

THESIS

THE TENSION OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM,
A SUBSERVIENT AND SUBVERSIVE CURRICULAR MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

THE TENSION OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, A SUBSERVIENT AND SUBVERSIVE CURRICULAR MOVEMENT

A Writing Across the Curriculum Program (or proponent or article) that does not seek to transform the classroom into a locus of consciousness-raising and liberating education is not one that is in keeping with the original intentions of WAC because it, along with Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, has traditionally worked towards a more socially just academy. Antiracism is of paramount importance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and, specifically, WAC because engaging in discussions of racial and language diversity is central to the objectives of writing instruction and consistent with the social justice aims of the field of Rhetoric and Composition. The question of whose language is valued and accepted—and, therefore, who is promoted and valued—is at the heart of all these curricular movements. To fail to make strides towards the integration of antiracist pedagogy and theory with WAC is a failure to listen to students and to anticipate their needs. I found that two of the most well-known and regarded WAC-focused journals, *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines*, show a lack of focus on antiracist pedagogy and theory. It appears as though, at least when looking at articles written for these publications from 2015-2019, current scholarship does not create space for antiracist educational pedagogy and theory. Based on the silence surrounding the topic within WAC-focused publications, there seems to be a sort of willful naivety within WAC with regards to social justice. WAC is not considering how it might integrate antiracism within its main publications. To provide an example of a journal that does create space for antiracist educational

pedagogy and theory and to ensure my methodological tool could be applied, I selected four articles from *Research in the Teaching of English* that lent themselves to comparative analysis. Because antiracism is a fundamental shift in how to teach, who to value, what to value, and the way to present ourselves, I make three recommendations for WAC scholars that immediately move to integrate antiracism.

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FORWARD: WHY IS A WHITE GUY DOING A THESIS ON ANTIRACISM AND WAC?

[T]here is a serious need for immediate and persistent self-critique. Committed cultural critics—whether white or black, scholars or artists—can produce work that opposes structures of domination, that present possibilities for a transformed future by willingly interrogating their own work on aesthetic and political grounds. This interrogation itself becomes an act of critical intervention, fostering a fundamental attitude of vigilance rather than denial.

bell hooks

Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics, 55

Beyond changing the social structure, is there much hope? No, there is not. So we better get on about the process of changing the social structure.

James Paul Gee

“Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: An Introduction,” 531

My interest in this research initially arose out of a desire to consider how WAC might be more equitable. It became an explicitly antiracist endeavor due to the continued prevalence of, and my subsequent inability to avoid seeing, syste

matic racism and oppression within and around the university system. The discussion on the WPA-Listserv in October 2018, incidents at Colorado State University during my time as a graduate student, and personal conversations I witnessed forced me to realize that looking away and pretending to be oblivious was complicity. So, I began to read and think and unlearn through the work of scholars who wrote of their experiences in academia and America. I attempted to understand antiracism by going back decades in order to try to catch up. And I am thankful for the work that exists, and for the scholars who wrote so someone like me could begin to understand and relearn. Talking about racism and whiteness as a white man is a predicament, but

one that I do not believe I can afford to avoid because my silence contributes to the problem, too. Beyond the inherent issue that my positionality affords me, I also must confront my personal past. Much of my environment growing up would have been characterized as “not racist,” a description that attempts to force a neutral stance where one cannot exist. At best, it could be said that growing up in Texas conditioned me to not see systematic and personal racism. More accurately, my past conditioned me to willfully choose to view those oppressed within America—especially based on race, but also on class, education, religion, and wealth—as deserving of their position. This background means that I have already unlearned a great deal, but I acknowledge that some of these biases still exist within me. I know that I have so much more to do.

As much as this research has been an academic exercise, it has also been deeply personal. I have benefited from a system that privileges whiteness, and so I have a responsibility to speak up within the system that benefits me. I must do antiracist work with full acknowledgement that I will get it wrong. I will mess up. But I start the work in order to learn from my mistakes and do the work a little bit better the next time. It is only by leaning in to my discomfort that I can begin to stop seeing the world through a lens of white supremacy.

Even as I type this, though, I realize my gender and ethnicity grant me power and privilege. My ability to take time to do this research and write about it may be beneficial for me, but my voice takes space that could be given to those who are traditionally marginalized and silenced. My presence in this conversation is inherently problematic. But it is more problematic for me to remain silent. For, as discussed by multiple scholars and analyzed later in this thesis, silence goes hand-in-hand with systematic oppression. And for this reason, I chose to write and think about racism and whiteness. All scholars need to interrogate racism and whiteness within

the academy and America, and this is also true of white scholars. Everyone needs to do identity work. Everyone needs to own up to who they are and who they have been. Our methods are always tied up in who we are, so this is critical because everyone's perspective affords certain opportunities and imposes certain limitations. This self-critique is at the heart of one's ability to sincerely engage with antiracism.

It is somewhat ironic that I write this in 2020 at Colorado State University. This is an institution about to host the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, home to the WAC Clearinghouse, and nationally known for its work with WAC. And yet, it is an institution without a WAC Program. Though I do not specifically address the question of how WAC might be brought back to CSU, the research contained within and the recommendations I propose should be useful for any institutions looking to reimagine their WAC Programs through a more meaningful and antiracist lens. This specific integration is timely both here and across the nation, and it is necessary if WAC is to again support consciousness-raising education.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Across the Curriculum is a movement that believes writing in all areas of education can improve student-engagement with material, retention of information, and critical thinking skills. Pamela Flash says that this function of writing can “increase senses of agency, intentionality, and rhetorical agility” (227). It focuses on the ways writing can function as a student-centered, cognitive-focused act that helps individuals process and synthesize information and the ways in which writing competency can be learned and applied in all areas of the university and life (McLeod 2-3). Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter view Writing Across the Curriculum as “an initiative in an institution to assist teachers across disciplines in using student writing as an instructional tool in their teaching. The movement strives to improve student learning and critical thinking through writing and to help students learn the writing conventions of their disciplines” (562). It does not seek to simply add writing papers or grammar lessons to already existing curriculum; it aims to transform. Traditionally, “WAC has been aimed at transforming pedagogy at the college level, at moving away from the lecture mode of teaching (the ‘delivery of information’ model) to a model of active student engagement with the material and with the genres of the discipline through writing, not just in English classes but in all classes across the university” (Flash 284). At its core, “WAC programs are not additive, but transformative—they aim not at adding more papers and tests of writing ability, but at changing the way both teachers and students use writing in the curriculum” (McLeod 2). A WAC Program (or proponent or article) that does not seek to transform the classroom into a locus of consciousness-raising and liberating education is not one that is in keeping with the original

intentions of Writing Across the Curriculum because it, along with Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, has traditionally worked towards a more socially just academy.

The Writing Across the Curriculum movement started in the 1970s as a result of a perceived literary crisis among American students. Articles like *Newsweek*'s "Why Johnny Can't Write" added to the panic, so politicians and university administrators came to English departments across America asking what could be done to better help the "generation of semi-literates" (qtd. Russell 161). As with other "literacy crises in the 1870s, 1910s, and late 1940s, the mid-1970s crisis coincided with widening access to previously excluded groups" (Russell 161). Unlike the prior literary crises, though, the response from English departments tended to focus on pushing back against the fear and worry. As a result, "the WAC movement, like the tradition of progressive education it is ultimately a part of, was born out of a desire to make the mass education system more equitable and inclusive" (Russell 166). Russell is not alone in his idealistic perception of WAC's genesis. C. C. Hendricks claims that WAC "has a rich history of attending to the relationship between writing and learning in ways that transcend disciplinary ways of knowing" (49). Scholars at the epicenter of the WAC movement, such as Toby Fulwiler and Art Young at Michigan Tech, aimed for an explicitly "consciousness-raising model of WAC" (Russell 163). The goal was not to respond to this literary crisis and make it go away in an attempt to return to business as usual. The goal was to use this opportunity to consider how writing might foster learning all across the university.

The 1974 Conference on College Composition and Communication statement, coming closely on the heels of some of the first WAC and WACish groups and in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, concerning Students' Right to Their Own Language affirmed that though there is a dialect called "edited Academic English" that exists within, is taught by, and valued by

the academy and certain sectors and cultures within America, the notion that this is universal or somehow objective is a myth. “The diversity of [America’s] cultural heritage ... has created a corresponding language diversity and, in the 20th century, most linguists agree that there is no single, homogeneous American ‘standard’” (CCCC SRTOL 7). The CCCC explicit says that “no dialect is inherently good or bad” (7), and that an emphasis on edited Academic English ultimately “encourage[s] a restrictive language bias” (14)—that is, it encourages a racist language bias. The statement on Students’ Right to Their Own Language (SRTOL) works from some of the same assumptions that the originators of Writing Across Curriculum valued: the university ought to be serving students by allowing them to engage in writing that values their perspectives and their voices. Both the CCCC statement and the formation of WAC in the late 1960s and 1970s demonstrated Writing Studies’ and Rhetoric and Composition’s desires to make the university a more accessible and equitable place, and were in line with some schools’ decisions to switch to open admissions policies (most notably the City University of New York). SRTOL was an intentional movement towards bringing antiracist notions of language into the academy and allowing them to transform the assumptions that underlie and inform curriculum and beliefs about epistemology. This is such an important moment in the history of Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition because “ideological struggles are struggles over *meaning*. Meaning is a social production, a practice of making the world *mean* something, and this meaning is produced through language ... language is the principle medium of ideologies, and ideologies are sets or chains of meaning located in language” (emphasis in original, C. Crenshaw 256). The argument of Students’ Right to Their Own Language is essentially that to deny students their language is to deny them a voice, literally, in the academy. SRTOL and WAC’s focus on multilingual students strive to take students’ prior knowledge into account,

believing it to be of the utmost importance. This means that these two curricular movements move forward based on how language might serve as an uplifting and liberatory tool whenever students maintain the opportunity to choose when to engage with the university and when to maintain their personal voice. It is a way of showing students, concretely, that they are valued. The question of whose language is valued and accepted—and, therefore, who is promoted and valued—are at the heart of all of these curricular movements. Scholars have worked to integrate WAC alongside these historically, showing that portions of the field have consistently aimed for student-centered education. If WAC wants to simply remake the same sort of student over and over again regardless of background, then WAC is currently good enough. But if WAC scholars want to be true to the original goals of the field, WAC must consider how to change and engage with students where they are and where they come from. It also must consider the way in which its past successes can be a hinderance to the present and future; success in the past is not indicative of success in the future, especially when what was good enough in the past is assumed to be good enough in the future.

In conjunction with socially just movements like SRTOL, educators considered whether Writing Across the Curriculum might be used as an underlying principle that would allow all students to graduate as competent writers. According to Bazerman et al., the “ownership” of WAC programs shifted away from grassroots initiatives with external grant funding to administrative mandates with internal funding (29-30). To again quote Russell: “WAC became popular among administrators in higher education, not only as a means of responding to the public demand for better student writing but also as a faculty development program and, in broader terms, as a means of encouraging a sense of academic community” (163). This kind of support made it easier to treat faculty development as a central tenet of improving student

literacy, which became an “extremely popular practice in American higher education” (Bazerman et al. 32). The emphasis on faculty development is still central to Writing Across the Curriculum today. While undoubtedly a beneficial shift in some ways, this change did bring some difficulties. McLeod believes that “faculty must own WAC programs in order for those programs to succeed” (2), so the movement away from grassroots organization meant that some WAC programs lost their support or effectiveness over time. Perhaps most notably, the shift in ownership changed the goals of the movement because the definition of success became more tied to the administration. WAC relies on the university because it is built within the system and relies on the system to continue. And this is not a bad thing, inherently, but it does mean that WAC has always tended to be subservient due to financial considerations within the university. Ultimately, WAC is a cross-disciplinary integration of writing’s best (and worse) impulses. It reflects what compositionists and other departments collectively value.

Regardless of the shift from grassroots to administrative, research indicates that students do tend to benefit from the inclusion of writing in classes all across the university no matter if the program is organized from the top-down or the bottom-up. Bazerman et al. reference a few different studies, one of which is Anne J. Herrington’s 1988 article “Teaching, writing, and learning: A naturalistic study of writing in undergraduate literature.” They do this to show that students “adopt the writing elements they are asked for,” so long as “students’ perceptions of the assignment and the tasks they must accomplish are shaped by the assignments, the roles instructors project, the interchange of the classroom, as well as the interpretive strategies that they are taught and practice in class discussion” (Bazerman et al. 44). More recently, Dan Melzer’s (2009) article further supports claims of the positive impact of WAC. His study of writing programs and various assignments from universities all across the country indicates that

nearly all writing assigned within his dataset proves to be beneficial to students by being transactional and informative (W246).

WAC is not a universally beneficial movement, though; it is important to note its shortcomings, specifically the way in which WAC does not always take students from diverse backgrounds and languages into account. Jonathan Hall and Michelle Cox argue that while WAC may serve as a liberatory model for traditional students, the changing demographics of the university mean that WAC must also change if it is to continue to work across the curriculum. The trend of “increasing cultural and linguistic diversity” (Hall 33) is something to pursue and celebrate, but it is also a challenge. Reflecting back on the initial goals of WAC, Hall believes that WAC professionals “need to catch up with this new reality” (35) if they view themselves as agents of change. From this same perspective, Cox asks whether WAC is actually able to open “doors to knowledge-making, active learning, and communication for students across the curriculum” (1) from all backgrounds. Later in her article, she answers in the negative, and argues that WAC hurts Multilingual Learners more than it helps them (5). Paul Kei Matsuda echoes these concerns, saying that while “efforts may have enhanced student learning in many ways, they may also have created additional challenges to some second language writers who are successful in learning that materials but who may struggle with writing” (47). As a result of these shortcomings, WAC scholars have sought to adjust WAC and focus more on the linguistic diversity students bring into the classroom. However, simply pushing for more linguistic diversity is not enough. In one of the few articles included in *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines* over the past ten years that specifically addresses antiracism, Mya Poe states that efforts to take Multilingual Learners and second-language learners into account are good, but frequently “ignore students' racial identities in favor of their linguistic identities” (2) Students do

not fit neatly into single categories that teachers can focus on one-at-a-time. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's discussion of intersectionality (1991, 1242-1243) continues to ring true; educators have to remember people are complex. Poe expounds on her earlier point later in her article, reminding scholars that "language teaching is not merely about the dissemination of technical skills but about the interactions that inform those instructional contexts both in the classroom and in the ideologies that pervade those contexts" (Poe 2). The interactions make the learning.

Bringing in antiracism to existing fields and pedagogies is not an original idea—it builds off of Students' Right to Their Own Language and is the subject of much writing within Rhetoric and Composition. Mary Carol Combs argues that the willingness of instructors to "strongly affirm students' right to their own language" is a consciously antiracist decision that treats education as "emancipatory" and sets "exceptional teachers" apart from others (38). The reason SRTOL can be called "emancipatory" is because giving students a choice to value their home languages and dialects inherently means that "they are also given a choice to value themselves and other languages" (Kirkland and Jackson 147). Some scholars, such as Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, argue that there is no such thing as an unbiased, non-discriminatory form of meritocracy because the definitions that determine whether someone is fit for a position or better than another candidate rely on long-standing (and frequently unstated or unconscious) assumptions that flow from racist, sexist, and classist views. From this perspective, unbiased merit is a myth. And to an extent, even biased merit is a myth because the "biased" part of that phrase frequently takes over the "merit" portion of it. A terrible example of this is presented in discussion of scholar Melville Herskovits' views on W.E.B. Du Bois' "politically self-interested" research and theories. Herskovits saw Du Bois "as an advocate who eschewed 'objectivity' in matters pertaining to the inferiority of Black people" (K. Crenshaw 2017, 2301). Though few

scholars would openly agree with Herskovits opinion today, Crenshaw argues that his beliefs about knowledge production, language, and scholarship persist to this day, which means that some of academia's central, unbiased, objective beliefs are steeped in racism (and sexism and classism, as well). The university is an "arena of struggle in the same way that voting booths [are]. They [are] sites where racial power [is] created, aggregated, and mobilized in ways that legitimized racially inequitable ends (K. Crenshaw 2017, 2306). She is supported in these claims by other scholars, such as Julie Kailin, who says education's "role in ideological reproduction, [means] it is not surprising to find that racism has been an organic component of the American system of education." (173). Within the university system, basic writing and writing programs are, in particular, "always subject to the political economy because of structural racism" (Villanueva 2013, 103) because they frequently viewed as remedial, necessary only because of failings on the part of students who arrive at the university unprepared.

Asao B. Inoue goes into more detail in the forward to *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication*, saying that structural racism within the academy "works by hierarchical categories, not equal ones. It works by vertically uneven relations to power, not laterally even ones. These things affect rewards and punishments, and in the academy, rewards and punishments mean assessment and grading, opportunities and chances, policies and their methods" (xiii). The fact that structural and personal racism is in place means that WAC, if it intends to serve all students, must push back and explicitly stand against racism prevalent in the university and in the discourses of the university (Inoue qtd. Learner 114). Antiracist pedagogy, according to Carlin Borsheim-Black, is any "approach that works proactively to interrupt racism" (409). But it does more than interrupt—it seeks to transform as it challenges the "system of domination" (Kailin 173). Antiracist theory holds that people, ideas, systems, and actions are

either racist or antiracist based upon how they are functioning in a given time and place. The adjective (racist or antiracist) is not a permanent descriptor, though. The key is that a person or action should be judged by its current function in its current time and place. But everything will either be racist or antiracist—the middle ground is an absence of opinion, which benefits those in power and the systems currently in place. And to this end, Inoue, among others, sees “a lack of any substantive theorizing or use of theories of race and racism, intersectional or not, in how teaching or learning writing across disciplines happens or could happen” (Learner 114). WAC does not currently seem to care about and consider antiracism.

The classroom must be viewed “as a communal place ... [dependent] on collective effort” (1994, 8), according to bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress*. Merely stating that antiracist theory is a good thing or making place for some students to address it is not enough. Instructors intent on pursuing consciousness-raising WAC “must insist that everyone’s presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be merely stated” (1994, 8) or else WAC runs the risk of othering groups of students and undermining the sort of educational awareness that some within the field seek to purport. Later in her book, hooks says that if instructors “really want to create a cultural climate where biases can be challenged and changed, all border crossings must be seen as valid and legitimate” (1994, 131). She clarifies that this is not to say that anything is acceptable and beneficial, full stop, but that through “critique or critical interrogation” (1994, 131) scholars might collectively push back against the sort of systematic racism Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Victor Villanueva, and Asao B. Inoue address above, and that doing so “is ultimately less threatening than a continued attachment to and support of existing systems of domination” (1994, 131). The analysis and conclusions of this research may serve as a model for other scholars hoping to integrate antiracist pedagogy and theory into their classrooms and work.

My inquiry seeks to address how WAC can “find ways to help our colleagues in compassionate ways to deal with this structural problem” (Inoue qtd. Learner 115) by continuing to both serve and subvert.

Writing Across the Curriculum has traditionally been and will continue to be on a spectrum—it must be both subversive and subservient because it is within such a wide field with so many different individuals and departments. WAC cannot exist without other curriculum; it depends “on faculty and departments in other disciplines who deliver the courses in which the writing is taught. WAC Programs rely, too, on funding and support from larger administrative entities as well as on the consensus of the academic departments whose faculty are teaching the program” (Malenczyk 94-95). WAC is a product of the university system for the university system, and so we cannot remove it from its context and expect it to fit in without adjustment. WAC must exist within the current system because it relies on other departments and theories to be the base that it builds on.

As shown above, WAC can be a focal point in consciousness-raising education. But it can only do this so long as it makes itself worthwhile to departments and students who want nothing to do with consciousness-raising. “Writing across the curriculum is realized through changes in faculty and student assumptions about writing” (Magnotto and Stout 23). It is through its usefulness to faculty and students that WAC is taken seriously and given a position of influence. WAC can hold the binary discussed above in appropriate tension if it functions as a bottom-up movement that is explicitly connected with consciousness-raising education. This idea of being both subversive and subservient is not new; Pamela Flash, while talking about a reflective-focused Writing Engaged Curriculum, says that in order “to subvert resistance, the model would need to be owned by internal stakeholders. To instigate change, it would need to

offer a reflective process aimed at uncovering and working through issues and assumptions that may be blocking it” (232). Essentially, WAC must show itself to be useful before attempting to change minds. Villanueva calls this *jaiberia*, or “subversive complicity” (2011, 173), and sees it as a “trick” scholars must perform: “maintaining a cultural identity while complying with dominance” (2011, 173). WAC and its derivatives must always hold their position in the university in tension between subservience and subversion. One way that WAC proponents can best realize this is through a strong integration of antiracist theory.

WAC does have a history of social justice and inclusiveness, but it only does this up to a certain point. It engages with SRTOL and considerations of multilingual learners and works to decenter language away from Standard Academic English. But, it does not push into racial and ethnic considerations, at least to any meaningful degree. The issue that I noticed and address with this study is that antiracist pedagogy and theory has not been part of WAC traditionally or recently. My reading suggests that there has been one attempt at the integration of antiracism into WAC-focused journals, and that was in a special issue of *Across the Disciplines* in 2013. My review of the literature suggests that this is the only instance of peer-reviewed articles that are specifically focused on antiracist pedagogy and WAC. (There are, on the other hand, book reviews and interviews; Asao Inoue’s interview in 2018 is the most notable example of this.) Of the articles in the special issue of *Across the Disciplines*, Mya Poe’s article seems to be the only one that is focused on faculty development. This lack of conversation about antiracism and WAC suggests the necessity of the study undertaken in this thesis. Here I consider the degree to which WAC scholars have taken up an antiracist philosophy and inclusive pedagogy and the degree to which they have not.

Antiracism is of paramount importance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and, specifically, Writing Across the Curriculum because engaging in discussions of racial and language diversity is central to the objectives of writing instruction and consistent with the social justice aims of the field of Rhetoric and Composition. To fail to make strides towards the integration of antiracist pedagogy and theory with WAC is a failure to listen to students and to anticipate their needs. It supports discriminatory and damaging language standards that are currently in place (and have been for some time). This is particularly harmful because of the unique potential that Writing Across the Curriculum holds. WAC is positioned to bring about a more antiracist university due to the fact that it works to support both students and faculty. With students, by advocating for their voices and right to liberatory education. With faculty, by serving as a professional development tool and specifically challenging faculty to revise their curriculum and giving them a chance to continue doing what they want to do better. In order to allow WAC to serve all students, an adjustment in thinking needs to occur. Proposing a curriculum redesign through WAC with an explicitly antiracist emphasis could allow WAC to return to its roots and function as a liberatory movement. A good place to start this line of inquiry is with the intended outcomes of WAC because, according to WAC scholars Chris Thaiss and Susan McLeod, “WAC programs are defined in part by their intended outcomes” (284). While actions are the ultimate show of belief, the stated goals are partially (and initially) how a program or movement will be judged. This is an appropriate starting point because I do not intend to suggest a watered-down antiracism that creates space for traditionally oppressive regimes and hegemonies (and those who belong to these groups) to feel hopeful and complacent in their lack of effort. So, what are the stated goals of WAC? What were the stated goals of WAC?

I aim to address three ideas with this thesis. The first is that WAC has the ability to function as a carrier of theory and ideology. It is uniquely able to work within the university as something other than a department, and it further blurs lines as both student-focused and teacher-focused pedagogy. Second, because of its unique position as a carrier of ideology, it is worth considering what, if any, socially just pedagogy and ideology WAC has supported over the last five years (2015-2019). This is of particular relevance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and WAC due to the discussions taking place around racism, sexism, and social justice both publicly (see the discussion that came out of Michelle LaFrance's "Rubrics to Assess Writing Assignments" WPA-Listserve) and privately. And third, to consider the extent to which antiracist pedagogy and theory, in particular, have been part of Writing Across the Curriculum, and to consider whether antiracism should or should not be an integral part of WAC. Is this something that WAC is able to integrate in the pursuit of consciousness-raising education? And if so, should it be done? This idea is relevant because some members of the field are working to push WAC into explicit integration with antiracist theory and other socially just theories while some members of the field seem to view social justice as a fad or distraction.

These ideas are important because they get at what scholars believe the purpose of education to be. How WAC scholars answer this question is exigent because Writing Across the Curriculum stands on the precipice of whatever answer the field decides. If the purpose is employment, then WAC ought to go along with and support the expectations of various departments in order to promote a cohesive learning environment so that students can understand the importance of their time in school. From this perspective, WAC is subservient to the political and economic state. While education might still focus on the student, it only does so in so far as this focus ultimately ends with a job. But if the purpose is more idealistic and focused on

consciousness raising, then WAC ought to subvert the expectations of various departments in order to promote student-centered growth. And if this is the case, then WAC is subservient to not the political or economic state, but students and the ways in which students might seize control of their own lives and remake the university, the state, and the economy. From this view, institutions owe a great deal to the students, not the other way around.

METHODOLOGY: GROUNDING THIS STUDY IN WRITING-ACROSS-THE CURRICULUM (WAC) AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In order to consider the ways in which WAC publications have (and have not) integrated antiracist pedagogy and theory, I elected to modify an existing tool published by William Condon and Carol Rutz. In “A Taxonomy of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs: Evolving to Serve Broader Agendas,” the scholars aim to provide WAC proponents with language to describe, label, and analyze WAC Program around the United States. They propose dividing WAC Programs in one of four ways: Foundational (basic engagement with a pedagogy or theory; it is a thing that exists, but not much more thought is given), Established (stated belief in importance of specific pedagogy or theory and desire for integration, but application and research are not yet part of the field in a continuous manner), Integrated (stated belief that specific pedagogy or theory is necessary and important; the field supports this belief through active application and research in a variety of contexts and ways), or Institutional Change Agent (full immersion of specific pedagogy or theory in the field to the degree that even when it is not the focus of application or research, it still informs application or research due to its permeation; it is not lip service to the pedagogy or theory, but a shift in the underlying assumptions of scholars across the field that results in changes to beliefs about the university, knowledge, students, teachers, and learning) (362-363). Each of these four labels is applied based on areas of focus pertinent to WAC Programs. The areas of focus (see Figure One) were determined through discussion with notable scholars in the field of Writing Across the Curriculum. Condon and Rutz believe their taxonomy is useful for individuals who want to promote WAC at their universities because the labels allow identification of “where the program stands within a national context,

according to national norms” (379). The characteristics of each label might allow these people to “make an argument for success” (379) and “initiate a formal assessment of [a program’s] status and momentum” (379) within their universities. This self-assessment seeks to identify where a program is in order to determine what specific steps it must take to “become part of the fabric of the institution, contributing its energy to the whole, and receiving energy from the whole as well” (380).

	Foundational	Established	Integrated	Institutional Change Agent
Primary Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-based statement of purpose • Increase writing in curriculum • Teaching writing becomes everyone’s job • Understand difference between learning to write and writing to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty development and missionary models continue • Need to lead others to serve WAC agenda • Create reliable, continual archives of materials, policies, evolution of program—history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration into larger agendas: institutional assessment, accreditation, accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAC drives institutional change
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely volunteer effort, sometimes with minor reassigned time • Dependent on good will from umbrella (provost, dean, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has own budget, through often on temporary funding • Program identity emerges: space, staffing, programming become more visible and regularized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget grows to support more substantial presence • At least some permanent funding assigned to WAC • Funding supports outreach to faculty and students, as well as to other initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial, permanent, institutional funding for well-defined and established roles and personnel
Organization/ Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty development model • Vision from one leader or small group of collaborators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic administrative existence or implementation • Identity of its own, differentiated from general education or other allies • People with WAC mapped into workloads • Cohort of supporters or stakeholders develops (usual suspects) • Interdisciplinary policy committee emerges, preferably tied to faculty governance structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established structure, with director and substantial support • Governing/policy committee has clear place in faculty/institutional governance structures • Faculty ownership emerges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional identity congruent with activities • Program capable of existence independent of umbrella (provost or dean’s office, etc.)

Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move beyond inoculation model for learning to write • Focus on writing pedagogy • Missionary work: gain faculty buy-in for WAC goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes identified in participatory process • WAC scholarship recognized as valuable within institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to coordinate with other efforts and preserve program identity and mission • Faculty development part of larger context • Upper administration recognizes validity of WAC assessment practices, seeks advice from consultants in WAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliances with other curricular initiatives feed into improvement • Program moves beyond usual suspects, becomes widely valued resource • Institutional patterns new initiatives on existing, valued writing model • Theater of action broadens to include multiple campus initiatives or collaborations in multiple efforts to build quality
Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early success based on leadership's energy and charisma • Recruitment of range of faculty to WAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental improvement, guided by careful processes for change • Recruitment expands to include faculty from whole curriculum • Key players/founders/vision people can hand off pieces of program or whole program to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing infused throughout curriculum • Carefully designed assessment process with multiple, generative benchmarks • Program seen as indispensable, as source of pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full theorizing of program(s) • Begin to have signature pedagogy (Shulman) • WAC is signature program for institution
Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Barbara Walvoord, Toby Fulwiler and Art Young, James Britton, Elaine Maimon, Jay Robinson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Russell, Susan H. McLeod, John Bean, Barbara Walvoord and Lucille Parkinson McCarthy, Chris M. Anson bibliography, Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Bazerman, David Russell, Susan H. McLeod et al., Kathleen Blake Yancey and Brian Huot, Barbara Walvoord et al. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard H. Haswell, William Condon and Carol Rutz, Jeffrey Galin, Chris M. Anson, Pamela Flash

Figure One: William Condon and Carol Rutz's Taxonomy of WAC Programs

Condon and Rutz are well situated to formulate a tool that effectively taxonomizes WAC Programs, and it is a good way to ground my specific methodology within the field I aim to study. The original taxonomy focused on labeling programs in order to see what next steps were needed or desired. This is beneficial for its intended use. However, their areas of focus do not translate well to other mediums, such as journals or conference presentations. In order to preserve their goals of self-assessment but apply it to journals, and specifically Writing Across

the Curriculum publications, I sought a heuristic that would allow me more relevant areas of focus so as to “provide information that [could] be used in evaluation [and] think more systematically about these texts” (Yancey 96). Further, I wanted to ensure that the standards for assessment were set by me so I would be able to demonstrate that what I am doing is what I intended to do. In her discussion of assessment of digital texts, Yancey states that any heuristic should use “another language ... to move our assessment to a higher level of abstraction” (96), which means “to think in terms of pattern/arrangement as functioning in both design and reception” (96). She invokes Adams et al.’s comparison of texts and textiles, noting the shared origin of the word and talking about the way in which individual threads come together in an “ordered complexity” (qtd. Yancey 100) that can be appreciated through analysis of the relationship that forms within the resulting text or textile. It is through this relationship of the individual threads that coherence is found: a “composition is an expression of relationships—between parts and parts, between parts and whole, between the visual and the verbal, between text and context, between reader and composer, between what is intended and what is unpacked, between hope and realization. And, ultimately, between human beings” (Yancey 100). This description of individual pieces coming together in relationship in order to form coherence is what I needed to assess articles well. Further, I used this tool to emphasize ideology and underlying theories and pedagogies. For these reasons, I turned to Critical Discourse Analysis, or CDA. Barbara Johnstone’s *Discourse Analysis* provided the grounding for the areas of focus (see Figure Two) in the modified chart. I replaced the areas of focus (the left-hand vertical column) in the Condon and Rutz chart with four areas of focus (questions and analysis about choices that authors make) within the frame of CDA, specifically Johnstone’s discussion of how choices about discourse work together to demonstrate underlying ideology.

	Foundational	Established	Integrated	Change Agent
Choices about representation of knowledge status				
Choices about naming and wording				
Choices about the representation of actors, actions, and events				
Choices about incorporating and representing other voices				

Figure Two: WAC-Marginalization Grid

Within Johnstone’s explanation of CDA, she says the “controlling theoretical idea behind CDA is that texts, embedded in recurring ‘discursive practices’ for their production, circulation, and reception which are themselves embedded in ‘social practice,’ are among the principal ways in which ideology is circulated and reproduced” (53). From her perspective, allowing our words to remain unexamined gives implicit consent to the (frequently unstated) hegemonic narratives and ideologies because unexamined language works to “make oppressive social systems seem natural and desirable and to mask mechanisms of oppression” (53-54). These ideas fit in both with the tool I created for analysis and within the antiracist emphasis I hoped to analyze. Johnstone’s outlining of CDA shows that it has the potential to provide insight into articles and journals when considering how systematic racism is perpetuated by writing, research, and discourse that is not explicitly antiracist in nature.

When I set out on this project, I planned to show how my methodological tool might be used to see the extent to which an article (and journal) adheres to a specific theory, pedagogy, or ideology. I chose to examine published texts from the field of WAC and extended this to include other texts from writing and English studies in order to understand the degree to which the field has been or continues to grapple with questions related to inclusive pedagogy, antiracist pedagogy, and language diversity. What we spend time on researching and writing about denotes what we value and what we take seriously. I chose this focus within WAC as an example due to my own loyalties.

I started by looking at the possibility of examining conference proposals from the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference. I hoped to analyze the submissions through CDA with a focus on the pedagogies, theories, publications, and scholars referenced (both implicitly and explicitly), and explicitly consider the way in which antiracism was included or left out. Unfortunately, this angle did not prove feasible due to time constraints and limited publicly available information. I still wanted to consider what WAC conference presentations focused on, and so I attempted to gather and examine conference proposals from academic events that hosted WAC-focused presentations. Though I did gather a great deal of publicly available data that would be suitable for analysis, there was little consistency in terms of what was available (both in terms of recorded documentation from conference-to-conference and from year-to-year). Though these datasets did not prove useful, the focus of my research remained unchanged. I determined that considering journals and books would provide me with the consistency that was missing from conference documentation, and so, in order to cast as wide a net as possible, I looked at reputable and relevant publications from the past twenty years that mentioned Writing Across the Curriculum in any capacity. This was far too large of a dataset,

and so I first cut out books in favor of journals. Even then, though, I was still looking at over 300 issues of various publications. Eventually, I narrowed my focus down to nine journals and my scope to the last five years (2015-2019) I took time to closely examine their individual issues in order to see which ones discussed WAC, antiracism, and would be useful for analysis. As I did this, I found that the two most well-known and regarded WAC-focused journals, *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines* (Malenczyk 98; personal discussion with WAC scholars), showed a lack of focus on antiracist pedagogy and theory. It appeared as though, at least when looking at articles written for these publications from 2015-2019, scholarship was not creating space for antiracist educational pedagogy and theory. This claim can be made because articles and books on the integration of WAC and antiracism are not being published in the most prominent WAC publications (*The WAC Journal*, *Across the Disciplines*). There are references to antiracism in two places from 2015 through 2019: one is an interview (of Asao B. Inoue) and the other is a book (based on a special issue of *Across the Disciplines* from 2013) that only partially addresses WAC and antiracism (Mya Poe is the main scholar considering this issue in the collection and special issue). Besides these two examples, antiracism is absent even going back to 2010. In light of the ongoing cultural and political conversations, Writing Across the Curriculum seems to be avoiding antiracist pedagogy and theory even as prominent members of the field (both WAC and Rhetoric and Composition) discuss how WAC might better serve all students. *Across the Disciplines* and *The WAC Journal* are both Foundational, according to WAC-Marginalization grid (Figure Two).

In other, non-WAC-focused journals, the topic is constantly brought up and written about. Many of the other journals I considered (such as *Composition Forum*, *Reflections*, or *Research in the Teaching of English*) contained multiple articles throughout the same time period

(2015-2019) that examine antiracist pedagogy and theory from a variety of perspectives. Due to the fact that I wanted to ensure my methodological tool could be applied in the way I intended, I elected to turn to a journal with a larger corpus of antiracist texts. *Research in the Teaching of English* turned out to be an excellent candidate due to the prevalence and continued nature of their antiracist work. Specifically, the journal does not include antiracist pedagogy and theory only tangentially or in special issues, but regularly and as a constant influence. During the time frame of 2015-2019 (the original time frame I used for considering journals), *RTE* includes many articles that cover a variety of focuses. I selected four articles from four different issues that lent themselves to comparative analysis because they deal with antiracism and a similar subject matter with which I felt comfortable due to my background as a high school teacher. Though not the main focus of each article, the writers are all working within or studying elementary, middle, and high schools. The articles selected cover three main areas of inquiry: the direct address of antiracist pedagogy (Carlin Borsheim-Black's "‘It’s pretty much white’: Challenges and Opportunities of an Antiracist Approach to Literature Instruction in a Multilayered White Context" from May 2015), an argument for reimagining Critical English Education in light of antiracist pedagogy (Lamar L. Johnson's "Where Do We Go from Here? Toward a Critical Race English Education" from November 2018), and the implementation of antiracist practices (Ebony Elizabeth Thomas' "‘We Always Talk About Race’: Navigating Race Talk Dilemmas in the Teaching of Literature" from November 2015 and Tisha Lewis Ellison and Marva Solomon's "Counter-Storytelling vs. Deficit Thinking around African American Children and Families, Digital Literacies, Race, and the Digital Divide" from February 2019). Switching to *RTE* allows me to show what a journal at the opposite end of the spectrum—one functioning as a Change

Agent—looks like. Further, it provides the analysis with more material to consider, allowing a more robust assessment.

The advantage of combining Condon and Rutz's taxonomy with Johnstone's CDA is twofold. First, combining these two analytic instruments allows me to consider the ways in which articles consider specific pedagogies and theories. Analyzing and labeling these articles allows discussions about how an article (and, by extension, a journal) interacts with a pedagogy or theory and what steps might be taken to expand and grow this interaction. To consider the articles through the areas of focus one-by-one is helpful within the right context, but it does not allow for an expanded discussion considering what is being done and what is still to do. Using the combined tool allows discussions and comparisons based on specific traits or absences and can lead to theorization. Within this specific study, the WAC-Marginalization grid allows direction for scholars looking to better focus on, consider, research, promote, and integrate antiracist pedagogy and WAC. The second reason is that these two original sources (Condon and Rutz's taxonomy and Johnstone's CDA) both speak to different areas of my research. This works to tailor the WAC-Marginalization grid for my research, ensuring that the tool works in its intended manner. Condon and Rutz ground the analysis within the field of Rhetoric and Composition, and specifically Writing Across the Curriculum; Johnstone explicitly shows CDA to be a tool that is inherently political and naturally able to consider marginalized viewpoints. The intersection suggests how varying levels of WAC can be further analyzed via an analysis of programs' awareness of marginalized populations who are affected by WAC and writing programs in general. The WAC-Marginalization grid allows discussion of how any article interacts with any theory, meaning that it has the potential to be taken and reapplied across many disciplines.

While not the main focus of my thesis, this tool is perhaps the biggest takeaway, at least in terms of what others might utilize. The heuristic I provide through the mashup of Condon and Rutz and Johnstone is meaningful because, as an inquiry-based tool (Yancey 96), it can be reused and reapplied by other scholars. It allows scholars to bring together different areas of consideration and view them together, which can help reduce bias and avoid placing too large of an emphasis on any one area of focus. For example, it is good to think about the citations and sources brought into any of the articles, and I imagine looking at multiple articles (or even full journals over years) will show as to who is cited and who a field values. But to only consider citations is too narrow an emphasis and may lead to unhelpful (and potentially incorrect) conclusions. Looking at each article from four different areas of CDA, though, eliminates this potential pitfall (or at least downplays it).

More than anything else, this tool functions as a prompt for discussion. Utilizing the WAC-Marginalization grid creates a more specific discussion, but it is not so firmly defined that it shuts out the potential for disagreement (or to create a problematic binary). The chart, then, seems precisely imperfect. Phrased differently, it is what Elliot et al., playing off Peter Elbow's "good enough evaluation" call good enough assessment: "a pragmatic approach that sidesteps dead-end conflicts and attends to specific instances" (n.p.) The tool creates confines which allow discussion and debate within a narrow area to bring people into the conversation and allow engagement with a large topic from an accessible starting point. With my study, I utilize it to address how scholars within the field of Writing Across the Curriculum integrate antiracist pedagogy and theory, and the tool was built with this specific focus in mind. By looking at individual articles and journals, it is possible to address, however imperfectly, where the field stands in relation to current research and in relation to where we might want to be. Further, it

allows scholars to consider what might, at a program- or university-wide level, constitute success and what steps should be taken to achieve success (with the understanding that it is always a process of improvement, never an arrival at a final version). And finally, it provides language to discuss how WAC might change “the fabric of the institution, contributing its energy to the whole” (Condon and Rutz 379) through antiracist WAC faculty-development.

FINDING A DATASET: WHY *THE WAC JOURNAL* AND *ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES*
WERE NOT ANALYZED

The issue that I noticed and address with this study is that antiracist pedagogy and theory has not been part of Writing Across the Curriculum traditionally or recently. WAC does have a strong history of social justice and inclusiveness, but it only does this up to a certain point. It engages with Students' Right to Their Own Language and focuses on multilingual learners in order to decenter Standard Academic English and value all dialects, but it does not usually push into racial and ethnic considerations. There is a silence among WAC-focused publications with regards to discussions of race. For this reason, I considered the implications of this silence as it exists within *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines* before moving forward with my analysis of the articles from *Research in the Teaching of English*.

Discussions about race, as Ebony Elizabeth Thomas finds in her observation of high school classrooms, are characterized by “silence and evasion” (171). This idea has been discussed by scholars such as Toni Morris, who Thomas quotes to support her findings: “in matters of race, silence and evasion have historically ruled literary discourse” (9 qtd. 155). Thomas explains the inherent dangers in this phenomenon, clarifying that “discursive silence and evasion can encode race without naming it, thereby circumventing debate” (155). Carrie Crenshaw expands the idea in “Resisting Whiteness’ Rhetorical Silence” when she explains “whiteness is protected by silence ... If we silence talk about race, we will perpetuate whiteness’ silent privilege” (272). This trend is worthy of note, especially since the WAC publications examined provide another anecdote concerning silence around race. In a way, the single biggest finding within my research is what was not present in WAC-focused publications. The absence

of antiracist pedagogy and theory ultimately reveals the value, or lack of value, that *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines* place on racial justice. There are many possible reasons why these journals have not published articles considering and promoting these topics. Some place the blame on the editors or peer reviewers, some on the researchers, and some on the field as a whole. Regardless of the exact reasons why, a few of which are considered in the results of the paper, the absence shows a distinct lack of care concerning how antiracist pedagogy and theory might help make WAC a more equitable and meaningful movement.

In the same source that informs the WAC-Marginalization grid, Barbara Johnstone explains how researchers can code and learn from silence:

Noticing silences, things that are not present, is more difficult than noticing things that are present, but it is equally important. Foregrounds are only possible in the context of backgrounds; what is not said or cannot be said is the background without which what is said could not be heard. Silence sometimes becomes the foreground, [and] only when silence becomes the foreground and discourse the background ... do we routinely notice silence and its roles in discourse and world. (70-71)

The “habit of ignoring race” (Morrison 9 qtd. Thomas 155) is so pervasive within the academy that those who attempt to draw attention to it, as Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw explains, end up challenging “the deepest pretense of liberal sensibility—that universities themselves are apolitical arbiters of neutral knowledge rather than participants in the struggle over how social power is exercised” (2017, 2298). This is, perhaps, why many people within Writing Across the Curriculum are resistant to the idea that an integration of antiracist theory in order to reimagine the entire academic system is necessary. To admit this (and to be clear, simply not commenting on it is silence, which, as discussed above, perpetuates narratives of white supremacy) is to consider whether one’s own position came about not through merit but through privilege. Few academics would take the position that there is no such thing as white privilege, but many are not

willing to “overtly acknowledge their white privilege because they think of themselves as average, morally neutral non-racists” (C. Crenshaw 255). The research I am doing attempts to draw attention to silence and bring it to the foreground; it is not a unique idea, and it will not be the first time race has been the focus of a study. It is important, though, to notice the silence within Writing Across the Curriculum journals and pay attention to it and talk about what has historically been ignored. By bringing these silences to the foreground and treating them as meaningful evidence, it is possible to see how WAC frequently fails students. There have been many successes over WAC’s fifty years, but to only focus on these at the expense of the work still to do shows that this movement is not actually concerned with equality within the university. WAC ought to be more concerned with its legacy moving forward than what has already happened.

Discussions concerning the absence of antiracist pedagogy and theory within Writing Across the Curriculum lead to foundational questions about learning and the purpose of education. What is the role of education? Who has the right to learn? Who should teach? And ultimately, who holds power in these situations? These are fitting questions to consider since “struggles over power and control are often struggles over whose words get used and whose do not and over who gets to speak and who does not” (Johnstone 71). My review of literature on Writing Across the Curriculum suggests that it has been an effective intervention within the current education system because it has made itself useful to mainstream discourse and arguably subservient to hegemonic educational systems, including linguistic systems. Silence supports the majoritarian position and beliefs; it allows what is assumed to be the norm to continue unchallenged. WAC’s silence concerning racial discourse reinforces mainstream discourses rather than challenge them; it essentially works well as a curricular movement for some students

but not for others, just like the education system writ large. But is this position not at least in part due to WAC's precarious position? As with most writing programs, WAC is a contingent movement that relies on funding from central locations. WAC has been "successful largely because it appealed to the interests of faculty and the concerns of administrators alike" (Malenczyk 89). This appeal has resulted in WAC's position as a curricular movement subservient to the university, which makes sense given its contingency on funding from central locations. But this subservience also results in the reinforcement of majoritarian power dynamics, beliefs about learning, and beliefs about who has the right to learn. To stand as an outlier and move towards liberated and liberating self-respect puts the entire program at risk. The question then becomes if there is a way to adopt antiracist pedagogy while still maintaining an influential position within the university? And if so, how? The *RTE* articles analyzed provide some insights that may prove beneficial, and these are expanded in the recommendations at the end of this thesis. But there is ultimately no clear answer that can be neatly presented and published. What can be said is that there is at least the potential for WAC to push back against the system by adopting explicitly antiracist positions. And what is more, it arguably must do this if it seeks to reach its potential as a pedagogy of empowerment.

APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY: *RESEARCH IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH'S*
COMMITMENT TO ANTIRACISM

The areas of focus analyzed within the following pages, as stated above, come from Barbara Johnstone's *Discourse Analysis*. These four categories are included due to the way in which they provide a holistic analysis of the choices made by the authors. Each of the articles analyzed is representative of how WAC scholars might work to better integrate antiracist pedagogy and theory into their own work. Lamar L. Johnson's article will be detailed most thoroughly due to the fact that it serves as a nearly flawless model of antiracist scholarship both in substance and style. All the articles, though, do three things particularly well. First, they show and tell. By this, I mean that they all put their theorizing into practice through their research. It allows the author and the audience to function as agents within the research by promoting change and asking something of the reader. Second, the authors work to decenter traditional assumptions about epistemology by giving voice to people and ideas typically not heard within academic works. How scholars locate epistemology reveals assumptions about who belongs in the university and who does not. The authors show that knowledge is co-created through the relationships between subjects, but also put themselves into their work so that they actively interact with the participants. Third, they do not utilize euphemisms throughout their work. They are explicit in their word choice and discuss the necessity of using direct language to be more effective at challenging oppression.

Before getting into the analysis, I will briefly summarize each article in order to provide a bit of background that will assist in comprehending the analysis. After the summaries, each of

the four areas of focus will be introduced, explained, and then applied to the four articles from *Research in the Teaching of English*.

Carlin Borsheim-Black's article focuses on the way in which one white high school teacher in Michigan attempted to integrate antiracist pedagogy and Critical Whiteness Studies into her *To Kill A Mockingbird* unit. Borsheim-Black observed the class and recorded the discussions during this unit, and then coded these conversations in order to analyze them using CDA. She found that within the classroom—a predominately white space—the teacher's efforts to integrate antiracism both pushed back against whiteness and reinforced it.

Ebony Elizabeth Thomas' article, like Borsheim-Black's, examines discussions about race in two high school English classrooms. She observed each of the classes at specific points throughout their semester in order to observe and record discussions; her analysis specifically focused on the role race played in this racially diverse school. She found that while the two teachers worked to bring race to the forefront, moments of racial tension resulted in silence and deflection by the students.

Tisha Lewis Ellison and Marva Solomon's article contains two studies that considered the role of counter-storytelling in Black children and their parents' interactions with digital literacies. The researchers brought the participants into the study by explicitly sharing the background, purpose, and results, and then asking the parents and children to reflect on the information. Lewis Ellison and Solomon found that the common conception of the digital divide (that cuts out Black families) was an incorrect, and racist, belief.

Lamar L. Johnson's article is an analytical autoethnography that proposes Critical Race English Education as an antiracist pedagogy and theory. The article centers around three stories from Johnson's life, all of which engage with the #BlackLivesMatter movement in some

capacity. Johnson's purpose in this piece is to promote Black literacy in the English classroom while simultaneously fighting systematic racism.

Area of Focus: Choices about the representation of knowledge status—

This area of focus considers the way in which knowledge is presented, questioning if knowledge is it presented as newer and more open to debate or older and more fixed. The author's representation of knowledge status is important to consider because the authors "can present themselves as knowers or merely supposers, their claims as known, believed, possible, or unlikely" (Johnstone 57). Johnstone says this area of Critical Discourse Analysis can consider the certainty with which something is presented ("Is this bit of knowledge explicitly presented with certainty? Or is it implicitly presented with certainty? Is this bit of knowledge explicitly presented as possible? Is it implied to be possible?") and the way in which bits of knowledge presented by others are represented ("Does the author agree with the source? Does the author explicitly or implicitly contradict the source? Is the author allowing the source power and agency? Or are they seeking to dismantle or remove power from the source?") (Johnstone 58). The presentation denotes not only how open or closed to challenge an author is, but how accepted or unknown an idea or topic may be. More open presentations are likely to reflect newer ideas an author is presenting to the field or which they are trying out in an effort to push their field in a new direction. Closed mandates and declarations paired with newer ideas will show what is more accepted by the field and how those accepted ideas can be used to promote change or discovery.

Within my analysis, choices about the representation of knowledge status reveal a great deal with regards an article's label (Foundational, Emerging, Integration, Change Agent) because it shows the degree to which antiracist theory is accepted, the degree to which it is considered

open for interpretation, and the degree to which it is integrated and applied. The representation of knowledge status can be looked at both from how the theories and prior research inform the current beliefs and how the theories and prior research inform what is being proposed (that is, what is possible). Both perspectives speak to the extent the author values antiracist pedagogy and theory, and also how they think the field values antiracist pedagogy and theory.

All four articles analyzed present antiracist theory as a more fixed idea, meaning that the prior research included is decidedly positive and something to be pursued. However, they do not all present the authorial and subjects' knowledge status in the same way. Carlin Borsheim-Black and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas discuss large amounts of research from other scholars with confidence, implying the ideas surrounding antiracist education are known, accepted, and valued within *RTE*. Both Borsheim-Black and Thomas allow other scholars space to speak while affirming the information before explaining how they plans to add to these ideas. The discussion comes with how these ideas are applied. As the paper moves out of the opening sections, there is a shift and space is devoted to discuss the gaps identified in the current body of research. Borsheim-Black tends to start paragraphs with a description of the moment or incident to be examined, move towards supporting claims about the moment with research, and then transition to a proposed analysis of the moment or incident based on the research. Her paragraph describing one incident in the classroom is an excellent example of this:

Colin's joke, however, was an isolated example, one of the only instances coded as resistance. Students' lack of resistance was notable, given the overt resistance documented in other studies ... It is possible that students' lack of resistance reflected Ms. Allen's thoughtful attempts to scaffold their exploration of Whiteness over the course of the unit. Or, students' lack of resistance might have been another example of White talk. Haviland (2008) has argued that polite participation can undermine authentic engagement with biases and prejudices. Trainor (2008) found that students in her study participated in antiracist activities to distance themselves from appearing "redneck" and to distinguish themselves as middle-class. Perhaps Ms. Allen's students participated politely in ways Ms. Allen

clearly expected in an attempt to distance themselves from being perceived as racist. (417)

Within this paragraph, the certainty that comes with reporting a fact (“Colin’s joke, however, was an isolated example”) or another scholar’s research (“given the overt resistance documented in other studies”) is followed by a suggestion for how to analyze the moment (“It is possible,” “students’ lack of resistance might have been,” and “perhaps”). Throughout this example, Borsheim-Black maintains a confident disposition as she moves from relating research to doing her own. Knowledge about antiracism is more fixed, and what is up for discussion is how these known ideas are applied. She acts as a supposer more than a knower with her ideas, which can be interpreted as a conscious decision based on her desire to avoid the “blindspots” (44) that she believes her identity brings to the study. This is unique among the authors as Borsheim-Black is the only author who self-identifies as white. She is not, though, the only author who presents themselves more as a supposer than a knower.

Thomas presents herself in a similar manner, grounding her pedagogical suggestions in other scholars or in the subjects of her study. This is not to say that she disparages herself or undermines her credibility, but that she makes claims about the observations she performs with a strong theoretical grounding and a desire that others might also emulate what she did. She does not present herself as the locus of knowledge within her article; instead, her representation of knowledge is that it should be decentralized and take into account other voices, specifically those of the teachers and students she observes. The creation of knowledge and active learning is discussed and brought up as a result of the interactions between the subjects. In order to demonstrate this belief, Thomas includes comments from the teachers and students, allowing them space to speak within the pages of her text (“Anthony later told me that his goal...” (165) and “Ella reflected that it had gone as she planned...” (170) are two examples). Thomas does not

completely give up space to the teachers' voices, though—she spends the conclusion talking about them, specifically what they “show [about] how two experienced English teachers navigated race talk dilemmas” (170), what “helped” (171) the students, how “silence and evasion characterized particularly tense moments” (171), and what the successes and shortcomings mean for future research (172-173).

These two articles can be labeled as Integrated because they are not explicitly focused on proving the value antiracist education, but on how instructors might apply tenets of antiracist education to their own classrooms. There is not a question as to whether antiracist education should be brought into the classroom, only the effectiveness of address “racial equity” (Thomas 154) through race talk and literature. If there were still an ongoing discussion about the value of antiracist education within *RTE*, it is likely peer reviewers would ask the articles to include more supporting evidence and explanation as to why antiracist pedagogy is a beneficial goal. Instead, the focus is the impact discussions of race and race talk have within the current educational system and how teachers might interrupt the norms that are unconsciously accepted. These articles seeks to bring forth consciousness about racial inequity in order to bring about change, which is a central tenet of antiracist education. Antiracist beliefs are accepted and valued within this discourse, so Borsheim-Black and Thomas are able to use those as a shared starting point and promote a new way of considering the application of these shared beliefs.

Borsheim-Black and Thomas align in their presentations, but Lewis Ellison and Solomon position their study as inherently subversive. They aim to “resist majoritarian narratives about the digital divide” (229) and “speak against traditional definitions that have perpetuated incorrect, discriminatory, and deficit-view perspectives of what African Americans are capable of digitally producing” (229). The authors give agency to their subjects and allow them to be

knowers. This creates space so “that their stories are no longer silenced by the assumptions of others; rather, their stories are used to examine other ways of knowing and understanding” (224). Lewis Ellison and Solomon consider counter-story to be “a pivotal part” (224) of their methods for the agency it offers to their subjects. Johnson echoes this belief, using counter-storytelling as a “methodological tool” (113) which can work to push back against “dominant narratives—or stories—[that] often sustain whiteness, white supremacy, and anti-blackness” (113). All three view counter-storytelling as a central tenet of antiracist theory, something that is shared by proponents of feminist theory. As Donna Haraway explains it,

Unless we tell stories of possibility that give us heart, stories that keep us vital and alive with each other, unless we are storying with each other about that which might be ... Unless we engage in a collective imagination of that which we are lusting toward, that which we are lured by, we are stuck, we are paralyzed. And we will die in despair and cynicism. Storying is a really important part of giving heart for change, as well as imagining possible change. (Jacobin Radio)

The imagination of change is central to all four articles, but is particularly pronounced in Lewis Ellison and Solomon’s and Johnson’s due to the fact that they specifically seek to allow those traditionally marginalized by the academy to act as knowers. With Lewis Ellison and Solomon and Johnson, this is achieved by giving agency to traditionally silenced voices—Black children and Black mothers—and allowing them to add their “cultural, digital, and racial selves” (Lewis Ellison and Solomon 225) to the article. Their role as researchers is to “approach everyone’s counter-stories as dominant narratives, thus challenging uncontested supremacies” (225). This “challenging [of] uncontested supremacies” (225) speaks to the authors’ view on the status of knowledge within their work. It is clear they are not interested in repeating what has been done before, but work to use counter-storytelling to allow “participants’ voices, experiences, and stories to be heard independently of the majoritarian voice” (225). They do not subscribe to what others, necessarily, have said about “digital literacies for and about African American children,

adolescents, and families” (225) because the past research “was detrimental, deceptive, and oftentimes deadly” (225). This reveals the authors’ identity as both knowers and supposers. They know what has been done in the past that forms the majoritarian narrative is at best unhelpful and at worst false and deadly. The entire article is presented as a counterargument to the majoritarian narrative. Lewis Ellison and Solomon do not proclaim certainty of their ideas, but they do proclaim certainty of the wrongness of those ideas they push against. They suppose that what they work towards might shed light on these unhelpful past practices and might allow new areas of research to flourish. It uses “critical scholarly skills to produce studies that resist racism” (C. Crenshaw 274), and so is explicitly antiracist research.

Johnson takes this a step further by using analytical autoethnography. In fact, it is one of the better examples of an analytical autoethnography, as defined by Leon Anderson, due to the fact that Johnson engage with all five of the key features—“complete member researcher (CMR) status, analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, dialogue with informants beyond the self, and commitment to theoretical analysis” (378)—at length in his piece. Johnson does not simply engage with these different features in order to meet a technical definition. He uses each one to more fully present an antiracist article. A strong example of this commitment is in the way that he avoids engaging with the supposer and knower dichotomy Johnstone presents. As with Lewis Ellison and Solomon, he is still forced to work within standard publication conventions even as he subverts the dominant narratives at play in academia and the culture. Johnson aims to ground his analysis and argument in his experience, identity, and observations. He eschews the supposer-knower dichotomy because he rejects it as a false dichotomy, instead viewing individuals as both. This is evident in the way Johnson desires a rejection of hegemonic beliefs about “race-neutral theories, frameworks, and methodologies” (111) and “discriminatory

and dehumanizing research methods and methodologies” (111). The idea that an individual or a field can know something without any critical consideration of their own beliefs, biases, privileges, etc. is in line with historically eurocentric notions of epistemology which Johnson emphatically condemns as “acts of violence that constantly remind Black children and youth that their language, literacies, culture, race, ethnicity, and humanity don’t matter” (104). Johnson does not, though, view everything as unknowable and an individual’s experience as completely subjective. Johnson adds his own voice to the research in an explicit attempt to push back against racist assumptions about epistemology and knowledge. He uses his personal experience to work from the specific to the universal (112).

Through their raising of marginalized voices as knowers, both Lewis Ellison and Solomon and Johnson actively promote antiracist theories of epistemology, making their article a demonstration of Change Agency. The authors promote antiracist theory both through their research and the way in which they conduct research. They decenter knowledge from the scholarship in order to center it on lived experience and personal revelation. Both articles seek to move beyond the supposer-knower dichotomy; Lewis Ellison and Solomon begin to do this, while Johnson fully commits to it. In the final section of his article, Johnson says he cannot provide “a ‘how-to-guide’ or a ‘cookie-cutter’ demonstration of how to *do* CREE” (emphasis in original, 120) because it is a matter of “one’s state of *being, heart, and mind*” (emphasis in original, 120). He then Parker Palmer, saying that “teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness for better or worse” (Palmer 2 qtd. 120). These final comments challenge the audience while simultaneously showing his ability to be both a supposer and knower; he does not know for sure how one might implement CREE because it is a matter of

what one believes, but he does know that the only way “to move from racial violence to racial justice” (120) is through educators’ willingness to “(re)imagine” (121).

Area of Focus: Choices about naming and wording—

This area focuses on the diction and words that are put into an article to evaluate how an author portrays the considered pedagogies and theories. The act of naming “can constitute a claim about it” (Johnstone 59) because the connotative definition of words frequently carries more weight than the denotative definition. Johnstone proposes viewing words on a euphemism-dysphemism scale and considering how the choice of a given word from the many synonyms or near synonyms “suggests [a given word’s] ideological significance” (58). Ideological significance is important because the entire purpose in looking at these various areas of focus is to determine the extent to which an author speaks about and with a specific pedagogy and theory. Is their work steeped in the language? Or do they take time to introduce and discuss each technical term, frequently providing definitions? The constant usage of accepted words demonstrates familiarity with and membership in a field. It also can indicate how comfortable an author is at disagreeing with a field’s consensus knowledge. How the author accepts and works with the considered pedagogy and theory, then, is an important matter within my analysis. The words used to describe antiracist pedagogy and theory allow claims about the author’s feelings about topics to be made, which can be used in conjunction with the other areas of focus to place articles as Foundational, Emerging, Integrated, or Change Agent.

This area of focus is the most quantitative heavy area and works best when paired with the other areas. Word choice is revealing, but not universally so on its own—it is difficult to determine meaning hard without context, (which is where the other areas of focus can provide assistance). Looking at how often specific words are used and repeated, and where these repeated

words might come from, dictates underlying theories and research. The euphemism-dysphemism scale is specifically valuable with regards to the analysis of antiracist theory because one of the recommendations at the end of this piece is to avoid euphemisms in favor of direct and plain word choice. Therefore, within the articles from *Research in the Teaching of English*, I consider the extent to which the authors use euphemisms surrounding antiracist pedagogy and theory.

All four authors identify themselves in their articles in order to acknowledge and discuss their positionality. Borsheim-Black is the only author to self-identify as “[w]hite” (412). Lewis Ellison and Solomon say they are “African Americans [who are] well aware of the stereotypes, racial biases, and labeling that other researchers might have missed or ignored” (225), Thomas identifies herself “one of the few African American teachers” (157) at the school studied, and Johnson says he is “a Black male English educator and language and literacy scholar” (104). This reveals a desire to be clear about their background—their context—because the authors understand this impacts each study. This also reveals a desire from each author to be specific with their positionality, something that Borsheim-Black, Thomas, Lewis Ellison and Solomon, and Johnson each discuss at some point in their work.

Borsheim-Black and Thomas indicate that they use *black* and *African American* interchangeably throughout their articles. Lewis Ellison and Solomon do not comment on their word choice, but do use both of these terms interchangeably. Every article except Johnson’s uses a lowercase “B” in *black*, and none of the authors comment on their choice to use lower- versus upper-case. Johnson, though, specifically comment on his word choice (with regards to *white*, *Black*, *Brown*, and a few other terms such as *eurocentric*) and his decision to capitalize the “B” in *Black* and *Brown*. He does this in order to “show a radical love ... for Black and Brown people who are constantly wounded by white supremacy” (121), and, for the same reason, chooses

to “disassemble white supremacy” (121) by using a lowercase “W” in *white* and *white* supremacy and a lowercase “E” in *eurocentric*. Every author talks about the importance of avoiding euphemisms—the lack of willingness to be explicit with words and what they mean is the main focus of Borsheim-Black’s and Thomas’ articles—in order to avoid perpetuating misunderstandings and oppression, but Johnson is the only one to explain his decisions. This is one way in which Johnson is contrasted with the other articles and it presents him as a scholar more comfortable in pushing back against conventions and standards in order to make a point more explicit. His article is a model both in its substance and style.

Another example of the more explicit nature of Johnson’s article is in his word choice with regards to the noun used to discuss the death of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown: *murder*. This is an entirely accurate description, but it is one which is sometimes avoided among mainstream outlets, especially more formal ones. This choice is an attempt at neutrality, and reflects a more eurocentric view that is only acceptable due to the permeation of white supremacy in all areas of society. Using another word (or phrase) is not only factually incorrect, but it undermines the decentering work Johnson attempts to do with his article. This reflects the of the inherently political nature of language Johnstone discusses with her explanation of CDA, and is an example of how there is no middle ground with regards to antiracism.

Johnson is not the only author that models with his research, though. All four articles contain elements worthy of emulation. A notable example is through Thomas’ using and explanation of the term *race talk*. This term is “derived from” Pollock and her “ethnographic study of a racially diverse high school” (155). This theoretical backing is specifically used by Thomas in order to underscore the goal of this study; she looks at “moments in conversations about race that have the potential for conflict” (155), and so race talk is an accurate and

enlightening term. The name displays the concept and allows significance to be attributed to these dilemmas within conversation, skewing more towards the dysphemism end of the euphemism-dysphemism scale. She is willing to say what needs to be said, and this avoids potential confusion regarding definitions. Even beyond the avoidance of confusion, though, the audience is able to actually learn from a model for appropriate engagement with discussions about race.

Area of Focus: Choices about representation of actions, actors, and events—

This area of focus considers the agency given (or removed) from the actions, actors, and events that are observed. Johnstone suggests looking at the usage of active and passive voice and nominalization, which is defined as “using as nouns words that can also be used as verbs, adjectives, or adverbs” (56). Active and passive voice clarify how the author views specific concepts and actors; the subject performing the action obviously has more agency than the object being performed on. While these two specific grammatical considerations may seem trivial, the “choices involving the assignment of semantic roles and nominalization can represent people [or ideas or topics or fields] as being out of control of their destinies in the most fundamental ways” (56). Within my analysis, the way in which the subjects of the studies are introduced, discussed, analyzed, and promoted reveal the extent to which the author’s work to decenter knowledge and share the if it is something pushed by specific people and research or if it the author views it as something grand and overarching outside of any one person’s control. The way in which individuals and the field do or do not seize agency, which helps in labeling an article as Foundational, Established, Integrated, or a Change Agent with regards to its use of antiracist pedagogy and theory.

All four articles include moments where they give space to the people that form their datasets to speak; in doing this, they show as well as tell how other scholars might decenter epistemology. This said, there is a stark contrast in the way that Thomas engages with her dataset and subjects when compared to Borsheim-Black and Lewis Ellison and Solomon. Borsheim-Black returns to the teacher she observes in order to share her thoughts on a situation or even discuss her intentions throughout her piece. Lewis Ellison and Solomon explain their connection to their subjects and ask their thoughts about the study and their reflection on participating. Thomas, though, does not add in the thoughts and feelings of her two observed teachers. This is not to say that she does not allow them the opportunity to speak about their experiences in the classroom and thoughts after the fact, but Borsheim-Black's teacher seems to enjoy an almost co-writing opportunity where her ideas and voice is permitted to speak to both the author and audience. Lewis Ellison and Solomon do not go quite this far, but they do include quotes from their subjects and allow those insights to inform the analysis and result of the research. Thomas' teachers are not afforded these opportunities; what is included, what is analyzed, and the implications are determined by Thomas without input from the teachers she observed. The entirety of the conclusion (170-171) and the implications for future research (172-173) talk all about the teachers and what happened in the transcribed situations, but the only time where a member of the dataset is given space to speak about the incidents after the fact is the department chair, and their quote is simply "it's so much easier to sidestep it!" (171), which is reported as coming from a workshop the subjects had together after the transcribed incident. The way in which Thomas controls her dataset more tightly is not inherently problematic, but it does not seem to promote the decentering of knowledge in the way Lewis Ellison and Solomon or Borsheim-Black do. These authors work to promote shared understanding and the co-creation of

knowledge through their analysis and writing by allowing the subjects the opportunity to speak, breaking down the researcher-subject binary. This move is antiracist in nature, and it is a reason as to why (with this area of focus, specifically) Thomas seems to produce an article that is more accurately labeled as Emerging than Integrated. Both Borsheim-Black and Lewis Ellison and Solomon demonstrate an Integrated approach to antiracism.

Johnson's article demonstrates Change Agency due to the fact that he presents himself as both the center of his research and as one of the Black voices and victims he interacts with. Due to the ethnographic nature of the piece, the audience sees the research through Johnson's eyes. This is most prominently noted in the first-person pronouns *I*, *my*, and *me* used often in the piece. When discussing Trayvon Martin's murder in the opening section, Johnson closes the first paragraph with the statement "[m]y soul remembers" (102). He repeats this phrase to end the opening section, bookending the section to show the audience that the entire article will be an exercise in what Johnson's lived experience has imprinted on him. While only hinted in the opening paragraphs, Johnson makes his position as the center of the article clear when he says he will specifically draw from his "personal experiences, observations, interviews, autobiographical narratives, social media artifacts, and images" (105) in order to "move critical conversations and the pedagogical practices around the intersections of anti-blackness, violence, language, literacy, and education from the margins to the center of discussion and praxis" (105). Through explicit statements and choices about how to present himself, Johnson communicates that he is attempting to do what he is recommending in his article—he is moving himself, as the researcher and a "Black male" (117), from the margins into the center by creating space for his "personal racialized and gendered memories, autobiographical narratives, journal writings, social media interactions, pictures, and conversations with colleagues, family, and friends to help [him] to *tell*,

analyze, and theorize” (emphasis in original, 111) his stories. Johnson’s article is most complete in this manner; it is written in such a way that any educator might be able to engage with it and understand the what and why of Critical Race English Education both through the explicit explanations of it and through the model laid out. The story of his trip to Ferguson makes the ongoing (at the time) protests and violence personal, but it also positions him uniquely as “both researcher and subject, both teacher and student, both author and audience.” He is in a both-and position with this article, making it impossible to be objective and impossible to be false. As a result, this article, more than the other three, is written from the perspective of the marginalized. It is peer reviewed, yes, but still seems to be outside of all standards and expectations and values. It focuses, instead, on being an honest recounting of those who traditionally cannot speak in academic spaces. Johnson works to validate his voice in order to show how he believes other voices should be validated within an antiracist system. The traditional eurocentric model focuses on an epistemology that does not allow room for those on the margins to contribute. Johnson deplatforms himself in order to raise up other voices, and in doing produces a work that is antiracist. It opens up the audience’s eyes to what is possible; it embodies antiracist pedagogy and theory precisely because it defies expectations and norms that assume we (the audience, and the white audience) can produce work like this and see where it is going to end up. This is a piece that firmly shows what it means to tell stories, in Haraway’s words from earlier, “that give us heart, stories that keep us vital and alive with each other ... about that which might be.” It is a picture of “collective imagination” that provides an alternative to death through, within the academy, “despair and cynicism,” and outside the academy by “giving heart for change, as well as imagining possible change” (Jacobin Radio).

Again referring back to a similar topic from Borsheim-Black's piece, it is good to consider the way in which the concept of systemic racism or oppression is presented. Is it something that exists on its own outside of individuals? Or is it only to be found within people? Thomas indicates that difficulty in communication surrounding race comes arises whenever "teachers and students wrestle with the narratives they are studying" (155). These dilemmas with race, based on the language Thomas uses ("to examine how English teachers handle race talk dilemmas that arise while teaching literature" (155), "race talk dilemmas may surface for teachers while they are engaged in literary instruction" (155), "[s]urfacing the complexity of race talk during the teaching of literature is in itself a complex endeavor" (156), and "[w]hether or not students and teachers attempt to avoid conversations about race, however, race is inescapable" (157)) will naturally pop up in conversations. This leads the reader to conclude that while the individuals who participate in these discussions may not be responsible for the systematic inequality that antiracist education hopes to address, they do participate in the incidents and situations that make these "racial differences" (157) visible. So while the system itself may be responsible for a great many ills, the fact remains that "students may say things to each other that are inaccurate, intolerant, or offensive, leading to disagreement and heightened emotions" (156), and that the "contentious conversations" (157) only arise out of these "problematic labels, contestations, and silences" (156-157). These issues, then, are found at the moments when individuals interact with one another in the midst of discussions about race (and sometimes other topics that only tangentially touch on race), which is to say that Thomas is not engaging with a large-scale concept like systematic racism, but the specific moments when the individual results of systematic racism appear through the people (students and teachers) who are learning and working and living within the larger system. Unlike Borsheim-Black, then, Thomas' focus leads

her to represent terms like *race talk* without agency or spoken about as concepts outside of control. They are observable and personal, which echoes Pollock's purpose—to examine “*when and how race matter[s]*” (emphasis in original, 155)—in her original study from which the definition for race talk that Thomas uses emerged (155-156). Johnson is held up within this thesis as the epitome of antiracist research for what he makes possible through what he does. Other authors examined do antiracist work and present alternatives, but do so within the current system. That is a good start, but ultimately limited. Johnson stands in contrast for presenting alternatives to the entire system, pushing the audience to “embrace and live within the radical imagination” (121).

Area of Focus: Choices about incorporating and representing other voices—

This area of focus concerns itself with who and what is included (and by extension, excluded). Johnstone explains this area of focus as dealing with the multi-voiced nature of all discourse (an idea she attributes to Mikhail Bakhtin) (60). Authors reveal their influences in both explicit and implicit ways. They can be called explicit when consciously quoting and paraphrasing, and implicit when the author references knowledge, perhaps unconsciously, without direct attribution. This can be revelatory, according to Johnstone, because the choices an author makes about “how to represent other people or groups of people and the worlds they inhabit” (61) naturally tie into “the purposes of the present discourse” (60). The inclusion of a voice does not inherently mean the voice is given agency and power within a text—it may be that the inclusion of a voice is done for the explicit purpose of showing how it is flawed or harmful. What is important about incorporating and representing other voices is the fact that while people may be consciously choosing to include or exclude certain voices, the unconscious inclusion or exclusion can reflect larger beliefs about culture, ideology, theory, or voices. Every

discourse puts “forward certain concepts, viewpoints, and values at the expense of others” (Gee “What is Literacy?” 538). Within her explanation of how to analyze these choices, Johnstone includes an example fitting for my analysis. She says that “racism can be ‘enacted’ in discourse which is not, on the face of it, ‘about’ race at all” (62). These unstated beliefs are often the “most pernicious” (62) because of the way in which they are unconsciously carried along and continue to enact influence even as they are unstated (or perhaps because they are unstated, since that which is not discussed is unlikely to be interrogated).

This area of focus is also revelatory for what it does not show. What is left out is just as important as what is included. It is important to consider the way in which these articles are multi-voiced. The citations and sources are one area that can be considered, but it is also worthwhile to address how sources are cited. This integration can be analyzed through Johnstone’s presentation and questions, but it is also important to address some of the critical citation research that exists. Rubota believes that looking at the specific authors and sources cited in a given piece allows for assumptions about the sort of research an author has done and values. For the purposes of my analysis, this can be used to see if an article practices antiracist (and decolonial, which Rubota emphasizes) approaches to citations. Rubota argues that epistemological racism perpetuates an “epistemological hegemony” (7) within scholarly articles and the academy because “the perceived legitimacy of knowledge is linked to the location of knowledge production” (10). This form of racism is often “made obscure but maintains unequal relations of power between West-based and non-West-based knowledge and academic practices” (2). To enact antiracism, Rubota believes scholars ought to continually examine the ways in which racism impacts epistemology within the academy, “adopt[ing] a philosophical skepticism for recovering the agency of subjugated people and a political commitment to uncover the

position of the marginalized” (15). This can be done by “scrutinize[ing] the ways [scholars] refer to academic ideas produced by others” (16) and paying attention to whose ideas and publications are included.

More than the other articles examined, Johnson presents himself as the center of his research. The other three articles do include the authors as part of the study, but they yield space to their subjects as the primary focus of the study. Johnson blends Critical Race Theory and Critical English together to theorize Critical Race English Education, a pedagogy that “explores the intimate history and the current relationship between literacy, language, race, and education by expanding the concept of literacies to include activist contexts and social movements” (108). All of this is done, ultimately, to promote Black literacies within the English classroom. The promotion of Black literacies is a key feature of Critical Race English Education, and Johnson “affirm[s] the lives, spirit, language, and knowledge of Black people and Black culture” (108) both in theory and practice through his article. Johnson believes “Black children’s, youth’s, and women’s stories matter and ... Black peoples’ stories illustrate how [they] are producers and holders of knowledge” (111). In order to support this belief, Johnson keeps his own experiences, beliefs, and voice at the center of the article. This is an explicitly antiracist and decolonial act. Johnson presents Critical Race English Education as a possible way of working through the shortcomings of Critical Race Theory and Critical English, and then applies CREE “as a theoretical lens that help[s him] share and analyze [his] racialized stories” (111). He “lean[s] on [his] personal racialized and gendered memories, autobiographical narratives, journal writings, social media interactions, pictures, and conversations with colleagues, family, and friends” (111) in a way not traditionally done in academic writing. The presented epistemology seeks to emulate the pedagogy CREE supports and models what he thinks should be done by doing it.

Johnson's decision to keep his own experience at the center of the research does not mean he only puts his voice in the text. He includes citations throughout the article and directs his audience to other studies, theories, writers, and movements. So how does Johnson keep himself at the center of his piece in order to make the work an autoethnography? By literally inserting himself into the piece through first-person pronouns, demonstrating fluency in both the language of his students and the individuals he interacts with in Ferguson and his academic audience (Anderson 388), and by using his own lived experience to ground his purpose, research, and analysis. He explicitly says this, but also is clear to remind the audience subtly throughout the article. As an example, Johnson includes the following sentence: "[a]s a Black male, I knew [Michael] Brown was not murdered by a single police officer as much as he was killed by the system in the United States (Hill, 2018; Taylor, 2016)." Johnson is using first-person pronouns to process his time in Ferguson by walking the audience through what he knows about police brutality (based on first-hand experience "as a Black male" within the United States). Johnson then includes an in-text citation for two sources which support his lived experience to clarify, just in case the audience is skeptical of his authority on the subject, the accuracy of his assertions. The citation after the presentation of personal experience allows Johnson "to view [his] personal experience as a larger cultural experience" (112), which reminds the audience of his goal of "interweave[ing] personal narratives into a theoretical depiction of a particular phenomenon" (112). The inclusion of citations alongside lived experience happens multiple times in the text, showing that Johnson is intentionally balancing his first-hand epistemology with support from other scholars. It demonstrates how Johnson is working to both show and tell what he is doing in order to allow people to learn from what he did, from what he is currently doing, and from what he is saying. He provides layers to his argument in order to demonstrate an

example of CREE-infused-autoethnography, an example of antiracist education in practice, and example of antiracist pedagogy in theory, and an example of doing antiracist theory as a researcher. All of these moves work together to fulfill Johnson's stated purpose from early in the article: "I aim to move critical conversations and the pedagogical practices around the intersections of anti-blackness, violence, language, literacy, and education from the margins to the center of discussion and praxis in ELA contexts" (105).

As the only white author analyzed, it should be noted that Borsheim-Black seems to have worked to include citations from scholars of color, women scholars, international scholars, and scholars from outside of her discipline. This speaks to her efforts to, as Rubtoa discusses, decolonize the epistemology of her research. However, the most cited sources do not appear to come from people of color, which leads to consideration of whether there were other articles that might have served the same purpose by "minoritized learners" (Rubota 7) and scholars. This is something worthy of note. One could argue that the situation surrounding the study (the observation of a "a white woman in her early twenties" (411-412) attempting to integrate antiracist theory into discussions on *To Kill A Mockingbird* in a predominantly white school, and then analyzed by a "white [researcher who] grew up in a small, rural community, which was also predominantly white" (412)) is inherently flawed because it does not seem to create space for scholars of color even as it seeks to fight against ingrained racism. I bring up this issue not because I can provide resolution or a definitive answer, but because this issue is also present in my thesis. Though I am not analyzing white subjects in a classroom setting, I am a white researcher analyzing articles in an attempt to engage with antiracist theory. This is something that I cannot avoid, and I do not want to attempt to downplay my positionality. As is stated in the prelude, this is problematic, but perhaps more problematic if I say nothing.

Though the authors share a few sources (notably Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Toni Morrison), they mostly differ in whom they cite. However, all four authors parallel one another in how their information (specifically their antiracist information) is presented. Each author takes time to specifically place themselves alongside their source material, and discuss the ways in which racism has played a role in who is represented and who is left out. With some, such as Borsheim-Black and Thomas, this consideration is noted but not directly applied in any meaningful way with regards to the study. Lewis Ellison and Solomon make sure to address moments in history where black voices were subjugated and oppressed, and they specifically seek to create a study that runs contrary to these notions. They do this by explaining themselves to their participants and allowing them, especially the mothers, the chance to weigh in on the study. They specifically attribute some of the insights to these participants, an antiracist move and one that is especially powerful in light of the problematic studies they cite earlier on in the piece.

A difference within the articles that again separates Johnson from the other authors is the literal naming of people Johnson does throughout his article. The other authors include the voices of their subjects and citations, but anonymity is preserved with the subjects and the citations are presented in a more traditional manner. The anonymity does not undermine the other articles, but it is indicative of the traditional mechanics of academia and peer-reviewed research. Johnson, as the main subject of his piece, is not presented as an anonymous voice, and so his piece comes across as strikingly different in this way. This does not inherently make it more (or less) reliable, but it does preserve an element of authenticity that is typically absent within academic journals. Additionally, he takes time to include the full names of individuals who have been involved with or the subjects of police brutality. This conscious choice is

explained as a way to restore humanity to those who have been dehumanized (114?). This is an example of Johnson integrated antiracism into every aspect of his writing; he seeks to give power to the names of those who have been murdered in the hopes of raising them up, even in death. Outside of the individual names, Johnson also includes two specific lists of individuals who have been killed through “state-sanctioned violence” (105). Beyond naming the individuals who have been killed, Johnson also goes beyond standard citation practice and lists the full names of people who have specifically contributed to various movements and research even when they are not directly cited or paraphrased. An example of this is when he discusses the founders of #BlackLivesMatter; though they are not directly cited, or even referenced outside of this moment, Johnson creates space to pay “homage to the contributions, labor, and love of three Black queer women who created the movement—Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors” (104). This is not his only list, and others are included to honor “the foundational contributions ... of Black women language and literacy scholars” (106) or to situate his own work “within a Black literary legacy” (113). All of this is done to practice Black literacies, a central idea within the article. The fact that Johnson does not list out all of his citations demonstrates his awareness of genre conventions and deliberate decision to break them within these five lists in order to give more respect and space to these people. It is a move to work within the accepted mechanics and genre conventions while pushing back on that hegemony.

RESULTS: DOES WAC CARE?

In a Grant Final Report concerning College Writing Programs at Elon University, Chapman, Eidum, and Patch state that Asao Inoue is “currently considered the voice of anti-racist work in writing studies” (1), citing his influence on Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition as a whole. Though the three authors take issue with some of Inoue’s work, specifically what they call “his erasure of feminist approaches to” (1) antiracism, they view his push of antiracist pedagogy as the academic tipping point (along with cultural events such as publicized police killings, #BlackLivesMatter, and fights to remove Confederate monuments across America) that moved antiracist pedagogy from outside Rhetoric and Composition to its center. They cite his 2015 publication on the WAC Clearinghouse as the main example of this change, which leads me to believe the lack of discovery concerning writings on the integration of Writing Across the Curriculum and antiracist pedagogy is reflective of a larger problem that can now be named: few WAC scholars are taking on the task of addressing racism in educational settings or bringing antiracist approaches to classrooms. While addressing racism explicitly continues to be a generally radical practice in traditional scholarship, it seems as though other journals and individuals have been engaging with antiracist pedagogy for some time, and it is only recently that Rhetoric and Composition has begun to devote conference presentations and panels to this topic. This adjustment towards antiracist pedagogy is in its infancy, though it seems to be an area newer scholars within the field are willing to take up.

Based on the silence surrounding the topic within WAC-focused publications, there seems to be a sort of willful naivety within WAC with regards to social justice (and antiracism and decoloniality, specifically). It is almost as though individuals within WAC will do what is

required when it is required, but believe it is better to maintain ignorance within this area so as to allow things to continue as they are for as long as possible. This may be an overly harsh critique, but antiracist pedagogy and theory are not a new area of scholarship—so if it is not willful naivety, what is it? Perhaps the lack of scholarship is due to a belief that antiracist pedagogy and theory is a fad that will blow over in a few years. Perhaps it is due to a belief that antiracist pedagogy is just another area to study, something good for some scholars to consider but not something central to the field (and the entire system of education). Perhaps it is not actually a lack at all, but a conscious decision by scholars to publish, for whatever reason, in publications besides *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines*. Whatever the reason, Writing Across the Curriculum is not considering how it might integrate antiracism within its main publications. It is falling further behind in an area in which it could meaningfully step up. *Research in the Teaching of English* has been discussing these ideas for quite some time, and I hypothesize that this is due to the fact that many of the articles within *RTE* deal with (in part or in whole) a Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational settings. Within these settings, there is far more of an emphasis on meeting the students within their communities; the education comes to them metaphorically—because decisions are made at state and district levels and communicated to the various schools—and literally—because educators move to the neighborhoods and cities so as to be near the physical locations of the schools. This is in contrast to education at the collegiate level, wherein the students are the ones to move in order to go and “get” knowledge from the university for a few years before leaving again. This difference has implications beyond the proximity of classrooms to students’ homes. Teaching in elementary, middle, and high schools involves the obligatory responsibility of educating all students, not just some. Teachers must consider new pedagogies and theories on a monthly, if not daily, basis due to the wide variety of

students who enter their classroom. These individuals spend more time, typically, with their students and have a different goal for their education. With public school education, curriculum is not “concerned not only with enhancing students’ mastery of the subject matter in preparation for their future occupations, but also with their development as moral persons and citizens in a democratic society” (Sabbagh 683). This is not to say that those who teach in higher education do not care about these ends; “the moral work of teaching ... is a central and unavoidable part” (Sanger et al., 6) of any instruction regardless of the age of the student, and many instructors in higher education deeply care about the wellbeing of their students beyond the classroom. But the fact is that colleges are able to select their students, even if the specific instructors do not, which means that students are the ones who must make adjustments. Even if current college instructors do not see higher education as a white ivory tower, this is still a fitting description since only some are permitted access. Teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools ultimately have to be far more concerned with the “everyday activities” (Sanger et al. 4) than university instructors. They must ensure that “teacher-student and student-student relationships are fostered in ways that promote mutual regard [and] reciprocity of interests” (Fenstermacher and Richardson 8) between all students, which may require a more nuanced (and arguably thorough) understanding of national and local culture, politics, and race. This difference in day-to-day reality means that what is important within higher education may sometimes be removed from the lived experiences of many students. Seeing as how *Research in the Teaching of English* has been concerning itself with the integration of antiracist pedagogy and theory for some time while it is still, in 2020, absent from *The WAC Journal* and *Across the Disciplines*, it is possible that this difference in obligation to student and community is an explanation for the lack of antiracist pedagogy and theory in WAC.

Another possibility for the absence of antiracist pedagogy and theory may be due to the fact that Writing Across the Curriculum, as something different than a department or field, has always had to make a case for itself to survive. WAC has always been forced to work within the system as part of the system for the benefit of the system, and so it does not have a record of being “itself” because there is no agreed upon version of WAC. The precarious nature of funding means that WAC has had to be a chameleon. It has adjusted and changed itself to become whatever it needed to be to survive rather than being strongly assertive of a philosophy and thus subject to critique and potential dismissal. Writing Across the Curriculum can be the tool by which Rhetoric and Composition scholars build coalitions with individuals and departments in order to bring about lasting change within the university and the academy. But it cannot do this if it shies away from the potential controversy that comes from adopting socially just and other political positions. As rhetoricians, much of what we do is “explicitly political” (Johnstone 54). WAC should not judge potential positions, especially those that consider pushing back against racist systems, based on whether or not it makes people uncomfortable. It should instead consider who a position lifts up, cares for, and welcomes. And if this new position is beneficial those who are traditionally marginalized and results in some scholars standing back due to their hesitancy to engage, so be it.

Regardless, there are reasons as to why individuals within Writing Across the Curriculum might be hesitant to move more explicitly towards integrated antiracism as proposed in this research. First, some individuals may question the staying power of antiracism, arguing that a transformation of this magnitude should not be based on a newer pedagogy and theory. Addressing racism and marginalization is not a new idea currently in vogue, though. It did not suddenly spring up over the last five or ten years; if it seems that way to some, that is only

further proof of how far behind the curve WAC (and even Rhetoric and Composition as a whole, arguably) are. Antiracist theory is a longstanding, widespread area of research with proponents across the academy and in the broader culture. WAC scholars have not taken up the name and applied the theory explicitly, but it has been present, too, within Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition since at least 1974 and arguably much longer. This tangential focus needs to come into the mainstream, and WAC can look to other fields and journals that have worked tirelessly to pick it up, integrate it, and make it part of their theoretical bedrock for guidance on how it should proceed.

Another potential question individuals may have with regards to this research is why antiracist pedagogy and theory is being focused on without much reference to other, equally important areas of study such as decolonial, queer, or feminist theory. Why is antiracism more worthy of exploration than these other areas? To those who are concerned about the singular focus of this study, know that this is an intentional choice to limit the scope of this text. The university (and society) needs antiracism, but not antiracism alone. Decolonial, queer, and feminist theory should inform the reimagining of what might be, especially since these (and other) theories regularly intersect, adding and borrowing and challenging each other. These other theories, as well as other unreferenced ones, should be brought in and used to reform the theoretical bedrock of WAC. My research focuses on antiracist pedagogy and theory because of my background and my immediate surroundings—I do not argue that antiracism is the only relevant pedagogy or theory. There is always more that needs to be considered and interrogated, and the process of deconstructing and sitting in the unknown should be methodological. I use antiracism to break down what is, but the intersectionality between queer, decolonial, feminist, and other theories must be part of the reconstruction of what will be.

I select antiracism because I am part of the issue and see it as particularly relevant to my teaching and research at this moment. But feminist theory and decolonial theory also impact my thinking, and I do not raise up antiracism in order to discount the others. I do not raise up issues pertaining to race and ethnicity at the expense of feminism or decoloniality. There is overlapping oppression (K. Crenshaw, 1991, 1242-1243). I had to start somewhere, so I started with antiracism. I suspect others will start in other places. And this is why I propose the WAC-Marginalization grid (Figure Two). I see it as an important tool that is possibly the most important takeaway from this thesis, at least in terms of usefulness for future research. I used it in a specific context, but others can undoubtedly use it in other contexts more effectively (and even in the same one to do more in-depth work that I did). My study reveals not only knowledge about WAC and antiracism, but knowledge about how scholars might measure, label, and discuss. The grid provides a language that we might use in order to share our criticisms and discoveries.

Others, both within Writing Across the Curriculum and from other departments, may push back against any attempts to force these ideas onto others. Entering into other departments as if WAC is the carrier of antiracist knowledge sounds an awful lot like the banking model of education Freire specifically calls out. This presents WAC as an oppressor, an idea initially raised by Farris (385), seeking to colonize other departments and fields. This is a fair criticism, and it is something that scholars who work with antiracist education have also considered. Near the end of her piece, Kailin clarifies, in multiple ways, the importance of teachers not “replicat[ing] oppressive or dogmatic ways of teaching” (181). To this end, WAC cannot be patronizing and controlling; it must view itself as having something to offer other departments and fields that is equal to what those departments and fields have to offer WAC. It is not through the avoidance of

new ideas that antiracist WAC is successful in its faculty development, but through mutual understanding and shared knowledge. This has to be the starting point of any WAC or WACish development, and this framing is the way it is most successful, according to Barbara E. Walvoord: WAC must “always [have] a basic foundation [of] faculty dialogue and faculty ownership” (10). At points, this means that new knowledge is brought in by one member of the group from an outside source. At other points, it is co-created in discussion. Regardless of how it comes into being, the community must function in such a way that “people teach each other” (Freire 80). The question is not how to convince others to take this on; viewing it from this perspective makes it more of a persuasive argument based on selling what we have to others, and therefore becomes about pushing an idea. Instead, the emphasis should be on making sure that Writing Across the Curriculum allows students to interact with their major in a way that values their prior knowledge and their identity. It is not a matter of “making” the current faculty development antiracist by removing certain phrases or terms or types of assessment. It is a matter of valuing equality to such a degree that every aspect of education becomes antiracist. In this way, antiracist pedagogy and theory can reach all departments and all classrooms through WAC’s ability to foster interdepartmental dialogue. This “dialogue among equals is the way to make and maintain true writing across the curriculum” (Blair 386), and it is the only way to make and maintain an antiracist WAC. The goal is holistic integration throughout WAC, Composition, and other departments, which cannot happen if WAC scholars are attempting to force idea upon others.

The point in integrating antiracist pedagogy is to go back to the underlying ideas of education in order to interrogate beliefs and ideas. This is done so that it is possible to build a classroom, a curriculum, an education system, or a worldview that reflects a more socially just

system. In doing this, it is only natural that antiracism will permeate presentations, lesson plans, research, and everything else. Paulo Freire says in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that “those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” (60). Constant growth is the mark of a good teacher and scholar. At this moment, considering and integrating antiracist pedagogy and theory is a matter of ensuring that WAC speaks up now because to remain silent perpetuates racism.

How can WAC take advantage of the opportunity to step into leadership—to be pedagogical leaders across the university? Because so far it has not. The field has tried to celebrate the triumph of WAC (the survival of WAC) and become complacent. WAC ought not continue resting on the laurels (however big or small they are) of what has been accomplished over fifty years, as some have been apt to do with conferences and in publications. Instead, seize the opportunity to interrogate the past and present to see where WAC has fallen short. WAC scholars must hold a mirror up to the field and look at who it has been, who it is, and who it will be. The field must move forward as leaders with its pedagogy and teaching. Questions such as who has the right to learn, who should teach, how to teach, and what the goal of education is have not changed. But students have. The environment has. Professors and instructors have. And society has. So with this in mind, why be content to sit back and rebuild the exact same thing that was already constructed? Why not seize the opportunity to imagine something new, with unexplored and unconsidered opportunities and challenges? Why does WAC not want to step up and involve itself in the campus and cultural discussions? Right now, an opportunity presents itself—why not take it?

CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS FOR WAC SCHOLARS

Our work within the current system must include antiracist pedagogy and theory. This requires consideration of how to remake the classrooms, curriculum, and research from an antiracist perspective. Antiracism cannot simply be added on to the current system. It is something to take in, process, reflect on, and apply. It is not a matter of saying the right thing or citing the right author. It is about liberating our classrooms, our curriculum, and our research so we can be in a position to promote consciousness-raising education. The four *Research in the Teaching of English* articles present approaches for the implementation of antiracist theory and praxis, and they also model the sort of research WAC scholars ought to be doing. The authors of these four articles seek to take what antiracist pedagogy and theory entails and apply it to all areas of the educational system. Writing Across the Curriculum must follow in these footsteps. Having one article, an interview, and a special issue is not enough. WAC must begin to apply antiracist ideas and theories in all areas of its research, teaching, and faculty development. But beyond WAC, the integration of antiracist ideas is something all people in all departments should do, much like everyone must read and write and grow as scholars. Antiracism is a fundamental shift in how scholars approach reading, writing, and thinking because it is a shift in how to teach, who to value, what to value, and the way to present ourselves.

Writing Across the Curriculum is uniquely situated to do antiracist work because of how it was designed. WAC was created to work alongside other departments and curriculums by transforming them. This is important because the goal of WAC is not to come in and replace anything, but to transform what already is. In the same way that WAC, ideally, is not an additive measure to pre-existing history curriculum, antiracism should not be added on top of what

already exists. I think that antiracist pedagogy and theory should be part of WAC, and I think that WAC should be part of all areas of the university. I see the value this and so will discuss it, implement it, and research it in the hopes that others will see the work being done and desire to get on board through their own adoption and integration, a move reminiscent of Freire's teacher-student and student-teacher scenario of co-creating knowledge (80). But I am not attempting to mandate or force antiracist WAC on any person, department, or university. For transformation to occur, it cannot be forced; it has to be done through consent and deliberate effort on the part of the receiving department or individual. Neither WAC nor antiracism should adopt a missionary posture wherein they use the pedagogy they seek to overthrow.

WAC and antiracism are similar in that they both work towards a future where they no longer exist; they aim to be transformative to a degree where every aspect of the university system takes writing into account as part of the core, and where every aspect of the university is reimagined as antiracist in all that it does. This perspective makes it clear that integrating antiracism is something that falls on the shoulders of everyone. It is not the right of WAC scholars to address antiracism within our work and instruction—it is our responsibility. We have to do the work first in order to demonstrate why it is effective. We have to build relationships across campus. Making WAC more antiracist does not negate the issues and struggles WAC already faces. If anything, it makes it harder. But I do not see how we can avoid integrating antiracist pedagogy and theory, and so the fact that it makes it more difficult does not mean anything good or bad—it just means we have more work to do.

Antiracist theory is a way of getting at some of the absolutely bedrock issues within education. It does not attempt to reform what already is, but reimagines what might be. This work requires “continually and actively build[ing] and rebuild[ing] ... not just through language,

but through language used in tandem with other actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing” (Gee *How to Do Discourse Analysis* 88). Our words create reality. The words we use and the words we do not use end up contributing to how reality comes into being. To continue onwards without addressing antiracist theory will only ever perpetuate the world as it is. We must work towards integration of antiracist education so that WAC and WACish work becomes liberatory. Without a push towards Freirean education, the university cannot hope to create an environment for students to learn that allows them to imagine something beyond what already is. It is only through student-centered, consciousness-raising education throughout the university that students will be able to imagine what might be. Without this, we risk simply teaching students to become the new oppressors (Freire 44). True equality can only be found in a reimagining of the current system. Revision is not enough. New policies are not enough. And addressing antiracism is necessary because it goes back to the start of the United States. Other issues deserve attention, absolutely. But if we do not begin at the start, any changes will stand on top of the white supremacy and oppression that forms the bedrock of our country, our education, and our lives.

Regardless of one’s own positionality, this is work that must be done. WAC must respond to the call put out over the last twenty, thirty, forty years. WAC scholars and publications have already been silent for far too long. The context within which we live, work, research, and teach is saturated in white supremacy; therefore, we must do antiracist work. Here I offer recommendations for specific steps that WAC scholars might take.

First, acknowledge this is not something to add to an existing theoretical framework; this is a change of worldview. Treat it as such. One way to implement this mindset shift is by, as

discussed earlier in the paper, noticing silences surrounding race. To return to that analysis, Johnstone explains that “[l]earning to notice silence [and that which silence conceals] means learning to ‘de-familiarize.’ It requires learning to imagine alternative worlds and alternative ways of being, thinking, and talking” (Johnstone 72). By starting to notice silence, individuals can become aware of the areas where racism is perpetuated unconsciously. To again quote Johnstone, “social power results not just from economic or political coercion but more subtly, through hegemonic ideas about the naturalness of the status quo to which people assent without realizing it” (54). This will take practice. And it will not be easy. But the way in which WAC scholars do or do not address the lack of antiracist discourse will be one of the long-lasting legacies of the curricular movement. There are a number of concrete ways that instructors might call attention to systematic silences. With any move, it is important to be aware that fruitful discussions will be more likely to arise when discussions are framed within specific material or a specific concept from the field and when instructors create space for students to ask questions and present opinions. A discussion in a marketing class about how to effectively reach certain demographics could ask students to discuss stereotypes and the way in which they are promoted or subverted by various advertisements, specifically older advertisements that appeal to explicitly racist or misogynist beliefs. A discussion about mortgages within an economics class could address redlining and how it is still implemented, albeit more subtly and under different names, today. As these moments and spaces are noticed, people can then call attention to the silence by speaking up. James Paul Gee talks about the way in which “[i]ndividuals instantiate, give body to, a discourse every time they act or speak” (539). In the same way that silence is complicity, what is and is not said also contributes to the continuation or cessation of racism within

academia. This ties into the second recommendation, which concerns speaking explicitly, not vaguely, about matters of race.

WAC scholars need to speak concretely about antiracism, antiracist pedagogy, and antiracist theory. It is important that these conversations do not center around euphemisms. Say *race*. Say *antiracism*. Say *white supremacy*. Euphemisms allow for vague and shallow conversations that focus more on avoiding conflict (or saying the perceived wrong thing), which ends up making these topics taboo and difficult to address. Garcia de Müller and Ruiz support this idea even more strongly: “[r]ace needs to be named, interrogated, discussed, and “demetaphored” in ways that are specific, explicit, and additive” (21). The more people practice antiracism, the more it will come into fruition. And this is not something that only WAC fails to do. Clary-Lemon’s analysis of race-related works published in academic rhetoric-focused publications since 1990 found that “the majority of race-related works published in these journals rarely use the actual words race or racism. Instead, authors utilize vague metaphors such as ‘diversity, inclusion, and social justice’ when alluding to racialized phenomena” (W6). The constant use of metaphors ends up sidelining discussions about race because the lack of specificity means that these conversations ultimately fail to define, explicitly, the ideas they claim to support. Though race talk, to use Ebony Elizabeth Thomas’ term, can be uncomfortable, it is ultimately necessary to promote antiracism and “improve critical pedagogy” (Garcia de Müller and Ruiz 22).

A willingness to bring up specific terminology instead of synonyms lends power to speech. But in addition to using terms like *white*, *Black*, *anti-Blackness*, and *racism*, the actual discussion about why these terms are used and what they mean can be equally beneficial. In her discussion on antiracist teacher education, Kailin says “[i]t is important to talk about the

language we often use when discussing race ... as well [as] the various concepts and terminology frequently used” (180). The discussion of language naturally leads into a discussion of what viewpoints are valued, which can then reveal which viewpoints are not (Gee “What is Literacy?” 538). Concretely, attempting to engage with race talk can feel unwieldy and awkward if it is the only goal of a lesson. It should be noted that discussions of race, like most concepts in a classroom, should be brought up through material relevant to the field and course. Within a psychology classroom focused on proper research methods, this might look like discussions of historically problematic studies, such as those cited by Lewis Ellison and Solomon. Within a math class focused on algebra or trigonometry, this might look like acknowledgement of all the various cultures who developed mathematical equations, not just European nations. This metadiscussion promotes awareness and reflection. It brings silence to the forefront while raising up perspectives that are traditionally marginalized. And this encourages an antiracist perspective of the university and society, but it does more than that. It takes steps towards changing “hearts and minds” (Johnson 109), which is ultimately what is required if antiracist is to take hold and begin to transform the university.

The third recommendation builds off of the first two. In order to break the silence surrounding racism and promote conscious discussion, *Writing Across the Curriculum* ought to engage in Communities of Transformation (CoTs) as part of faculty development. Kezar et al. present CoTs as “communities that create and foster innovative spaces that envision and embody a new paradigm of practice” (833). CoTs aim to reimagine as opposed to revise. They seek to embed “transformational practices within departments and institutions. Transformational practice breaks with current practice by challenging and altering underlying values” (833). Communities of Transformation are suggested due to the fact that WAC already includes similar sorts of

gatherings through its faculty development workshops. Among other benefits, workshops allow time “to collaborate with colleagues, redesign their classes and assignments, and reflect on language and learning” (Magnotto and Stout 33). By considering how CoTs might naturally fit into WAC, it is possible to combine discussions on writing pedagogy and theory with discussions on antiracist pedagogy and theory. This fulfills the goal of WAC workshops, creating space to “build interdisciplinary connections,” “foster faculty dialogue,” “encourage reflexive pedagogy, and demonstrate the connections between research, theory, and classroom practice” (Magnotto and Stout 33). These CoTs should work within WAC because they already are part of WAC, just not by this name. And this faculty-focused, community co-creation of knowledge is precisely how WAC has traditionally found success. As McLeod notes, WAC “has to be a bottom-up phenomenon, usually starting with a few committed faculty members and growing as others see how successful these faculty have been” (4) at creating student-centered, consciousness-raising education.

Real, sweeping change will never occur if people are only willing to push back if they do not have to risk anything. Asking those with any sort of money, power, stability, and influence to go against everything that has placed them in a favorable position is a difficult request. But this is precisely what we must do. And it is precisely what those of us with positions of privilege must do. Antiracist theory needs proponents with everything to lose. WAC needs to advocate for those who cannot. There is now a point where it is no longer, if it ever was, possible to sit back. Barbara E. Walvoord, writing nearly twenty-five years ago, considered how WAC could not exist and thrive as a neutral entity on college campuses. She saw, even then, that “WAC must decide how to relate to other movement organizations. It cannot ignore them, and on most campuses, I believe, WAC cannot survive as Switzerland ... [proponents] often want to, and

must, combine WAC with assessment, critical thinking, and other movements. WAC, I believe, must dive in or die” (69-70). In light of the growing awareness of societal inequity and continued issues with racism in America, there is an opportunity for WAC to remake itself through antiracist pedagogy and theory in order to remake the university and the way in which people interact with society. It is not an overstatement to say that this unique time period allows the potential to literally reimagine the world. WAC is fortunate to be in a position where its proponents can use their platform within the university to raise up the voices and needs of those traditionally marginalized by the university. To do so is to return to WAC’s original, socially just goals, but it is more than that. It is a moral imperative. It is rising to the occasion. And it is how WAC can be a Change Agent that works to make the university a more equitable and antiracist institution.

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