythe & Gonzales (2016)	Examination of a dozen undergraduates composing via screencast videos	Students enrolled in a biology class after having taken a first-year writing course transferred writing skills in the meta genre of "research from sources," though students frequently attributed their writing knowledge to high school.
CCC	Brent (2012)	Case study of six college students' writing as they	Students did not engage in transfer cleanly from one

		transition to "co-op" placements in a workplace.	context to another, drawing instead from multiple contexts, including high school.
CCC	Lindquist & Halbritter (2019)	Authors study their own pedagogical implementation of literacy narratives	Literacy narratives should not be used as a one-off activity to ease the college transition; they should be reframed within first-year writing as the start of a multiyear process of discovery.
CCC	Ruecker (2014)	Case study of eight bilingual Mexican American students as they transition to college	College writing courses should start from the recognition that writing classrooms across contexts are interconnected.
CCC	Sullivan (2012)	Case studies of student writers from the 1920s	Archival research of student writing practices is an untapped source of data for understanding classrooms of the past.

Table 3

Contributions and limitations.

While literacy narratives serve epistemological functions for the students conducting them, they also function to seed specific stories in the broader literature. For example, from a college freshman's narrative, we see how a 3rd grade curriculum centered on standardized writing "took away any enjoyment I had with writing" (Alexander, 2011, p. 608). We hear a college writer saying, "In high school, I only had the basic writing courses which did not prepare me for college writing" (qtd. in Hassel and Giordano, 2015, p. 135). We see a 21 year-old writer employing her literacies for civic purposes as she advocates for a child who was verbally abused in public (DeRosa, 2004). The content of literacy narratives, like those teased here, ground—in real, specific terms—the types of literacy experiences students had in prior educational settings. The caveat, as Alexander finds, is that students' reliance on archetypical "master narratives" of literacy success may bias the stories presented.

Currently, any details gleaned through these narratives about students' past engagements with writing are purely incidental. That is, it is unclear from the existing literature whether there has been any systematic attempt to use research of literacy narratives in order to learn about high school writing instruction. Taken together, these autobiographical and biographical literacy studies offer a portrait of high school pedagogies. This is particularly relevant given Blyth and Gonzales's (2016) conclusion that students often attribute their knowledge about writing to high school instruction, not first-year writing. The systematic study of literacy

narratives, both locally on college campuses and universally through the literature, could fulfill Blythe and Gonzales's recommendation that first-year writing programs "more directly and efficiently build on the writing strategies students are bringing in from high school" (p. 629).

Reconnaissance: Inquiry into the Other Side

Gilyard (2011) writes that "Ultimately, I see all language arts issues as college concerns because the education and discursive shaping of future undergraduate populations unfold largely in the K–12 world. College issues are not K–12 issues in the same sense. The river does not flow backward" (p. 540). The literature reflects this flow (See Table 4), with a greater effort towards deliberate crossover on the part of K-12 teachers than on the part of their college counterparts. For example, Ark (2017), a high school English teacher, interviews college writing instructors about college-level writing, and their responses emphasize the importance of students' authentic intellectual curiosity in college-level work. Brockman et al. (2010 and 2011) facilitated focus groups with college instructors, who defined college writing as students' ability to conduct research, manage sources, and "challenge themselves intellectually when they write" (p. 77). Both authors reported unearthing new findings through these discussions. However, it would be a surprise if any secondary writing instructor did not already intuitively understand their charge to be to help students cultivate "intellectual curiosity" or to "challenge themselves intellectually." The question is whether these reconnaissance missions somehow position high school teachers to feign discoveries about the intellectual demands of college or whether these are genuinely novel insights that can help high school teachers recalibrate their pedagogies.

There have been a handful of college writing teachers who have also structured their research as reconnaissance into the high school realm. Addison and McGee (2010) surveyed faculty across settings and found that high school and college faculty are "generally aligned with one another when it comes to prewriting, clear expectations, and good instructor practices" (p. 157). Burdick and Greer (2017) interviewed high school English teachers about how they built out their professional knowledge of college-level writing; the top sources cited were teachers' own freshman composition classes, the CCSS, and informal conversations with former students. Their conclusion – to "engage more energetically with high school teachers" (p. 97)– is reiterated throughout the literature.

Journal	Researcher(s)	Article Type/Data Source	Summary/Conclusion
<i>CCC</i>	Addison & McGee (2010)	Literature review of trends in writing research as well as original research interviews conducted at a variety of high schools and colleges	More strategic vertical planning is needed between high school and college to diversify writing taught in schools and to encourage transfer.
<i>T/W</i>	Brockman & Taylor (2015)	Curation of four college-level assignments from various disciplines	The qualities that make the assignments "college level" is their emphasis on critical analysis, the development of literacies across contexts, and writing as a skill that develops over time. These features are all, also, accounted for by the CCSS.
<i>English Journal</i>	Brockman, Taylor, Kreth, & Crawford (2010 and 2011)	Survey of college faculty about their perceptions about writing	College faculty focus groups affirm many widespread beliefs about writing at the secondary level and would push high school teachers to promote more intellectual risk taking and more writing across disciplines. There is a need for more points of contact between high school English teachers and college faculty across disciplines.
<i>WPA</i>	Burdick & Greer (2017)	Survey results from 85 high school English teachers	High school English teachers primarily grow their conceptualization of college-level writing from their own experiences in college composition courses, the CCSS, stories from former students, and college writing textbooks, among other sources.
<i>English Journal</i>	Fanetti, Bushrow, & DeWeese (2010)	Interviews with college writing instructors and middle and high school teachers	High school English teachers wish they did not have to teach to the test, and college writing instructors wished high school teachers didn't teach to the test.
<i>CCC</i>	Hannah & Saidy (2014)	Observations of a local high school teacher and her classes over a 22-week period and survey data from 112 of that teacher's students.	First-year writing instructors should build out a common language with their students as a means of smoothing students' transition to college writing and of inquiring into students' prior writing experiences.

Table 4

Contributions and limitations.

This literature offers concrete models of what can happen when we ask questions of each other instead of settling for assumptions. The answers offered are less important than the project of working towards a common discourse around writing pedagogy and an informed understanding of how we construct knowledge about each other. More, a disconnect between high school and college writing instruction is actually belied by the findings of this literature, which demonstrate that the two camps' values and practices are much more closely aligned than our professional divisions would lead us to believe.

Burdick and Greer (2017) and Burke (2019) make a particularly notable contribution in that they don't just investigate the knowledge we hold about each other, but they inquire into the source of that knowledge. Whether or not our knowledge sources are reliable, understanding them as sources makes available the opportunity for strategic intervention and clarification.

The limitation of this literature is, as described above, the perception that there are higher stakes for high school teachers to understand what happens in college classrooms than there are for college instructors to understand what happens in high school classrooms; the benefits of conversations are reported as mutually serving both secondary and postsecondary educators, and, thus, their shared students. As a result, the research presented is largely lopsided in offering purposeful and genuine inquiry on the part of or on behalf of high school teachers.

Collaborations: Getting in the Same Room

Research that features collaborative cross-institutional partnerships (See Table 5) represents the most profound examples of blurring boundaries. Some of these collaborations take the form of professional development workshops. Cook and Caouette (2013), for example, led a collaborative workshop with adjunct writing instructors, high school English teachers, and English educators in order to share stories about implementing the CCSS. Young (2014), too, describes a series of workshops he facilitated for college and high school teachers, also, around the implications of the CCSS. Other collaborations take the form of local partnerships between high school and college students and/or teachers. Oxford (2010) and Shah (2018), for example, both discuss writing partnerships where high school and college students joined forces for writing workshops, emerging with important understandings of how cross-institutional student partnerships can benefit both the younger and older student writers. And still, other collaborations take the form of either intellectual or physical teaching partnerships, where curriculum and practices are a joint production. Warren (2010) and Tinberg & Nadeau (2013) respectively study a yearlong AP Language and Composition course co-created by high school and college writing instructors and the effects of a dual-enrollment course on high school students. In, perhaps, a less orthodox example of a teaching collaboration,

Johnson (2019) and Wells (2011) describe a kind of intellectual partnership in which they borrow concepts incubated in the sphere of college composition–threshold concepts and writing about writing–and apply them to their respective English education and high school classrooms.

Journal	Researcher(s)	Article Type/Data Source	Summary/Conclusion
<i>T/W</i>	Cook & Caouette (2013)	Description of a collaborative writing workshop for nine college instructors, three high school English teachers, and the two authors, college English professors	Workshop facilitators led the mixed group in conversation about the CCSS, with dedicated time for the high school teachers to share how they implemented the CCSS in their own classrooms.
<i>T/W</i>	Johnson (2019)	Description of adapting writing studies' "threshold concepts" in a writing methods course with pre-service high school English teachers.	The threshold concepts that have been developed within the field of college composition studies offer a sound framework for teaching writing methods to pre-service high school teachers.
<i>English Journal</i>	Oxford (2010)	Description of a collaboration between a high school English class and college students	The long-distance collaboration, which relied on technological platforms to share and respond to writing, led to less isolated classrooms and more authentic audiences.
<i>CCC</i>	Shah (2018)	Interviews with 15 high schoolers across three high schools, who partnered with college composition students.	Composition programs engaged in high school partnerships can support success in four ways: <i>personalismo</i> —a positive, personal relationship established between partners, affirmation of high schoolers ideas, rigorous engagement of the high schoolers' writing, and role fluidity.
<i>English Journal</i>	Tinberg & Nadeau (2013)	Case study of two high school students dually-enrolled in a college course	Dually-enrolled student writers face similar challenges to novice college writers, yet they also have an observed "experience" gap.
<i>WPA</i>	Warren (2010)	Evaluation of a year-long partnerships between seven AP classrooms and a local first-year college writing program.	The partnership improved student writing, but it did not lead to improved scores on the AP exams.

T/W	Young (2014)	Description of the author's facilitation of a series of workshops for college instructors and local high school instructors who teach in the institution's "Concurrent Enrollment Program."	The implementation of the CCSS demands collaboration among K-16 writing instructors in terms of developing a shared discourse around college readiness and conduits for sharing information about students' experiences transitioning from high school to college.
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Table 5

Contributions and limitations.

The same quality defines the contributions and limitations of these studies: they are locally situated and the outcome of complex logistical coordination. As such, they testify to the idiosyncratic work of developing meaningful, personal, grassroots partnerships. They also make it difficult to generalize learnings for more universal contexts. For example, Oxford (2010), Shah (2018), Warren (2010), and Young (2014), all call for some version of replicating or expanding their studies. While increased collaboration and increased research around the results yielded by such collaboration would be the ideal outcome of this literature, it also unlikely to be accomplished to the degree that would be needed for sweeping benefits. A classroom or a workshop here or there, hardly fulfills the vision of stitching closed the high school-college gap.

Discussion

In their contribution to the *CCC* symposia celebrating NCTE's centennial, the founders of the English Education/Composition Connections SIG wrote that "When people from two similar, yet sometimes competing, disciplines share a room and speak in real time, stereotypes and preconceptions break down..." (Alsup, Brockman, Bush, & Letcher, 2011, p. 677). The literature offered here demonstrates how engaging the details can crumble stereotypes and preconceptions. However, it also shows how stubborn these stereotypes and preconceptions can be.

Microaggressions continue to bubble up, particularly in the language used by college writing instructors. High school teachers have long played scapegoat, carrying blame for students' perceived shortcomings as writers. Branch and Eckert (2012) explain these narratives of blame as so: "College professors correct the shortcomings students bring with them from their previous schooling; we offer a depth which offsets the one-dimensional views students learn in high school; we make students work and think with more sophistication and precision" (p. 20). However, the aggression is often subtle, guised merely as an underestimation of high school teachers' agency or as shock with their aptitude.

For example, Addison and McGee (2010) write: “The fact that more high school faculty in our sample reported engagement in deep-learning activities (better teaching practices?) than college faculty, may be surprising” (pp. 157-158). The parenthetical question and the “surprise” betray an assumption that college instructors, who are masters of their content, are also masters of the pedagogical knowledge required to teach that content. Similarly, Cook and Caouette (2013) describe that a group of adjunct composition instructors were “impressed and interested in the many ways that this group of high school instructors had worked to make the CCSS their own” (p. 54). While it is reassuring that connections can lead to greater respect, it is disheartening that low expectations are the baseline; the onus is on high school teachers to “surprise” or “impress” their college counterparts. This expectation is emphasized in an anecdote Reid (2011) shares about a high school teacher who called her “not bad, for college.” As Reid understood, the praise stemmed from the high school teacher being “pleasantly surprised that I knew something about and respected the work she and her colleagues did...” (p. 689). That is, while college faculty are “surprised” when they see high school teachers doing good work, high school teachers are “surprised” when they see college teachers respecting that work.

The underestimation of high school teachers as agentive professionals is also manifested in the popularity of document analysis as an approach by college faculty. For example, in Kelly-Riley’s (2017) enthusiastic overview of the CCSS, she asserts that the standards have “narrowed the curriculum” (p. 208) and declares that “Writing has a new place in American education...” (p. 215). Even if true, the analysis places all power within the CCSS document, without so much as a nod to the document’s dependence on teachers’ enactment. Lindstrom’s retrospective on standards movements (2018) at least renders high school teachers as a decision makers. However Lindstrom, too, forgoes nuance in stating simplistic poles with which teachers must align: “A compromise between teaching directly to the test and ignoring standards completely seems to be the common practice of modern-day English teachers...” (p. 49). The CCSS and the assessments used to measure them are conflated. A classroom teacher can, of course, honor the CCSS at the same time they choose not to teach to the test; stating them as mutually exclusive diminishes the complex acts of navigation that high school teachers perform. The strained professional relationship among secondary and postsecondary writing instructors is undoubtedly a source of strain, too, for the students traversing the two realms.

In terms of where to go from here: First, writing teachers of all levels would benefit from more research that centers collaborative partnerships across educational sites and that centers authentic inquiries into each others’ work. While local, one-off collaborations appear as yielding remarkable returns, logistical and scaling challenges make virtual collaborations a more viable option. It would be a

good use of our professional literary spaces to share assignments, syllabi, resources, practices, and stories.

Second, standardized measurements of students' "college readiness" force high school and college writing instructors in a strange predicament: "Secondary teachers feel compelled to teach to the test, and college instructors wish students hadn't learned so well in high school that an essay is five paragraphs and a thesis statement can appear only as the first or last sentence in the first of those five paragraphs" (Fanetti, Bushrow, & DeWeese, 2010, p. 79). Yet, for a slate of pragmatic reasons, colleges continue to rely upon standardized exams for course placements. To resist an equation between standardized exams administered in high school and college readiness—and there is consensus at least among the authors featured in Table 2 that this would be a worthwhile resistance—more research is needed that features colleges that have successfully deemphasized the tests either by not using them altogether or by using them as one aspect of a more robust evaluation of students' preparedness for college writing.

And third, students' lived experiences are a severely untapped data source. Many college composition classes are already having students do the work of creating literacy narratives. How can we leverage these artifacts to help high school teachers understand what students are taking from their classes and help college instructors nuance their understanding of high school? Transfer studies has led to a handful of longitudinal studies following students from freshman writing class through college and career: Blythe & Gonzales' study of transfer (2016), Brent's study of college writers transitioning to the workplace (2012), and, notably, the longitudinal writing studies conducted by Stanford and Harvard University. However, with the exception of Rueker's case study (2014) of bilingual students transitioning to college, there is a dearth of studies centering student voices. Listening to and reading about students' experiences in high school, in college, and across the transition can serve educators at both levels.

The existing literature features a few examples of local collaborations and inquiries across educational settings. It features abundant examples of rhetoric around the importance of collaboration and the interpretation of professional documents. It features some student voices narrating their own pasts (and presents) as writers across contexts. And yet, authentic communication and the distribution of information among educators remains a daunting pain point; existing conduits of knowledge proliferation—teacher education programs, professional development, academic journals, conferences—have proved insufficient for seeding the specifics.

Nearly a year into COVID-19, K-16 educational spaces have shifted beyond brick and mortar classrooms to inhabit virtual spaces as well. In this new educational landscape, the challenges and opportunities of virtual learning beckon for even stronger communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. The sustained villification of educators by non-educators, which has hit a fever pitch of

late, has also cast anew the harm of relying on assumptions and generalizations. This is certainly a truth, too, within the expansive profession of educators. If we forgo the pursuit of the specifics, if we forgo a genuine curiosity about each other's work, it is our students who are likely to be dizzied as they navigate among us.

Beyond local attempts to smooth over lines in the sand, the dangling project that remains is, partly, for secondary and postsecondary stakeholders to more faithfully understand and represent the work being conducted in each others' spaces for the benefit of the students moving between those spaces. It is also to strategically amplify those understandings in order to disrupt the narratives that wedge high school and college writing instructors apart.

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