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Beyond Transactional Narratives of Agency: Peer Consultants' Antiracist Professionalization

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Beyond Transactional Narratives of Agency: Peer Consultants' Antiracist Professionalization

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Abstract Social justice movements, especially Black Lives Matter, inspired many writing center administrators to reflect on their commitments to antiracism and engage with antiracist professional development with their staff. However, there is continued need to study the impact antiracist professional development has on writing center consultants' ability to practice antiracism in sessions. This article presents a predominantly white institution (PWI) writing center's attempt to do this work, with a particular emphasis on how antiracist professional development complicates portrayals of consultant agency within the writing center. The study analyzes qualitative data collected from consultants' reflective writing, survey, and interview responses. Results illustrate that, in the context of enacting antiracism in and beyond the writing center, consultants showed messy, partial, and incomplete forms of agency with the professional development curriculum impacting consultants of color and white consultants differently. These findings suggest writing center studies must embrace an understanding of antiracist professional development that is reflective, fragmented, and iterative, and identify more concrete practices of antiracist consulting.

Keywords tutor professionalization, antiracism, tutor agency

After the string of murders that took the lives of Black Americans during 2020—George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery among others—statements of outcry and public commitments to social justice began appearing across writing center listservs and program websites. Like many in our field, we began searching for more concerted ways to take action in the face of systemic racism. We looked to a number of colleagues

who were already enacting antiracist practices in writing centers at other institutions: the University of Connecticut (Suhr-Sytsma & Brown, 2011), University of Houston-Victoria (Camarillo, 2019), Oklahoma State University (Coenen et al., 2019), Tufts University (Aikens, 2019), Drexel University (McCloskey et al., 2020), and California State University Dominguez Hills (Grayson & Naynaha, 2021). As writing program administrators of a writing center

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at a large, southeastern, predominantly white institution (PWI), we, too, wondered how we could begin creating the change we wanted to see locally. Given our context, a statement did not seem an appropriate first step. We needed time to listen, learn, and reflect before we could claim we knew or practiced antiracism. We needed to identify our complicity in racist structures, consider how these structures manifested in our center, and craft a framework of antiracist practices we could begin implementing as agents of change in our local culture.

As we took up designing antiracist professional development curriculum, we wanted peer consultants to become reflective practitioners and engage with white privilege as it manifests in writing, institutions, and society. We wanted to raise their awareness of intersectional, marginalized experiences of diverse writers in writing centers, with an emphasis on the racism that Black, multilingual, and other writers of color face. We wanted peer consultants to see themselves as agents capable of empowering writers, questioning assimilating forces of standardized edited academic English (SEAE), and taking up linguistic justice in consultations (Baker-Bell, 2020). We positioned ourselves as learning alongside peer consultants. In so doing, we aimed to identify antiracist values to enact across our program and then use those values to conduct an assessment of how we could better practice them in our resources and services.

Peer consultants were largely excited when we introduced the program. During an interview, one peer consultant of color, Mila, responded:

I remember when I first heard about it, I emailed everyone. It was like, "Oh my God I'm so excited!" [laughing]. Because, especially with everything that happened over the summer, it was reassuring and comforting to see that my place of work was invested in antiracism and inclusiveness and diversity, more than just talking about it but taking action on it.

As Mila said, we wanted to act quickly and respond meaningfully to the violence experienced by Black Americans in 2020. We hoped

that our curriculum would introduce antiracism to peer consultants and prompt them to apply antiracist practices in consultations. However, we did not adequately consider the gap between peer consultants of color, who were deeply and personally familiar with racism, and white peer consultants, who were generally new to antiracism. Nor did we account for the impact peer conversations would have on peer consultants of color, especially as it relates to the ease with which some white peer consultants evaded considering race. In retrospect, we have learned a great deal about the complexity of our goals, especially how our whiteness and oversimplification of agency impacted project design. As we will show, Mila's experience in professional development was not shared by her white peers. Throughout this article, we highlight peer consultants' voices to give a better understanding of the impact of our antiracist professional development, especially on their sense of agency in acting against racism.

The professional development curriculum included 14 weeks of learning about antiracist writing center practices and completing reflective activities. Afterward, peer consultants created an assessment tool that articulated the antiracist values they wanted to see our program deliberately put into practice. A subset of peer consultants then helped us apply this assessment tool to program materials to identify areas for revision. Our process for the inductive and collaborative development of the assessment tool was heavily influenced by Bob Broad's concept of dynamic criteria mapping (2003) and Asao Inoue's (2015) framework for an ecological understanding of assessment. Peer consultant feedback led to substantive changes in programmatic materials, processes, and trainings. As part of this IRB-approved study, we collected pre- and postsurvey responses, written reflections, and interview transcripts, which gave us insight into the impact the curriculum and assessment experience had on peer consultants—with particular focus on their agency to enact antiracist practices in consultations.

Our research has led us to problematize our understanding of agency from an antiracist perspective. Specifically, we now reject

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transactional notions of agency as something that is given to individual peer consultants. Instead, we forward an understanding of acquiring agency that is messy, partial, reflective, and reflexive. As we will illustrate, peer consultants identified factors that constrained and enhanced their agency in practicing antiracism in and beyond the writing center; these constraints often overlapped with their perceived ability to impact the institutional culture of writing. As a PWI writing center, institutional and local culture were often in tension with antiracist values. For peer consultants, those constraints were palpable. In addition to describing complicated relationships with agency, peer consultants identified steps administrators could take to promote antiracism beyond the writing center, emphasizing the need for collective action. Our research offers one approach to implementing antiracist professional development and explores findings to learn more about acting against racism at a PWI.

Literature Review

Because our writing center employs undergraduate and graduate students from across the disciplines, few had existing knowledge about antiracism or the role race played in writing centers, writing, and language. Sophia, a peer consultant, summarized her realization, stating that the curriculum helped her understand “how pervasive like racism is to like every institution that is in our world and, like, including the writing center,” going on to note, “Like, you think it’ll be like a happy nice place for everyone, and we can come and talk about writing projects and it should just you know, be reflective and safe, but um, just like realizing that it can also be sort of a place where people are silenced, and they feel like they’re not included, and they can’t come to get help because they’re going to get told that they’re wrong.” In this review of literature, we summarize previous work related to antiracism and agency in writing centers and discuss the relationship between traditional agency frameworks and antiracism. We acknowledge that some literature is more recent and informed our data analysis, meaning it was not explicitly

included in professional development curriculum, whereas other cited works are directly pulled from the curriculum. The full professional development curriculum is available in Appendix A for readers curious to learn more.

As we study the role of race within writing center administration and professional development, we learned from the foundation created for our work by many scholars of color. Testimonies of racism in the writing center have been shared by scholars of color, including Wonderful Faison and Anna Treviño (2017), Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison (2018), Richard Sévère (2018), and Zandra Jordan (2021), among others. Alexandria Lockett (2019) called on writing center administrators to recognize the racial violence that is often experienced by students of color and multilingual writers in their centers. Romeo García (2017) similarly argued that “whiteness continues to shape contemporary forms of management and control of practices and writing center scholarship.” He urged those pursuing an antiracist agenda to include and recognize the experiences of other minoritized groups beyond the white/Black paradigm, like the experiences of Mexican American students. To do this, García posited, peer consultants must become researchers, reflective practitioners, and even theorists of race and racism. The reflective and theoretical work of antiracism García describes raised difficult questions about agency for our center.

Scholarship in writing program administration and writing centers illustrates complicated facets that arise in doing antiracist work. Natasha N. Jones, Laura Gonzales, and Angela M. Haas (2021) encouraged writing programs to go beyond “posturing and performing,” which we place in direct opposition to antiracist agency, toward actions that promote real change for Black scholars (p. 32). Within writing centers, specifically, Sonya Barrera Eddy, Katherine Bridgman, J. Ione Matthews, Rande M. Schmitt, and Autumn Brooke Crane’s (2021) concept of “comadrisimo” emphasized antiracism as a highly collaborative, compassionate, reflective, and vulnerable process for peer consultants and administrators that relies on relationship and care as the root of dialogue and action. Similarly, we emphasized collaboration and distributed agency, with the

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goal of fostering agency in peer consultants to enact antiracist practices in and beyond the writing center. For us, an essential element of that agency was consultants' ability to act by identifying and enacting antiracist practices.

In writing center literature, agency is often treated as if it can be held and doled out. Specifically, those who hold agency also traditionally hold perceived positions of power in writing center hierarchies. In some cases, agency is shared through a transactional process, either from the writing center director(s) to peer consultants or from peer consultants to student writers. For instance, Georganne Nordstrom (2019) framed tutor agency as granted by directors who choose to involve tutors in decision-making processes that affect the future of the center. Additionally, Layne Gordon (2014) described writer agency as granted by tutors, and Celeste Ann Del Russo, Sharada Krishnamurthy, and Donna A. Mehalchick-Opal (2020) understood writer agency as enabled by directors who adopt translanguaging and transmodal approaches through the fostering of "literate agency" in student writers. However, we are unsure agency can ever really be owned and transactionally transferred to others.

In contrast, an antiracist lens questions the assumption that agency can be shared in such a tidy transaction. For Ben Rafoth (2016), agency required both recognition of oppressive social conditions and imagination to disrupt these conditions to envision a new future. García (2017) agreed, noting that to act against racism, individuals need to cultivate an awareness of their "internal checkpoints" that lead to complicity (p. 30). Similarly, Janel McCloskey, Mary Allain, Sarah Drepaul, Kelsey Hendry, Janae Kindt, Aaliyah Sesay, and Devin Welsh (2020) argued that systemic racism positioned all as complicit in sustaining racism, and they maintained that individuals (i.e., peer consultants) and collectives (i.e., a writing center) can still create change through deliberate acts. Finally, Wenqi Cui (2020) recognized that agency is an ongoing process of (re)constructing identities, framing *agencies* as multiple, intertwined, and shaped by choices to reproduce, resist, or transform.

Building upon this work and concerned with how our whiteness might have led us to conceptualize agency, we applied Inoue's (2016) framework of a white racial *habitus* to critique our understandings of agency. Inoue identified four elements of a white racial *habitus*: "hyperindividualism; individualized, rational, controlled self; rule-governed, contractual relationships; clarity, order, and control." Inoue's framework complicates agency as simply transactional, shared in uneven power relationships (director to peer consultant; peer consultant to writer). In fact, we now believe that transactional concepts of agency reinscribe a white racial *habitus* when they fail to acknowledge the power of systemic racism in denying voice to peer consultants with diverse, marginalized identities, especially race. We initially believed that we could distribute power to peer consultants and thereby help them position themselves as antiracist agents, but we found that the reality was much more complex.

Methods

This IRB-approved project was conducted in a writing center housed within a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program under the Provost's Office at a large, research-intensive PWI in the southeastern United States. During the semester in which the research took place, we employed approximately 40 undergraduate and graduate students from across the disciplines as peer consultants. Our staff primarily included white women with racial demographics closely mirroring the whiteness of our institution, which were 77% white, 8% "non-resident aliens" (the institutional term), and 5% Black or African American. Because peer consultants come from various programs and departments, which may not allow for elective courses, we do not require them to take a writing center theory course, although such a course is available through the English department. Instead, professional development occurs throughout the semester in whole-staff and small group "circle" meetings. During the study, five circles of 5–8 peer consultants

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were led by a lead peer consultant and full-time administrator.

The curriculum began with a staff meeting wherein we defined key concepts: racism, anti-racism, institutional racism, intersectionality, BIPOC, and systemic oppression. We also introduced the research study and distributed the presurvey. In the week 2 staff meeting, we hosted a professional from the Office of Inclusion and Diversity who presented on privilege and intersectional identity. From there, circles began meeting to review readings related to antiracism and completed brief activities (these readings included Alvarez, 2018; Geller et al., 2007; Green, 2016; Inoue, 2016; Isaac, 2018; Lyiscott, 2018; McIntosh, 1989; Patanayak, 2017; Suhr-Sytsma & Brown, 2011; Young, 2011). At three points during this curriculum, peer consultants responded to reflective prompts. At the end of the semester, the staff convened to create the collaborative assessment tool, take the postsurvey, and opt into participating in programmatic assessment. In all, seven peer consultants were paid to participate in assessment, during which they applied the assessment tool to materials from our office. Twelve opted to participate in the study by allowing us to analyze their pre- and postsurveys ($n = 12$), reflective written responses ($n = 12$), assessment institute materials ($n = 7$), and/or interviews ($n = 8$). Of those participants, two identified as women of color, but the majority were white women. All participant names have been pseudonymized.

The mixed-methods study used peer consultants' surveys, reflective writing, assessment materials, and interview transcripts to answer four research questions:

1. How do antiracist theories inform consultants' practices?
2. How do consultants use antiracist theories to create an assessment instrument that can be used to evaluate program resources?
3. What does a consultant-driven programmatic assessment reveal about how well a program is enacting antiracist principles?

4. How does participating impact consultants' sense of agency in the institutional culture of writing?

We write about our program assessment experience in a forthcoming collection by Asao Inoue and Kristin DeMint Bailey, *Antiracism in Context: Exploring the Politics of Judgement and Subjectivity in Collaborative Writing Assessments*. This article focuses on research questions 1 and 4; thus, we primarily focus on qualitative data, which we coded using an inductive framework.

Data Analysis

As noted above, we collected several forms of qualitative data before analysis:

- Open-ended response questions on pre- and postsurveys
- Reflective writing prompts, completed three times during the semester
- One-hour interviews, completed the following semester

In these data, participants identified their beliefs about racism, writing, and the institutional culture of writing, and they discussed their ability to apply antiracist practices in consultations. They also discussed the role they played in the larger culture of writing.

We analyzed these data using an inductive qualitative coding framework. Dana Lynn Driscoll and Sherry Wynn Perdue (2014) called for writing centers to leverage replicable, aggregative, data-driven (RAD) research to guide practices in their centers and writing center pedagogy. Importantly, Neil Simpkins and Virginia Schwarz (2015) reminded us to queer RAD research methods so that they are flexible enough to include nuanced and outlier experiences; we note this as being especially important within the context of our PWI. Our analysis methods had to reserve space for us to hear and recognize the perspectives of our few BIPOC peer consultants who had firsthand experiences related to racism and writing while simultaneously looking across data provided by our predominantly white staff. If

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essentialized, these data have the potential to erase or reduce the experiences of the two BIPOC peer consultants ($n = 12$). For these reasons, our analysis emphasized the descriptive content of data in addition to quantitative measures like frequency and correlation.

Our approach to inductive coding was informed by the process for data analysis outlined by Cheryl Geisler and Jason Swarts (2019). We began by compiling written and verbal data into an Excel document and dividing data into stable t -units. From there, all four researchers reviewed data to identify emerging themes: antiracist practice, inclusive practice, collaboration, agency, lack of agency, culture of writing, self-reflection/awareness, racism, and multilingual writers. We used these themes as an initial coding set, which we applied to 100 sample t -units. Then, we determined where codes could be refined.

Codes that were too capacious were broken down into distinct codes or nested codes with parent and child codes. For instance, the culture of writing code was refined into a nested category with child codes specific to how participants discussed the culture: describing (neutral connotation), suggesting (positive or negative), affirming (positive connotation), or critiquing (negative connotation). After two additional rounds of application and revision, researchers landed on a final code set, which is shown in Table 1.

We applied these codes across 513 t -units. We allowed double-coding, or instances where multiple codes were applied simultaneously to a single unit (Saldaña, 2015). Each t -unit was coded by two researchers and disagreements were adjudicated to establish an inter-coder reliability rate of 93% simple agreement. We did two forms of analysis: First, frequency and correlation counts illustrated which codes appeared most and least often and how codes were applied in double-coding instances. Second, descriptive analysis within each code and within each participant's set of codes provided us with deeper descriptions of these data.

Results

Here, we explain each code using peer consultants' words. Whenever possible, we name the

self-reported race of peer consultants the first time they are mentioned to give a better understanding of how the curriculum addressed white peer consultants and failed to address the needs of consultants of color. Notably, we begin with agency (which we define as the ability to understand or take antiracist action) and lack of agency. These codes illustrate a tension between peer consultants' felt ability to enact antiracist practices and their ability to impact the institutional culture of writing.

We also investigate codes that co-occur with discussions of agency—self-reflection, antiracist practice, inclusive practice, multilingual writers, and culture of writing. Peer consultants emphasized self-reflection as a factor in their ability to apply antiracist practices but sometimes struggled to articulate nuances between antiracism specifically and inclusion or multilingualism more broadly. While peer consultants were confident in their ability to change their behaviors and apply antiracist practices in consultations and conversations with family and friends, they were hesitant to think they could meaningfully impact the institutional culture of writing.

Agency

Several peer consultants articulated a potential to transform the institutional culture of writing but had varying perspectives on what that transformation might look like within and beyond the writing center. Dakota, a white peer consultant, described working to “destabilize” racist ideas about language. For them, transformation was possible because of their professional position as a peer consultant and their exposure to the antiracist curriculum. Similarly, Sophia (a white peer consultant) and Mary described their peer consultant roles as granting “mild authority” to “tear down” or to “affirm” clients' linguistic diversity and advocate, listen to, and encourage writers. Mila told us she refused to be complacent and would not accept a racist status quo: “I would definitely consider myself a rule breaker. . . . I am also very much so willing to fight for the right to do that.” While Mila had to “fight” with fervent agency to oppose rules imposed by systemic racism, even while

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Table 1. Final Codes and Definitions

Code	Nested Codes (if applicable)	Code Count	Definition
Agency		66	The participant discusses their ability to act
Lack of Agency		70	The participant discusses their inability to act
Antiracist Practice	Within Consulting	77	The participant discusses their own, outward-facing, antiracist practices that impact other people, such as calling in/calling out, recognizing that some forms of English are coded as good/bad, and/or linguistic diversity, all specifically with respect to race
	Beyond Consulting	62	
Collaboration		79	The participant discusses moments of peer-to-peer collaboration, listening, and discussion, excluding interpersonal racism
Culture of Writing	Culture as Related to Writing Center	95	The participant discusses the culture of the writing center and/or its place within the larger culture of writing
	Describes Culture	69	The participant describes the institution's culture of writing without evaluating it or suggesting changes
	Suggests Changes to Culture	23	The participant suggests changes to the institution's culture of writing
	Affirms Culture	31	The participant affirms the institution's culture of writing as appropriate or supportive
Critiques Culture		90	The participant critiques or criticizes the institution's culture of writing
Self-Reflection		173	The participant discusses their own privilege, personal growth, learning, or an increased awareness of racism and oppression
Inclusive Practice	Within Consulting	63	The participant discusses inclusive practices to ensure learning is available equally to all people, but does not discuss issues of race
	Beyond Consulting	101	
Systemic Racism		75	The participant discusses racism as a systemic phenomenon by referencing racism in the contexts of culture, society, or attitudes and practices with language
Interpersonal Racism		28	The participant discusses racism as a matter of personal bias or discrimination, or else occurring in interactions among small groups of people
Multilingual Writers		36	The participant discusses the needs and experiences of multilingual writers or international students

expecting retaliation due to her race, others believed they could enact antiracism only under specific conditions. For Mary, a growing comfort discussing “issues” with white peers and clients allowed her to “contribute to efforts of inclusion and antiracism.” The varying manifestations of agency, especially when it

depends on comfort, makes us question its capability to lead to transformative action.

Lack of Agency

Peer consultants expressed a sense of powerlessness and explained that being *peer*

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consultants ultimately did not allow them to destabilize systemic racism within the institutional culture of writing. Learning about systemic racism felt “overwhelming” (Caty, a white peer consultant); status as a student hampered their reach and, in some cases, required assimilation. Sophia expressed felt responsibility to help students revise to conform to SEAE because it may be expected in academic and professional environments: “You want to be fostering good relationships with faculty and staff. . . . It’s just hard to see this going on and not be able to say anything.” Grace struggled to identify “an opening” to discuss antiracism in consultations, sharing, “I didn’t feel quite comfortable enough with bringing up what—what we talked about.” For Grace, discomfort led to avoidance, a position not afforded to Mila, whose work to destabilize racist ideologies around writing was accompanied with personal risk. Whereas Grace’s discomfort led her to avoid discussing racism during appointments, Mila persisted through any potential discomfort, and even personal risk. Poignantly, Mila described her experience of writing papers that identified failures at the institution to support minoritized students: “And every time I write one, I like cry a little bit because I’m so scared. I’m like: Is this the moment I get expelled? Is this the moment I get kicked out?” Notably, peer consultants did not experience agency and lack of agency codes exclusively, often perceiving their agency as in flux and reliant on environmental factors or personal risk.

Self-Reflection

García (2017) said reflexivity is an important initial step in developing agency and awareness, and data showed many white peer consultants taking initial steps in reflecting on systemic racism. Sophia was one of several who mentioned self-reflection as a reason for wanting to participate in the research study, saying that it “will definitely help me be more reflective about how I can apply antiracist principles to my own life. . . . I can assess my behaviors meaningfully and try to determine what messages they send to others.” For white peer

consultants, especially, the curriculum gave them the “opportunity to discuss and think” (Caty) about writing and tutoring with an antiracist lens, including how “to put what I’ve learned forward and apply it” within and beyond the writing center (Gwen). For peer consultants of color, self-reflection led to different ends, namely “less patience for lack of diversity in writing” (which Grace was only becoming more aware of) and “more confidence to be *not* okay with things not being okay” (Mila). For peer consultants, self-reflection was important in developing awareness and, in some cases, fostering agency, or the ability to enact antiracist practices.

Antiracist Practice

Certain antiracist practices seemed more applicable and appealing to peer consultants, such as calling in, destabilizing SEAE, encouraging the use of dialects and languages, and empowering writers. Peer consultants’ perceived abilities to enact such practices sometimes existed in tension with their sense of agency. However, we were heartened to see that many were compelled by their engagement with the antiracist curriculum. Caty mentioned using calling in to expose racism in consultations with white clients. She says that there is a “delicate balance . . . between not wanting to be rude to someone, but also not wanting to like just let something like that go” because “if you let something go, they’re just gonna keep having that mentality that’s going to keep contributing to the system they’re benefiting from.” Sophia also saw “calling things out” as now necessary in “making a safe space for people of all races . . . to come in and feel like they can express themselves and get their services.” Many saw the transferability of antiracist practices to contexts beyond the writing center: their future professions, practices with writing and research, and conversations with friends and family. Yet, peer consultants often questioned what it meant to practice antiracism (i.e., have agency) and grasped for models of antiracist consulting that were notably absent or underdeveloped in the literature.

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Inclusive Practice

Peer consultants also connected—or confused—antiracism with other inclusive practices, such as disability rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and socioeconomic class. In discussing ableism and neurodiversity, Anthony, a peer consultant who openly discussed his own ADHD, said one realization he came to was “learning to appreciate different peoples . . . and kind of seeing like how different people’s voices and experiences can kind of show through writing.” While we were happy to see consultants thinking deeply about intersectional identity and reflecting on their marginalized identities to try to relate to antiracism, we fear the frequency might show white peer consultants getting stuck in habits of generalizing to avoid confronting systemic racism by flattening antiracism to overgeneralizations, like treating others fairly and creating experiences open to “all,” or making jumps away from discussing race in favor of critiquing heteronormativity or ableism. Mary told us, “I understand like treating everyone fairly and with the same care as a consultant is important, with my relationship with clients, but also being considerate and understanding to everyone.” Again, while we do not inherently disagree with fairness as a concept, we think fairness often invoked problematic meritocratic values that did not make visible or destabilize systemic inequities that make fair treatment impossible for individuals of color. In terms of agency, these instances of generalizing or performing inclusion were distinctly different from the ability to detail the enactment of specific practices that exposed, confronted, and redirected racism.

Multilingual Writers

In more meaningful, but still problematic, pivots, peer consultants linked antiracism to the linguistic and cultural bias that is often experienced by international students. Although many writers of color at our institution are international students, we were disappointed that peer consultants did not articulate distinctions between nationality and race. That being said, we saw peer consultants developing empathy toward those acquiring a language and

the adversity multilingual writers can experience related to English proficiency (Sophia, Anthony, Caty). Becca wrote, “A writer’s own cultural and societal background and experiences have led them to the developmental spot in their writing that they are in today. Their ideas and unique expression of language should be celebrated and many students who are multilingual have been belittled for their writing in the past.” Becca went on to write that “inclusive and antiracist practices should be brought by the writing consultant into every appointment.” While Becca seemed clear in her drive to use antiracist practices, she seemed less sure of *how* to do this work. Pavarti (a peer consultant and international student of color) disagreed with the idea that antiracist practices could be de facto applied in consultations with international writers, noting that she had personally benefited when SEAE was transparently explained: “If, maybe, I’m not familiar with something then [professors and peers] are more than willing to help me understand.” We will continue to emphasize the intersectional but still meaningful difference between multilingualism and antiracism in future professional development.

Culture of Writing: Writing Center

Culture of writing codes were divided into five child codes, with one code identifying the perceived culture of writing within the writing center. Largely, peer consultants viewed the antiracist curriculum positively and hoped we would find more opportunities to discuss antiracism in greater depth (Sophia, Mila). For most peer consultants, their only opportunity to engage with writing studies scholarship was through professional development, so it was necessary to provide them with a foundational knowledge of important terms and concepts related to writing and antiracism. However, peer consultants’ willingness and desire to engage with antiracist writing center scholarship shows this kind of professional development can be delivered successfully in writing centers that employ students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Some mentioned not realizing writing centers had been critiqued as a white space and could “contribute to a culture of

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racism” (Ricky). Others noted how powerful it was to see “staff take responsibility this semester for the roles they play in maintaining the oppressive writing culture, as well as their desire to improve for our clients,” adding that “with collaboration and active listening, we can begin to make progress” (Sophia). Opportunities to critically reflect on systemic racism prompted our writing center community to begin wondering how to begin changing conversations about writing and language across the institution.

Culture of Writing: Describes, Suggests, Affirms, Critiques

The remaining culture of writing codes were broken down by how the culture was characterized: was the participant describing it or were they making suggestions, affirmations, and critiques of this culture? The most frequent code was “critique,” with consultants noting that antiracism needed to be a conversation reaching beyond the writing center. Dakota noted that the institutional culture of writing is “rooted in the racist things we studied,” like “the standard academic writing,” saying, “The writing center can affect that but only to a degree, it can help improve some students’ perspectives of writing, but I don’t think that the culture of writing . . . could shift without professors also knowing about the ways in which the culture of writing could have racist consequences.” Caty suggested that “any class that has to do with writing can start having these conversations with students” because “opening up the conversation could have a lot of impact.” Consultants mentioned their role in, as Dakota put it, “de-stabiliz[ing]” the negative aspects in the culture of writing “to help our minority students feel more included and accepted.” When peer consultants affirmed the culture, they mentioned specific interactions with professors who invested in their writing development, gave them multiple chances to try, and cared about their growth. It was curious to see participants mention individual interactions that fulfilled some of their own definitions of inclusive, antiracist practice yet still describe the institutional culture of writing negatively. Anthony offered one explanation for this: “Each part of the university

has like their own writing culture and they don’t overlap a lot.” This leads us to the need for collective action: changing an institutional culture of writing has to involve collective labor, not just individuals doing this work in isolation. In the end, it is impossible for a writing center to accomplish this work alone.

Other Codes

We coded in three additional areas— collaboration, systemic racism, and interpersonal racism. In this section, we will discuss the presence and absence of these codes in our data. First, many mentioned that collaboration enabled their learning, especially hearing the experiences of others: peer consultants of color, those with disciplinary backgrounds related to speech and language learning, and those providing testimony to the ideas we were reading about in action. Anthony, for instance, shared hearing a professor “singling out international students saying, ‘Hey, you guys should go use the writing center because you guys need this or that,’” thereby witnessing what Wonderful Faison and Anna Treviño describe as the “weaponization” of centers against certain students (2017). Sharing experiences was essential to the learning and growth we did throughout the semester.

However, peer consultants of color experienced interpersonal racism within our collaborative learning environment, and we recognize that we did not do enough to anticipate or respond to these events. Mila mentioned a white colleague questioning racism’s existence during circle discussions, but did not feel comfortable calling this peer out:

*I was very disappointed in myself because— [starts crying] I call people out on a regular basis. Like, I’m not someone who was very afraid of doing that. But in that space like, even though it was supposed [emphatically] to be a very safe space for engaging in that kind of discourse, the— It— At times it felt like I was walking on eggshells around topics as to not make people feel discom-
forted or upset.*

Mila’s point is essential to our antiracist work because it speaks to interpersonal racism and

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a failure on our end to create the brave spaces needed to engage with antiracist practice safely. By centering the needs of white peer consultants who were largely new to learning and discussing these topics, we did not do enough to consider the emotional labor peer consultants of color would carry hearing colleagues challenge or express surprise at the racism they had experienced their whole lives, nor did we adequately address these moments or anticipate how they could impact peer consultants' ability to act and speak. Although Mila did not describe her experience in terms of agency, we believe her agency was flattened in this moment by interpersonal racism, forcing her to feel that she was "walking on eggshells" and avoiding calling out so as "to not make people feel discomforted or upset." We did not anticipate racism manifesting itself in this way within our center and must do more to critically identify and interrupt racism. As white writing program administrators, this means confronting our whiteness, constantly reflecting and self-assessing our efficacy and ability to do this work without reproducing racism, and directly addressing racism within the center and the institution.

Finally, racism permeates all social structures, including institutions and writing centers; thus, we expected to apply the *systemic racism* code frequently, especially in co-occurrence with the *lack of agency* code. However, we were surprised that these data did not reflect this connection. In these data, peer consultants described a recognition of the existence of systemic racism but were unsure of or only beginning to explore their role in sustaining or dismantling it. For example, Caty stated that the professional development sparked a new understanding: "I've always known that I do have white privilege, but um because of that privilege, I think that I haven't had to, like, really delve into what that means. . . . Starting the journey of figuring out what role I play in that system was super important." Although we wished participants had named systemic racism more regularly, we were heartened that they were beginning the long, reflective path of antiracist practice—one we continue to travel. We can all travel further on that path by making more "noise"

(Mila) about systemic racism, to expose it and render it able to be dismantled. In fact, the relatively low number of times we applied the code speaks to the need to make "noise" (Mila) about systemic racism to expose it and render it able to be dismantled.

Discussion

In this discussion, we return to two key research questions: How do antiracist theories inform peer consultants' practices? How does participating in antiracist curriculum impact peer consultants' sense of agency within our institutional culture of writing? Although Mila highlighted the personal risk she took in antiracist action at the institution and the emotional labor involved in experiencing interpersonal racism from colleagues, she also expressed a sense of hope that her efforts could create a culture shift:

The power that I have on an individual level when talking to my clients, and helping to empower them, and to give them more confidence and more willpower to stand up for themselves is I think probably what I consider my biggest tool with agency. . . . When you work on the small scale, it, you know, like the idea of bubble up economics, instead of trickle down. Trickle down never works. Starting at the top, by the time you get to the bottom there's nothing left, but when you start at the bottom things only grow. So, yeah, I think most of my agency lies in the work that I'm able to do with the writing center.

Mila's discussion of economics echoed the aim of the antiracist curriculum—to empower peer consultants to move the writing center toward an antiracist stance. However, the fear and grief she experienced as an activist woman of color in a PWI was not shared by white peer consultants, who saw antiracist action as a choice, something that could be taken up when the situation was comfortable, rather than a practice that threads through all work regardless of personal comfort. Mila had to witness a white peer sharing racist beliefs, which is as much our failure as

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administrators as it is a moral shortcoming for that peer. Mila's words remind us that agency may be experienced differently across racial identities. Women of color, like Mila, especially stand in opposition to systems and institutions that oppress them. Our white racial *habitus* led us to mistake the functioning of power, believing that transactional agency was available to be taken up by any individual or could be easily shared with peer consultants.

While we did not practice antiracist agency as thoroughly or consistently as we had hoped, peer consultants and administrators grew through the process and discussed how to enact antiracist practices within and beyond the writing center. Peer consultants said the curriculum gave them opportunities to listen and reflect on their beliefs and behaviors. Sophia said that following the curriculum, "I can assess my behaviors meaningfully and try to determine what messages they send to others." Sophia's listening and reflection achieves what García (2017) identified as a first step toward antiracist action, suggesting peer consultants engage "with weekly or monthly reflections" wherein they describe and account "for the ways in which power, issues of race, and social relations play out" (p. 50). For white peer consultants, in particular, listening and reflecting involved difficult conceptual moves, like acknowledging their complicity in systemic racism and the ways past behaviors reinscribed the racist structures we were now trying to work against. Reflection also created spaces for peer consultants to verbalize the powerlessness they felt as they pushed against other institutional barriers, like the expectations professors or the institution held regarding writing. Emily, a student studying speech-language pathology, noted:

As a future SLP, anti-racism, dialect, and linguistic differences are very important to me. SLPs consider language dialects as differences, and do not diagnose children who have linguistic differences with speech/language deficits. After these conversations, I understand this on an even deeper level. It makes me question why health professions acknowledge this, but many teachers may mark off assignments for this.

For Emily, there was overlap between anti-racism and her professional community, but those values conflicted with institutional expectations related to SEAE.

Although peer consultants were skeptical of their ability to change the institutional culture, they noted they could impact individuals—clients, friends, and family—using antiracist practices. By far, the most popular resource was a handout on calling in and calling out created by Rebecca Haslam and Seed the Way (2019); it was mentioned 22 times across our codes. Calling in, specifically through question raising, complemented strategies already at work in our writing center and offered peer consultants a way to guide clients to consider how their writing might invoke racist ideas and concepts. Becca said, "I learned that anti-racism includes 'calling-in' and getting at the heart of what someone means when they write something that may be hurtful or prejudiced. A key part of anti-racism is working through those difficult conversations with writers from a variety of different backgrounds." However, other concepts were also shared beyond the writing center. Grace said, "I've found myself referring to our readings and teachings even in conversations with my friends." Dakota brought up code-switching with their mom, who teaches first-year composition: "I've even told my mom about code-switching because she teaches freshman-level English classes at an HBCU. I think it is one of the best ways to subvert the systematic discrimination within academic writing, and easily mentioned into consultations, which makes it especially powerful for us." Some might view these instances of individual action as signs of agency; however, denoting these as moments of agency reinforces Inoue's white racial *habitus* and does not achieve collective, reflexive, and iterative processes of action and reaction that requires long-term learning and radical transformation.

Conclusion

As noted in the opening of this article, we reject agency as something that is given to peer consultants in a tidy, transactional process. Instead, we embrace the partiality and

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messiness essential to reflective and reflexive learning. Antiracism continues to be a focus in professional development as both peer consultants and administrators feel they have a lot to learn. Within the writing center, that means identifying more models of antiracist consulting or antiracist action. For instance, peer consultants wondered how they would know when they were doing enough to practice antiracism: Should every appointment prompt a discussion about antiracism? Does antiracism need to be named explicitly, or can goals of empowerment and a love for BIPOC language and writers also be illustrative of antiracist work? Can antiracism be signaled to clients through mission statements, or mentioned at the beginning of each appointment? What does it mean to do—and not just perform—antiracism in a writing center? Put differently, peer consultants needed explicit models of what it looks like to do this work in writing centers.

Within our writing center, we will continue to engage with, discuss, and apply antiracist scholarship to our practice with time set aside to assess how well these values are being illustrated through tutoring strategies and program resources. As a writing program, we must also reflect on what it will mean to do antiracist work in our writing center: What does that look like exactly, and how do we communicate that commitment? This work gets at another one of García's (2017) concepts, *ethos*—one of the essential qualities of becoming decolonial agents, which can only be made through an iterative process of encountering, coexisting, and reflecting on race and power that results in "explicit commitments to addressing race and power" (p. 48). We continue to consider our commitments to antiracist practice, especially as we engage with the managerial aspects of writing center administration, like staff turnover, because those aspects factor into the larger ecology of our center and impact our practice of antiracism.

For our peer consultants, changing the institutional culture of writing felt out of reach, but they urged administrators to push against institutional barriers towards antiracist work. Specifically, they named faculty's continued

tendency to overvalue SEAE in their evaluation of student writing. Our writing center is part of a larger WAC program, leaving much potential for thinking critically about strategies for writing evaluation that get beyond surface-level, syntactical choices to focus on higher-order concerns, rhetorical context, and student choice. While peer consultants can do antiracist work in consultations, it is our job to advocate for more capacious definitions of good writing across the institution and destabilize reductive assumptions that good writing equates to one's ability to write in SEAE.

Especially at a PWI, antiracist writing center efforts need to be in conversation with larger institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. While we cannot claim institutional change, we have made several revisions to programmatic policies and materials following this study. For example, we explicitly identify our linguistic values in a Linguistic Diversity Statement at the beginning of every presentation we deliver on campus. As well, we have revised workshop materials and program guides using the assessment tool consultants developed to better put into practice our antiracist values. Finally, as we created learning outcomes for clients and consultants, we included an outcome specific to working with clients who have diverse backgrounds and positionalities. Not only do these revisions speak to concrete programmatic changes but they also create spaces to discuss linguistic diversity and antiracism across campus.

Writing center studies must provide more examples of antiracist action in writing centers with attention to how administrators and peer consultants can explore their positionalities and understanding while deliberately supporting consultants and administrators of color, particularly at PWIs. To do this well, models of agency within the center need to be reimaged to embrace a more uneven and iterative process that adapts across identities and power structures. This work cannot perpetuate undue labor on BIPOC scholars and peer consultants. We hope peer consultants' voices will be foregrounded as these models emerge, with the intentional inclusion of peer consultants across disciplines.

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Appendix A: Writing Center Consultant Professional Development Curriculum

Overview and Rationale

As institutionally sanctioned spaces, writing centers are participants in and perpetrators of institutionalized racism; however, this positioning also empowers writing centers to work to dismantle institutionalized racism within their programs and the institution through an antiracist stance. Writing centers can be racist when they take as their primary mission the maintenance of white language practices, particularly standardized edited academic English (SEAE). As Geller et al. (2007) put it, writing centers have long had a “traditional role as gatekeepers of academic literacy” (p. 105) that often results in racist judgments that treat languages and dialects besides SEAE as abnormal or erroneous deviations from the standard. Alternatively, writing centers can enact antiracist principles and challenge these assumptions, honor the rich language variety students can bring to their writing to great rhetorical effect, and center the needs, perspectives, and bodies of Black, Indigenous, and other students of color. When they do so, writing centers and writing center administrators can take on leadership roles as agents of antiracist institutional change (Geller et al., 2007, p. 104).

As a means for better practicing antiracism in the writing center specifically, and writing program generally, we have revised our professional development curriculum to introduce our consultants to antiracist concepts and strategies they can enact during appointments with clients. Writing center scholars often advocate for such changes in tutor education. For example, Geller et al. (2007) argue in favor of tutor education that involves “sustained examinations of the ways and degrees to which writing centers might be contact zones in which there is an ongoing struggle to challenge the unequal distribution of power and access along racial lines” (p. 97). Such work requires writing center administrators and consultants to engage in inquiry into the links between language and identity and the racial prejudices and practices we bring into our centers. Aikens (2019) offers a three-point framework for guiding this work:

1. Recognize that academic language is raced, classed, and otherwise privileged, and therefore disadvantages low-income students of color and multilingual students, among others. Develop strategies to avoid using writing tutoring as a method for assimilation.
2. Identify how the racial positions and educational experiences of tutors affect their approaches to writing and tutoring, their perceptions of the students they work with, and the students’ perceptions of them.
3. Develop and practice strategies to compassionately and thoughtfully challenge racist and other oppressive language when it appears, consciously or unconsciously, in student papers.

Our plan is to adapt this framework (which Aikens designed for a credit-bearing course) to our professional development curriculum (which is not credit-bearing). As a university-wide writing center, housed within a writing across the curriculum (WAC)/writing in the disciplines (WID) program, we hire undergraduate and graduate students from various majors and programs. Many of these students are in majors with highly structured curricula, such as engineering and nursing, with little room for elective credits. To aid in recruiting consultants from these programs, we do not require anyone to take the writing center theory and practice course (offered periodically by the English Department) before working for us.

Instead, we schedule weekly meetings, either as an entire staff or in small group “circles” (Marshall, 2008); consultants are paid for this time. In years past, we have used these meetings to introduce them to scholarship on grammar(s), researched writing, multilingual writers,

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linguistic diversity, multimodality, and accessibility. Consultants prepare for these meetings by reading writing studies scholarship or completing hands-on activities with sample student writing. They often do this work on the clock, between appointments with clients and meetings with other consultants, so we try to limit the number of readings and activities required during any given week. With these structural limitations in mind, we have created a new professional development curriculum that aims to deepen consultants' engagement with antiracism in the writing center.

The revised curriculum begins with an overview and rationale for the curriculum as a whole, utilizing the local exigencies and scholarship that articulates the need for antiracism in writing centers (Geller et al., 2007). Then, we will invite our consultants to engage in reflections on their own identities, and especially their racial positions (Aikens's second principle), by working with [Program Administrator for Inclusion and Diversity Education], on identity and allyship, and by reading about white privilege (McIntosh, 1989). Because our consultants' demographics closely resemble those of our predominantly white institution, we hope these discussions will raise their awareness of the ways in which the writing center mostly mirrors the white space that is our university. The remainder of the semester will introduce a wide range of theories and perspectives that should support our consultants' antiracist writing center praxis. A reading by Anjali Pattanayak and a TED Talk by Jamila Lyiscott will introduce students to the myth of SEAE and the realities of linguistic diversity—as well as the harmful, racist effects of linguistic chauvinism. The next two readings expand that conversation and aim to help consultants work to understand racist and anti-racist language practices (following Aikens's first principle). Work by Mandy Suhr-Sytsma and Shan-Estelle Brown will help consultants better understand how to recognize and counteract oppressive, and especially racist, language. A blog post by Asao Inoue offers a brief but nuanced explanation of the ways in which attention to grammar is and is not racist. Based on these readings, we will invite consultants to engage in a critical review of diversity and antiracism statements by academic institutions and corporations. Although we will also include activities relating to writing center praxis throughout this work, the final three readings will return specifically to writing center spaces (following Aikens's third principle). Neisha-Anne Green's scholarship will introduce consultants to, and give them strategies for supporting, code meshing during their appointments. Rochelle Isaac connects students' resistance to writing to an often-unrecognized racist cultural politics that leads students to feel disconnected from their writing; she sees her job as empowering students to find their voices and their exigencies as writers. And finally, Nancy Alvarez enables us to disrupt the Black/white binary (Garcia, 2017) by turning our attention to the experiences of Latinx students and the complexities of multilingual learning in the writing center. Through this curriculum, we hope to help "those who enter and work in the writing center be self-reflective practitioners, ones who give immense consideration to how their own identities and experiences affect the outcomes of their sessions" (Denny et al., 2018, p. 240).

In addition, we want to use this opportunity to bolster our antiracist praxis in our office as a whole. To that end, the curriculum will culminate in an assessment institute that focuses on an evaluation of our program resources, including handouts, worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, bibliographies, and readings that we use in consultant training, student workshops, and faculty development; our draft diversity statement; our mission statement; past assessment reports; and our website. Such materials can manifest a dominant (especially white, but also masculine, heteronormative, middle class, and able-bodied) *habitus*, which Asao Inoue (2019) glosses as a set of "linguistic, bodily, and performative dispositions" (p. 5). We think reflective practice centered on antiracism will help all of us—administrators, consultants, graduate assistants, and staff members—become better readers of the values, the *habitus*, at work in these materials. To aid in this work and help consultants see the connections between the readings and assessment, we will ask them to build a list of antiracist values, principles, and practices over the course of the semester, drawing from readings and our reflective discussions about those readings.

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With readings, reflections, discussions, and lists as a foundation, we will invite consultants to participate in the collaborative design of an assessment protocol that names the inclusive, antiracist values and features they want to see in program resources. Specifically, we will engage them in an adapted version of dynamic criteria mapping (DCM; Broad, 2003; Grouling, 2018). Broad (2003) argues that DCM results in “a more useful representation of the values by which we teach and assess writing” than traditional rubrics (p. 3) that “document [. . .] only a small fraction of the rhetorical values at work” in judging student writing (p. 12). DCM has been utilized in numerous contexts to both judge performances of student work and to assess the efficacy of curriculum and instruction (see Broad et al., 2009).

However, to our knowledge DCM has not been used in a setting with an institutional purview, such as a writing center or WAC/WID program, nor has it been adapted to provide evaluative judgments from students on writing program resources—this despite Grouling’s (2018) assertion that DCM “can help students [and, we would add, consultants] move beyond a view of writing as a neutral representation of information and toward a rhetorical view of writing to which they can add their own voices” (p. 13). We find Grouling’s (2018) point about the potential for student agency in DCM compelling. Too often, student agency is absent from programmatic assessments, even though student writing is often the object of assessment. In contrast, our approach to DCM will empower consultants to apply what they have learned about antiracism to the design of a rich map of what they value in writing program resources so they can evaluate our programmatic materials and instigate change in our program.

Week 1: All staff meeting

Geller, A. E., et al. (2007). *Everyday racism: Anti-racism work and writing center practice. The Everyday Writing Center* (pp. 87–109). Utah State University Press.

Topic: semester overview: definitions (racism, antiracism, institutional racism in education, systemic oppression, intersectionality, BIPOC, empathetic listening); describe the arc of the semester; discuss policies, scheduling, etc.; explain the research study and secure informed consent.

Week 2: All staff meeting

Topic: Invite guest speakers from the Office of Inclusion and Diversity to come do some introductory reflective work on identity, inclusivity, allyship, etc., plus discussing difficult issues of identity with care and intentionality.

Week 3: Circle meeting

Topic: Whiteness and white privilege

Reading: P. McIntosh. (1989, July/August). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. Peace and Freedom.*

Activity: What might white privilege look like in the writing center? In the culture of writing at our institution?

Week 4: Circle meeting

Topic: Mythbusting racist assumptions about language

Readings: Pattanayak, A. (2017). There is one correct way of writing and speaking. In C. E. Ball & D. M. Loewe (Eds.), *Bad ideas about writing* (pp. 82–87). <https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf>

Activity: What experiences have you had with the myth that there is one correct way of speaking and writing? In what ways have you seen this myth perpetuated (or disrupted) at our institution? What does this get you thinking about your own consulting and writing practices?

Practical application to consulting: Bell, S. (2017). “Whiteboys”: Contact zone, pedagogy, internalized racism, and composition at the university’s gateway. In F. Condon & V. A. Young (Eds.),

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Performing antiracist pedagogy in rhetoric, writing, and communication (p. 176). WAC Clearinghouse. <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/antiracist/bell.pdf>. Excerpt: Section “Attachment to Error” only 1 pg.

Week 5: Circle meeting

Topic: Intersections of language and power

Video: Lyiscott, J. (2018, May 23). *Why the English class is silencing students of color*. TedxTalks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4dc1axRwE4>

Activity: How do Lyiscott’s arguments about language, power, and race expand upon Pattanayak’s? What does this get you thinking about your own experiences or consulting practice?

Practical application to consulting: Diab, R., Godbee, B., Ferrel, T., & Simpkins, N. (2012). A multi-dimensional pedagogy for racial justice in writing centers. *Praxis 10*(1). <http://www.praxisuwc.com/diab-godbee-ferrell-simpkins-101>. Review three scenarios and accompanying reminders for readers such as that we can’t understand racism as individual bias but as a systemic issue.

Week 6: Circle meeting

Topic: How to recognize and challenge oppressive language

Reading: Suhr-Sytsma, M., & Brown, S. E. (2011). Theory in/to practice: Addressing the everyday language of oppression in the writing center. *The Writing Center Journal*, 31(2), 13–49. (Converted into a handout.)

Activity: Heavy focus on application in writing centers. Look at Barron, N., & Grimm, N. (2002). Addressing racial diversity in a writing center: Stories and lessons from two beginners. *The Writing Center Journal*, 22(2), 55–83. Excerpt (pp. 55–58). Scenario: A consultant works with a Black client who is hesitant to share her perspective in a class response because she is the only Black student in the course. She feels if she writes what she thinks, her anonymous response will be immediately identifiable, raising larger questions about how to address race within a mostly homogenous population and how voices of BIPOC can be heard respectfully while not being tokenized.

Week 7: Circle meeting

Topic: The racial dimensions of grammar; diversity/anti-racism statements

Reading: Inoue, A. (2017, February 27). Is grammar racist? *Infrequent Words*. <http://asaobinoue.blogspot.com/2017/02/is-grammar-racist-response.html>

Activity: Examine diversity or antiracist statements by institutions, corporations, etc., and identify which ones work well and which ones do not. Look also at apologies issued by various offices or organizations in response to a social media account exposing discrimination experienced by BIPOC students at our institution.

Week 8: Circle meeting

Topic: Multilingualism and code meshing as rhetorical practice

Reading: Green, N.-A. S. (2016). The re-education of Neisha-Anne S. Green: A close look at the damaging effects of “a standard approach,” the benefits of code-meshing, and the role allies play in this work. *Praxis*, 14(1). <http://www.praxisuwc.com/green-141>

Supplementary reading: Young, V. A. (2011). Should writers use they own English? In L. Greenfield & K. Rowan (Eds.), *Writing centers and the new racism: A call for sustainable dialogue and change* (pp. 61–72). Utah State University Press.

Activity: What experiences have you had with code meshing? In what ways do you see code meshing valued or judged here? What does this get you thinking about your own consulting practice?

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Week 9: Circle meeting

Topic: Empowering BIPOC voices in the writing center

Reading: Isaac, R. (2018). Sacred pages: Writing as a discursive political act. In H. Denny, R. Mundy, L. M. Naydan, R. Sévère, & A. Sicari (Eds.), *Out in the center: Public controversies and private struggles* (pp. 66–74). Utah State University Press.

Activity: How might students with diverse voices feel invalidated during consultations? Conversely, how do we validate diverse voices with our actions? You can think of strategies that you use in writing center consultations or how you support these voices in your courses, work environments, or social interactions. Special focus on microaggressions—make a 2-list heuristic (Suhr-Sytsma and Brown) of how microaggressions and other disempowering statements may occur in conferences and strategies to instead affirm and celebrate diverse voices.

Week 10: Circle meeting

Topic: The writing center as a racialized space

Reading: Alvarez, N. (2018). On letting the Brown bodies speak (and write). In H. Denny, R. Mundy, L. M. Naydan, R. Sévère, & A. Sicari (Eds.), *Out in the center: Public controversies and private struggles* (pp. 83–89). Utah State University Press.

Activity: Alvarez writes about two writing centers: one diverse and inclusive and another white space. As consultants at a writing center at a predominantly white institution, what three steps can we take to challenge the assumption that the writing center is, by default, a white space?

Week 11: Circle meeting

Topic: Assessment. Examine sample program materials (need a small range); begin dynamic criteria mapping + values coding

- Before circle: consultants read program materials, identify features and values present and absent
- During circle: share features and values for materials, comparing across samples

Week 12: Circle meeting

Topic: Examine program materials; continue dynamic criteria mapping + values coding

Week 13: All staff meeting

Topic: Compare and reconcile criteria maps across the circles

Week 14: All staff meeting

Topic: Finalize criteria map and any potential levels of judgment in preparation for the assessment institute

After Semester

Post-semester Assessment Institute