WRITING STUDIES IN CANADA: A PEOPLE’S HISTORY

by

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Abstract

This study answers the question “what is writing studies?” by answering the question, “who is writing studies?” This dissertation attempts a people’s history of writing studies in Canada insofar as it defines writing studies, gives shape to the people who work in it, and begins to offer an explicitly political account of working in this field. Chapter 1 covers the motivation and context for the study, the framing of the research through feminist standpoint theory and survey research informed by life writing, significance of the study, and an outline of the chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review and fleshes out the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 details the methodology and methods for a quantitative and qualitative survey of writing studies professionals in Canada, defined here as subscribers to the list-servs of Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW), the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning (CASLL), the Canadian Writing Centres Association (CWCA), and the Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric (CSSR). Chapter 4 situates me as researcher through life writing about my journey into writing studies. Chapter 5 presents data to provide a definition of writing studies in terms of demographic information, institutional locations, and working conditions. Chapter 6 describes a collective identity for writing studies through respondents’ definitions and uses of the term, “writing studies,” their membership in and understanding of the scholarly organizations of writing studies, and their identities as in writing studies or not. Chapter 7 details respondents’ descriptions of their experiences in writing studies in terms of their routes into the field, their perceptions of change, their perceptions of tensions within their institutions as well as their aims to improve teaching and learning conditions. Chapter 8 gathers the data from Chapters 5-7 into a working definition of writing studies and discusses implications and limitations of the research as well as future directions.
Preface

The identification and design of the research program were mine, and shaped, through the course of the program, by my supervisory committee. The primary investigator was Dr. Judy Segal, and the additional members included Dr. Carl Leggo and Dr. Jennifer Vadeboncoeur. I purchased the online survey tool, wrote the electronic surveys in English, and had them translated into French by a professional translator. I organized, coded, and analyzed the data.

This research was minimal risk, and was approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia on August 5, 2015. The certificate number is H13-03270.
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For Susan Miller, who passed away on Feb. 22, 2013.

She professed, in *Textual Carnivals*, that discourse of difference will “impel composition professionals to account for the political event their work constitutes daily, or will make their silence its own loud commentary” (p. 16).

Let it be in her memory that we speak.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Motivation for the study: The invisibility of the field

While reading for this thesis, I came across the question, “where were you when you ‘fell in love’ with the theory and/or practice of rhetoric and composition?” (Lunsford, 1999, p. xi). I can tell you exactly. I saw rhetoric and composition from across a crowded room, though I didn’t know, then, what I was falling in love with. I was in the third year of a literature degree at Simon Fraser University in 1995, meandering ambivalently through the required courses that surveyed the canon, when my life was suddenly altered by the professor of my medieval literature course. She suggested I take Advanced Composition because my ideas were good, but I needed to improve my writing. She had not been the first professor to note this, so I registered for Advanced Composition with the vague notion that it would help me learn to be a better writer. Language came to life; I had finally found “it”! This was my thing. I was captivated, enraptured, spoke with the instructor after class to ask if she would supervise a directed study. Unable, she guided me down the hall, saying “you need to meet my colleagues,” as she nudged me into an office. There, my mentor-to-be cordially asked me what I was interested in and what I would like to study. I felt panicked and embarrassed. This, I want to study this. But, what was this? For 20 years, I have chased that question.

The short answer was “rhetoric and composition studies.” I dove into the course offerings, focused from the beginning on trying to understand how an entire area of study could exist within English while I had never heard of it. Egocentric as this seems to me now, I think my query was well founded; there had to be reasons why I had never even heard of rhetoric and composition. The only people who appeared to know about it were those teaching courses in that specialization, and there were only a few.
And then I was given Susan Miller’s (1991) *Textual carnivals: The politics of composition*. Miller made American rhetoric and composition visible to me through its people. She was explicitly political in her critique of “institutional dispositions toward composition” (p. xi), arguing that its students and teachers were “subjects of a marginalizing and negative—but nonetheless widely believed—myth,” what she called “a denigrating tale” (p. 1). In brief, the myth has three interrelated beliefs, that student writing is deficient because of deficiencies in students, that writing instruction should be remedial, and that writing instructors are non-disciplinary. The myth in Miller’s account is sanctioned by ideologies of gender and enacted in the institutional location of composition studies an ancillary to literary studies within departments of English.

Miller’s (1991) myth told a denigrating tale of students who cannot write and need remediation, and it erased the disciplinarity of those in composition. Miller offered “a new narrative” (p. 1) of American composition studies, a version from within that she framed as follows:

I have come to understand the politics of writing by learning that power is, at its roots, telling our own stories. Without ‘good’ stories to rely on, no minority or marginalized majority has a chance to change its status, or, more importantly, to identify and question the ‘bad’ tales that create it. In this case, the required new narrative portrays teachers and students of writing in American higher education. (p. 1)

Miller’s “good story” placed composition against the metaphor of a textual carnival. She situated the academy as the carnival, “the great American themepark,” and used a Bakhtinian definition of carnival as the interrelation between high and low discourses. She situated literary studies as the high and composition studies as the low, at once rewriting the myth that the high has told of the low. Importantly, Miller’s work is political in that the low within the carnival represents “a licensed suspension and inversion of the dominant culture” (p. 1). She inverted the dominance of
literary studies by making composition the main attraction, rather than “the illegitimate sideshow.” Her desire to tell composition’s story arose from her experiences working in it. Her aim was to test her interpretations of composition studies in relation to literary studies against her colleagues’ interpretations of their experiences to see if there were larger sociological trends at work. To elicit the stories of the people of composition, she conducted a national survey of composition specialists about their institutional locations, experiences in them, and perceptions of the field’s relationship to other fields within English.

I consider Miller’s (1991) work to be a people’s history because it issued from the marginalized, exposing and critiquing the myth by presenting an alternate story of composition studies. A common-sense definition of a people’s history is “history from below, or folk history,” a social history of the “disenfranchised,” “oppressed,” and “non-conformists” (people’s history, n.d.). Like the carnival, each of these has an inversion as history from above, a social history of the enfranchised, the privileged, the conformists. Miller’s version collected stories from the disenfranchised, oppressed, non-conformists, the low in the carnival, focusing on the consequences of the politics of writing for the people of American composition studies. These consequences are material, as evidenced by an enormous body of literature in the U.S. about working conditions and institutional locations. They are also ontological: the stories told about people affect their senses of themselves in relation to their perceptions of how others view them. That is, when people’s sense of themselves matches the way others view them, they are ontologically comfortable. When, on the other hand, it does not, their experiences can be negative.

Eight years after the publication of Miller’s book in 1991, the need for a people’s history of American composition resurfaced. It was mentioned by Harris (1999) in the opening editorial
remarks of a special issue of *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) that reflected on 50 years of the journal, and the organization, Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Both the journal and the conference have been the primary spaces of the academic community of American rhetoric and composition since 1949. Harris noted:

> [A]s crucial as it has been to uncover the political and material grounds of our study and teaching, there is a corresponding need to create a kind of people’s history of our field, to recognize who has done the actual day-to-day work—in classrooms, departments, programs, conferences, caucuses, and committees—of forging a new space for teaching writing. (p. 559)

Like Miller (1991), Harris (1999) focused on the need to recognize those who do the work. His conception of a people’s history as “recognition” suggests a need for recognition both physically, to remedy invisibility, and materially, to remedy inequities. Harris linked the field and the people, explicitly connecting “the profession at large” with “individuals in the profession,” noting reciprocal “lines of influence” (p. 559). He viewed the articles in the special issue as a history that “begin[s] to sketch out the varied roles—some transformative, some resistant—that individuals and groups have played in making composition a new force in the academy” (p. 559).

“Transformative” and “resistant” roles, “making composition a new force in the academy,” and “forging a new space for teaching writing,” (Harris, 1999, p. 559) are all explicitly political aims. There is an impressive body of work by those in composition studies in the United States (U.S.) that exposes the consequences of the myth for people in their day-to-day work. A key part of this exposure has been openly discussing the relationship between institutional location and the working conditions of those who work in American composition. Most importantly, being political has also been about openly discussing ontology, people’s identities and sense of the stories told about them as subjects of a myth that describes them as non-disciplinary. I remain struck that if we use Miller’s (1991) work as a lens for examining the politics of contemporary,
Canadian writing studies, the myth is similar despite considerable contextual differences. Likewise, the opposition to the myth is similar. There is evidence of a story of good writing as essentialist, of student writing as deficient and writing instruction as remedial, and of writing instructors as non-disciplinary. Opposition to the myth tells a story of good writing as contextually determined, student writing as novice behavior, writing instruction as enculturation, and writing instructors as disciplinary. Compared to the proliferation of work in the U.S., Canadian writing studies has not explicitly addressed the final element of the myth.

The first time I read Miller (1991), I knew I would write an account like hers about the field in Canada, an explicitly political inquiry that takes the people of writing studies as the central object and offers a collective narrative from their perspectives. This study is framed by feminist standpoint theory, particularly Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology of women, because, like a people’s history, it gives visibility to the invisible and voices to the silent and unheard. This survey research is informed by life writing, which situates me as researcher at the same time that it acts as data, as one person’s account of being in writing studies. Like Miller, I conducted a nation-wide survey of writing studies professionals. The survey was both quantitative in that it inventoried demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions, and qualitative, in that it invited responses about peoples’ identities in terms of their definitions and uses of the term, “writing studies,” their membership in and understanding of the scholarly organizations of writing studies, and their identity as in writing studies or not. It also asked respondents to reflect on their experiences in terms of their routes into the field, their perceptions of change within the field in recent decades, tensions within their institutions, and their aims to improve the teaching and learning conditions at their institutions.
The aim of a people’s history for Canadian writing studies is immediately confounding because, in order to determine what writing studies is from the perspectives of its people, I must presuppose a working definition of writing studies, and, in doing so, name and draw parameters around the community I am trying to identify. For the purposes of this inquiry, writing studies is defined as four scholarly organizations identified by Drain (2008) and Graves (2014) as constituting writing studies in Canada: the Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, (CATTW), which, in 2008, became the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW); the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning (CASLL); the Canadian Writing Centres Association (CWCA); and the Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric (CSSR). I use the term “writing studies,” however problematically, to mean this collective of organizations made of individuals who are the people of this people’s history. The establishment of a working definition of writing studies as the four organizations casts a wide net to interest those who might identify as belonging to writing studies. The list-serv community is larger than the community of writing studies, so it seems unlikely that there are scholars who would identify as members of writing studies who would not have found their way to at least one of these organizations. Such parameters also do well to capture the fluidity of the boundaries of membership and participation because it is likely that there are many scholars who belong to these organizations and/or subscribe to their list-servs who do not identify as in writing studies, but whose membership and participation are based on related identifications and affinities. Simultaneously, the ways in which these scholars identify can tell us much about writing studies, in part by defining what it is not.

A limitation of this working definition of writing studies as the four organizations is that it excludes thousands of teachers of writing. There is a crucial distinction between those who
teach writing and those who teach and study it. In the case of most faculty members, there is little separation between what they teach and what they study, but for teachers of writing, there often is. There are thousands of sessional employees teaching writing, many of them literature specialists, who could offer valuable information about the teaching of writing as contingent labour. Moreover, the ways in which sessional instructors identify themselves in terms of disciplinary or area specialty would reveal something of writing studies’ relationships to other disciplines, especially English. But the work of this thesis is a people’s history, a history from within. For now, the umbrella of the organizations presumes people are in writing studies; a definition of writing studies is developed throughout the thesis.

This chapter contains four sections. First, it outlines the context of research, including the multiplicity of institutional locations for writing instruction, liminality and invisibility, as well as opposition to the myth. Second, the chapter frames the research theoretically, through feminist standpoint theory, specifically Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology of women, and methodologically, through a quantitative and qualitative survey informed by life writing. Third, the chapter explains the significance of the research in terms of visibility and acceptability for writing studies. Fourth, it ends with a brief summary and outline of the dissertation.

1.2 Context of research: Institutional locations, liminality, and resistance

As with the tentative naming of my research subjects as those in writing studies, the term “writing studies research” is complicated. I use Clary-Lemon’s (2009) definition of what she called “Canadian writing research” in her inventory of scholarship in the field/discipline since 1953. Clary-Lemon gathered anthologies, articles, and presentations, defining “Canadian” scholarship as “pieces written by Canadian scholars at Canadian institutions” or scholars of other nationalities writing about Canadian contexts while working in Canadian institutions (p. 98). I
adopt this definition of Canadian research. Clary-Lemon’s definition of “writing research” was more complex; she noted that it is diverse and has a number of meanings, but “at this juncture in Canadian disciplinary history, may be grouped together by slim necessity: discourse analysis; text linguistics; classical rhetoric; technical communication; genre studies; composition; pedagogy; and to a lesser extent, communication studies and English as a second or additional language” (p. 98). The breadth of Clary-Lemon’s definition of “writing research” affirms the need for this study. What unites these areas and distinguishes them? Furthermore, she used multiple terms for the field: “the discipline of rhetoric and composition” (p. 94), “writing and rhetoric” (p. 95), “the field of rhetoric and communication (or ‘writing studies,’ as it may come to be known)” (p. 96), and rhetoric and composition as a field and a profession (p. 98). The myriad of names is evidence of the need for the present study insofar as the meanings of each of these terms is muddied when they are conflated, and multiplicities can eclipse a broader umbrella that might unite the subfields.

In addition, Clary-Lemon (2009) used the activities of three of the four scholarly organizations of writing studies as I am currently defining it (CASLL, CASDW, and CSSR) to establish parameters for her review of the scholarship of rhetoric and composition/writing studies. At the time she wrote, CWCA was a new organization, having been formed in 2006. Clary-Lemon discussed the significant roles the scholarly organizations play in defining writing studies and advocating for its recognition as a discipline with a distinct body of knowledge (p. 98). I refer to the Canadian writing studies literature as research by Canadian scholars in the four organizations. Within this body of work, I focus specifically on work about rhetoric and composition/writing studies itself.
The most studied topic in the field is the field itself, confirmed by Clary-Lemon (2009). She identified five “topoi,” which she defined as “themes that might be seen as a loose taxonomy of Canadian writing research” (p. 98). They included the following: “scholarship of definition, scholarship of the social construction of writing, scholarship of writing across the curriculum [and writing in the disciplines] (WAC/WID), scholarship of professional and technical communication, and scholarship of genre” (p. 98). The most common theme was the scholarship of definition, through which scholars seek “to name and define a Canadian context of teaching, writing, and research” as motivated by a struggle to “carve out a space uniquely theirs” (p. 99).

Clary-Lemon was writing in an American journal and talking specifically about a unique space in relation to American rhetoric and composition. “Definitional pieces,” she explained, “seek to locate something distinctly Canadian about the research they happen to be doing – whether writing a history, documenting a practice, identifying a location, or explaining a cultural commonplace” (p. 99). Scholarship of definition has focused on theorizing Canadian and U.S. distinctions, largely through study of the multiplicity of locations for writing instruction. There are also fine threads of discussion about demographics, identities, and experiences woven throughout the definitional research Clary-Lemon identified.

The literature focused on scholarship of definition concentrated on the institutional locations for writing instruction in Canada and revealed that a number of aspects of the misconceptions like those in Miller’s (1991) myth have existed here historically and persist despite distinct national contexts. There are two primary characteristics of a uniquely Canadian context, both embodying anti-American discourse which shaped curriculum and pedagogy in Canada in the 1870s (Hubert, 1994; Johnson, 1988; Kearns & Turner, 2008). The first is the
belletristic tradition outlined in Johnson (1988) and Hubert (1994), and the second is opposition to the U.S. model of freshman composition.

The first unique characteristic of Canadian writing instruction, the belletristic tradition, was born of loyalist, nationalist aims of literary studies to teach writing through appreciation and imitation of the literary greats in the English canon. This tradition in Canada through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to the erosion of classical study in rhetorical arts from English studies and an increasing emphasis on writing instruction as remediation in grammar. Almost all scholars writing about rhetoric and composition studies or writing studies in contemporary Canada, notably Brooks (2002), Clary-Lemon (2009), Graves (1994), Hubert and Garrett Petts (2006), and Kearns and Turner (2008), situated their work in Johnson and Hubert. They tended to use the belletristic tradition, the primacy of literary studies over rhetoric in English studies curricula, to contextualize the history of writing instruction in Canada.

The second unique quality of the Canadian context, a way in which the belletristic tradition was particularly nationalistic, was opposition to the U.S. model of freshman composition, which manifest in multiple institutional locations for writing instruction (Brooks, 2002; Clary-Lemon, 2009; Hunt, 2006; Kearns & Turner, 2008). The belletristic tradition severed literature and composition, such that composition as it began in the U.S. did not play out in Canada. According to Graves (1994), writing instruction occurred far less frequently in English departments than in the U.S.; instead, it was dispersed into the disciplines. Over twenty years ago, in 1994, Graves inventoried locations for writing instruction in Canada by surveying administrators at English and French universities. Graves’s later work in 2006, with Heather Graves, also examined institutional locations for writing instruction. Their collection was framed by theorizing the multitude of locations for writing instruction in a section called “Canadian
Identity and History.” To demonstrate that identity and history, the collection brought together descriptions and analyses of local models and current practices at eight universities in Canada. The collection closed with an Afterword by Hunt (2006), also theorizing and celebrating multiplicity as distinct from a U.S. model. Key in Graves and Graves was Smith (2006), because she connected current institutional locations to historical ideologies. She focused on writing instruction about non-literary genres outside departments of English in relation to the bellettristic tradition. Her focus was more explicitly political than most in that she explored “different types of resistance [to] or acceptance” of this trend toward writing instruction outside of English (p. 319). There is currently a multitude of institutional locations for the teaching of writing in Canada: 1) within departments of English; 2) attached to disciplines other than English such as Communications, Engineering, Health Sciences, Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Language Studies, and Education; 3) in professional communities such as hospitals and banks, 4) in Writing Centres; 5) in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs, and; 6) as stand-alone academic units. Within these larger categories of location are extremely diverse arrangements reflecting unique conditions at local institutions (Graves & Graves, 2006). The landscape has changed in the decade since Graves and Graves collection.

The writing studies literature demonstrates that this multiplicity of locations and the diversity of programs renders a relational sense of locations for writing studies difficult to discern, a characteristic that contributes to its invisibility. In 1994, Graves noted that, in attempting to answer questions about “how writing was taught at Canadian universities,” his work with communities of writing instructors did not provide “any kind of a general overview” or allow any conclusion beyond “‘nobody really knows’” (p. x). Two decades later, the diversity
of writing instruction in Canada was described by Hunt (2006) as a “hodgepodge structure” (p. 381) of “isolated and uncoordinated initiatives…varying wildly from context to context” (p. 371); by Kearns and Turner (2008) as “characterized by a…variety of writing sites and approaches” (p. 2); by Graves and Graves (2006) as “a baffling variety” (p. 1); and, by the publisher of Graves and Graves as a “tangled garden” (Trafford Publishing, n.d). In concert with this hodge-podge is a barrage of diverse terminology to describe the entity I am calling writing studies. Throughout the dissertation, I use the terms that authors use in their own work, often without unpacking them. Part of the aim of this thesis is to establish a working definition of the field such that terminologies might be easier to disentangle.

Both Graves (1994) and Hunt (2006) likened writing instruction to the cultural metaphor of Canada as mosaic, a move that reflects the diversity of locations and highlights nationalistic discourse. The first word in Graves’s book is “mosaic.” He continues:

If one looks too closely at any section of the mosaic, the picture fails to cohere or focus, and the pieces resemble nothing more than scattered tiles. From a distance, one can draw back and begin to see patterns of differentiation, of connection, and perhaps even of design. (p. 1)

Graves’s notion of design hints at location as purposeful, as a kind of opposition to the U.S. model; the design of multiplicity is nationalistic. Hunt (2006), in the “Afterword” in the Graves and Graves (2006) collection, claimed that “the most fundamental pattern” of Canadian writing instruction “in fact, is negative. It’s mainly about what’s not there” (p. 371). And what’s not there, he said, is American freshman composition. Instead arose a “mosaic of programs and initiatives” that allowed space to support writing in “ad hoc and uncoordinated ways,” what he called, “a quintessentially Canadian situation” (p. 381). So, paradoxically, Canadian writing instruction is purposeful in its flexibility and spontaneity. A multiplicity of locations is distinctly
Canadian because those locations arose from the belletristic tradition that insisted that English departments were for the study of literature. This separation of literary studies and composition dispersed “composition” into the disciplines and any number of other locations that worked in local conditions. Resistance to the American model of freshman composition, which positioned rhetoric and composition studies as ancillary within departments of English, gave rise to the “brand” of Canadian rhetoric and composition as outside English, occupying multiple locations instead.

Whalen (2004), Hunt (2006), and Alexander (2005) discussed this multiplicity as liminality, but the liminality they spoke of was not merely about location. They included notions of tradition and place, homelessness, belonging, and value, all of which encompass ontological concerns related to identity and community. Whalen called the field of rhetoric liminal: a place on the margins, “betwixt and between, lacking a strong, clearly defined tradition or place in the university” (p. 2). Hunt referred to diffusion as “disciplinary homelessness,” noting that people concerned with writing in university “have been pushed to find allies” in areas other than departments of English (p. 377). Alexander (2005) discussed liminality as a gender technology that positioned writing specialists as non-disciplinary through discourse of service—put another way, liminal locations and gender intersect to devalue writing specialists. Liminality defies the traditional institutional structures of disciplinarity and can sanction the notion of writing instruction as remedial service, rather than disciplinary activity.

Moreover, its obscurity to those outside it renders writing studies difficult to see as disciplinary because its body of knowledge is erased by its dispersion. Liminality is evident, for example, in the limited number of graduate programs in Canada, and programs, where they do exist, are as diverse as the models of writing instruction in Canada. This diversity leads to
liminality in terms of locations in, amongst, between, and outside the disciplines. Physical liminality has material consequences for those who teach writing; it also has ontological consequences in that they are often positioned as liminal beings by others even while they share, identify with, sanction, and maintain a disciplinary identity of their own.

Inquiries focused on institutional locations have contributed to a definition of writing studies, but such focus emphasizes difference more than sameness. It can be difficult to see what unites writing studies, because the structures within which its people work decentralize their disciplinarity—making shared epistemologies, methodologies, and pedagogies less visible. Examining the locations for writing instruction provides a sense of where writing is taught in relation to the organizing concept of disciplinarity. Importantly, placing those who do that writing instruction as the centre of inquiry makes visible an important cohesion that acts as a way to more thoroughly define writing studies. For example, until recently, I worked in three institutional locations. I worked in a Writing Centre, which involved two locations, first, in the Centre itself working with students one on one and, second, in workshops that occurred in the contexts of specific disciplines and courses. Third, each semester I taught as a sessional instructor, either a mandatory first year writing course or the odd rhetoric and composition course within a department of English, and, at various points over 13 years, I taught some courses in Communications and Criminology. With the focus of inquiry on my work as a teacher and scholar who routinely occupies three institutional locations on a daily basis, evidence of my disciplinary participation studying and teaching academic writing in many disciplines can emerge. Put another way, daily activities amount to at least some defining characteristics of writing studies. Writing studies is located within me, and others in my field, as expertise and experience that resides in us, that travels with us across contexts.
There is a collective material body of writing studies scholars who share a body of knowledge that distinguishes writing studies from other areas of inquiry. That distinction says “we share a body of knowledge” that is disciplinary and necessary to teach writing well. Those in writing studies have yet to interrogate empirically their more subtle and more vulnerable statement of resistance, “we are disciplinary.” Writing studies scholars embody their resistance, they teach from their epistemological, theoretical, and pedagogical positions, and they conduct research and disseminate their work at conferences and through publication. But they have not given a political account of themselves.

Not surprisingly, the people of writing studies have examined themselves in less formal genres over at least the last decade. Calls for papers (CASDW, n.d., current; CASDW, n.d., past) conference themes (CASDW, 2013), informal surveys, and list-serv discussions have focused on where scholars are located, what they do, who they understand themselves to be, and their experiences in their institutional locations. The scholars in the organizations of writing studies are poised to offer a comprehensive, national version of themselves and an account of themselves politically. Ideologically, there are calls for changes to public and academic perceptions of student writing, changes to institutions in terms of pedagogy and curriculum, and changes to institutional structure that can facilitate professionalization and legitimacy for writing studies. But most of those calls are made locally, or in relative isolation; writing studies scholars understand themselves as a collective, but that collectivity is not well studied or articulated, thus less demonstrable to others. The central goal of this study is to increase visibility for writing studies by offering a definition of it from within.

I answer the question “what is writing studies?” by asking the question, “who is writing studies?” Three more specific objectives include the following: 1) to gather data about
demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions; 2) to describe a collective identity for writing studies by obtaining respondents’ definitions and uses of the term, “writing studies,” their understanding of the scholarly organizations and motives for belonging to them, and their identification as in writing studies or not, and 3) to expose individuals’ experiences to make visible the consequences of the myth about student writing, writing instruction, and writing instructors. Like Miller (1991), I conducted a survey of writing studies professionals that aimed for a national sense of the field.

1.3 Framing of research: Feminist standpoint theory and survey research informed by life writing

1.3.1 Feminist standpoint theory

To frame this study, I use feminist standpoint theory, more specifically Dorothy Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology of women, because its epistemological and methodological tenets are compatible with both Miller’s (1991) rewriting of the myth of composition studies and my aim of a people’s history. Feminist standpoint theory reframes the world from the view of marginalized groups and individuals and makes visible their experiences and day-to-day lives in order to critique discourses and relations of power. Likewise, a people’s history is grounded in the premise of telling a version of the world through the eyes of marginalized groups.

Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology, a sociology of and for women, aimed to make visible individuals and groups who are, “foreclosed-upon,” by discourses of power and their attendant institutional structures. Smith used two key terms to explain such foreclosure: “objectified forms of knowledge” and “relations of ruling.” Objectified forms of knowledge are normative ways of making knowledge, and discursive relations of ruling are normative discourses. Objectified forms of knowledge begin, she says, from a standpoint of men and, as
such, foreclose other possibilities, thereby relegating a standpoint of women outside relations of ruling. In contemporary terms, discourses of power usually embody social constructions of gender. Smith’s term, “relations of ruling,” focused on “the socially organized and organizing practices of using language that constitute objectified knowledges” (p. 4). Smith described this as a kind of “conceptual imperialism” whereby “we learn to practice the sociological subsumption of the actualities of ourselves and of other people” (p. 15). She repeatedly used dramatic language, arguing that the subject is “obliterated” by “a bifurcation of consciousness” that occurs when dominant, normative forms of knowledge and discourse separate women and other marginalized groups from the experiences of their actual lives.

Smith (1990) called for an alternative sociology that begins from the standpoint of women. Her argument was that the claim to objectivity by sociologists was problematic because it depoliticized those in power as neutral, but all knowledge, all discourse, is political. Smith’s approach, then, called for beginning from marginalized lives as a way to pose questions that “rupture the fabric” of what appears natural in order to open up spaces for critique of objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling. An alternate sociology of women also addressed researchers’ inevitable complicity in objectified forms of knowledge by calling for interested, ideological researchers who made explicit their role in the construction of knowledge and inevitable reification of power relations. My study was informed by an alternative sociology of women in three ways. First, I began from outside objectified forms of knowledge by situating myself as researcher through a life writing chapter that tells my story of being in writing studies. Second, the life writing also acts as data from one member of writing studies. Third, my study is compatible with an alternative sociology of women because it is a visibility project; it invited
others to begin in their day-to-day experiences as a way to talk explicitly about what it is like to work in writing studies.

1.3.2 Life writing

I used my own experiences in writing studies as a point of rupture, in Smith’s (1990) terms. Miller’s (1991) most prominent finding was that composition specialists are inadvertently complicit in their own subjugation by perpetuating a self-sacrificial role and cultural identity. In the book’s third chapter entitled, “The sad women in the basement: Images of composition teaching,” she explained that the myth and the institutional location within English departments positioned composition specialists, predominantly women, as “transgressive irritants” and “self-sacrificing saints” (p. x). These subjectivities were exactly the ones I felt ascribed to me, and resisted the most, in my writing centre work. Lunsford (1999), in framing a collection of U.S. rhetoric and composition scholars’ narrative writing about their ways into and experiences in the field, described “the familiar narratives of ‘rhet/comp’” (p. xi). She identified these as the journey from other fields, institutional struggles and punishments, scholars’ reimagining of themselves, the rewards of teaching writing, the struggles for disciplinary recognition and legitimacy, the “troubled marriage” of literature and composition, and the battles for tenure and promotion (pp. xi-xii). My experiences in the Writing Centre echoed all of the familiar narratives apparent in the American collection, despite a distinct national context and a more recent timeframe, 1995-2015. I journeyed from another field, albeit as an undergraduate; I routinely experienced institutional struggles and punishments; I was compelled by the profundity of the rewards in my work as a teacher; I struggled endlessly for disciplinary recognition and legitimacy; I have experienced the tensions of a troubled marriage between literature and composition; in 2015, I experienced the closure of our 26-year-old Writing Centre. The life
writing chapter narrates my experiences of coming into and being part of writing studies as a way to contribute to a definition of the field. I expose some of the intersections of the myth, demographic characteristics, institutional locations, working conditions, identity, experience, and ideological aims as I experience and understand them.

1.3.3. Survey research

In concert with the framework of an alternative sociology of women and the aim of a people’s history, I began in the day-to-day experiences of those who do not normally get to tell their own stories. Drawing upon my life writing, the writing studies literature, and Miller’s (1991) national survey of composition studies professionals, I developed a quantitative and qualitative survey distributed by email to the subscribers of the list-servs of the four organizations identified as writing studies in Drain (2008) and Graves (2014): CASDW, CASLL, CWCA, and CSSR. There were four sections to the survey, which contained 34 questions. The first two sections included closed questions that gathered demographic data and information about institutional locations and working conditions. The third section included four open questions about identity. The fourth section included six open questions about experience. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.4 Significance of the study: Breaking silence

This study brings together numerous previous efforts by writing studies to better understand itself in relation to the constellation of Canadian academia. CASDW and CASLL have issued calls for papers that focus on the scope and territory of writing studies (Graves, 2008a, 2008b). Smith (2000), through a micro-ethnography, examined CASLL and its Inkshed conference as a site of disciplinary activity and community building. Informal and formal surveys about institutional location seem common on the list-servs, almost as common as the
entry line, “apologies for cross posting,” as many posts are sent to multiple list-servs. Three of the organizations have 30-year histories to explore. CASDW and CASLL have been recently active in examining who they are as organizations as well as what they do. Neither CWCA’s arrival in 2006 nor the implications of CATTW’s name change to CASDW in 2008 have been explored.

The people of writing studies know who they are, but their field is largely invisible within the academic constellation; thus, writing studies needs an inventory of its people’s demographic characteristics, institutional locations, and working conditions. Furthermore, those in writing studies usually oppose the myth, an objectified form of knowledge that is a normative version of writing, student writing, writing instruction and writing instructors. People in writing studies deserve, as experts, to tell their own stories. More than once in my career, I have been called self-interested by faculty who misunderstood my advocacy. They failed to see that advocacy for the field was necessary so that we could be heard when we told a different story about writing, about student writers, about how to teach them to write well.

A defining characteristic of writing studies is its opposition to the first two elements of the myth, that student writing is deficient in and of itself and that writing instruction is remedial. Twenty years ago, in 1994, Graves asserted: “the challenge that remains is to change the public idea of writing, first within the university and then outside it” (p. 86). In 2013, he was still writing about that challenge (Graves, 2013a). The CASDW list-serv recently included posts about possible ways in which to respond to an editorial in University Affairs (Dion & Maldonado, 2013) lamenting the state of student writing and calling for extensive and rigorous testing of students’ literacy skills throughout post-secondary education. Subscribers expressed frustration at the perpetuity of this narrative of lamenting the state of student writing and a
narrowing of academic literacy to testing. People were discussing how best to respond—as individuals, as one organization, or as multiple organizations. Graves (2013a), contributing to the discussion of what might be useful as a response, commented on the field itself:

> While working on a common response has its merits…the individual responses have more impact, I think, than a common statement unless the common statement comes from a large organization. In Canada, we have failed to organize ourselves into one large organization that could be said to represent writing studies (so far)….there are lots of people out there who more or less share the same perspective. The variations in the responses, however, also help bring out various sub-themes and concerns that one co-written piece would not. And that makes our positions both more developed and more grounded in reality…..This is a prime opportunity for us to talk to administrators across the country about the value of what we do. (emphasis in original)

Graves pointed to a phenomenon at the crux of this study: there is a shared perspective that denotes writing studies at the same time that there are various sub-themes and concerns. Graves seemed to think both are valuable for advocacy, but in different ways. Similarity makes a point, and difference fleshes it out. The “prime opportunity” he saw in 2013 was about talking to administrators about the value of what writing studies does in order to tell a different story of student writing and writing instruction. Respondents to the survey expressed concern about the future of the field in terms of recommitment by post-secondary institutions to elements of the myth, notably the de-professionalization or closure of a number of writing centres that have been subsumed by student success models that replaced experienced administrators and teachers with people whose expertise is not in writing studies. The trend is so prominent that a post on CASDW in recent months was called “How to Wreck a Writing Centre” (2015).

If writing studies could be seen and understood as a legitimate field, faculty from other disciplines might more often make use of the expertise in writing studies to enhance and improve their writing pedagogy. This in turn might provoke institutional and ideological change within post-secondary institutions that could lead to greater social responsibility to students. If those in
writing studies are advocating within their own institutions, this research potentially enables them to continue to point out to others the existence of a field that few know how to see.

1.5 Summary and Outline of Chapters

In sum, there is evidence that the elements of the myth about student writing, writing instruction, and writing instructors critiqued by Miller (1991) survive in Canada, despite nationalistic ideologies that manifest in unique institutional arrangements. The writing studies literature in Canada has examined institutional locations for writing studies as the embodiment of historical, national discourse about the purpose of English studies. It has inventoried locations for writing instruction on a national scale. Those in writing studies have sought to define the field primarily through the study of its locations and of its scholarship. Framed by Miller’s myth, and her rewriting of it through a version told by the subjects of that myth, alongside the aim of a people’s history of Canadian writing studies, this inquiry uses survey research informed by life writing to identify what and who writing studies is. It contains eight chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the myth and institutional locations, pointing to a lack of research focused on demographic characteristics, working conditions, identity, and experience. Chapter 2 also further explains Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology as the theoretical framework for this inquiry. Chapter 3 explains the methodological framework, a quantitative and qualitative survey analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Chapter 4 offers life writing that situates me as researcher and acts as data insofar as my experience amounts to a collection of characteristics of writing studies as I understand it. Chapter 5 summarizes the quantitative survey data about demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions. Chapters 6 and 7 present the qualitative data regarding identity and experience, respectively. Chapter 8 provides a summary of the dissertation, educational implications, limitations, and possibilities for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review: Putting the People in the People’s History

2.1 Introduction: The myth, institutional location, and liminality

The writing studies literature in Canada provides evidence that the elements of the myth persist; student writing is constructed as deficient in and of itself, and, thus, writing instruction is widely understood as remediation in grammar. These narratives, combined with the multiplicity of institutional locations for writing instruction unique to Canada result in liminality and invisibility, which culminate in a perception of writing instructors as non-disciplinary. Canadian writing studies scholars have touched on the myth insofar as they have presented colonial, loyalist, nationalist, curricular histories of the field (Hubert, 1994; Johnson, 1988), and they have connected the multitude of contemporary institutional locations for writing instruction to those histories (Clary-Lemon, 2009; Graves, 2004; Graves & Graves, 2006; Hunt, 2006; Kearns & Turner, 2008). These histories of the field and studies of contemporary locations for writing instruction contain sufficient evidence to conclude that the first two elements of the myth persist. Such narratives mean that writing studies is often not considered a field unto itself, a perception that contributes to its marginalization in relation to English studies and its widespread invisibility within the academy more broadly. Furthermore, its dispersion between, among, and outside of disciplines can contribute to its illegitimacy and invisibility.

There are additional reasons for the erasure of the field, connected to the third element of the myth, that writing instructors are non-disciplinary. These reasons remain largely unexamined. I contribute to existing histories by offering a people’s history. Such a history exposes the stories of those working in writing studies, makes their lives visible, and critiques contemporary institutional and discursive power relations as they perpetuate the myth in current times.
There are several bodies of work within the Canadian writing studies literature, all of them evidence of resistance to ways in which the myth is operating. Clary-Lemon’s (2009) work is useful because it critiqued the myth by demonstrating rhetoric and composition’s collective body of knowledge, its disciplinarity, through a literature review of researchers’ foci. She provided an historical analysis of the development of writing research in Canada from 1953 to 2009 in order to “map…the discipline of rhetoric and composition in the Canadian academic landscape” (p. 94). I use her work to narrow the focus of this literature review to what she called “scholarship of definition,” one of five topoi she identified within the writing studies literature. Two topoi, “the scholarship of the social construction of writing” and “the scholarship of genre” act as opposition because they reconceive notions of writing as grammar skills alone to writing as a contextualized social activity.

Two others, “the scholarship of WAC/WID” and “the scholarship of professional and technical communication,” amount to an argument that writing should be taught as enculturation, rather than remediation, so they speak to the second element of the myth. WAC and WID both advocate pedagogical approaches of enculturation, though there are important distinctions between them. WAC programs are systemic, integrated throughout institutions and sanctioned by senior administrative bodies, commonly university senates. WID programs, on the other hand, are usually discipline specific and occur within the context of the disciplines. WID programs often take the shape of writing instruction attached to specific disciplines, but they can also be more ad hoc than WAC programs, operating in the form of discipline specific workshops embedded in courses, for example. The notion of writing instruction as remedial is also overturned by “the scholarship of professional and technical communication” in favour of contextualized writing instruction, or at least writing instruction that strives to imitate context.
Such locations, like WAC/WID, also disrupt the notion of writing instruction as remedial because they situate it away from Departments of English.

Clary-Lemon’s (2009) final topos, “scholarship of definition,” informs the third element of the myth, that writing instructors are non-disciplinary. The “scholarship of definition” acts as a framework for this literature review in three ways. First, the Canadian landscape of writing instruction has been widely claimed as distinct from the U.S.; if this is the case, it is interesting to think about how and why the myth seems to cut across national differences. Why is it that the story I read about in Miller, a story from a different country 25 years ago, is not unlike my own story or the stories of my colleagues and students? Second, one of the ways in which Canadian writing studies is unique in relation to the U.S. is that American rhetoric and composition has offered an explicit political account of itself, while in Canada, political analyses and discussion have remained veiled. Third, one aspect of definitional work in Clary-Lemon’s description is “explaining a cultural commonplace.” This study sought to explain the cultural commonplace of Canadian writing studies itself.

This chapter has four sections. The first briefly describes the colonial history of the myth in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and the United States (U.S.). The second examines the institutional locations for writing instruction in Canada and ways in which those locations both sanction the myth and afford opportunities for resistance. In the third section, I explore ways in which liminality and invisibility have consequences that remain largely unexamined. Finally, I highlight concepts from Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology as a framework for exposing those consequences in order to critique the myth, more specifically, its third and least openly discussed element, the conception of writing instructors as non-disciplinary.
2.2 Colonial history: The myth in the United Kingdom and the United States

The myth originated in the U.K., but manifest in different institutional locations in the U.S. and Canada because of national ideologies about language education. Ideas that student writing is deficient and writing instruction is remedial are rooted in the essentialist belief that good writing is good writing and in discourses of language standardization and prescription in the U.K. in the mid-1870s. Crowley (1989) examined the politics of Standard English in the U.K. in the mid-1800s, and Milroy and Milroy (1991) discussed standardization in relation to prescriptivism and complaint about language. Part One of Miller’s (1991) book, titled, “Where the Carnival Has Been,” traced the history of language prescription in the academy as a way to explain the institutional location of composition studies as ancillary within English departments.

Crowley and Miller explained that as literacy increased, more and more people had access to advanced education, and when they entered the academy, brought non-standard usages of English that were different from those of the aristocracy. Language diversity was socially constructed as a marker of class.

Standard English was heralded as the dominant mode of expression and was used to measure student worth. Entrance exams were devised as a way to deny some students access to university; Crowley (1989) argued that the entrance exam was established to identify those who were of what he called the “articulate classes,” the British aristocracy, and those who were of the “barbarian classes,” who were “beyond the pale of ‘civilized law and order’” where they might “break open the gates” (p.224). Notions of barbarism and breaking open gates of western civilization are evidence of ontological insecurity on the part of the British aristocracy; that is, access to knowledge meant that the lower classes posed a threat to aristocratic power, fostering a fear of threat to self. The agreed-upon set of rules might not be so agreed-upon anymore.
Giddens (1990) argued that “what makes a given response ‘appropriate’ or ‘acceptable’ necessitates a shared—but unproven and unprovable—framework of reality” (p.36). The aristocracy protected its power in the academy through the exalted status of Standard English enforced through prescriptivism and the complaint tradition, both of which positioned language diversity as deficiency and incivility.

The pervasiveness and perpetuation of the myth in both the U.S. and Canada can be traced to these traditions. Milroy and Milroy (1991) asserted that language “standardization may be said to have advanced…in the promotion of a standard ideology, i.e. a public consciousness of the standard. People believe that there is a ‘right’ way of using English” (p. 30, emphasis in original). Cameron (1995) argued that discourse on language and its use is so systemic that it exists as a discourse of value, “a discourse with a moral dimension that goes far beyond its overt subject to touch on deep desires and fears” (p. xiii). Such discourse is moral, so people feel compelled to comply or unconsciously comply. Compliance means that they must also believe and enact the stories told about them. The moral, ontological dimension to discourse about language use inspires credulity, a kind of unconscious willingness to believe. Discourse about language standardization is perpetuated by people who Milroy and Milroy describe as “complainers” who are “concerned with clarity, effectiveness, morality, and honesty in the public use of the standard language” (p. 38) or who represent the “correctness tradition…wholly dedicated to the maintenance of the norms of Standard English in preference to other varieties” (p. 37). In Cameron’s terms, “verbal hygiene” is an “urge to improve or ‘clean up’ language” (p.1). In sum, fear of the barbarians at the gates swept the U.K., accelerating the classist, prescriptivist ideologies of language that are the stuff of the first two elements of the myth.
In the U.K., the first two elements of the myth were fused by the entrance exam (writing as deficient) and a mandatory course for those who failed (writing instruction as remedial). American post-secondary institutions, like those in the U.K., instituted entrance exams, relegating students who failed to a mandatory, remedial writing course known as Freshman Composition (Connors, 1990; Miller, 1991). Connors (1990) argued that “the educated classes in America were suddenly swept up in a wave of anxiety about the propriety of their speech and writing, and educational institutions responded to this anxiety” such that both the Harvard Entrance Exam and Freshman Composition at Harvard were implemented in 1873-1874. The entrance exam/freshman composition model was ubiquitous in the U.S. by the late 1880s (Connors, 1990, p. 109; Graves, 1994, p. 19; Miller, 1991). Miller (1991) called freshman comp “the new institution of writing,” arguing quite powerfully that “the errors of students have complex connotations that can be historically placed in an entire social agenda designed to convince an institution of its control over the language of the citizens while persuading those individuals of their flaws” (p. 58). Such persuasion again necessitates credulity—there must be a perceived threat to the well-being of human subjects. Freshman composition, at least as it began, can be understood as systemically persuading individuals that their language is deficient and in need of remediation.

Discourse of language diversity as deficiency prevails in the U.S. and Canada, but has been institutionalized differently. Locating freshman composition in English departments in the U.S. gave rise to the high and low of literary studies and composition outlined by Miller (1991). Owing to distinct national values and resistance by Canadian departments of English to the U.S. model of freshman composition, the entrance exam was instituted less commonly in Canada (Graves, 1994), and writing instruction was far more diversely located.
In Canada, the loyalist, nationalistic discourse of the belletristic tradition emphasized the appreciation and imitation of the greats of the British literary canon, which, combined with instruction in grammar, was meant to socialize students into the academy and aristocratic cultural sensibilities (Johnson, 1988; Hubert, 1994). This tradition eroded previously present rhetorical study from the curriculum, focusing instead on grammar and high style. Johnson (1988) explained that

the eighteenth-century British tradition philosophically conjoined the development of grammatical and rhetorical control over a ‘high’ style in speech and formal discourse with the acquisition of a distinctly ‘English’ literary sensibility and promoted the view that these virtues were fundamental to the intellectual, social, and civil character of English-speaking society. (pp. 861-862)

That is, “style” came to be equated with formal discourse and high manners exemplified by the writers in the canon; grammatical style eclipsed rhetorical style. Due also to anti-American sentiment that emphasized practical writing instruction with utilitarian, rather than cultural, goals, Canadian English departments typically, but not always, rejected writing instruction, which subsequently dispersed into a multitude of institutional locations manifest in various models depending on local context. Graves (1994) drew upon Johnson (1988) and Hubert (1994) to demonstrate that at the crux of the U.S. and Canadian distinction was a “split between views of universities as primarily serving utilitarian ends” and “as primarily defenders of culture” (p. 1). Brooks (2002) referred to these “dominant attitudes and biases” as “American pragmatism” and “Canadian philosophical idealism” (p. 673). Hunt claimed, in the “Afterword” of the Graves and Graves (2006) collection, that “apparent rejection of the American model of composition instruction…[is] the single most important fact about instruction in, and study of, writing and reading in Canadian universities” (pp. 371-372). In sum, differences in national values in the U.S. and Canada meant different locations for writing instruction.
2.3 Institutional locations: Sanctioning of and opposition to the myth

Despite considerable distinctions in the locations for writing instruction in the U.S. and Canada, notably the absence of freshman composition as an institutional enterprise, the elements of the myth appear to transcend those distinctions. That is, the story of student writing as deficient and writing as remedial persists, even where institutional arrangements do not situate writing instruction in mandatory courses in departments of English. There is widespread agreement that freshman composition has “never taken hold in Canada” (Kearns & Turner, 2008, p. 2). Johnson (1988) argued that “the twentieth-century Canadian academy has never embraced the curricular concept of the ‘Comp’ class per se” (p. 869), as did Graves (1994), Brooks (2002), Hunt (2006), Smith (2006), Hubert and Garrett-Petts (2006), Kearns and Turner (2008), and Clary-Lemon (2009). Instead, “most writing instruction in Canada is distributed among various academic units outside of English departments” (Graves, 1994, p. 2). Resistance by English departments and resistance from founders of rhetoric and composition who resisted the U.S. model of freshman composition contributed to the dispersion of writing instruction into many areas of the academy.

Opposition to the myth is also apparent in Hubert and Garrett-Petts (2006), who, like Brooks (2002), grounded their work in Johnson (1988) and focused on national attitudes that precipitated the erasure of rhetoric from the curriculum. Their paper traced “three deeply rooted reasons for the anti-rhetorical position [within English Studies] in Canada,” two of which are relevant here: the devaluing of rhetorical theory and practice as a result of late-Victorian idealism, and “the resistance to American influence in Canadian education from the very beginning of higher education in Canada” (p. 87). Hubert and Garrett-Petts argued that “nineteenth century idealism and Canadian nationalism have conspired to reject rhetoric as outside the scope of English studies, with composition too pragmatic for the serious study of literature and with rhetorical theory irrelevant to literary criticism” (p. 87). By pointing out reasons for the erasure of rhetoric from early Canadian curriculum in English studies, Hubert and Garrett-Petts are, in effect, arguing against that erasure.

In an overview of the historical roots of rhetoric and composition in Canada, Kearns and Turner (2008) used Johnson (1988) to discuss ways that resistance from English Studies and resistance from Canadian rhetoric and composition to the U.S. model of freshman composition have shaped writing instruction in Canada. They wrote in a European journal for a predominantly European audience, arguing that Canadian rhetoric and composition has more in common with European models than American ones, noting three compatibilities between Canada and Europe: 1) “the relative novelty of the work we do as writing teachers and of our place in higher education” (p. 1); 2) “misperceptions about what we do and why it is valuable” (p.1); and, 3) resistance to American influence (p. 2). Kearns and Turner described the work of writing teachers and their place in higher education as novel and as subject to misperceptions, but they did not explicitly critique those misperceptions. Clary-Lemon (2009), too, situated her
work in Johnson (1988) and Hubert (1994), as well as Graves (1994) and Brooks (2002). Like Kearns and Turner’s (2008), her work was slightly more political in that it connected “the location and ideology of rhetoric” (p. 94) and the “reaction against the American model” (p. 95) as historically intertwined forces that characterized Canadian rhetoric and composition.

In sum, the writing studies literature focused on the scholarship of definition provides evidence of pervasive ideologies about writing instruction that were institutionalized in a multitude of locations for writing instruction within post-secondary institutions in Canada. There have been seven general locations for writing instruction: 1) within English, 2) within or attached to other departments, 3) in writing centres, 4) outside academia with communities of writers in professional and community contexts, 5) in WAC programs, 6) in WID programs, and 7) as stand-alone academic units. The field is in need of an inventory; there is a recent trend of deprofessionalizing writing centres and moving them from academic to student services areas; WAC programs are virtually non-existent; stand-alone units are extremely rare; and WID programs and activities need to be more thoroughly measured. Within these general categories are many configurations based on local conditions. The next section outlines ways in which these locations simultaneously sustain the myth and afford opportunities for resistance.

2.3.1 Within English

A key aspect of early Canadian curriculum was the widespread rejection of the American model of freshman composition within English. That said, there appears to be some uncertainty about the degree to which rhetoric and composition was or was not historically located in departments of English and the degree to which writing studies is now. It is similarly unclear what roles traditional thinking may be playing in contemporary times. Brooks (2002), Clary-Lemon (2009), Graves (1994), Graves and Graves (2006), Hubert and Garrett-Petts (2006), Hunt
(2006), and Kearns and Turner (2008) concluded that the vast majority of writing instruction was and still is located outside of English, but conceded that sometimes it was and is located in English. It was located in English enough that at least Brooks (2002), Kearns and Turner, and Proctor (2006) discussed ways in which this location is problematic in that it erases and devalues rhetoric and composition studies. Brooks examined differences in Canadian and American national attitudes to writing instruction as reflected in curriculum. He called the field in Canada “‘composition,’” using quotation marks to emphasize distinction from the U.S. Where composition was part of English departments in Canada, Brooks argued, it was its “neglected child” (p. 105). Literary studies dominated composition, “pushing rhetoric and writing instruction to the periphery” (Kearns & Turner, 2008, p. 4). Similarly, Hunt (2006) claimed that while “‘freshman composition’ isn’t there” (p. 371), the presence of writing as part of literary study has meant that it is rare to find a “Canadian English department that doesn’t still have regular internal disputes…often about the proper nature of the curriculum” (p. 376).

Reminiscent of national, loyalist discourse that privileged a belletristic approach to writing instruction, and the complicated relationship with English that resulted, Graves and Graves (2006) argued that “four philosophical questions…have driven decisions about writing related curricula in Canadian universities” (p. 9). They are these: “What is the function of higher education, especially in English studies? What does it mean to be Canadian? How should Canadian identity manifest itself in program and curricular development, especially in English? And finally, what is the appropriate location for writing instruction in undergraduate curricula?” (p. 9). Despite the claim many have made that most writing instruction is located outside of English, the contemporary relationships between writing studies and English studies warrant attention. Some locations in Canada from which writing is taught can resemble American
freshman composition. For example, my institution has an entrance exam as one way to section students by ability and an academic writing course mandatory for most programs. That course is taught by the department of English, predominantly by English literature specialists, many of whom are sessional faculty. While the ubiquity of freshman composition as it exists in the U.S. does not exist in Canada, there is evidence that the myth transcends this primary distinction. This suggests, perhaps, that counter to what one might think, location does not reduce the pervasiveness of the myth. Gaining a more precise sense of writing studies’ positioning relative to departments of English and to the employment of English literature specialists can tell us much about the myth and its consequences for those in writing studies.

2.3.2 Attached to or within other disciplines and professional communities

Historically, most institutions in Canada, especially in central and eastern Canada, had English departments that rejected rhetoric and composition as too practical for their goals, which, in the 1880s, were appreciation and imitation of the literary greats, so the field seldom came to be housed in English. This meant that writing instruction came to be located elsewhere, where it could study and teach rhetorical theory, and be practical and utilitarian in its relationships to the disciplines and/or to professional communities. Graves (1994) explained that “resistance to establishing composition as a field within the English department” (p. 38) allowed Canadian scholars to succeed in other areas and to teach writing more effectively by teaching it in other disciplinary contexts. He noted that “many universities have ‘professional’ programs of study such as engineering, nursing, business, and education…. [that] seek deliberately to join the utilitarian with the cultural missions of universities” (pp. 2-3). Kearns and Turner (2008) affirmed that, where located outside departments of English, “the link to a belletristic approach has been severed decisively, and the field has been free to develop as an endeavor that often
extends beyond interdisciplinarity into workplace and professional partnerships” (p. 7). They argued:

Had Canadian universities and English departments been...less fixed to their English roots, had they been more flexible and accommodated American ideas and models of writing instruction, they might have made the kinds of little changes that, at bottom, really just maintained the status quo. Instead, their inflexibility in the face of a growing demand, from both students and faculty outside the English Department, forced practical, useful writing instruction to emerge elsewhere. (p. 7)

In other words, literary studies’ goal in early curriculum was to civlize students through appreciation and imitation of literature, which meant that writing instruction with utilitarian aims was entrenched outside of English departments where it was more closely connected with communities and contexts in which writing takes place.

More specifically, in Canada a professional writing movement grew out of what had been accepted from Scottish aims for practical, utilitarian writing instruction (Hubert, 1994) and from the Technical Communications field in the U.S. In fact, CASDW began as CATTW, a Canadian offshoot of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) in the U.S. Lil Rodman provided a comprehensive account of the evolution of technical communication and CATTW in a 2003 CATTW conference presentation titled, “From Service Course to Discipline: The Evolution of Technical Communication (1960-2002).” She begins in her personal experience in the 1960s of coming to teach technical communication, then details the development of technical communication as a discipline, from early service courses in the 1950s and 1960s, through the formation of communities in the 1970s, technology and growth in programs in the 1980s, to expansion and specialization through the 1990s. Perhaps most relevant here is her discussion of “perennial issues” that “have persisted in technical communication in the time that [she has] been involved” (p. 12). The issues she identifies are the following: “1. The relationship among the
three streams—or solitudes—of practitioners, teachers, academics; 2. The housing of technical communication in English departments; 3. The status of the service course and the people who teach it, and 4. Conflict among base disciplines and among different types of research” (pp.12-14). Despite the persistence of these issues, Rodman seems to believe that the diversity and tensions within technical communication as a discipline are strengths.

The growth of the field of technical writing and its increasing institutional status is examined in another history provided by Wegner and Nicholson (2006). “Development,” they said, “has much to do with how professional writing instruction and theory have gradually incorporated a rhetorical-theoretical foundation and a renewed appreciation for the full sense of techne—that is, of expertise as a combination of theory and practice” (p. 147). It is through this theorizing that programs have “been able to broach other disciplines” (p. 148). Wegner and Nicholson noted that, at their college in British Columbia, rhetoric and composing theory were offered separately from the professional writing program in the department of English. They noted this as problematic:

instructors of these practical writing courses have numerous tales to tell of their status in English Departments—somewhere below composition instructors who have been struggling with their own problems of recognition and deep fathoms away from the literati who still hold sway through the subject matter of their discipline. (p. 149)

Wegner and Nicholson’s account mirrors the high and low of literary studies and composition in Miller (1991), apparent in their uses of “below composition” and “deep fathoms away from the literati.” Their statement that these literati “hold sway through the subject matter of their discipline” points to the dominance and primacy of the subject matter of English literary studies, evidence, also, of the belletristic tradition’s influence on contemporary times. Likewise, Brent (2006) noted that professional writing is even more removed from literature than is academic
writing. The removal from literature both sanctions the elements of the myth and incites opposition to it. Where writing instruction is located in other disciplines, it is imagined as service to those disciplines. Where it is located in communities, it is imagined as service to those communities. And it does exist in service of those disciplines and communities. But it should exist as collaboration rather than service, a way of understanding writing studies as disciplinary.

2.3.3 Writing centres

The locations of writing centres almost exclusively reinforce all three elements of the myth, more so than all other locations in the Canadian landscape. The 2006 Directory of Writing Centres in Canada revealed that the vast majority of centres are located in Student Service areas, and, less commonly, attached to higher administrative offices. Both locations separate writing centres from academic areas, which reinforces the myth. Faculty members’ and administrators’ beliefs that writing centres are places for deficient writers to be remediated are left untroubled by this arrangement. The common isolation of writing centres from the disciplines also effectively reinforces the notion that the acquisition of disciplinary content is separate from the act of writing about it. Moreover, writing centres are often associated with remediation especially because of one-on-one models of instruction. Teaching that occurs in writing centres is not often considered to involve teaching disciplinary content. Moreover, writing centres’ locations in Student Services can position them institutionally as non-disciplinary. Kearns and Turner (2008) argued that “writing centres are often under-funded, located in Student Services or libraries, operating without departmental status or tenured faculty, and misunderstood by faculty and students” (p. 6). They are misunderstood, said Kearns and Turner, because those in writing centres “still work within institutions deeply rooted in the cultural assumptions” of their history (p. 6). These assumptions link the positioning of writing centres to entrenched cultural
assumptions that tell us that student writing is deficient, writing instruction is remedial, and those who are deficient and in need of remediation go to writing centres.

Those who work in writing centres are often imagined to be correcting the grammar of poor writers, rather than acting as legitimate academics who are members of their own discipline. Hunt (2006) explained that “instructors employed in writing centres are—even more than the toilers in the vineyards of freshman comp in the U.S.—usually isolated from the faculty in the departments whose students they share” (pp. 376-377). Proctor (2006), in an article in Graves and Graves (2006) about the writing centres at the University of Toronto, noted ways in which the positioning of writing centres in Student Service areas is problematic in its alienation of writing centre instructors. She asserted that “although students from all courses and programs seek instruction from…writing centres, the people who assign their course work and the people who offer instruction on that work inhabit separate universes” (p. 309). Further, Brent (2006) argued that “being situated outside an environment of academic teaching and research is highly likely to contribute to perpetual marginality unless the program has extremely robust support from the university community at large” (p. 178).

Writing centres, like writing instruction in Canada generally, are diverse and professionalized to varying degrees. Many became increasingly involved in service and scholarship, and work more closely with disciplines, providing faculty support (Proctor, 2006), which has done much to professionalize their work. A significant contributor to professionalization was the formation of CWCA in 2006, first as an organization within the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) and now as connected to CASDW.CWCA has been actively working to understand more about institutional locations and material conditions for those working in
Canadian writing centres. It is important to better understand to what degree those who work in writing centres are identifying as members of writing studies.

2.3.4 Writing across the curriculum and writing in the disciplines programs

The dispersion of writing instruction into the disciplines resulted in two additional, related locations for writing instruction, Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs. Smith (2006) offered a nuanced distinction focused on pedagogical goals:

WAC is characterized by courses that explicitly teach principles of writing in a variety of faculties and a committee of WAC specialists who provide training and resources to instructors and students. However, WID is the use of students’ writing processes…to learn disciplinary subject matter; it is a subject area course in which writing is seen as a mode of learning and an integral part of the research process. (p. 349)

Put more simply, WAC emphasizes “across” and “curriculum” in that it is pan-institutional and focused on faculty development, while WID emphasizes “in” and “disciplines” in that it is embedded in specific disciplinary areas and focused on students’ learning through writing. Both WAC and WID programs counter the myth of student writing as deficient and instruction as remedial because they see writing as advancing specific goals and, thus, contextualize writing instruction in disciplines. Both ask the academy to rethink traditional goals for student writing and traditional ways of teaching it. Furthermore, both trouble the idea and institutional apparatus of disciplinarity, WAC programs because they span across disciplines and WID programs because they inevitably require disciplines to be explicit about their own knowledge making and textual habits. Interestingly, the perception of student writing as deficient and in need of remediation by disciplines is the justification and impetus for WAC and WID. Graves (1994) explained that WAC and WID evolved in Canada because students from both professional programs, such as engineering, education, health sciences, and traditional fields, such as physics,
history, philosophy, biology, chemistry, historically struggled and continue to struggle with “university-level writing assignments because of the lack of instruction in the discipline-specific ways of their fields of interest” (p. 9). WAC and WID involve a peculiar subversion, because those running WAC and WID programs tend to believe that writing is not deficient in and of itself, but because it is taught in a way that removes it from its social situation within academia. WAC and WID program administrators and instructors generally strive to help disciplines adopt this viewpoint over time through collaboration.

Both kinds of programs are based on the epistemological assumption that writing is rhetorical and should be taught as enculturation into disciplinary and/or professional communities; writing is a process, and theory about writing is a knowledge base. Both writing as a skill and knowledge of writing theory are acquired in context and over time through extensive practice and study. Writing instruction is embedded in programs and courses because it is understood as inseparable from knowledge-making. In 1994, Graves found that “Canadian universities have defined writing as transcription (correctness of form and style) rather than as epistemic (part of the knowledge-making process of each discipline)” (p. 71). He argued that WAC programs have been largely unsuccessful because “reformers were unable to change the prevailing attitudes and values towards writing instruction” (p. 85). A look at writing instruction over 20 years later reveals similar conditions.

The Graves and Graves (2006) collection demonstrated that WAC/WID programs rarely succeed and outlines a number of reasons why, all of which are related to the myth. WAC challenges typical ways of imagining writing as remedial, but has to work within the confines of this belief, so is most often taught only in first year and taught separately from content in the
disciplines. Russell (1991) explained ways in which WAC in the U.S. runs counter to typical academic beliefs and structures in that it

resisted the fundamental organizing principle of modern academia, the compartmentalization of knowledge. Second, it upset the usual methods of regulating access to coveted social roles by challenging the convenient assumption that writing is a single, generalizable skill, learned (or not learned) outside a disciplinary matrix—in secondary school or freshman composition—and not related in any discipline specific way to the professional roles associated with a discipline. (p. 53)

WAC in the U.S. resists the notion that writing is a generalizable skill learned within a single course at the first-year level, so it exists in opposition to the widely believed, dominant myth about writing instruction as remediation. Without champions to sustain an alternate view of writing as best taught in context, WAC initiatives usually fall to the ubiquity and pervasiveness of the myth. Similarly, in Canada, champions are needed. Graves (1994) explained that “a key rhetorical move in the establishment of [a successful WAC program] was to characterize writing instruction as ‘cognitive development’” to achieve faculty buy in (p. 85).

Another challenge for those wanting to implement WAC programs is that the teaching of writing becomes the responsibility of faculty whose primary area of expertise is not writing studies, which can often mean the perpetuation of the elements of the myth. WAC changes the ways student writing and writing instruction are conceived, now as novice behavior and enculturation rather than deficit and remediation. The expertise of those in writing studies can unsettle faculty if they think about writing and the teaching and learning of writing in a different way; “WAC programs would challenge university teachers to reflect on their teaching practices” (Graves, 1994, p. 87). Through this sometimes uneasy collaboration, though, WAC has the potential to change some of the ways that faculty in writing studies are perceived. WAC is generally understood within writing studies as the best model, in conjunction with effective WID
programs and professionalized writing centres. WAC and WID require partnership amongst faculty in other areas and faculty in writing studies to learn more about a disciplines’ or communities’ values and knowledge making habits, as well as the ways these are embodied in discourse, and can work together to help students succeed in their writing tasks within those disciplines and communities. Twenty years after Graves’s (1994) work, collaboration with faculty in the disciplines is still sometimes fraught because some faculty members still perpetuate the myth, often inadvertently. Graves (2014) published an article in *University Affairs* titled, "Five strategies to improve writing in your courses: How to get your students to submit better assignments," which lists five tips, none of which are focused on remediation of student writing. The call, instead, is for pedagogical remediation. Graves's tips were the following: 1. Identify the genre of the assignment; 2. Let students know how it'll be evaluated; 3. Structure in opportunities for revision; 4. Assign low stakes writing; 5. Contact the writing centre. These proven strategies stand as pedagogical approaches that directly counter the aspects of the myth that position student writers as deficient and writing instruction as remediation.

In addition to an oppositional view of the myth that can unsettle academics and administrators, another factor that confounds the success of many WAC programs in Canada is that they are typically more difficult to implement where writing instruction is tied to literary studies in English departments. That “tying” can indicate a number of different relationships; the literature suggests that even where writing instruction is not located within departments of English, English often claims the territory of writing instruction as theirs, and can, thus, remain in conflict with writing studies. Graves (1994) argued that, rather than building empires of under-funded and part-time workers, English departments would do well to develop expertise and support research into writing instruction in the various disciplines where it already occurs. In this way the ‘value added’ to students will
come in a form they can understand (as part of instruction in their field of major interest), and the responsibility for adding value will be spread across the campus. (p. 6)

Yet, departments of English, at least in some institutions, still employ large numbers of under-funded, over-worked part-time workers. Likewise, Hunt (2006) explained that in Canada there is resistance to WAC from English. WAC programs in the U.S. “encountered resistance both from English departments defending their comp programs and from other departments less than eager to take on what they saw as the English Department’s proper burden of marking, grammar correcting, and basic composition instruction. WAC has not been markedly more successful in Canada; promising programs here have often succumbed to similar resistance” (p. 378). In sum, even while English departments widely rejected rhetoric and composition within their departments, they sometimes saw writing instruction as their jurisdiction.

Yet, there are success stories in local contexts. Proctor (2006) explained that “the Writing Program [at the University of Toronto] got off the ground as a result of sustained efforts by sympathetic individuals in positions of some power” (p. 279). Kearns and Turner (1997) added that “‘support from one’s colleagues, the character of the university,’ and ‘timing and circumstance—good luck’” are important features that foster success (as cited in Brooks, 2006, p. 111). WAC and WID programs seem to only survive where there are champions, both faculty and administrators, who continue to advocate for them.

2.3.5 Stand-alone units

Stand-alone academic units are rare. Two examples are described in Graves and Graves (2006), including Sheese, Spencer, Rehner, Greenwald, and Rozendal’s (2006) article about the Centre for Academic Writing at York University and Kearns and Turner’s (2006) account of the Centre for Academic Writing at the University of Winnipeg. Graves and Graves explained that
both “focus on academic writing as the exigency for their work,” are located in “cities with larger, historically better funded universities,” “have tenured faculty lines,” “have status as teaching units,” “have very strong faculty unions,” and report to the Faculties of Arts (p. 17). They also noted Proctor’s account of “the radical changes” that have taken place at the University of Toronto, where there are more than 15 writing centres housed in faculties and colleges within the institution. No matter the location, the writing studies authors credit a mix of institutional factors that enable this success, namely champions in administrative roles and ambivalent English departments who do not pose territorial challenges. It seems that successful independent programs depend on individuals and institutions changing their ideas about student writing, embodied by better institutional locations for writing instruction and improved material conditions for writing instructors.

2.4 Liminality: material and ontological consequences

The multiplicity and diversity of institutional locations and local models for writing instruction in Canada result in liminality. This condition makes the national terrain of writing studies difficult to discern and fuels the notion of it as non-disciplinary. Whalen (2004), in the introduction to the inaugural online issue of CSSR’s journal Rhetor, noted that liminality, for what she called the discipline of rhetoric, is a condition both material and ontological. Liminality refers to not only an in-between-ness in institutional locations that have varying relationships to disciplines, but an in-between-ness of identity. She explained that “in liminal spaces we find ourselves on a threshold (or limen), caught between practices, cultures, frames for knowing the world, and modes of communication….this is an interstitial place, the place of in-between” (p. 1). Liminality in terms of institutional locations within and amongst or attached to disciplines
can erase the disciplinarity of writing studies because its body of knowledge disappears from plain sight with its multiplicity.

To provide an example, I turn to a letter in *University Affairs* (Marche, 2008) that inspired a response by Drain (2008) that acted as the first public identification of the four organizations unified as writing studies. The article to which Drain responded was written by the late Suny Marche, then Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie University, and titled “Who cares about writing anyway? We all do, of course. But when it comes to teaching effective writing, we talk a better game than we play.” Marche developed the article from a piece he wrote during a writing-teaching initiative wherein volunteer writers demonstrate their writing behaviour in practice. He argued that universities claim to value writing instruction, yet continue to hire TAs or leave writing instruction to faculty in the disciplines, neither of whom, he argued, possesses the expertise nor the will to teach students to write. The point he made rings true for me. Universities do say they value writing instruction, and they do seem to hire people who have neither expertise nor will to do it, but the point Marche missed is that almost all Canadian colleges and universities *have available* people who *do* have the expertise and the will to teach students to write. More than that, they have expertise in writing itself as a subject matter. Marche appeared to be unaware of an entire field of study active in his own institution. The omission of the field in his article is evidence of the kind of invisibility experienced by marginalized groups to which Smith (1990) referred. Writing studies is shut out of a discussion about its own area of expertise.

Liminality erases writing studies’ body of knowledge in another way. A consequence of multiple locations for writing instruction and the uniqueness of local models is that there is a dearth of undergraduate programming (Brooks, 2002) and graduate programming in writing
studies in Canada (Clary-Lemon, 2009; Graves, 1994; Hunt, 2006; Jacobs & Dolmage, 2006; Smith, 2006). Consequently, the body of knowledge is learned wherever in the curriculum it is discovered and is variously either named or unnamed.

       Little is known about the material consequences of liminality for those in writing studies. The issue of contingent labour has been written about for over 60 years in the U.S., but almost no work in Canada has addressed it. Graves reported in 1994 that in Canada almost two thirds of writing instructors were non-permanent (p. 51). He also noted a distinct lack of support for research, concluding that “only 19% of institutions provide[d] research grants to faculty who conduct[ed] research in writing; 13% provide[d] released time from teaching; and 12.5% provide[d] research assistants” (p. 53). He argued that “much needs to be done to ensure that the workforce for teaching writing…has access to the material conditions necessary for [scholarly] endeavours (time for research, money for books and travel to conferences, security and stability of income)” (p. 76). In addition, Proctor (2006) noted that until 1995 or so, most writing centre professionals were on short term contracts and had no security. More recently, she said, the trends have been disrupted. An inventory of the material conditions of those in writing studies is sorely needed.

       More importantly, material conditions have consequences for people’s actual lives. The myth and location together have consequences, though perhaps only where and when those in writing studies feel a disconnect between the ways in which their work is routinely characterized by others and the actual work they do. In Miller’s (1991) explanation, “individuals are ‘placed,’ or given the status of subjects, by ideological constructions that tie them to fantasized functions and activities, not to their actual situations” (p. 122).
The literature demonstrates that writing studies seems to be multi-named, misnamed, or unnamed, all of which contribute to notions of writing instructors as non-disciplinary. Ambiguities in naming can contribute to misunderstanding and absence within broader academic discourse in the sense that multiple terms and meanings can muddy larger identity categories more visible to outsiders. Even more perplexing than the naming or lack of naming that occurs within the academy broadly is the fact that those who might consider themselves in writing studies do not appear to name themselves in any consistent way. Various names exist: rhetoric, rhetoric and composition, composition, professional writing, writing studies. The naming and activities of the scholarly organizations also reflect multiplicity of purpose and blurring of boundaries, which act as strength because of the diversity of approaches, but can sustain the negative consequence of invisibility.

Two fairly recent name changes within writing studies need further examination because they can reveal much about what contemporary, Canadian writing studies is. Charmaz (2006) highlighted naming as reflective of power relations:

names provide ways of knowing—and being. Names construct and reify human bonds and social divisions. We attach value to some names and dismiss others. Much of sociology addresses relative power differentials between individuals or groups to make a name stick—or to resist the name with its attendant categorization, values, implicit and explicit directives, and implications for subsequent life. Names, then, are rooted in actions and give rise to specific practices. (p. 396)

Given the power of naming, it seems especially important to better understand the emergence of the widespread use of the term “writing studies.” Furthermore, the name change of The Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (CATTW) to the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) at the organization’s AGM in 2008 (CATTW minutes, 2008) needs examination. Debate about and selection of naming is a debate about and
selection of what the organization believes in and does at its core. CATTW began as an offshoot of the American Association for Teachers of Technical Writing. The name “CATTW” potentially restricted the subject of study shared by those in the organization to technical writing, but the activity in the organization had a much wider purview than technical writing alone. While some in CATTW felt at home in its name, many did not. The CATTW minutes (2008) read:

- there were many suggested names offered by members present at the meeting
- key terms, however, were considered to be ‘writing studies’ and ‘teaching,’ ‘professional,’ ‘communication’
- considerations—such things as inclusiveness, funding agencies, governments, new members, and a name that truly reflects the work of all members. (n.p.)

The motion was to change the name to the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing. The membership voted overwhelmingly in favour, save one no and one abstention (CATTW minutes, 2008). They also voted to change the journal’s name from *Technostyle* to *Canadian Journal for Studies in Discourse and Writing*. The renaming meant that “discourse and writing” became the terms of the shared subjects of study such that, more accurately, technical writing is one area within a broader field of study.

The name change from Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing to Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing is obvious in its broader inclusion of the diversity within writing studies. Clary-Lemon (2009) argued that the “name change [was] aimed at remedying [a] perceived lack of centre” (p. 96). I am not so sure it was a perceived lack of centre as much as a desire to be as inclusive as possible in a way that the name “Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing” was not, as one of six locations for writing instruction in Canada, and only one sub-field within writing studies more broadly. “That move toward a more inclusive conception of Canadian writing studies beyond the niches occupied by technical or professional writing,” Clary-Lemon continued, “may suggest the first real bid for a
centralized locale for Canadian scholars of writing and rhetoric” (p. 97). The nexus of scholarly organizations has been grouped together under the umbrella term of “writing studies,” by Drain (2008), Clary-Lemon (2009), and Graves (2014) though it is not clear what unites them. At the same time, the subtleties of the organizations and the kinds of work being disseminated at conferences could contribute much to understanding the nuances of communities within writing studies.

A small body of work has included or focused on the scholarly organizations. Clary-Lemon (2009) used them as one way to define writing research in Canada by showing disciplinary work as it goes on among them. Smith (2000) and Horne (2010) appear to be the only scholars whose work explicitly used membership and participation in a scholarly organization as the centre of inquiry. Smith offered a “micro-ethnography” of CASLL by observing members during their conference, Inkshed, and list-serv discussion. She was guided by the following “lines of inquiry”: 1) the characteristics of relationships among members, 2) limits or borders of this group such as the diversity of its membership, functions, and values, members’ relationship to the organization professionally and personally, 3) their talk about this relation, 4) perceptions of the group by newcomer and established members, 5) the nature and function of list-serv communication in relation to face to face communication, and 6) the reciprocal influence of the listserv and conference on methods and topics of communication. Smith’s work is one of the only studies to expose aspects of the day to day lives of those in CASLL and to explicitly examine that community as a community. Miriam Horne (2010) examined her experiences of becoming a writer as part of the community of Inkshed and theorized entry into a disciplinary community. CASLL, then, has been examined as a community, but the other organizations of writing studies have not.
It remains to be seen whether or not those in the field of writing studies seek a more centralized locale for their scholarly activity. In the meantime, their liminality over decades is both a constraint that reifies the elements of the myth and a potentially positive space of resistance. In defining the liminality of “rhetoric,” Whalen (2004) called up anthropological theories, “referring to those marginal social spaces outside of everyday constraint that liberate participants from routine activity” (p. 1). The spaces of writing studies marginalize it, but marginality also inspires community and resistance. Hunt (2006) made a similar claim:

fitting nowhere else in the traditional departmental and administrative structure of universities, writing—and research on writing, as well as more general work on the role of language in learning—has simply infiltrated the cracks, finding housing in administrative units, other departments, writing centres, various ad hoc creations of deans and provosts. (p. 376)

His inclusion of “and research on writing” (emphasis added) in effect makes “writing” and “research about writing” visible as a discipline, despite its dispersion. Hunt included research on writing and the role of language in learning as an idea that has “infiltrated,” hinting at intention, design, penetrating something not easily penetrable. Infiltration has the connotation of permeation and stealth. It is through subversion that those in writing studies have made visible what exists in the cracks. Most of the time, as Hunt did with his use of “infiltrate,” the politics of location are visible even if not explicit.

Discourse of deficit and remediation persist, but there is also evidence of progress in these ways of thinking about writing. Twenty years ago, Graves’s (1994) study asked administrators to define writing. They defined it as follows: “handwriting and mechanical correctness; as belles tristic appreciation; as a process of coming to know the self; and as a process of creating knowledge within a discipline” all of which, Graves noted, have “historical precedents” (p. 74). More contemporary examples confirm that not a lot has changed. Kearns and
Turner (2008) explained that “in many universities, the belief remains that writing instruction is necessary only for those who have arrived with inadequate skills….initiatives to address writing at university still tend to be driven by faculty concern with student competencies and capabilities in the areas of reading and writing” (pp. 6-7). Other evidence of the first element of the myth is Giltrow’s (2008) “grammar snag,” which characterizes the pervasiveness of concerns about deficiency in student writing. In a 2008 CATTW conference panel paper titled, “Oh, so you’re the writing teacher,” Giltrow reflected on the role of “the grammar snag” in shaping people’s understanding of writing teachers. Essentially, the grammar snag means that people trip on the complaint and prescriptivist traditions; one can scarcely have a conversation about writing without talk of poor grammar arising. Giltrow argued that the grammar snag perpetuates the belief that teachers of writing teach grammar.

The pervasive notion of student writing as deficient is also apparent in a notice Graves (2013b) sent through the CASDW list-serv, alerting subscribers to an article he published (2013) in University Affairs, titled "Why students struggle with writing: What to do about it." The article is noteworthy both because it responds to traditional beliefs about student writing and acts as a kind of resistance to those beliefs. Graves’s article began as follows:

The quality of student writing at university has been the subject of debate for more than 140 years and shows no sign of going away. At a recent panel of employers invited to address the faculty of arts at the University of Alberta, two speakers referred to the less-than-stellar quality of writing in the graduates they interviewed. In an online forum, a faculty member said essentially the same thing about student writing. The arts faculty is doing a review of our BA requirements and we need to know: Is the writing of our graduates as poor as these employers and professors claimed? And if so, what can we do about it? (para 1)

Graves’s article demonstrates that debate about student writing persists, with employers and faculty noting the poor quality of student writing. His response continued with claims that
student writing is not poor *in and of itself*, and that students try “diligently” to write in academic settings. Student writing is not meeting the expectations of instructors, he says, because instructors are not explicitly telling students what their expectations are. Disciplinary knowledge making is often tacit, and writing in disciplinary contexts is extraordinarily complex. Graves explained that instructors can make their expectations more explicit and can give students tools to write well, such as helping them to identify a specific, theorized audience as well as providing scaffolded instruction and opportunities for revision. This post highlights the ubiquity of the first element of the myth, that student writing is deficient, and subverts that element by telling a different story. Student writing is deficient because the academy does not teach students well.

There were a number of responses on the CASDW list-serv celebrating Graves (2013b) that act as opposition to the myth. A subscriber asked the following: “Will this be the piece that finally persuades some people that student writing is not worse than ever and that the remedy is not More Grammar?.... the belief that grammar drills will improve not only students’ writing but society in general may be a conviction beyond the reach of rational appeal.” Another noted, “[my] first year students, again this year, wonder why I don’t correct their grammar.” These responses suggest that there is a kind of frustration about the persistence of the story experienced by those who posted responses.

Brent (2006), Graves (1994), Proctor (2006), and Smith (2006) demonstrated ways in which the myth of writing instruction as remediation survives. Kearns, Whalen, and Clary-Lemon (n.d.) described the “myth of writing in Canada” in a presentation titled “Rhetorical questions: Writing Studies in Canada.” The powerpoint presentation was located on the internet and is decontextualized, though the URL suggests it may have been a presentation to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Winnipeg. Their presentation addressed: “the evolution of writing
studies at the University of Winnipeg, our department in the Canadian context, and U.S. and Canadian conceptions of writing” (slide 1). Kearns et al. refer to *the* myth, but identify a number of interrelated elements. It is not clear the ways in which they see these interacting to contribute to a broader myth. The elements of the myth in Canada, according to Kearns et al., echo the historical myth described by Miller (1991): “1) Writing is a ‘basic skill’ that can be mastered in one course; 2) We can best ‘fix’ students’ writing by explicit drill in grammar and mechanics; 3) Anyone can teach writing; it takes no special expertise; 4) Teaching writing isn’t compatible with a research agenda; 5) There are no best practices for teaching writing” (slides 10-15).

The assumptions of writing as deficient and writing instruction as remedial are apparent in the notions that writing is a basic skill and that student writing can be fixed by drills and in a single course. The fact that Kearns et al. (n.d.) put “fix” in quotation marks is a kind of resistance to the notion of remediation. The ideas that the teaching of writing does not involve specialized expertise, is not compatible with research, and does not have best practices all point to assumptions that writing is not itself a subject of study, that writing studies does not have a body of knowledge, and that writing instructors, thus, are non-disciplinary. Kearns et al.’s use of the term “myth,” like Miller’s, begins in opposition to dominant ideas about writing, writing instruction, and writing instructors by declaring it false. The literature provides evidence that those in writing studies would say that writing is not a “basic” skill, nor can it be mastered in one course or “fixed” by grammar drills. Those in writing studies have said their work does involve specialized expertise; it is compatible with research, and does have best practices. They make the case, though, from spaces where it is difficult to be seen and heard.

Those in Canadian writing studies have been explicitly political by analyzing the presence of the first two elements of the myth and by resisting those elements. Canadian rhetoric and
composition/writing studies has always made visible, embodied, and fought for alternate versions of the first two elements of the myth as they see them. Graves (1994) asserted, “the challenge that remains is to change the public idea of writing, first within the university and then outside it. That challenge must be met by those who currently teach writing at universities” (p. 86). Brooks’s (2002) work had an ideological aim, “to speculate on the usefulness of first-year English as a barometer of change in the relationship between higher education and national cultures” (p. 673). Further, Jacobs and Dolmage (2006) desired “societal and institutional change” and programs at the “leading edge” (p. 144). Wegner and Nicholson (2006) called for the academy to bridge theory and practice. Hunt (2006) called for “putting writing not across the curriculum, but under it” by which he meant that “we need to be exploring ways of constructing situations for student writers which offer them immersion in the social situations which occasion and use writing” (p. 380). It is noteworthy that explicit calls for changes to the first two elements of the myth are evident in the literature.

There is also resistance to the first two elements through articulation of best practices. Kearns et al. (n.d.) argued that one misconception about writing studies is that there are no best practices. Smith (2006) advocated for best practices; in analyzing trends in Canadian writing studies curriculum, she posited four characteristics of strong post-secondary writing instruction: 1) that “academic writing instruction that is not limited to grammatical and formal concerns be a major emphasis (i.e., 50% or more) of an early course in the majority of students’ programs,” 2) “that the flagship of any university’s value for writing instruction” is having “an academic program or a degree specialization devoted to the academic discipline of writing,” 3) the presence of “an institutional culture that values the advanced literacy development of all its students,” and 4) “sufficient resources behind such endeavours” (pp. 323-324). These best practices begin to
offer an alternate story of student writing as novice writing, writing instruction as enculturation, and writing studies as itself a discipline. Put simply, each best practice is also resistance: 1) teaching writing is not about teaching grammar, 2) there should be programs in writing itself as disciplinary subject matter, 3) institutional culture must value writing as advanced literacy development, and 4) resources are necessary to teach writing well.

Clary-Lemon’s (2009) work, too, addressed the third assumption, that writing instructors are non-disciplinary, by making visible their body of knowledge, their disciplinary work. She declared, “it is the aim of this piece to provide stronger documentation of the ongoing struggle for professionalization of the field of rhetoric and communication (or ‘writing studies,’ as it may come to be known) in Canada” (p. 96). Professionalization as a discipline can be further facilitated, she said, by increased venues for research. These shared ideological aims all implicitly depend on a change to all three elements of the myth.

Writing studies scholars have embodied their resistance to the third element by acting in their daily lives as disciplinary beings within institutional arrangements that constrain that disciplinarity. Disciplinarity is a complex term with a history too long to explore at length here. Moreover, there is work currently being done on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. I offer, in the meantime, a set of characteristics presented by Rodman (2003) in tracing the evolution of technical communication as a discipline and the establishment of CATTW, which would become CASDW. She included four core determinants: an academic community, agreed upon subjects of research, agreed upon methods of research, and agreed upon body of knowledge. While my research does not make clear the parameters of any of these four characteristics of a discipline, or do enough to explore what is "agreed upon" and to what degree, it certainly makes clear that the
people of writing studies are disciplinary insofar they are indisputably an academic community with subjects of research, methods of research, and bodies of knowledge.

Two works that could be considered explicitly political accounts of scholars’ experiences as disciplinary beings are Strachan’s (2008) and Alexander’s (2005). They share an institutional context: Strachan as the director of the Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning (CWIL) at Simon Fraser University and Alexander as one of CWIL’s faculty members. CWIL was an ad hoc centre whose institutional mandate was to make the university’s curriculum writing intensive by hiring writing specialists on temporary contracts to train faculty in strategies for writing intensive pedagogy. Importantly, Strachan, like Alexander, grounded her work in her own positioning and working life. She explained: “This is a story that I tell from my own vantage point. There are things I did not and could not see from where I stood. There are things I did not understand and could not explain from where I stood. But this account draws on all the resources available to me” (pp. 2-3). Strachan wrote about the initiative from administrative angles, “bringing together many elements in a single project in a single portrait” (p. 2). She focused on senior administration and local department levels to trace the processes of developing SFU’s writing requirements (p. 17). Alexander, it seems, is the only scholar in Canada to explicitly examine gender.

Analyses focused on gender and/or using feminist frameworks have been significant in the American composition studies literature. Miller’s (1991) “critique of institutional dispositions toward composition studies” (p. xi) argued that composition is attached “to a form of power” that re-inscribes an identity of composition teachers as shaped by traditional women’s roles (p. 122). Most notably, these are the domestic role of handmaiden, the non-disciplinary servant to the real work and workers of academia, and the mother role as nurturer. Salient examples include Enos’s
Gender roles and faculty lives in rhetoric and composition and Schell’s (1998) Gypsy academics and mother-teachers. Furthermore, Phelps and Emig (1995) edited a collection of stories about gender from rhetoric and composition scholars, Feminine principles and women’s experience in American composition and rhetoric. Phelps framed the work as explicitly feminist, describing how the collection arose in day-to-day experience. She wrote about her collaboration with Emig:

As we talked over some of the premises for a writing program, we began to discuss the experiences and problems of women in leading such enterprises. Why, we wondered, were these matters not discussed openly as feminist issues? For years, we knew, women in composition and rhetoric had been having underground conversations about gender in relation to genre, the politics of the field, their own experiences as women teachers, scholars, and administrators; yet rarely did they articulate these insights as feminist positions, and almost never in public forums. (p. xii)

The collection stands as a feminist account, as a breaking of silence through exposure of the day-to-day experiences of women that reveal consequences of the myth in relation to gender and open up possibilities for critique of power relations.

In Canada, Alexander (2005) offered a feminist account explicitly addressing gender in relation to institutional location and ideology and the subjectivities and identities of writing studies scholars in a specific institutional context. Alexander used Dorothy Smith’s methodology of institutional ethnography to examine “how becoming described as a ‘writing lady’ at the university can make the politics of gender relations, disciplinarity and textual mediation in the academy visible as a site for critical analysis” (para. 1). She described her experience at CWIL where she and her female colleagues were initially introduced in various institutional locations as Dr., but soon found that while their colleagues from other disciplines continued to be introduced this way, they came, quickly, to be introduced by their first names. Noticeable, too, was an emerging tendency for students to refer to the group of writing instructors as “the writing ladies.”
Alexander described the term “writing lady” as a “‘gender technolog[y]’ of identity formation and the marginalization of teaching and writing specialists as non-skilled labour within the academy” (para.1). Interestingly, she offered the most explicit discussion about the implications of gender and writing instructors as contingent labour in perpetuating notions of writing instructors as non-disciplinary, noting that even those in administrative roles faced similar problems as members of a feminized discipline.

In what appears to be the only other mention of gender in the Canadian literature, MacLennan (2006) titled her article in the Graves collection, “What’s a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?” She wrote about teaching technical writing in Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, but beyond the title, gender is not mentioned. What does she mean by “nice girl like you” or “place like this?” MacLennan is, presumably, the nice girl, and the place is engineering.

Alexander’s (2005) work and MacLennan’s (2006) title touch on the issue of gender, which has not otherwise been formally discussed. In the U.S. there has been plenty of work on gender, and Miller’s (1991) findings were particularly meaningful in raising awareness. She made the tough claim that composition specialists are the “sad women in the basement” of English in that they embody the qualities of self-sacrifice and nurturance that oppress them and that they strive to change. Writing studies is almost completely silent on the matter of gender, yet, the material body of writing studies is predominantly female.

There is, however, an undercurrent of resistance in the Canadian writing studies literature. First, resistance to the myth is made visible by the physical embodiment of actual humans who do actual disciplinary work. Put another way, the very presence of the literature is evidence of the presence of writing studies. Second, the content of the research by those in
writing studies exists as an academic body of knowledge. Writing studies scholars’ focus on the history of rhetoric and composition in relation to English studies in Canadian curriculum and in relation to American composition has meant an implicit politics of location. Resistance is latent in the literature in so far as little work actually openly criticizes ways in which institutions sanction and perpetuate elements of the myth. I deliberately call upon a commonsense definition of “latent” as a metaphor of “a fingerprint that is difficult to see but can be made visible for examination” (Webster’s, 1994). The fingerprint itself is not visible to the naked eye, but there is evidence of its existence upon magnification and the application of specific tools for analysis.

Those in writing studies need to be at the centre of the inquiry and heard so that their voices may contribute to changes in perceptions about student writing and, subsequently, in the ways institutions offer writing instruction. To offer a people’s history that openly enquires into power relations, we need a better understanding of the people who are in writing studies. First, we need to know who identifies as in writing studies and on what grounds, as well as ways in which the term, “writing studies,” is defined. Second, we need to create a national map of institutional locations and aggregate demographic data to identify where those who identify as in writing studies are located. Third, we need to discern parameters that unite and distinguish the four scholarly organizations in order to give shape to scholarly communities within writing studies and the interests that define them. Fourth, the day-to-day experiences of those in writing studies (or not) must be uncovered, including what drew people to writing studies and what keeps them in it, as well as their understanding of the term “writing studies” and their identities in relation to it. Fifth, institutional positioning as liminal must be explored and political aims highlighted. The aim of this people’s history is to determine the impacts of the myth by breaking
silence, by telling a story of writing studies from the perspective of those in it in order to expose a politics of liminality and render writing studies more visible within the academic constellation.

2.5 Key concepts from an alternative sociology of women

Smith’s (1990) standpoint theory provides a useful framework for the aim of a people’s history of writing studies in three ways. First, both begin with the premise of injustice through marginalization and erasure of groups by normative knowledge making practices, discourses, and institutions. Writing studies is a marginalized and erased entity within the academy because it is liminal. The myth exists as evidence of normative epistemologies and discourses and is sanctioned by institutional locations. Second, both a people’s history and Smith’s alternative sociology expose injustice by making visible the material and ontological consequences of marginalization and erasure for subjects, which is the aim of this study. Third, ideological aspects of experience allow for identification of patterns that can collectively constitute a standpoint, albeit fluid, from which critique can ensue. The exposure of the daily experiences of those in writing studies is an act of resistance to the myth, the provoking of a more explicitly political conversation. This section parallels the tenets of the theoretical framework of a people’s history and Smith’s (1990) framework I outlined above, beginning with the premise of injustice through discourse. Second, rupture occurs through individuals’ exposure and critique of the injustice.

2.5.1 Injustice through normativity: objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling

The root premise of feminist standpoint theory, and of Smith’s (1990) framework, is the marginalization and erasure of particular human subjects. Smith defined normative knowledge-making practices as objectified forms of knowledge and normative discourse as relations of ruling, arguing that both foreclose human subjects when the story told about them does not
match the story they might tell about themselves. The myth is an objectified form of knowledge, as evidenced by its ubiquity, its longevity, and its manifestation in discursive and institutional forms of power and privilege. Objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling depoliticize the interests, discourse, and actions of those in power, positioning them as though they were neutral. Smith’s notion is that foreclosure of human subjects occurs because “the persistence of the privileged sociological version (or versions) relies upon a substructure that has already discredited and deprived of authority to speak the voices of those who know the society differently” (p. 24). The depoliticization imposes a subjectivity of complainer on those who critique sociology; political issues, where they are invisible to others, reduce the political to complaint. The depoliticization of the interests of those in power forces those who critique that depoliticization to justify, explain, and prove their legitimacy before they can speak, let alone begin to be heard.

The myth qualifies as a normative story, and disciplinarity the institutional structure that sanctions it. Writing studies is liminal, often located outside the disciplines or located within or amongst them, so it troubles concept of disciplinarity as an objectified form of knowledge. So writing studies is largely invisible to both sociology and almost all other members of the academic constellation. Its scholars’ resistance can be interpreted as complaint, so those in writing studies have made their marginalization and erasure known from a distance, by presenting curricular histories and examining the ways in which they have affected contemporary locations for writing instruction. But scholars in writing studies, by and large, have not made the consequences of the marginalization and erasure of their daily work and identity visible. Use of Smith’s framework means starting from outside objectified forms of knowledge and relations of
ruling. Those in writing studies begin outside the construct of disciplinarity within the academic constellation.

2.5.2 Ruptures through exposure and critique

Smith (1990) suggested that beginning from outside objectified forms of knowledge means exposing day-to-day experiences of human subjects who are otherwise erased. Objectified forms of knowledge “are objectified structures with goals, activities, obligations, and so on, separate from those persons who work for them” (p. 15). The goal becomes, then, demonstrating how everyday work and experience do not match the story told of that work. The elements of the myth that see student writing as deficient and writing instruction as remedial set up a false picture of the work of writing instructors.

Alternate versions, in Smith’s (1990) conception, make visible “ruptures in the fabric” of objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling that open possibilities for critique. This particular project ruptures the fabric of some objectified forms of knowledge within academia by offering an alternative version of writing studies. In Miller’s (1991) explanation of the iterative power of the myth, “individuals are ‘placed,’ or given the status of subjects, by ideological constructions that tie them to fantasized functions and activities, not to their actual situations” (p. 122). Smith (1990) referred to a “bifurcation of consciousness” that occurs whereby the governing attitudes of society separate people from the material bodies they occupy and the contexts in which they act (p. 17). That is, the story told about human subjects often does not reflect their actual material lives or the story they tell about themselves. When these inconsistencies persist, bifurcation of consciousness becomes “a daily chasm to be crossed” (p. 20). Writing studies as a disciplinary entity causes rupture in its resistance to all three elements of the myth. Those in writing studies work to persuade administrators and faculty in academic
institutions to adopt a different view of student writing as novice behaviour, to see writing instruction as enculturation, and to understand those in writing studies as legitimate members of an academic field or discipline.

2.6 Summary

The myth of student writing as deficient, writing instruction as remedial, and writing instructors as non-disciplinary is normative. Ways in which the myth is operating in Canada need scrutiny, especially in terms of how its writing instructors, as subjects of that myth, might be subsumed and eclipsed by it. More specifically, the myth is sanctioned and resisted through institutional locations and advocacy, but little is known about the consequences of the myth and institutional location, materially or ontologically. Smith’s (1990) framework called for beginning outside objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling; “a sociology for women would offer a knowledge of the social organization and determinations of the properties and events of our directly experienced world” (p. 22). To access “the directly experienced world” of members of writing studies, I summon the voices of my colleagues through a national survey of writing studies professionals. I also provide insight into my directly experienced world through life writing.
Chapter 3: Survey research informed by life writing

3.1 Introduction: Objectives and research questions

A people’s history for Canadian writing studies begins to answer the question, “who is writing studies?” Similarly, Smith’s (1990) framework begins in the “who,” in human subjects who are marginalized and erased by dominant ways of knowing and expressions of knowledge. The central goal of this study is to increase visibility for writing studies by offering a definition of it from within. Three more specific objectives include the following: 1) to gather data about demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions; 2) to describe a collective identity for writing studies by obtaining respondents’ definitions and uses of the term, “writing studies,” their understanding of the scholarly organizations and motives for belonging to them, and their identification as in writing studies or not; and 3) to expose individuals’ experiences to make visible the consequences of the myth that student writing is deficient, that writing instruction is remedial, and that writing instructors are non-disciplinary.

This study uses survey research informed by life writing, detailed in this chapter in three sections. The first section explains how the qualitative survey, in particular, acts in accordance with the tenets of Smith’s (1990) framework. The second section details past uses of survey in studies of rhetoric and composition and writing studies. The third outlines the mixed quantitative/qualitative survey, explains sampling, ethics, recruitment, and data collection as well as outlines the procedures of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008).

3.2 Survey research informed by life writing as outside objectified forms of knowledge

Beginning outside objectified forms of knowledge means telling one’s own story. Central to this process is an interested, ideological researcher (Smith, 1990). In this study, I position myself as such a researcher through life writing about the ways in which demographic
information intersects with my institutional locations as well as my identity and experiences as a member of writing studies. My account also acts as data, as one member’s way of understanding writing studies. Furthermore, the qualitative survey data has narrative qualities through which sociological and discursive forms of social regulation can be examined. Bochner (2012) noted that interest in narrative recognized the “functions of stories and storytelling in creating and managing identity; the expressive forms for making sense of lived experience and communicating it to others” (p. 156). The survey asks open questions about respondents’ identities and experiences of coming into and working in writing studies.

3.3 Uses of survey in rhetoric and composition studies and writing studies

Uses of survey are common in research about rhetoric and composition studies and writing studies, but they have typically focused on institutional locations and research activity. They have not focused on demographics, and have never, at least in Canada, focused explicitly on issues of identity and experience. This study is most significantly informed by Miller’s (1991) national survey of composition specialists conducted in the U.S. in 1987. There is nothing published in Canada like Miller’s national survey, though there are a number of useful surveys, either informal or peripheral to this study. This section describes Miller’s methods and explains some previous uses of survey in rhetoric and composition/writing studies.

3.3.1 Miller’s national survey of composition specialists

Miller’s work preceded Smith’s in 1990, but appears consistent with a feminist analysis, and her framework is similar. She produced an explicitly political account of “the people.” Miller began from outside objectified forms of knowledge by making her positionality as researcher explicit. She began in what she knew as a member of composition studies, declaring that her study was “undertaken and reported to test [her] interpretations against the experiences of many
colleagues” (p. 205). She focused on a marginalized population, interrogating individuals’ experiences of the intersecting subject positions of composition teachers and women. Miller acknowledged her research as not “claiming either statistical significance or scientific objectivity” (p. 206). Her goal was to expose the experiences of those in composition studies in order to tell what she called, “a good story,” a different story of writing and of teachers and students of composition than the myth usually told about them. And the story told about them is the same as the one told now, 25 years later, in a distinct national context. The myth naturalizes good writing as good writing; writing studies sees good writing as contextually determined. The myth says that students are not good writers due to cultural or moral deficiencies; the field says that students do write well when engaged by informed (that is theoretical and researched) pedagogy. The myth says that writing instruction is remediation of error; the field says writing instruction is enculturation into the social and textual habits of a given community. The myth says that the work of writing instructors is not disciplinary, and inextricably, that they, as people, are not disciplinary; those who do that work and belong to the field know differently.

This national survey of writing studies professionals, like Miller’s (1991) survey, was both quantitative and qualitative, and I modelled a number of questions after hers. Miller’s survey asked for demographic data: name (if respondent’s wish), years since leaving graduate school, PhD field, type of institution, relationship to composition in the institution, and contact information. She also invited brief answers to open-ended questions grouped according to the following areas: tenure, promotion, research awards, as well as departmental and institutional acknowledgements of composition. Miller asked respondents to rank order fields in terms of status within their departments, which is an explicit act of identifying perceived power relations. She also asked them to identify, as precisely as possible, tensions associated with composition in
their departments, changes they perceive in composition’s status in recent years, and changes respondents would make to their department and/or institution. It does not appear that she established word limits for the questions. Miller’s account was descriptive, and included content analysis of the lengthier, narrative questions. She found that the field of composition studies was marginalized within English departments and the academy broadly. Her significant interpretation of the data was that teachers of composition studies inadvertently perpetuate the negative myth about composition as ancillary within English by assuming an assigned cultural identity of self-sacrifice, exemplified by a handmaiden role.

3.3.2 Additional uses of survey in rhetoric and composition or writing studies

Further evidence that survey is the most appropriate method of data collection for this study is that a myriad of informal surveys have been conducted through the list-servs of writing studies in recent years about a wide range of topics related to demographic information, institutional location, identity, and experience. Two recent examples include an American survey titled “Teaching composition on the tenure track” (2012) that included predominantly open-ended demographic questions focused on qualifications, the topic of respondents’ dissertations, current scholarly interests, identity, subjects taught, and title. A second example, more focused on where writing instruction happens, was an “International WAC/WID Mapping Project” (Thassis, 2008) about activity and interest in writing across the curriculum and in the disciplines. There were two different surveys, one international and one focused on the U.S. and Canada. The U.S. and Canadian version included five open-ended questions about where writing instruction was located and where WAC/WID activity was happening within institutions. Thassis (2008), in writing about the aims and methods for the project, explained that the survey involved multiple choice and open questions focused on the following themes: program leadership/administration,
sources of funding, goals of the initiative, components of the program, opportunities for faculty/staff training, connections with other campus support services, importance of electronic technology, curriculum elements devoted to writing (e.g., courses, centers), and incentives to program assessment. Thassis reported that the project was expanded to include preliminary surveys through the list-servs of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing and the European Writing Centres Association; “as of April 2008, more than 250 respondents from just over 200 institutions in 47 countries had contributed to the data” (p. 5).

A current example of research on the scholarship of writing studies was conducted by Clary-Lemon, Phelps, Mueller, and Williams (2016). They were interested in where those in writing studies are publishing, with specific attention to scholarly activity happening across national boundaries. They administered an email survey “on Canada-U.S. writing studies interdependencies” and “geographic indicators of scholarly activity” to better understand “transnational networks related to rhetoric and composition, writing studies, and technical and professional communication” (Mueller, 2014, email communication). Clary-Lemon et. al’s study is useful in terms of inquiring about the scholarly activity of those in writing studies as one aspect of its definition.

A survey about institutional location was conducted over the list-serv of the Canadian Writing Centres Association. CWCA formed in 2006 as a sub-group of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE). Around the time of CWCA’s official inception in 2006, a post appeared on CWCA’s list-serv to gather data about the institutional locations of writing centre professionals. Thirty-two subscribers from 32 institutions responded within 24 hours, and many followed in the coming weeks, giving rise to an impressively comprehensive, Directory of Canadian Writing Centres (2006) that catalogued the name, address, and website of
138 Writing Centres in all 10 provinces, as well as two of three Territories, the Yukon and the Northwest territories.

Most informal surveys on the list-servs are tied explicitly to the need for data in conjunction with advocacy for funding for additional staffing, better conditions for writing centre staff, relocation for writing centres, or programming. Many inquiries have also focused on demographic information: type of institution, number of students, position in organizational structure of institution, numbers of employees, rank and qualifications of employees, location of Writing Centres within Student Services or an academic faculty, the number of full time people in the Writing Centre relative to the number of students in the university, numbers of tutor and faculty positions at each centre, and the number of schools in Canada that have WAC/WID programs. CWCA has often inquired about scholarship through questions about desired conference topics, conferences members attend, and membership in scholarly organizations.

In addition to questions about locations, demographics, and scholarly activity, issues related to identity have been frequently discussed; two salient threads include the Marche (2008) and Drain (2008) letters on CASLL, CASDW, and CWCA and “the future of Inkshed” on CASLL. Both threads explicitly focused on the people of writing studies. Of particular interest are the posts about the Drain letter wherein members discussed how the letter should be signed and which of the organizations should be included and why. The future of Inkshed discussion centred on whether or not the Inkshed conference, and by extension, CASLL, should continue, which lead to clarification about its mandate and a resurgence of the conference.

The only national scale survey, conducted by Graves (1994) 20 years ago, focused on institutional locations for writing instruction. Early in Graves’s research, he discovered “several informal and unpublished surveys that administrators at individual universities had conducted”
(p. 38) and attempted to bring them together by surveying 331 administrators from “every undergraduate faculty in every university—English and French language—in Canada” (p. 41), for a total of 61 (p. 40). His research questions were these: “How widespread is writing instruction within Canadian universities? What do we know about writing instructors? What kinds of writing instruction are provided?” (p. 42). Crucially, his work answered much more about the first and third questions than the second, which is not surprising given that Graves surveyed administrators. He asked that deans pass the survey along to others if they felt they were more qualified to answer. The result was that respondents included deans of each faculty (47%), associate deans (12%), department heads (6%), and instructors (35%).

Graves (1994) described his aim as “to compile base-line data about how many programs there are, who runs them, what faculties and departments require formal writing instruction for graduation, and what factors determine the role of writing instruction in university programs” (p. 43), so his survey was structured to meet those objectives. Relatedly, for Graves, the “data gathered serve[d] primarily descriptive purposes” (p. 42). Graves’s survey asked 10 questions, all of them close ended, and allowed space for respondents to add comments. Only two questions were about people who teach writing. One focused on the number of people teaching writing and what rank they occupy, while the other asked whether any members of the faculty in question conduct research on writing. Graves concluded that “almost 2/3 of instructors who teach writing are non-permanent” and “1/3…come from the professoriate,” though it is important to note that in courses that do not involve the teaching of literature, “very few tenured faculty teach writing” (p. 51). He also noted a lack of prestige manifest in a ubiquitous lack of support for research attached to most positions. While his study reported these important insights, it did not explore them at length. His focus was on locations for instruction rather than the people doing the
instruction, but there was an undercurrent of the people. Almost nothing is known about the people of writing studies in Canada, because they have never been the central subjects of inquiry.

The current study is modelled on Miller’s (1991) quantitative and qualitative survey, and attempts to bring together a number of the questions about demographics and working conditions asked in previous inquiries, both formal and informal, that have taken place over the list-servs of the four scholarly organizations of writing studies in Canada in recent years. No single survey has invited responses from subscribers of all four list-servs, and no survey has concentrated on identity or experience.

3.4 Quantitative and qualitative survey

A mixed quantitative and qualitative survey (Appendix A) was the most appropriate method for this inquiry into what and who writing studies is. This study was a visibility project; breadth was needed to give shape and scope to writing studies. To tell a story of writing studies from the perspectives of those in it, we needed depth. The survey was written in English and translated to French. The questions arose from the literature, the life writing chapter, and Miller’s (1991) study, in particular. The survey included four sections: demographics, institutional locations, identity, and experience. Twenty-one closed questions inventoried demographic information, institutional locations, and working conditions. Thirteen open questions gave space for respondents to provide lengthier answers about identity and experience. This section examines sampling, ethics, and recruitment, then outlines procedures for data collection and analysis.

3.4.1 Sampling, ethics, and recruitment

Scholarly organizations have been used to define a sample by Miller (1991), Clary-Lemon (2009), and Smith (2000). Miller conducted a mixed quantitative and qualitative national survey of American “professional composition specialists” (p. 206). As organizing principles for
recruiting respondents, she used participation in the conference of the primary organization of composition studies professionals (CCCC) and activities within NCTE (National Council for Teachers of English) focused on composition. She surveyed “every tenth person listed (in any role) on the 1987 program” of CCCC. She also invited “members on NCTE standing committees related to composition and participants in the 1987 national Writing Program Administrator’s conference,” for a total of 284 invitations (p. 206). Clary-Lemon used three of the organizations to define research done in Canadian rhetoric and composition studies. Importantly, CWCA did not exist at the time Clary-Lemon was writing. Smith used CASLL to theorize membership in community. The current study defines writing studies as Drain (2008) and Graves (2014) did, as the following four scholarly organizations: CASDW, CASLL, CSSR, and CWCA.

The widest possible membership in these organizations can be captured using list-serv subscription as the criterion. List-serv subscription, rather than actual membership in the organizations, was not only more comprehensive, it was an especially effective way to recruit. First, membership in the organizations is officially defined as having paid one’s dues, so defining membership in this way would have significantly limited the amount of respondents available. Second, such a strategy captured data about those who do not identify as in writing studies, but identify with these organizations as a secondary field or area of interest. This survey attempts the widest possible population of people who would be likely to identify as in writing studies; it is extremely unlikely that there could be a Canadian scholar connected to writing studies who does not subscribe to at least one of these four organizations. It can be reasonably assumed, then, that the body of scholars in writing studies is smaller than both the membership of the organizations and the subscriptions to the list-servs. This breadth allows for a more comprehensive mapping of the boundaries of writing studies than is achievable by other means. List-serv membership also
allows for convenience sampling in that all communication is electronic, making it time efficient and easily imported into MS Excel and MS Word for analysis.

The survey was designed using Fluid Surveys, an online survey tool. I designed the survey in English, had it professionally translated into French, and designed a separate survey in French. The English survey was tested by six respondents and adjusted based on their feedback. The revisions were then translated in French and changed in the French survey before both surveys were sent. Invitations in both English and French that were also letters of information were posted to the list-servs of CASDW, CASSL, CWCA, and CSSR. The research was minimal risk. The letter of information contained the web links to the survey, so completion of the survey was deemed consent (UBC BREB, 2008, Sec. 9.6). At the time the survey was sent, CASDW had 167 subscribers, CWCA had 45 subscribers, and CSSR had 127 subscribers, for a total of 339. CASLL was listed as having 207 subscribers (Lists, n.d.). The highest estimate, then, is 546 invitations. There were 53 responses to the survey, 52 in English and one in French, making the response rate 9.7%. It is notable that the actual number of respondents approached could be significantly less due to a number of possible reasons. First, there is significant overlap in list-serv subscriptions; for instance, I subscribe to three of the four list-servs. Moreover, list-serv subscription can represent distanced participation in the form of information reception about calls for papers, conferences, publications, and issues in contrast to rigorous participation in a scholarly organization. For example, at the CASDW AGM in May, 2016, CASLL was reported to have four paying members, so it is unlikely that the 207 list-serv subscribers are not also subscribers to at least one of the other organizations’ list-servs. Similarly, while 127 people subscribe to CSSR, between 30 and 50 people pay their dues annually, according to that association’s treasurer. The low response rate is interesting insofar as it seems likely that the
community of scholars who would identify as in writing studies is smaller than the community of scholars with an interest in writing and writing pedagogy. To be more meaningful, comparative data from those who did not consider themselves in writing studies or who did not answer the survey for other reasons would be paramount.

Respondents had 4 weeks to complete the survey. The first invitation was posted on the following dates: Aug. 12, 2015 (CWCA), Aug. 19 (CASDW and CASLL), Aug. 20 (CSSR). There are two reasons why the first posts were staggered. The first is that posting to four listservs at the same time would likely mean that many people would receive the survey up to four times one after the other. Staggering the posts meant they would receive them multiple times rather than multiple times all at once. Second, my initial posts were rejected because the Fluid Survey account was registered with an email address that did not match the email address with which I was a subscriber. Reminders were sent on Sept. 2, 12, and 13. After the close of the survey, an individual wrote to ask if s/he could still complete it. The respondent completed the survey and a “last-call” was sent on Sept. 21 to allow others the same opportunity. The survey closed on Sept. 22.

3.4.2 Data collection and analysis

Respondents accessed the survey by clicking the link in the letter of information posted to the list-servs. Data from both the English and French surveys were collected by the Fluid Surveys tool and stored data on a Canadian server. The software assigned an identifier and a number to each respondent. Fluid Surveys allows the exportation of data in a number of formats. The quantitative data was exported into MS Excel and the qualitative data into MS Excel and MS Word. The raw data with identifiers is saved on my computer and protected by password. The identifiers and numbers were copied and sent to the P.I. for secure storage. Then the identifiers
were deleted from the raw data in Excel and Word formats. Only the numbers were used to identify respondents across questions. I also used the Fluid Surveys report function, which was particularly helpful for its summary using percentages of responses for the quantitative data and for its record of how many respondents answered each question. That report removed identifiers and produced a summary of the entire data set. It is saved on my computer and protected by password.

In terms of analysis, the quantitative data about demographic information and institutional location were aggregated using the Fluid Surveys report and presented and analyzed in Chapter 5. The qualitative data was imported into both MS Excel and MS Word and analyzed using thematic analysis, defined by Braun and Clarke (2006). It was grouped into two categories, identity and experience, discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. This section explains my use of Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis, defined as “a method for identifying and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). Braun and Clarke noted that thematic analysis is widely used in the social sciences and lauded for its flexibility. Themes can be based on prevalence as well as salience to the research questions; it is most important that the researcher be explicit about how she or he determined themes.

This flexibility also means, Braun and Clarke (2006) said, that its principles and practices are not well articulated, and it is often criticized for insufficient detail about researchers’ processes of analysis. To remedy this, they offered a series of 5 methodological choices that issue from epistemological preferences and a 6-phase procedure for analyzing data. I detail the base premise of epistemological orientation and the subsequent methodological choices and procedures, noting throughout how I used thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data.
The methodological choices laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) depend on the epistemological orientation of the researcher. In concert with what Braun and Clarke called the narrative turn in the social sciences, and in line with Smith’s (1990) framework, is the attempt to hold researchers more accountable to their epistemological positions as they inform methodological choices. Thematic analysis makes explicit the processes of the study design, analysis of the data, and presentation of the findings. It acknowledges the researchers’ role in shaping our interpretations of reality (essentialist) or constructing reality (constructionist) and is suitable for both epistemological orientations. An essentialist or realist method, Braun and Clarke explained, “reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants” while a constructionist method “examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (p. 81). My research was constructionist, which guided a series of five choices in method.

Before outlining my specific choices of method within constructivist thematic analysis, it is necessary to define “data” in Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework. “Data corpus refers to all data collected for a particular research project, while data set refers to all the data from the corpus that are being used for a particular analysis” (p. 79). Data item refers to an individual unit within a set; data extract refers to “an individual coded chunk of data, which has been identified within, and extracted from, a data item” (p. 79). There are two main ways of choosing a data set, and the choice depends on whether or not one is going to the data with specific questions. The first way, when researchers are not going at the data with specific questions, is that a data set may contain all or many of the data items within the corpus. The second means that the data items for analysis are identified in light of a particular analytic interest in a topic within the data, such that “the data set then becomes all instances in the corpus where that topic is referred” (p.
79). I used the second method because I have specific questions posed within a theoretical framework with the aim of writing a people’s history.

Braun and Clarke (2006) guided researchers to make informed decisions about method, and to be explicit about them, through five sets of choices that depend primarily on epistemological position: 1) “what counts as a theme” (p. 82); 2) the choice between “rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect”; 3) “inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis” (p. 83); 4) “semantic or latent themes” (p. 84), and 5) dealing with the use of “many questions in qualitative research” (p. 85). I proceed, with a constructionist orientation, to explain my choices for each.

The first choice is to decide what counts as a theme. A theme was defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as “captur[ing] something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 82, italics in original). In discerning patterns, it is important to consider what counts as a theme, as well as the size of a theme in terms of prevalence within each data item and across the whole set. Braun and Clarke noted that the number of instances does not necessarily signal the relative importance of those instances, arguing that researchers need to remain flexible and make judgments about what a theme is in the context of their own research as it unfolds. The important part is that researchers make explicit their definition of a theme and their choices in selecting themes for analysis. In addition to prevalence, the salience of a theme is dependent “on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (p. 82). Braun and Clarke asserted that good thematic analyses are consistent in their application of prevalence and salience, and researchers are explicit about their choices of those applications.
The second choice in Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide was whether to aim for rich description of all themes or a detailed account of certain aspects of the data relevant to the research questions. Rich description is useful for “investigating an under-researched area, or…working with participants whose views on the topic are not known” (p. 83). The alternative was to provide a nuanced account of a theme or themes which relate to a specific question or area of interest within the data. I did both, highlighting specific themes that emerge from the data in relation to the research questions. Relatedly, the third choice was whether to use an inductive or deductive approach. An inductive approach means the analysis is data-driven, such that “the themes identified may bear little resemblance to the specific questions that were asked of participants. They would also not be driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest in the area or topic”(p. 83). A deductive approach on the other hand, is “driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven” (p. 84). Braun and Clarke contended that a deductive approach tends to favour a detailed analysis of specific aspects of the data. My analysis was both inductive and deductive. An alternative sociology of women required analysis that was data-driven in terms of noticing the prevalence of themes that emerged from respondents’ answers and providing rich description of those themes. It was analyst-driven in terms of also noticing themes in relation to the objectives and research questions.

A fourth methodological decision facing researchers using thematic analysis, outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), is whether to examine semantic or latent themes, which refers to a level of analysis as either semantic and explicit or latent and interpretive. In sum, semantic analysis is commensurate with rich description of “patterns in semantic content” that does not look “for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written” (p. 84). Though ideally, said Braun and Clarke, semantic approaches begin to move toward interpretation,
“attempt[ing] to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications” which are often explored in relation to previous literature (p. 84). In contrast, analysis of latent themes “starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations—and ideologies—that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content” (p. 84). Braun and Clarke explicitly mentioned the compatibility of this approach to analysis of themes with constructionist paradigms. Thematic analysis that is constructionist “seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (p. 85). I use a constructionist approach, so I am more interested in latent themes that are shaped by ideology than in semantic description. Especially, though, scholars in the field have theorized a sociocultural context of colonial, historical, Canadian rhetoric and composition and the structural conditions that embodied it. The current study exactly aims to theorize a contemporary sociocultural context for Canadian writing studies and to gather data about current structural conditions on national and local scales.

The final decision about methodology involves managing the use of a series of questions in qualitative research. Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained that “there is a need to be clear about the relationship between these different questions” (p. 85). They described several different kinds of questions that need to be considered: 1) the research question, 2) the questions participants have answered, and 3) questions that guide the coding and analysis of data. There is no necessary relationship amongst the three, but it is necessary to explain the relationships or lack of them. My research tightly connected the three kinds of questions; the questions participants answer and the questions guiding the analysis were designed specifically to answer the research questions. In sum, my approach for applying constructionist thematic analysis, then, identified patterns in responses as themes, aimed for a detailed account of certain aspects of the
data, was inductive and deductive, examined latent themes, and maintained a tight relationship amongst the three types of questions shaping the research.

Once researchers have used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework to make methodological choices based on their epistemological preferences, they can follow a 6-phase process for analysis. Braun and Clarke note, of course, that analysis is a recursive, rather than linear, process that involves “a constant moving back and forth between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that [one is] analyzing, and the analysis of the data that [one is] producing” (p. 86). Researchers should first familiarize themselves with the data, then generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define and name themes, and produce the report and analysis of the data. The table below uses Braun and Clarke’s table wherein they name the phase and describe the process, and adds a third column, a description of my process of analysis.

Table 3.1 Phases of thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
<th>Description of my process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing oneself with data:</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
<td>I read all of the qualitative data in MS Excel, proceeding respondent by respondent so I could see respondents’ entire answers in relation to each other. I read all of the qualitative data in MS Word proceeding question by question so I could read all respondents’ answers for each question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes:</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
<td>I noticed and recorded words and phrases that repeated as well as grouped responses into broader thematic categories to which I assigned a colour. In Excel, I colour coded themes and highlighted key words and phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes:</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
<td>I made an Excel spreadsheet to record the themes and amounts of responses for every qualitative question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase | Description of the process | Description of my process
--- | --- | ---
5. Defining and naming themes: | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. | I re-read the entire data set in the Fluid Surveys report form to confirm the story I was hearing. I did so by ensuring codes were applied consistently across questions, ensuring themes as I named them represented the responses, ensured all relevant extracts had been selected, and gathered “rogue” responses. At this point, I also selected extracts that made big picture statements that wove together a number of themes.

6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis | The qualitative data is represented in Chapters 6 and 7, which focus on identity and experience. I took all the questions related to identity and grouped them together, then selected final extracts to use. I did the same for experience, such that all the qualitative questions were included to answer the research questions.

### 3.5 Summary

The national survey of composition studies specialists conducted by Miller (1991) in the U.S. is the inspiration for this examination of writing studies professionals in Canada. Graves (1994) conducted the only national scale survey in Canada, and it was of administrators and was focused on where writing was taught in Canadian universities. Informal surveys have been conducted on the list-servs, predominantly gathering information about institutional locations and working conditions. There is almost no data about the identities and experiences of those in writing studies, and there has not been a national scale survey of Canadian writing studies professionals. There has never been a formal attempt to measure or define the field using so many criteria. This inquiry involves a national survey of subscribers to the four list-servs of the scholarly organizations of writing studies in Canada. It gathers quantitative and qualitative
questions focused on demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions, and, uniquely, adds qualitative survey questions about identity and experience in order to construct a definition of writing studies from within. I analyze the qualitative data using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method is consistent with Smith’s (1990) framework that makes visible the day-to-day experiences of those who are foreclosed upon by a normative story of their lives told by other people. This study breaks silence by exposing other versions of the story, in this case, a story of writing studies built from the words of its people.

Another methodological approach of an alternative sociology of women lies in the “built from.” Researchers design, gather, analyze, and present data, but those processes, Smith (1990) and the tradition of feminist standpoint theory generally have argued, are as political as any other processes and should not simply be taken as natural, objective, and right. An alternative sociology of women remains a call for an explicitly situated, unapologetically interested researcher. Smith argued that “the only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it” (p. 22). In the next chapter, I offer my version of writing studies from within, an individual account of coming into and being part of it in order to position myself in relation to the knowledge I constructed using the words of my colleagues.
Chapter 4: Life writing: my story of writing studies

4.1 Introduction: the myth in daily life

To frame this chapter, I return to the question that opened the dissertation: “Where were you when you fell in love with rhetoric and composition?” I add the what, when, why, how, and especially who of falling in love in order to give shape to this discipline. I do believe it is a discipline. In this chapter, I demonstrate the prevalence of all three elements of the myth, and I oppose each of those elements. The myth says good writing is good writing; I believe good writing is determined contextually. The myth says student writing is deficient in and of itself; I believe that, most of the time, where student writing is deficient it is so because it is not taught using informed pedagogy. The myth says that writing instruction should be remediation of error; I believe writing instruction is enculturation into community. And, finally, the myth says that writing instructors are not disciplinary, that I am not disciplinary.

I am disciplinary. I have an academic community with whom I share subjects of study, methods of study, and a body of knowledge. In this chapter, I narrate my acquisition of disciplinary expertise by describing my experiences of coming into writing studies. Disciplinary expertise involves, at minimum, the evolution of a scholarly, thus disciplinary, identity and ways of being, developed over time through one’s body of knowledge acquired through mentorship and community, methodological approaches to examining shared issues, and pedagogy. The chapter is organized chronologically, in three sections. The first section looks at my acquisition of disciplinary knowledge and developing identity through my BA and MA years. The second describes the early years of my career at a mid-size university in British Columbia where I began to see the myth in action and understand myself as part of a community of people resisting it. In the final section, I focus on the recent years of my career and my resistance to the elements of the
myth, as well as advocacy for more appropriate locations for writing instruction and equity for writing instructors.

4.2 Falling in love: The BA years

As a third year student in Advanced Composition at SFU in the mid-1990s, I found a world where writing was about people acting in context. Nothing I had done to date, mostly courses in English literature, positioned language as social in this way. Advanced Composition and my initial meeting with my mentor compelled me to drive toward whatever rhetoric and composition had to offer. In the beginning, I learned that language is socially constructed by being asked to think of my own writing differently. In Spring 1996, I enrolled in English 214, Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric, during which I became an engaged reviser. The professor taught me that language is alive through Kenneth Burke and rigorous questioning of my own writing. He taught me that every word I use should be a deliberate and thoughtful choice based on what I want readers to know and do as informed by my estimate of those readers’ beliefs, values, and needs, however tacit. In trying to answer the questions he wrote on my papers, I was stunned into a whole new way of thinking. Why did I choose the words I did? I had never actively chosen them before—they came to my head, and I wrote them down. How much more exciting it was to think of them as purposeful and potentially impactful.

In English 214, I was introduced to narrative and autobiographical writing about the learning and teaching of writing by professors. Teaching had always mesmerized me, and here it was together with writing, my first and deepest love. In particular, Shaughnessy’s (1988), “Diving in,” and Rose’s (1989), Lives on the boundary, introduced me to ways that the teaching of writing is inevitably classist, racist, ethnocentric, and elitist, and they exposed me to the impacts of these ideologies on people. They also taught me ways in which teachers try, or ought
to try, not to be mechanisms of those ideologies and systems.

I first encountered the concept of methodology by learning about analysis of features of language as evidence of social action in my first course with my mentor, *Mode and Style in Literary Narrative*. I instantly preferred writing discourse analyses of literary texts over literary analyses of literary texts. I wrote a paper titled “The supreme moment of complete knowledge: Marlow, modals, and muteness” wherein I argued that Marlow, in Conrad’s *Heart of darkness*, spoke with the most conviction during testimonies of adoration for Kurtz, and that his heavily modalized speech in the rest of the novel contrasted with his lack of modality when speaking of Kurtz’s moment of clarity in death. I remember that at the time, I was disappointed with the paper’s grade, 81%. On the positive side, in class the professor described the argument to the class without naming the author. It was mine. My 81% paper, which was clearly not the best paper, had something memorable in it. I recently re-read this paper and was surprised by the sophistication of what I was arguing just into my third year. But it is an 81% paper, if that. It primarily lacks evidence from the text, both in terms of prevalence and lack of modality; it is engaging and interesting, but lacks the sophisticated and intricate web of features that constitute a successful academic argument. Still, I learned what modals were, my first intimate look at features of language as evidence of social action.

I had enough credits to graduate with my BA in English by the end of 1996, so I applied to grad school at SFU and was not successful. Subsequently, I decided to delay graduation to obtain an Honour’s degree. I re-took some of the upper division literature survey courses I had done poorly in and took more language and rhetoric courses. Returning to literature courses reminded me how much I preferred language courses that introduced me to the concepts of disciplines as communities of people in action and whose texts help us understand at least some
aspects of what they do and why. I enrolled in English 370, *Studies in Language*, and English 430, *Writing and Response in the Research Genres*. In 370, my work with features of language grew. I analyzed lower and upper division course outlines in SFU’s English department; the paper was titled, somewhat ridiculously, “The echoes of genre: An analysis of linguistic and pragmatic reverberations in undergraduate English course outlines.” It was in English 430 that I first learned about genre and scholarly genres and where I first read Carolyn Miller’s (1984) “Genre as social action.” I understood about four words of Miller the first time I read it, and it would be a long time before I really understood the concept of genre.

I was introduced to academic writing as disciplinary activity and disciplines as communities. In English 430, I also learned for the first time that my professors were researchers. And that they wrote things called journal articles. I learned that different disciplines have different knowledge making and textual habits. I began to read and summarize academic writing, writing I had never encountered before. My final paper was, “The discipline of history: Disparities in knowledge and text making.” In English 430, I also began to understand myself as a beginner in a disciplinary community. My first introduction to scholars as a community that disseminates research came when we presented our research to interested faculty and graduate students. I was terrified about that presentation, sick about it for weeks, but once I began, I felt more at ease. I left that mini conference with increased confidence because the people were kind and generous and seemed interested in what I had to say. In 430, writing came alive for me in a different way—I was a novice in a discipline.

The best part of English 430 was that there was a practicum in the Centre for Academic Writing. In class, we read about think-aloud-protocol, wherein academic readers report their specific experience of reading a text as a member of a community, thereby exposing the
community’s otherwise tacit expectations such that a writer can better understand them, and thus, use stylistic features that will be successful. In the practicum, we observed others practicing this method of response and attempted it ourselves. I observed several sessions in which the Centre’s instructors worked with students one-on-one on their writing. After observing others, we conducted our own session and received feedback. I remember how awkward I felt, how scripted my words seemed, because I was worried about things I shouldn’t do because they might violate the pedagogy. For example, I wanted to avoid summative and evaluative comments that fall back on phrases that eclipse the nuances of the sociality of writing such as “well organized” or “clear.” Such words can be seen as abstract descriptions of tacit rules without inclusion of the specific features of a text that render it well organized or clear for a specific purpose and reader in a specific context. Think aloud protocol as I learned to practice it attempts, instead, to help a writer see why readers need the textual features they do and how to incorporate them. So, “well organized” might become something like, “I appreciate, here, how you are signaling the next part of your argument by returning to the big picture and recapturing what happened in the previous paragraph.” It was hard to talk this way, but at the same time I felt awkward, think aloud protocol was liberating. Over time, I learned to add formative instruction to reporting. It was not until after years of working in a Writing Centre that I would learn the nuances of how to listen, where entry points to dialogue present themselves, how to create entry points if they do not present themselves, and what to do when there are no entry points.

The more I identified with this new way of seeing and new community, a community who did not, generally speaking, study English literature as their primary interest, the less I identified with literary studies. I had exhausted the language course options in English, so I asked my mentor if she would supervise a directed studies project. A nagging curiosity had been
growing about how it was possible that all this could exist within English while I had never heard of it. Rhetoric and composition was starting to take shape as a group of people united by the fact that they were not literary scholars, or not primarily so. I felt, increasingly, like no one other than those in it knew it was there. The bigger it became to me, the more invisible it seemed against the backdrop of English.

My mentor agreed to supervise a directed-studies course. I chuckle at my novice self. I remember being astounded that she just popped off a reading list—blasting off names, titles, and dates of publication as fast as I could write them down. How could anyone do that, I wondered? On the list was Susan Miller. The first time I read *Textual carnivals*, I knew I would write a story like that about the discipline in Canada. I also read Hubert (1994) and Johnson (1988), my first introduction to work by Canadians about Canadian rhetoric and composition in relation to English studies. My final paper, “What is English?: An examination of incongruities within the discipline” looked at English studies curricula in Canada and the U.S. in terms of nationalist and ideological forces that drove curricular decision making and development and the dominance of literary studies over rhetoric and composition studies.

I emerged from my undergraduate years with the epistemological notion that language is socially constructed, though it would also be while before I really knew what that meant. I learned about ways to analyze texts and read and wrote about non-literate texts. I learned about academics as academics, about disciplines, about writing pedagogy, and I had learned about the teaching of writing and the impacts of ideologies about language on student writers. I had practiced giving feedback on student writing. I had discovered hints of the political, and I already knew that this interested me most. And “interest” is not a strong enough word. I applied to grad school again, this time to UBC, and was accepted for the Fall 2000 semester. I was excited that
UBC’s graduate degree allowed for the selection of an English literature or English language focus. In the focus on English language, there was a name that represented a field of study in which I felt at home.

### 4.3 Dating: The MA years

The experience of my Master’s is characterized by a growing disconnect with literary studies, the discovery of autobiography as an area of study, and an increasing sense of myself as a member of a discipline gained by taking courses in other disciplines. I also discovered a number of secondary scholarly interests. I chose a course-work rather than thesis MA, and took three language courses, two autobiography courses, one literature course, two courses in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, and a six-credit directed studies.

The literature course was hard for me. I just felt like I did not fit. I didn’t enjoy analyzing literature and felt like I did not know how to do it. Moreover, the ways I thought about things were different, and at first I chose silence as a strategy to protect against this difference. Conversely, I loved the autobiography courses. I had always liked writing autobiographically and had been intrigued by the autobiographical writing of Shaughnessy (1988) and Rose (1989) and the narrative accounts in Miller (1991). I love autobiographical writing because of its texture—the subtleties, the beauty of individuals’ ways of describing their worlds. The autobiographies, focused on trauma and space/place, spoke to my love of the political; in them I heard voices of the traumatized and persecuted, the alienated, the underdogs. In both autobiography courses, I encountered predominantly literature students who did literary analyses, while I chose to analyze texts for sociological elements like identity and subjectivity. I also started to feel a deep connection between autobiographical writing and writing pedagogy, but it had not taken intellectual shape for me yet.
I felt at home in the language stream, including English 509, *Rhetoric of Health* and English 508a, *Linguistic Pragmatics*. In English 509, my understanding of rhetoric deepened as I saw rhetorical theory applied to non-literary and literary texts and got a chance to practice rhetorical analyses. Linguistic pragmatics was my least favourite of the courses I took with my mentor. It involved rigorous examination of sentence level features for their sociality and was difficult for me. That said, I learned a great deal more about features of language and practiced working with them, becoming increasingly attuned to the subtleties and intricacies of words and the kinds of social action they invoke. Two of my papers focused on common ground, an idea central to the notion of community, “Estimates of common ground: Representation of self in the writing of non-native speakers of English” and “Common ground: An analysis of definite reference in student journals.”

Near the end of my degree came my favourite course, *Ideologies of Language* (English 508b). We read Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Butler, and others, connecting them to the ways in which people’s ideas about language were shaped by broader social forces and had consequences for human subjects. I developed an obsession with Bakhtin, which resulted in consistent overemphasis on his work in my papers. I wrote a paper called “Staying in: Standardization, nation, and agency” which reflected my love of the political nature of the course. I also saw connections between Butler’s theories of subjectivity and autobiography theory such that the threads of my MA courses began to weave into something starting to look like a collection of scholarly interests that would go on to shape my growing uniqueness as a scholar.

The first time I took a graduate course outside an English department, my sense of myself as in rhetoric and composition grew. I was completely disoriented—the theoretical frameworks were foreign, and the practical application felt like batting left handed (if one is a right-handed
batter). Exposure to other disciplines affirmed the connection I felt to my new field at the same time that it opened up worlds for me, other ways of seeing and doing things. At the same time, in the Language and Literacy Department I experienced a genuinely supportive, welcoming, collaborative comradery amongst students that stood in stark contrast to my experience of English students as a generalized category. Learning in such an environment was markedly less intimidating. There was something more personal about education, and I began to see my field, autobiography, and narrative coming together. For instance, some titles of my papers near the end of my degree include: “Proposal: Decentralization and Linguistic Variation,” “Why Tell stories? Audience and Structural Analysis,” “In Search of the Right Track: Reciprocal Narratives in Talk about Writing,” “Legitimate Peripheral Participation: Learning in Writing Centres,” “Identity and Language as Symbolic Action,” and “The Quest for Self-Identity: Discursive Authority and the Other.”

Coursework gave shape to a body of knowledge, and graduate education in the form of work as a Teaching Assistant, molded a sense of myself as a teacher of writing. The first assignment was a weekly seminar of a non-credit course about Canada for Japanese exchange students from Ritsumeikan University. The course had four themes; mine was Canadian culture. Four faculty members gave lectures on the four themes that all students attended. The students were divided into four groups, one for each theme, for a seminar taught by a grad student. The TAs received a brief orientation that contained information only about administrative matters. There was no mentorship—unlike TA appointments within a department, there was no relationship with the faculty member who gave the lecture. I arrived at this seminar feeling absolutely clueless—who was it that thought I knew anything about Canadian culture or was
capable of teaching people, let alone people who did not reside in Canada and whose native language was Japanese?

So, nervous but eager, accountable to virtually no one, I set myself loose on the students. It was a non-credit course, so there were no grades. I spent the first four weeks of the course grasping at straws—I do not even remember what I taught. What I remember is my first intimate encounter with people of another culture for whom English is not their first language. I grew up in the Cariboo in the central interior of British Columbia. In 100 Mile House, the people were almost exclusively white and they spoke English with the same accent I do. My exposure to other cultures had been limited, so it was exciting to learn new things from other people’s perspectives.

Some of the Japanese students hardly spoke at all, and it was hard to work with them because there seemed to be a distance we could not cross. Some of the students spoke impressively, and there was good will everywhere, so the students helped each other and me to arrive at functional, collective understanding. And there was a brilliant student leader who held us all together, the link between me and them. They taught me how be more selective and purposeful about the words I chose and how to speak more slowly and use more gestures and drawings. And they taught me about bravery, theirs in studying in another country in another language away from their families and friends, and mine, in teaching.

My initial floundering led me to asking my students to write journals. I told them not to worry about their English, just to write. I asked them to tell me about their days, their challenges, their successes, their impressions of Canada, their observations, experiences, dreams. And tell me they did. Sometimes I asked specific questions, and sometimes I just asked them to write. And I wrote extensive responses. I had learned some complexities of audience, and, in writing
back to them, got a chance to practice. What could I presuppose? What cultural assumptions was I making? Whom might I be excluding? Which words and sentence structures might be too complicated?

During the seminar, we talked about the journal topics for part of the class and for the remainder, each student did a presentation on some aspects of Canadian culture—in other words, on whatever they wanted. They had to ask questions of the class and facilitate a classroom discussion. We ate, looked at photographs, listened to stories, saw a movie, heard about sports. During the term, the students from the whole program, from all four of the themed seminars, hosted an event on Japanese culture at their student residence. I was the only person from the faculty or TA teaching team who went. I wrote a letter to my students at the end of the course, explaining that I felt I had not answered their questions about what Canadian culture is. A year or two later, the student got in touch with me when he visited Canada again. We went to a pub, and he told me that the members of the class had talked about the letter—said it was moving and powerful for them. That course was a happy accident; I had done it, and done it meaningfully.

The second TA assignment, my first with the department of English, was a seminar on Canadian drama. While the professor’s lectures were entertaining, and he was a passionate presenter, I was not engaged with the material. It is hard to teach something one is not engaged with, yet I loved the opportunities to teach that being a TA in English afforded. But, I did not know how to “do” literary studies; how was I supposed to teach it? I had perhaps only once or twice pulled off an A grade literary analysis and struggled especially with dramatic texts. Moreover, I had not focused on literary studies since third year and it was starting to fade away. I felt like I was wearing the wrong clothes.
The accountability structure was very different now. I taught seminars for credit, marked assignments, and graded students. My teaching was also observed and reported on. The day the professor observed my class, he looked uncomfortable at the amount of silence and palpable awkwardness in my classroom and led half the seminar himself. His feedback was that I did not go deep enough into the text and that I “will make a good teacher someday.” I also remember a meeting at the restaurant, 99 Chairs, where each TA brought a set of questions to contribute to the exam, and mine was praised for its accessibility and perceived ability to elicit good responses from students.

Next came a TAship for a course in contemporary British women’s literature. I felt, like before, mostly uninspired by the readings and awkward at facilitating a seminar that was supposed to engage students with the material. I turned my section into a seminar about how to write the papers required for the course. I think this was the first time I really understood that content is not separable from form—I realized that as we studied the course material through the lens of learning to write about it, I was teaching them “content,” and doing a much better job than when I floundered through close reading. I cut my teeth designing curriculum, assignments and criteria for evaluating student writing. By the time I finished that term, I wanted my own class. I was ready to teach students to write.

Very near the end of my degree, at the same time I took Ideologies of Language, I was a TA for my mentor. She talked with her four TAs, explicitly and frequently, about teaching writing, especially ways to think about language as social action to guide the kinds of feedback we offered, namely think-aloud protocol, a form of response I had practiced during my practicum in the Centre for Academic Writing. The professor’s active role in her TAs’ formative
development helped us excel, and we worked well together. Two of them went on to be my colleagues and friends.

The final six credits of my MA were fulfilled by a directed studies course, a course that came out of my work at the Writing Centre at my institution. I was hired in the final semester of my MA, an experience I describe momentarily. The important thing here is that as soon as I had a context to practice the things I had learned, I also learned about research questions. I became immediately interested in my observation that students often wrote, “am I on the right track?” or “to see if I am on the right track” in the student comment box pre-session. I was interested in what “the right track” might refer to and the complexity of what the right track could look like and why. The directed studies examined these questions in relation to what writing centre instructors said they had focused on in those sessions. I thought my final paper, titled “Am I on the right track? Raceways, railways, and pathways in the Writing Centre,” was the best thing since sliced bread, and it turned out not to be. There were problems with the writing, namely that I did not effectively work with scholarly voices and my research read like advocacy. But, like earlier papers and earlier courses, there was something good inside the stumble.

I did not realize until I began working that there were a number of other things I learned from my first two degrees. The first is that the role of “belonging” in students’ success should never be underestimated. There are moments in a person’s life that can change the course of that life significantly. How different my life might have been if my mentor had acted differently on that first day, how much might have been lost if professors had not challenged me to see things differently, and how much less it would have mattered if they had not given generously of themselves to me. My professors helped me believe I could do it by expressing interest in me and my work. I felt an unstated assurance that they were behind me. It is for their interest and
acquaintance that I tried harder, that I engaged more deeply, that I listened more carefully. I was curious about them as people because they made me curious about the world. I read their comments over and over and over again. I replayed conversations we’d had over and over and over again. I wondered about them. Where do they live? Are they married? What do they look like when they first get out of bed? This mentor obsession was a catalyst for me; I was increasingly drawn to the academic world.

A fellow student in the *Ideologies of Language* class asked if I would be interested in applying for a job at my institution. I cried all the way home. I pestered my classmate about when the posting would be officially out, and when it was, realized with alarm that I did not know how to apply for or interview for this job. I tried to gather information about the Writing Centre from the people who worked there, but of course they could not tell me things they didn’t tell other candidates. I asked my mentor, too, when I ran into her on the bus one day, and she said, “I think you should be mindful of difference.” And I thought, “WTF does that mean?” but was too embarrassed to ask. I read the institution’s website, re-read my C.V., and applied. This was, incidentally, the first time I wrote a C.V., rather than a resume. With little to no clue what was about to happen, I arrived, sweating and almost late to the interview.

I bumbled through questions about writing centres and teaching writing, most often not knowing how to answer but managing to keep talking anyway, offering what I could from the experiences I did have as a student and TA. I also talked about my previous experiences as a Cargo Agent at Air Canada, and I remember saying something about 4H and John Deere tractors. I even noted to the panel, *ridiculously*, that all four of the interviewers had the same colour eyes. They took a deep breath and hired me, based on my scholarly background as demonstrated on
paper, my enthusiasm for this field of study, and my potential to gain the experience to work well as a member of the Centre.

4.4 Marriage: my first institution

I thought I knew little when I was hired at the regional university at which I work, and of course in hindsight, 14 years later, I realize that I knew even less than I thought I did. But back then, paradoxically, this sense of novice-ness was accompanied by an epiphany about how much I did know as things came together quickly when my novice disciplinary knowledge and skills, as well as my unique interests as a scholar, landed in a context of practice. I arrived with a preliminary sense of the following aspects of my discipline’s body of knowledge and pedagogical practice: 1) the epistemological notion that language is socially constructed, 2) new rhetorical genre theory, 3) rhetorical and linguistic pragmatic analysis of texts, 4) theory about writing in the disciplines approaches to writing instruction, 5) writing pedagogy, 6) the politics of teaching writing in terms of impacts of ideas about language on student writers and on teachers of writing, 7) practice giving feedback on student writing, 8) practice teaching writing. I also arrived equipped with secondary scholarly interest in critical theory and autobiography, especially the concepts of identity and subjectivity. But the key thing is, I did not know I possessed this body of knowledge until I put it into practice and began to understand myself as a member of a community in relationships with other communities.

I started in January, 2002, four months before graduation. I drove 187 kilometres per day for three months to work while finishing my degree. At the Writing Centre, I knew I was home, but still felt as though I did not know what I was doing. On my first day, after a morning of inviting conversation, I asked what I could do, and they said I could write a handout if I liked. They said, “We could use one on literature reviews.” And I said to myself, “WTF is a lit review?” I set to
looking up “literature review” on Google and wrote a handout crediting the internet sources I used to write it. It may seem odd that I did not know such a thing, but I had never encountered a literature review, or anything explicitly called a literature review. While the experience gained in the SFU Centre for Academic Writing had introduced me to academic writing in the disciplines through the framework of new rhetorical genre theory, I realized quickly that I had little sense of academia or academic writing in any kind of macro way. The scope and magnitude of writing I saw in the Writing Centre was staggering and began to give shape to a constellation within academia. A kaleidoscope of genres, programs, disciplines, communities, great and small, distant and close, arranged, in the context of an individual institution, into a symbol and a message. These new ways of learning about the bigger picture helped me understand teaching better because I could contextualize it.

I loved working with students, and I did it well, even in the beginning. After my first one-on-one consultation, my Writing Centre colleagues stayed an hour after shift to listen to me talk about it. I told them I was surprised that I could comment on my experience of student writing and discuss it with student writers. I knew little to nothing of things students were writing in Biology, or Nursing, or Kinesiology, or History, but I could help them write in and for those disciplines. The more I worked with student writing, the more I learned about disciplines. The more I worked with students, the more I realized that my colleagues and I shared a theoretical and pedagogical position from which to ground everything we did. The development of a professional identity is the development of knowledge and skills in relation to one’s understanding of oneself relationally. I reveled in my Writing Centre community, which increased my confidence. From the beginning, this group of brilliant professionals and deeply kind-hearted women treated me like a respected colleague; they trusted me before I had earned
their trust. In them I found a family, and this, indeed any, account will never do justice to the quality of their character.

Moreover, this profession thing was pretty excellent. I had never had autonomy before, having worked the following jobs since the age of 14: video store clerk, rural community newspaper correspondent, animal shit shoveller, summer employment officer, waitress, Toys R Us clerk, house cleaner, tanning salon clerk, and Air Canada cargo agent. This academic thing, THIS was autonomy. There appeared to be no immediately oppressive structure—no time clocks to punch, no scheduled breaks, no boss. No one told me what to do or when or how to do it—my colleagues invited me into their world by opening its doors and setting me free in it. Autonomy was exhilarating; I dove straight in. For better or worse, I learn best by plowing into something all the way, messing it up, and doing it over and over again until I get it. It would be years before I would understand that autonomy must be exercised, fought for, and defended within systemic constraints of overwhelming complexity.

The growing sense of myself as part of a community of scholars, my growing sense of myself as an academic, was augmented by the broader intellectual community my Writing Centre colleagues introduced me to, the world of scholarly organizations, list-serv discussions, conferences, journals, new bodies of work and areas of study within our field. The first time I ever went to a conference, Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing in 2003, was like the first time I stepped into the Writing Centre. I fit. Suddenly all that was behind this discipline, people like those in Miller’s work, were present. For the first time, it made sense to me that I was “in” a discipline. This study is an attempt, by determining a more refined definition of writing studies, to also define disciplinarity. In one sense, a discipline is people who share a body of knowledge and make a deliberate set of epistemological, pedagogical, methodological
choices on a generalizable level in relation to other disciplines or entities not disciplinary. So, at the level of discipline within the academic constellation, shared characteristics distinguish sociology from criminology, for example, or anthropology from art history. Within disciplines, there are distinct bodies of knowledge and highly contentious debates about epistemological, pedagogical, and methodological choices. There are also, of course, the complexities of naming and definition in terms such as interdisciplinarity, cross disciplinarity, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, postdisciplinary. This new scholarly world seemed to reflect this simultaneous unity and difference and this fluidity of disciplinarity.

I discovered that there are others who think like me, believe in the things I do, and study them in the ways I was only beginning to learn. In another sense, despite overarching similarities, there were different areas of study at the conference, different communities that reflect nuances in approaches, sometimes contention. Some of it did not seem to fit me. I wondered, for example, why we were going to a conference about technical writing when technical writing was not our area. After the conference, I brimmed with curiosity about the people of this discipline when I was introduced to a “we” larger than my Writing Centre, a national “we.” I wanted to know what “we” looked like in relation to the vast academic constellation. I would only see them once a year. In the meantime, I would learn what it is like to work in writing studies. I would learn about the interconnectivity of the ways in which my institutional locations and collective agreement status are at odds with the actual day-to-day work I do, the pervasiveness of all three elements of the myth, the ways that institutional location sanctions the myth, and resistance to the myth.

The institutional locations I occupy and the status of Writing Centre faculty as “academic support faculty” in our collective agreement are at odds with our actual day-to-day work. My
work is faculty work, but the institutional locations I occupy are not perceived as faculty locations. Writing Centre work is unique in that it involves a number of intersecting roles and locations in the larger constellation of the institution. We teach students about the sociality of academic writing in order to help them write effectively for academic audiences in one-on-one consultations in the Writing Centre about their writing assignments for any course. We design and deliver workshops tailored to specific assignments in courses across the disciplines. To a lesser extent, we support faculty with writing pedagogy, assignment design, and evaluation. In addition, we perform service to our institution on a myriad of committees. We conduct research and disseminate it. We have no official leadership position so perform our administrative and administrative assistant duties ourselves. There is one permanent full time employee, four permanent part time employees (80%), and a non-permanent, part-time (10%), with which to hire a sixth person one day per week. Five of us are female; one is male.

The Writing Centre is located within Student Services, rather than an academic deanery. The problems with this location are evidenced by my account of the recent Student Services Division Retreat. The focus was the Strategic Enrolment Plan (SEM), more specifically, the roles of student success and retention in operationalizing said plan. The goal of the day was to bring together areas from the unit to inventory ways in which we contribute to student success and retention and to brainstorm strategies and tactics for improving retention, especially with regards to student experiences of belonging and the role of persistence. In the Division are the following groups: Athletics, Advising, Counselling, Financial Aid, Student Life, and the Writing Centre. At one point in the presentation of the SEM by the VP Students, a slide appeared depicting a continuum of student experience, beginning with entry point elements like recruitment, registration, and financial aid and ending with graduation. In the middle was the section
depicting the classroom experience and “academic support services,” a term that I have to come realize means very different things to different groups. Advisors and Counsellors name what they do academic support. In the middle are also areas that contribute to a student’s sense of belonging to a campus culture, namely Athletics and Student Life. All of these areas contribute profoundly to student success and retention, but we should not elide the obvious fact that one of these things is not like the others. I was in a working group with two financial aid clerks and a wrestling coach. The retreat was valuable in that I learned a lot about what other areas do and met new people who are smart and dedicated. But, my work does not belong in Student Services, and neither do I.

Our collective agreement category as “academic support faculty” has a long history, and is still not an accurate category for our work. When I was hired 14 years ago, the positions were categorized as “staff.” After much advocacy, in 2007 we became part “non-teaching faculty,” essentially an ad-hoc name for a group of misfits who were perceived as not really staff, but not really faculty. In the years since, we have worked to demonstrate that what we do is analogous to faculty work and have lobbied to be categorized and evaluated as teaching faculty under identical terms in the collective agreement. The issues of contention surround demonstrating that teaching can occur outside the traditional structure of a course and that our work is disciplinary.

In the most recent round of bargaining, we were unsuccessful, but the group of misfits achieved a meaningful renaming as “academic support faculty.” The removal of “non-teaching” honours our identity as people who teach, even if not in the traditional sense. Other groups in this category such as librarians, counsellors, and advisors have agreed to the terms of their present category. Part of the struggle has been to demonstrate that the centrality of Writing Centre
teaching to the disciplines distinguishes us from other groups whose work with students is no less important, but is less immediately connected to their acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

The issue of contention regarding Writing Centre status arises because “writing” is not generally considered a subject onto itself, so we are not perceived to have our own disciplinary content knowledge. Moreover, “writing” is something everyone does, so it is often falsely assumed that if one can write, one can teach writing. This belief perpetuates the notion that anyone can teach writing because it does not involve specialized expertise. Furthermore, our secondary scholarly interests and expertise are generally not visible to others. The teaching we do, as the Writing Centre, does not occur in our own courses, so it is perceived as remedial service. While a large part of what we do is support students writing in the disciplines, we also, in doing so, teach our disciplinary content knowledge. Furthermore, we do teach our own courses, but as sessional instructors in English. Our actual work as individuals occurs in multiple locations and through multiple roles, and our disciplinary expertise, our subject matter of “writing,” is that we move across these roles.

I began teaching as a sessional instructor during my third semester, in 2002, to supplement what was then a 50% staff position in the Writing Centre. I have most often taught an introductory, mandatory academic writing course, as well as a few upper-division rhetoric and composition courses and a life writing course I designed. In earlier years, I taught professional writing in the department of Communications and an academic and professional development course in the department of Criminology. Four of us in the Writing Centre, presently or historically, have taught as sessional instructors, also predominantly in English, and predominantly the mandatory first year course. Three of us teach, or have taught, sessionally at another institution. My relationship with the department of English at my institution is a book
unto itself. The divide between literature and composition, the high and the low of the carnival, are palpable in my regional, British Columbian university. At the same time, there are lots of people working in English who do not subscribe to the myth and resist it as well. In the beginning, I attended English department meetings regularly. I listened, and where possible, tried to advocate for contextualized, rather than belletristic, approaches to teaching academic writing. This put me at odds with the epistemologies, as well as pedagogical goals, of most members of the department. After several years, I basically gave up trying to contribute, but continued to teach. I stopped investing my time and energy into English, choosing instead to devote myself to the Writing Centre, where I most belonged.

Most notably, I was saddened and angered by the ways students seem to have internalized the story of student writing as deficient and writing instruction as remediation in grammar and punctuation. Students routinely come into the Writing Centre and begin by saying that they are not good writers, sometimes terrible writers. Students fill out an online form when signing up for an appointment and on it is a box that says, “What would you like to work on today?” Anecdotally, a good 80% of the time, they write “check my grammar.” I have seen students write “grammar” when they do not yet have a text and are looking for help narrowing their research topic. To demonstrate the pervasiveness of this discourse, I decided, on a random day in October 2014, to collect comments from the box labelled, “What would you like to work on today?” There were four consultations. The student comments collected included the following: 1) “correcting grammar mistakes,” 2) “help with grammar, thank you,” 3) “I have a paper to write on self-care for nursing, and need to ensure I have the right mechanics, and sentence flow with regards to ideas,” and 4) “this assignment was not graded but handed back to me for a rewrite. I am confused at referencing multiple sources for the same idea, sentence
structure, paragraph structure and referencing ideas not quotes.” The first statement contains the
notion of us as people who “correct.” The second reframes correction as “help,” and “thank you”
acknowledges some notion of sociality. The third statement starts well, with the student
beginning in a disciplinary context with a particular assignment, but moves then to “mechanics”
which has little to do with writing an effective paper on one’s definition of self-care. The phrase
“sentence flow with regards to ideas” moves away from the myth usefully because it is at least
connected to ideas, but “sentence flow” does not capture the complexity of the task with which
s/he is faced. Similarly, the final comment reflects growing complexity. It includes a collection
of issues including revision, citation, and “sentence structure, paragraph structure,” which
demonstrates recognition of complex tasks alongside grammatical concerns. Most of the time,
students will phrase their needs for writing instruction in prescriptivist terms.

It is no wonder that students phrase their needs around writing most often in terms of
grammar and proofreading. Almost every day, I see instructors’ assignment guidelines that ask
students to do tremendously complex research, reading, and writing tasks, while their evaluation
criteria often do not reflect the complexities. Most evaluation criteria position “style,” most often
explicitly described as correct grammar and punctuation, first, even where it is numerically less
valuable than other criteria. It would be interesting to study why this occurs. Students also report
their instructors’ speech, noting that they were referred or sent to the Writing Centre to have their
work proofread and to learn about the basics. I still marvel at faculty’s commitment to deficit
discourse, but of course, they are enacting and repeating the ways they were taught to think about
writing when they were students. The refrains of deficit are old, even in new contexts: students
cannot write because they have lost the ability to communicate due to technology; they can’t
write because they are not learning grammar in high school; they can’t write because their first
language is not English; they can’t write because they don’t read; they can’t write because they
are an entitled generation who does not listen to instructions.

The discourse of remediation comes from a widespread belief in the separation of content
and form: disciplinary knowledge is content knowledge and writing is reduced to form, a skill
learned separately. Students don’t produce writing faculty want because faculty don’t teach them
the complexities of the genres in which they write and make all kinds of assumptions about what
students bring to the classroom. Also, where faculty members do teach writing in their courses,
they can meet with resistance because they are told that they should not be teaching writing
because their courses are not writing courses. When writing instruction is perceived as distinct
from the teaching of disciplinary content, writing pedagogy has generally involved opaque
assignment instructions coupled with evaluation based solely or predominantly on adherence to
Standard English. Discourse of remediation abounds in assignment guidelines and marking
criteria that, generally speaking, pay a disproportionate amount of attention to grammar,
enforcing its primacy and seriousness.

From my locations, I resist the myth by attempting to dislodge students from its grip and
inspire faculty to think of writing instruction as enculturation into the disciplinary activities of
communities. This belief is based on a learning theory by Lave and Wenger (1991), called
“legitimate peripheral participation.” Lave and Wenger examined how learning takes place by
studying communities of midwives, tailors, quartermasters, butchers, and recovering alcoholics.
They say specifically that legitimate peripheral participation is not a pedagogical theory, but
encourage its application to pedagogical contexts. I, like many others before me, have applied it
to a pedagogical context of teaching academic writing in post-secondary education.

Quite profoundly, I think, Lave and Wenger argued that learning does not depend on the
master imparting knowledge to the apprentice, but on their engaging in action together. This idea shifts the meaning of learning from product alone to the shared processes involved in creating a product. They explained:

> insofar as learning really does consist in the development of portable interactive skills, it can take place even when co-participants fail to share a common code. The apprentice’s ability to understand the master’s performance depends not on their possessing the same representation of it, or of the object it entails, but rather on their engaging in the performance in congruent ways. (p. 21)

For learning to take place, the master and novice need to be engaged in activities together; mentoring fosters knowledge and skill. Likewise, learning to write should be about being mentored into academic communities. For Lave and Wenger, learning is novices’ evolution as they are enculturated by the master into increasingly complex repertoires of participation in expert activity and knowledge making. The ideology of enculturation means a pedagogy that actively engages students in activities that are novice versions that contribute to expert activity and makes academic ways of being explicit through analysis of their texts.

Using legitimate peripheral participation to define learning means teaching students about the communities in which and for which they are writing, helping them to become proficient in moving across contexts. We teach them that “the right track” depends on the community, that rightness is determined socially in knowledge making practices, value systems, and discourse. The right track is a socially determined journey, and the best way we can prepare students for the writing they will do in the academy is to provide them with strategies for determining what the right track could be in a contextual moment and writing as best they can to discover it. So in a nutshell, teaching writing as socially situated means making explicit the knowledge making practices and belief systems that are embodied in academic discourse.

This brings me to another aspect of my work. Students do not know what the right track
is in large part because their instructors do not make it visible enough for them. Faculty many times do not connect student writing to their own disciplinary activities yet frequently lament the state of student writing, criticizing students for not being able to write in genres they have never seen. The myth of student writing as deficient and grammar instruction as the remedial tool persists. Complexities surrounding the locating and reading of scholarly sources, the orchestration of scholarly contributions, citation, framing and advancing an argument through evidence…these are reduced to words like style and organization. Another phenomenon is that the assignment criteria will lay out a number of higher-level criteria, but the marks all over the page attend mostly or only to grammar and punctuation errors or include notations like “awk” that do nothing to help students understand what readers need. In my daily working life, I routinely notice disconnection between what faculty seem to think students understand about the tasks they are given and what students report they understand during writing centre consultations. I see a lot of assignment guidelines that appear to do little to help students and a lot of prescriptive feedback that does little to help them learn to write better and can sometimes harm them emotionally.

Where I see evidence of the elements of the myth, I try to help faculty step out of thinking of student writing as deficient and instruction as remedial by asking them to rethink their interpretations of student writing and to question why it might be that students are not producing the quality of work their instructors demand. Of course, I cannot outright ask them to do this. My work is a peculiar kind of subversion. Our pedagogy asks faculty to be self-reflexive about what they do, and that is scary. Unsettling faculty members’ beliefs about student writing is about patience, and about showing, rather than telling. It frustrates me that this should be so. I do not enjoy feeling like I have to strategize when I collaborate. When “collaborating” with
faculty members whose beliefs support the myth, I have to estimate what could happen when I bring a different story of writing. When collaboration with faculty members is built on a different story of student writing and writing instruction, working with them feels rigorous and challenging, but not frustrating or risky.

When working with faculty members who fall into the former category, I try to get faculty to see that they can help students to write better by doing a number of things, the first of which is making their intentions and expectations explicit and evaluation based on specific features of the genre. Right away, I can see the arrogance in what I do, in what we do. Who are we, thinking that we know how to teach faculty how to teach students to write? Many faculty do not think that teaching writing is their job. And perhaps it is not. But whatever they see their job to be is what they should be talking to students about. For example, in addition to talking about the chemical properties of a substance, talk about why it is important to study chemical properties of substances, tell stories about having studied the chemical properties of a substance. Tell students how people study chemical properties and what they debate, what they talk about at conferences. My dear friend, an associate professor in Psychology, shows at least one picture of the scholar whose work she is teaching to her students and tells stories about the scholars she has worked with and met. That is how you teach people to write better—you make knowledge making social and human, and you invite students to feel they are becoming part of a community.

I began to understand that my work entailed telling a different story of student writing, and that telling that story from the locations I occupy is arduous. The different story grew as I saw that ways in which students struggled and succeeded in their writing. I saw that the errors they make are most often logical; they struggle mostly because much of what surrounds any
writing task in academia is tacit. My daily work involves convincing students that writing is about more than grammar, that revision is more than proofreading, and that they are good at writing or can be, a few exceptions aside of course. Second, my daily work involves an odd kind of collegial subversion wherein I try to help faculty from other disciplines see that their students’ writing is poor, when it is, for reasons associated with the unstated, unacknowledged, and unguided complexities of the tasks. Moreover, I try to learn from faculty about what they do in their disciplines and what their objectives and expectations are for student writing.

A misconception about the Writing Centre’s position on grammar and punctuation is that because we do not “do” grammar and punctuation, we do not think it is important. It is crucially important, but less so than other aspects of writing needed to persuade academic audiences, such as effective marshalling of evidence through citation in order to produce new knowledge, argument, critical thinking. Not a day goes by that I do not hear deficit discourse harkening a golden age of better writing and trumpeting a call for a return to rigorous instruction in grammar, sometimes enthusiastically, as though the point has never been made before. Thus, one of my favourite things to say to these calls is that post-secondary institutions in Canada have been using such approaches to teaching writing for over a century. If teaching writing by remediation in grammar and punctuation and appreciation and imitation of literary texts worked, there would not be perpetual discussion about the deplorable state of student writing.

Writing studies calls, instead, for situated writing instruction that is located not in a mandatory course taught mostly by literary scholars, but in the disciplines and taught through rhetorical lenses rather than belletristic ones. The ways in which we, in the Writing Centre, understood writing instruction in terms of location and pedagogy were at odds with the ideology of remedial writing instruction perpetuated by the myth. I came also to learn, fairly early on, that
my advocacy for alternate ways of thinking about student writing, teaching student writers, and relocating writing instruction was at once advocacy for legitimate institutional locations for myself and my colleagues in the Writing Centre. Thus, my advocacy for students seemed often to be misunderstood as self-interested. I had to justify my legitimacy before people would listen to my point of view. I advocated for my own legitimacy so that I could discuss with others an alternative version of writing and writing instruction.

4.5 Still crazy after all these years

Like being in a long-term marriage, being in writing studies has meant a continual need to revisit and renew my commitment through waves of defeat and hope. Things change, but they stay the same. Student writing is largely imagined as deficit; when student writing is imagined as deficit, the other two aspects of the myth are inevitable. Today when I checked my email, a colleague in the Writing Centre had written to our group of six to tell us that an instructor had written on a student’s draft, “’Go the Writing Centre to get help with: sentence structure: review verbs nouns etc., using active rather than passive voice, use simpler sentences’ just had to share that.” The fact that she wrote “just had to share that” reveals a back story. We are so tired of hearing this broken record, this refrain of remediation and deficit, this simplified story of student writing, of what it means to teach writing, and of what we in the Writing Centre do.

One of my colleagues responded to our internal email about this instructor’s comment as follows:

Dear student,

Go to your instructor…to get help with sentence structure: review verbs and nouns, use active rather than passive voice, use simpler sentences. Once you have given her the opportunity to enact her notions of standard English upon your work and person, please return to the Writing Centre where your ideas and needs as a developing academic writer
will be taken seriously and where we don’t see you and your language use as inherently, indescribably, maddeningly, vexingly faulty.

Best,
The Writing Centre

The colleague who sent the initial email did so as an act of solidarity. This colleague also said, in discussion about this very email, that “things we write but don’t send” is a genre unto itself. She is right. I have folders called “rants” and “shitfan.” Pages and pages of hurt and anger. Pages and pages that make the same points. Years of words that did not do any good to change the situation. Venting is standard parlance on our Writing Centre distribution list; we do it because we need to release our frustration, release it safely, regain our senses of humour and sanity, and try not to take it all too seriously.

Things change, but they stay the same. At this point in my career, I am starting to learn to assess what is realistically possible, doable, and survivable in my advocacy efforts. Thanks to a collection of supportive, open-minded, and innovative administrators, and to faculty members from other disciplines who support and advocate for us, the institution has palpably changed some of the ways the stories of student writing, writing instruction, and writing instructors get told. Our story has been taken up insofar as it is more apparent in the discourse about writing and in some changes to curriculum. Yet, despite uptakes in various areas of the university, the old story persists, as do institutional locations for my work that do not match what my work actually entails.

The Academic Support Faculty category has many material consequences. The writing centre location means that I am not eligible for research leaves because the leave formula is based on course sections. Those in this category do have access to a much shortened, four month sabbatical applied for within each unit in order of seniority. Another material consequence is that
the University Act recognizes only faculty or staff, so academic support faculty have to use the staff category in university governance processes. As such, they can neither vote for nor run for positions on Senate or its subcommittees unless they do so as staff. I refuse to identify as staff, because I am not staff. The most compelling evidence of the inappropriateness of this category is that the names on the faculty ballot are, for the most part, names I know, colleagues I work with routinely, people whose work I have heard about, people I do workshops with, people with whom I serve on committees. The ballot I am asked to tick, the staff ballot, is usually full of names of people I do not know and have never spoken to, let alone worked with. The fact that I know and work with faculty and do not know or work with most staff is evidence of a better fit with the faculty category.

Materially, I hold a permanent, part time (80%) position in the Writing Centre and supplement my income working as contingent labour in English. I pause to pay respect to the legions of teachers of writing without permanent positions. I acknowledge that the consequences of this materiality are in many ways positive; I earn a reasonable wage; I have good benefits including a professional development fund that has allowed me to present at conferences and fund my tuition. Nonetheless, compared to teaching faculty, I am an “other.” No one really knows what 80% means. The contracts are unconventional appointments arising from a history of being staff and gaining percentages as we were granted funding here and there over the years. I started in 2002 on a ten month 50% contract. We have worked as contingent labour for a long time, and, over many years, continued to take additions in funding and split them equally across positions, rather than top up one person at a time by seniority. In this discipline, having a team is more important than having full time work. In 2007, the five positions (one full time and four 80% contracts) were converted from staff to “non-teaching faculty” and in 2012 to “academic
support faculty.” Our percentages, then, are based on a staff-like work week calculation, but the actual work we do is faculty work. We have operationalized a way of allocating and accounting for our work and continue to advocate for full faculty status so that we can be evaluated based on the actual work we do. We remain, at present, in the Academic Support Faculty category.

We joke all the time about hitting our heads on a brick wall. That is what it feels like sometimes. Painful, exhausting defeat. Defeat is brought on by witnessing frustrated and sometimes hurt students who are taught in a system that still conceives of writing instruction as remediation. Defeat comes from having to listen to the same story of writing and student writing over and over and over again. Defeat is seeing instructor guidelines that not only do not help students, but hinder them. Defeat is working with faculty members who I feel continue to misunderstand both writing and what I do when I teach it. Defeat is feeling weighed down, held back from doing my best by the confines of institutional structures. When making the case for faculty status by demonstrating our professionalization, one administrator, quite a number of years ago now, said that no one had ever asked the people in the Writing Centre to become more than what they were. This, this, is in the spirit of the academy? Of academic knowledge making, the pursuit of excellence in humanity? This is the spirit of patriarchal ignorance.

Two subjectivities identified in Miller’s (1991) study were “transgressive irritant” and “self-sacrificing saint,” both of which resonate. In my context, the locations of my work are themselves transgressive because I move in, amongst, and across disciplines in the course of my day-to-day life, a contrast to the dominant organizing principle of the academy, disciplinariness. I also feel like a transgressive irritant in my advocacy for Writing Centre work and workers because it is understood as self-interested, rather than inextricably tied to my ideological goal of offering a different story of student writers and writing instruction than there is room for in the
myth. I am a transgressive irritant because not only do I want to tell a different story of student writing and writing instruction, but I also want to teach writing from legitimate institutional locations that match my day-to-day work and for writing studies and its alternative versions to be visible and valuable in the academic constellation. I am not a self-sacrificial saint, but I do sometimes accidentally act like one and dislike myself for it afterward. Sometimes I act like one on purpose for rhetorical strategy and like myself for it afterward.

I believe, like others before me, that it is an intriguing combination of institutional location and gender that perpetuates the third element of the myth, writing instructors as not-disciplinary. Five of six of us are women. There is a common sense mentality about what people who teach writing do (hunt for and correct grammar errors) and, by extension, who they are imagined to be (non-disciplinary, in service of students, faculty, the disciplines, communities). Because of the first two elements of the normative story, “writing” is not imagined by most people to be an object of disciplinary inquiry apparent in a body of scholarly knowledge, at least not in the way say “geography,” “history,” or “physics” is. Teaching writing is imagined as teaching skill in service of content knowledge, but is many times performed in isolation from it, reinforcing difference. The normative myth deems writing instruction remedial, as not requiring specialized knowledge, which conveys a sentiment that anyone who can write well can teach writing well. This is simply not the case.

I am writing a kind of people’s history, hoping to make more visible that which gets missed. In the academic constellation, if the disciplines are stars, writing studies is the blackness that surrounds them. There are consequences to doing work that is misunderstood or not visible to others. Whenever I read information for “teaching faculty” I am reminded, “but not you.” I am in a location that does not fit who I think I am, it misrepresents me and us, and it restricts our
actions. One of the most interesting subjectivities I occupy is, quite literally, “other.”

Unfortunately, I have not gathered data to support the presence of this as a naming in my academic life. Nevertheless, I cannot count the number of surveys, like the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), for example, where there were no names for my discipline and restrictive boxes that did not allow for what I do. All the while, I had answers to the questions, because what I actually do is teaching faculty work. I did save an error message during the FSSE survey: “we’re sorry, but we weren’t able to identify the general academic discipline of your department you entered. Please select the response below that most closely matches your discipline. Select from a general area below to view a list of specific disciplines.” It seems preposterous, sometimes, that such things actually matter to me. And maybe other faculty members in other disciplines have similar concerns. Being visible matters less because I need to feel validated and worthwhile as a person so much as it seems wrong that a field much older than many fields listed on surveys can be routinely disregarded as though it does not exist.

Another subjectivity I have been ascribed in the past is “guest” on meeting minutes, which used to refer to my presence at meetings of Art Department Heads and other committees where there was no Writing Centre representative in the formal terms of reference. Committees are open, and we went to them for long enough that we became legitimate participants. This legitimacy most often means legitimacy as contributors rather than a formalized legitimacy, though the College of Arts and Teaching and Learning Advisory Council have written Writing Centre representation into their Terms of Reference. It is odd, though, to have to “impose” oneself on a committee with direct relevance to our work. Furthermore, we routinely “impose” our participation in institutional discussions directly relevant to us even when we are not explicitly invited to contribute, for example, by submitting education and strategic plans. Calls
for such documents go out across the academic areas of the institution, which we hear about through our sessional positions or through our service to committees. Where they are relevant to us, we send them to the relevant administrator, hoping to register on the institution’s radar as a legitimate disciplinary area with much to contribute to the institution’s educational and strategic planning.

I am also a guest in other people’s classrooms, a peculiar feature somewhat unique in academia. I design and conduct workshops in faculty’s classrooms to assist their students with written assignments. I regularly teach in their classrooms, with their students, under their gazes, in their spaces. Where such guesting goes well, we often, over time, develop genuinely collaborative partnerships with those instructors and disciplines. Where it goes poorly, it is a frustrating, sometimes humiliating, experience. Going poorly can mean a number of things. One example is the way in which one is introduced (or not) to the students. The faculty members’ introductions set the stage for students’ responses to the workshops. I have experienced the following: not being introduced at all, but just given the go ahead to introduce myself, being introduced as “the writing person,” and being kissed on the cheek by a faculty member I had never met. It is more desirable to be introduced by respectful and collaborative faculty who tell students why they have invited me to work with the class. Likewise, the ways in which we are treated by the faculty members during the workshop matter. There is a monumental difference between participating in the workshop or marking in the back corner while the workshop is being given. Going poorly can also mean being challenged or contradicted by the instructor during the workshop—after all, our beliefs about student writing and best practices for writing instruction do not often match those of faculty. For example, a faculty member in Criminology asked me, during a one hour introductory orientation to writing in graduate school and supports the Writing
Centre offers, to focus on semi-colon usage. It is a rhetorical balancing act to support the instructor while sometimes subverting their viewpoint in order to offer students what we think will most help them. In sum, when faculty are open to a different version of the story of student writing and writing instruction, it typically goes well. When they are not, it does not.

Feeling like one is not being heard, and feeling constrained by subject positions that do not fit identity, is demoralizing and unjust. I live my professional life from a defensive position, and I work conscientiously to try to understand that better so that I can be less defensive. I work to take the myth less personally, despite the fact that it does impose sanctions that make it unavoidably and deeply personal. If I did not take it personally, I would not still be in writing studies, because doing so gives me the drive to get back up and do it again.

I renew my commitment to this marriage. There is hope in each of my days: in the comments students make, that they never would have made it through an assignment, course, or program without my help, that they learned more with me in an hour than they did in their writing course, that they feel confident about their work. There is hope in the high-five from the student who came up to me outside, reminded me of who he was and told me that he got an A on his last assignment, his first A in an English course. There is hope in students and the gifts and challenges they bring that teach me every day. There is hope in faculty members who do not think of their students’ writing in remedial terms and who ask questions about teaching writing and are open to looking at their own writing pedagogy and to improving it. There is hope in faculty who are courageous enough to share generously of their own disciplinary knowledge so that I may learn more about what they do and how they do it, and hope in faculty from whom I can learn more about teaching writing. There is hope in administrators who are open to innovative ideas, even if those ideas are difficult or nearly impossible to put into practice. There
is hope in my Writing Centre family, in the day-to-day sanctuary that is our space and place within the university. And, most importantly, there is hope in writing studies as a discipline because we can share our stories of hope with each other and, as a community, take them to others.
Chapter 5: Demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions

5.1 Introduction

The myth told a false story of the people of composition studies in the U.S. twenty-five years ago, and it tells a false story of the people of Canadian writing studies now. Miller (1991) called for a good story of composition that she described as telling one’s own stories, being and telling an inversion of the myth. Likewise, a people’s history exposes a version of beliefs and events as told from the point of view of a collective not visible in the version presented and taken as natural and, thus, apolitical. In order to define what writing studies is from the perspective of its people, we need to better understand them and what they do. To this end, the survey gathered data about demographics, institutional locations, working conditions, identity, and experience.

Chapter 5 briefly theorizes the survey in relation to Smith’s (1990) framework, then reports on the quantitative data about demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions.

Smith’s (1990) epistemological orientation in feminist standpoint theory means that “alternate” is beginning outside what she calls objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling. Objectified forms of knowledge position male ways of seeing and being as natural, and relations of ruling structure the institutions and discourses that embody those forms of knowledge. Beginning outside means not accepting these as natural and, thus, apolitical. Instead, all positions are political. The myth is an objectified form of knowledge and the institutional locations and discourses of service can be considered relations of ruling. The literature revealed that Canadian rhetoric and composition or writing studies opposes the first two elements of the myth. It tells a story of student writing that is usually not prescriptive, so student writing is not positioned as deficient, but as novice behavior. Furthermore, writing instruction is imagined not
as remedial or belletristic, but as approaches that strive to embed writing instruction in academic
and professional contexts in order to enculturate students into those communities.

In Smith’s (1991) framework, both objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling
separate women from their own experiences, because they tell a story that simply does not match
women’s experiences, which exist outside the language of men. Such positioning causes a
“bifurcation of consciousness” (p. 25). This means that women’s experiences and the language
used to describe them do not match the realities of their daily lives. Smith’s work is over 25 years
old, so it is important to note that gender, as I refer to it, does not mean language used by men,
but gendered language that constructs knowledge in terms that have historically been male social
constructions. In Smith’s words, “[a]n alternative sociology would be a means to anyone of
understanding how the world comes about for us and how it is organized so that it happens to us
as it does in our experience” (p. 27). A visibility project for writing studies begins as a visibility
project for its people.

I have proceeded with a working definition of writing studies as the four organizations
identified by Drain (2008) and Graves (2014) as CASDW, CASLL, CWCA, and CSSR. I have
further narrowed a definition of the people of writing studies to the subscribers to the list-servs of
these organizations. There were five quantitative survey questions focused on demographic data,
specifically gender, age, qualifications, number of years in the field, and number of years in
academia. Five questions gathered institutional data: province and country, type of institution,
position, department or area, and reporting structure. In terms of working conditions, the survey
asked about type of employment, whether respondents have tenure or not, and annual salary. The
survey also considered support for research as a particularly important aspect of working
conditions, so it asked four yes or no questions focused on whether or not respondents have
access to research leaves, have been nominated for awards in the past five years, have applied for a grant in the last five years, or have been a co-applicant on a grant in the last five years. The chapter proceeds by constructing a definition of writing studies from the top answer for each question, then breaks down each of the three categories, demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions. Each section presents additional data through tables and, where possible, discusses it in relation to the literature.

5.2 Demographics

This section presents data about gender, age, qualifications, and number of years in the field and in academia. A definition of writing studies is constructed from the top response in each category; then data from each response is explained. Most respondents were female, 51 years of age or older, held PhDs, and had worked in the field for 16 years or longer.

Table 5.1 Demographics: Gender, age, qualifications, number of years in the field and academia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>51+ years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifications</td>
<td>hold PhDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have partially completed PhDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of years in the field</td>
<td>have worked 16+ years in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of years in academia</td>
<td>in academia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 Gender

It is noteworthy that 3/4 of respondents were female, at 75.5%. Male respondents comprised 23.1%, while 1.9% selected “choose not to answer.” There does not appear to be comparable data on gender in the Canadian writing studies literature, and there is no contemporary data available from Statistics Canada. Even loose comparisons to related data, though, make obvious the need to examine the relationships between gender and contemporary,
Canadian writing studies. This study’s finding that respondents are 75.5% female exceeds a U.S. figure in the late 1980s. Miller (1991) did not ask for respondents’ genders, odd given her focus on composition studies as a gendered field. She cited Holbrook’s (1991), “Women’s work: The feminizing of composition” wherein Holbrook claimed that about two-thirds of composition teachers in the late 1980s in the U.S. were women. Holbrook noted a lack of data on gender and composition studies in the U.S and gathered a myriad of related statistics, including the genders of the professoriate generally. She noted that “it is hard to resist the impression that when women form less than a third (27.5%) of the faculty overall, they do a disproportionate share of composition teaching” (p. 209).

In seeking data about the genders of the Canadian professoriate, I learned that Statistics Canada stopped collecting key information in 2012 (Charbonneau, 2012). The government no longer uses “the University and College Academic Staff System (UCASS),” an annual survey that “collected more than 20 data points” including, for example, gender, age, department, principal subject taught, salary and administrative stipends, sabbatical leave, unpaid leave, province or country of degrees earned, and citizenship (Charbonneau, 2012, para.1-2). I turned, then, to an article in the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Review titled, “The changing academy: A portrait of Canada’s university teachers,” (CAUT, 2010). It cited gender and rank statistics from the 2006 Stats Canada UCASS survey that the government no longer uses. In 2006, the genders of the professoriate in Canada were male 66.9% and female 33.1%, all ranks combined and including a rank category, “other”(CAUT, 2010, p. 2). A sharp reversal of percentages is apparent, as pointed out by Holbrook (1991) and as evidenced by this study. In Holbrook’s research, one third of the professoriate was female, while 2/3 of those in composition studies were female. The percentage of female writing studies faculty reflects the
same sharp reversal if compared to the Canadian statistics from 2006. Seventy-five percent of respondents were female, where 33.1% of the professoriate in Canada was female.

Moreover, the number of female respondents well surpasses even Education, where the percentage of female faculty, according to the same Canadian 2006 survey, was 49.9% (p.2). A 2013 study by the Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta (AASUA) found that of 828 full professors, 612 were male which is 74% of the full professors. The number of male full professors outnumbered the entire female professoriate, all ranks combined (p. 10). Generalizing that between 2/3 and 3/4 of the Canadian and American professoriate tend to be male, and generalizing that between 2/3 and 3/4 of the faculty in rhetoric and composition studies or writing studies are female, the body of those who teach and study writing is predominantly female.

This study shows that contemporary Canadian writing studies can be considered a feminized discipline, defined by Holbrook (1991) as “associated with feminine attributes and populated by the female gender” (p. 201). The field in Canada is undeniably populated by the female gender. Alexander (2005) argued that feminine attributes were ascribed to members of the field, particularly by students, and embodied in normative institutional discourse. Writing studies, then, because it is comprises mostly of women, begins outside the myth and outside the academy. “Women’s work,” according to Holbrook, has “four related characteristics: It has a disproportionate number of women workers; it is service oriented; it pays less than men’s work; it is devalued” (p. 202). This study finds a disproportionate number of women workers within the field, at 75.5%. Moreover, the literature suggests that writing studies is still considered service oriented. It is not clear whether it pays less than men’s work because pay would have to be compared to salaries of academics in Canada generally, a statistic no longer tracked by the
federal government. Within the study, there were few notable differences between genders; there
did not appear to be significant discrepancies in either annual salary or rank. In terms of tenure,
though, more men (41.7%) had tenure than women (34.2%), despite the fact that women
outnumber men in the field 3 to 1. There is evidence, too, that the field, its work, and its workers
can often be devalued. The overrepresentation of women in writing studies needs attention in
relation to academia more broadly.

5.2.2 Age, qualifications, number of years in academia and the field

In addition to gender, age and demographic data including qualifications and the number
of years that respondents have worked in the field and in academia give shape to the people of
writing studies.

Table 5.2 Demographics: Age, qualifications, number of years in academia, and number of years
in the field, presented from the highest percentage of responses to the lowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>In the field</th>
<th>In academia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>PhD ABD</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>PhD in progress</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2.1 Age

As with gender, data about the ages of writing studies faculty in Canada do not seem to
exist. This study found that the writing studies population is aging, with 53.8% of respondents 51
years of age or more. Recent data on age of the professoriate do not appear to be available,
though CAUT (2010) noted that in 2006, “over 30% of professors were aged 55 and older” (p.1).
Notable, too, is the gradual decline in the next two generations, those aged 41-50 and 31-40.
There are 3.8% fewer respondents in the 41-50 category than the 51-60. Then, there is a decrease of 1.9% in the 31-40 age range. The youngest generation, 20-30 years of age, shows a dramatic 19.3% drop-off. The age division of 20-30+ necessarily means that people are less likely to have completed their graduate degrees, so there would be fewer scholars in this age category. Nonetheless, a 19.3% decrease in the youngest generation of scholars is wildly at odds with the findings cited by CAUT, who reported that between 2001 and 2006 “the number of faculty under 30 jumped by 26.5%” (p. 2). There is a 45.8% difference between this study’s findings and the findings of a national survey of the Canadian professoriate 10 years ago. CAUT also reported that “over 2001-2006, the under 40 cohort increased by 31.7%, compared to overall labour force growth of 22.5%” (p. 2). This study’s findings of a gradual decline over three generations followed by a dramatic drop-off in the youngest group are inconsistent with the increase in aging faculty, the increase of young faculty and the increase of youth in the Canadian labour force reported in 2006. To be meaningful, these statistics must be placed against others in academia; this data is meant to open up conversations about demographics.

5.2.2.2 Qualifications, and number of years in academia and the field

In terms of qualifications, PhDs have been earned by 60.4% of respondents, while another 17% have partially completed PhDs, for a total of 77.4%. This is evidence of a professionalized field of well-established scholars. In terms of experience, 50% of respondents have worked in the field 16+ years. Of those, 30.8% have been in the field for 21 years or more. More respondents have 6-10 years’ experience than 16-20, which is interesting in light of the number of scholars in the 51+ age bracket. Two categories show movement from academia into the field (21+ years and 6-10 years); two categories show movement from the field into academia (11-15 years and 1-5 years), and one category shows that time in the field and in
academia are basically the same (16-20 years). There are no similar data in Canada that I am aware of, but in the U.S., the collection edited by Lunsford (1999) presents scholars’ stories of their movement into the field of rhetoric and composition studies. That collection demonstrated that most people arrived through circuitous routes. Perhaps this is the case for other disciplines, but it seems noteworthy that most people were in academia before they were in their field, rather than being hired into their field initially. Respondents’ routes into the field and their qualification and experience are discussed in Chapter 7. In terms of demographics, most respondents were female, 51 years of age or older, held PhDs, and have worked in the field for 16 years or longer.

5.3 Institutional locations

Part of making the people of writing studies more visible involves understanding the institutional locations in which they work. The survey asked five questions focused on institutional location: the province of respondents’ primary institution, type of institution, position, department or area, and reporting structure. This section adds to a definition of writing studies then presents detailed data for each answer. Respondents worked in nine provinces, predominantly in research universities. They occupied 17 distinct kinds of positions in 22 departments or areas, 84.7% of which were outside of English. Those areas reported to eight different academic Deans.

Table 5.3 Summary of institutional locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional locations</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work in nine provinces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupy 17 kinds of positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupy positions in 21 areas other than English</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work in departments or areas that report to academic deaneries</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work in research universities</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.1 National and provincial locations, institution types

In order to define writing studies as a national field, the survey asked about the country, province and type of institution. In defining “Canadian,” I used Clary-Lemon’s (2009) definition of Canadian scholarship as “pieces written by Canadian scholars at Canadian institutions” or scholars of other nationalities writing about Canadian contexts while working in Canadian institutions (p. 98). A total of 90.2% of respondents predominantly work at Canadian institutions.

Table 5.4 National and provincial locations, institution type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary institution in Canada?</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Types of institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>University research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>University 4 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Québec</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of respondents who worked at Canadian institutions worked in Ontario (36.5%) and British Columbia (28.8%), for a total of 65.3%. Alberta (13.5%) and Nova Scotia (7.7%) showed the next highest percentages of respondents. In the remaining five provinces selected by respondents, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador, there was but a single respondent. Furthermore, the majority of respondents worked in research institutions (71.2%).

This inspires questions. How can there be so few respondents in 5 of the 9 provinces? Perhaps this phenomenon is a by-product of low response rate. Perhaps this data suggests that
that writing is not being taught primarily by respondents, especially where there is one respondent within a province. The question then becomes, who is teaching writing? It would be interesting to gather demographic data much like Graves did in 1994 that asked about who taught writing and where. Data about who teaches writing might then be usefully placed in relation to data about who teaches and studies it. Another important question is, who will replace lone writing studies specialists when they retire, especially given the 19.3% decrease in faculty aged 21-30 compared to previous generations?

5.3.2 Local institutional locations

Within national and provincial locations are a multitude of local institutional locations. Respondents occupied 17 distinct positions within 22 departments or areas; the vast majority of respondents, 84.7%, work outside departments of English. Respondents reported to eight distinct academic Deans, as well as nine additional types of reporting structures. The diversity and multiplicity of locations is reflective of the historical dispersion of Canadian writing instruction wherever in the academy it fit in local contexts. It might also be reflective of current conditions wherein people are often located in several places in order to secure full time employment.

Table 5.5 Local institutional locations: Current position, department or area, administrative structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current position</th>
<th>Department/area</th>
<th>Administrative structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Other(Appendix B)</td>
<td>Academic deanery (Appendix B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Appendix B)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Other(Appendix B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Writing Centre</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Cross appointment (Appendix B)</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The diversity of positions occupied by respondents is notable. There were 22 different positions, and the second most common response was “other.” Responses in this category included a variation on traditional associate professorship (2 respondents said Associate Professor, Teaching Stream), instructor on a tenure track, “somewhere between Coordinator and Director,” a second director position, a writing consultant, a manager, a doctoral student working as a TA, and a respondent whose work is being “revamped.” These findings, especially when connected with the department or area, are consistent with the multiplicity of institutional locations characteristic of the field in Canada since its inception.

On the matter of rank, Graves (1994) asked for the ranks of those who taught writing courses at English-language universities, noting that 1/3 of came from the professoriate (p. 51). He provided data for Assistant, Associate, and Professor, as well as a single category, non-permanent. This survey’s finding is that 45.1% of respondents come from the professoriate in the ranks Graves tallied.

5.3.2.2 Department or area

The most common response to the question of respondents’ departments or areas was “other,” at 30.8%. Responses in this category include the following: Continuing Studies, Writing Studies, Linguistics and Language Studies, Language Studies, Modern Languages, Historical and Critical Studies, Graduate Studies, Office of Interdisciplinary Studies and Masters
of Arts in Integrated Studies, Faculty of Arts (Undergraduate Research and Writing), Writing Across the Curriculum so cross-departmental, Educational Research Centre, appointed by Provost (report to Dean of one faculty), Engineering, Education, Engineering Education, and Mechanical Engineering. Cross-appointments totaled 13.5%, and include the following: Learning and Teaching Centre—Faculty of Business, Translation /French Studies and Professional Writing (French), and Writing Studies and Vantage College (a first year cohort model for international students Arts and Sciences). In addition to this plethora of responses, “other” and “cross-appointment” equaled 44.3% of the total positions and represented 19 different departments or areas. Added to these were English, Writing Centre, and Communications, for a total of 22. This diversity is consistent with the wild array of positions claimed by Graves and Graves (2006) and Hunt (2006).

The data confirm that most positions occupied by respondents are outside departments of English, 84.7%, though a portion, 28.8%, are located in English. The percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents were permitted to list multiple locations. The finding that the majority of positions are outside English is consistent with the claims made by Brooks (2002), Clary-Lemon (2009), Graves (1994), Graves and Graves (2006), Hubert and Garrett-Petts (2006), Hunt (2006), and Kearns and Turner (2008) These scholars also agree that a number of positions are still present within English. Of the 28.8% within English, 40% were in Ontario, 33.3% in British Columbia, and less than 1% in Alberta and Nova Scotia. It would be interesting to pursue provincial histories to better understand locations within English in those provinces. The plethora of positions, departments, and areas spread amongst institutions as driven by local conditions is commensurate with the writing studies literature.
5.3.2.3 Reporting structure

The majority of positions occupied by respondents, 79%, reported to academic Deans, most often Arts at 13.5%, but 7 additional Deans: Arts and Social Sciences; Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; Education, Engineering; Applied Science; Academic Dean; and Council of Health Sciences Deans. Respondents answered “Other” at a rate of 15%, adding to the diversity of locations. The “other” reporting structures were as follows: Provost, Vice-Provost, Academic, Vice-President Academic, Principal, University Library, Continuing Studies, and “Registrar (strange, I know!)” Respondents reported to each of Student Services and Teaching and Learning at 6%, such that 12% of respondents were outside academic areas. Locations outside of academic areas have long been considered problematic. Given the mass deprofessionalization and attendant relocation of writing centres to Student Services since at least 2006, it is perhaps surprising that so few respondents are located in Student Services. One reason for this discrepancy could be that the people now working in writing centres do not subscribe to the list-servs of the organizations of writing studies, largely because they are peer tutors or administrators without knowledge of or expertise in writing studies.

5.4 Working conditions and support for research

The questions in this section were based on Miller (1991). Working conditions were measured by four questions about employment status, tenure, union membership, and annual salary. Support for research was measured by access to research leaves, award nominations, and award applications as principal investigator or co-investigator.

5.4.1 Working conditions

The top responses indicated that the majority of respondents had full-time permanent, but untenured work, most often as union members making $81,000 or more annually.
Table 5.6 Summary of working conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working conditions</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>full-time permanent</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>untenured</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belong to a union</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earn $81,000+</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining these categories further reveals that the majority of the respondents, 66.7%, had full-time permanent employment, and 3.9% had part-time permanent employment. At the same time, 64% are untenured. Most are union members at 54.9%, and the same percentage, 54.9%, also earn annual salaries of $81,000 or more. Almost 10% of the respondents work at multiple institutions.

Table 5.7 Working conditions: employment status and annual salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Annual salary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$100,000+</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time permanent</td>
<td>$81,000-$100,000</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time temporary</td>
<td>$61,000-$80,000</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time/temporary</td>
<td>$46,000-$60,000</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed at multiple institutions</td>
<td>$31,000-$45,000</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$20,000-$30,000</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data about respondents’ working conditions would be more meaningful in light of data about the Canadian professoriate were it available. Perhaps these working conditions are
indicative of the fact that the senior members of writing studies predominantly answered the survey. The finding that 66.7% of respondents are full-time permanent faculty is inconsistent with both Graves’s (1994) finding that 2/3 of those who taught writing twenty years ago were non-permanent, and an increase in part-time academic staff reported by CAUT (2012).

In 1994, Graves’s research questions to administrators were these: “How widespread is writing instruction within Canadian universities? What do we know about writing instructors? What kinds of writing instruction are provided?” (p. 42). He asked two questions to address gather information about writing instructors, the number of people teaching writing and their ranks, as well as whether or not they conduct research on writing. Graves found that most of those who taught writing were part-time lecturers or instructors, followed by TAs as the second highest category. He also found that only 31.8% of instructors of writing were reported to conduct research on writing, whereas 68% did not. It is important to a definition of writing studies to inventory who is teaching writing in Canadian universities in contemporary times. Writing is still largely taught by contingent labour. It would be interesting to examine the research activity and disciplinary identities of those who teach writing in Canadian universities.

5.4.2 Support for research

This research aimed to examine support for research as a condition of work so looked at access to research leaves, awards, and grant applications. Most respondents had access to research leaves. About 1/3 had been nominated for an award in the past five years. Just over half have applied for grants, and just under half have been co-applicants.
Table 5.8 Support for research and research activity in terms of awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to research leaves</th>
<th>Award nominations</th>
<th>Grant applications</th>
<th>Grant co-applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is some support for research; slightly more than half of respondents, 56.9%, have access to research leaves. Given that most of these are full time positions, 56.9% is perhaps low. This data, though, shows a definite improvement from Graves’s (1994) finding that 13% of institutions provided released time from teaching (p. 53). He also noted that “only 19% of institutions provide[d] research grants to faculty who conduct research in writing” (p. 53). Slightly more than half of the respondents to the current survey, 54.9%, have applied for grants in the past five years, and slightly less than half, 49%, have been co-applicants. These findings demonstrate that far more resources are available for research about writing than once were. In the current study, respondents were asked how much time they devoted to teaching, research, service, and administration. Research accounted for 20% or less of their workload for 60.9% of respondents, most having heavier teaching, service, and administrative loads.

Graves (1994) peripherally addressed the material conditions of research through a survey containing four questions about those who teach writing, the final two of which are focused on research activity: 1) the names of those who directed writing programs in the faculty being surveyed; 2) the number of people who teach writing, divided by academic rank; 3) whether or not faculty conducted research in writing, and 4) support for research in writing (p. 50-51). Clary-Lemon (2009) did not address the material conditions of research; her literature review of the research foci of those in rhetoric and composition/writing studies was politically
explicit in pointing to the field’s disciplinarity as evidenced by its shared body of knowledge. Graves’s (1994) survey respondents were administrators describing who taught writing at their institutions or those who administrators had passed the survey onto. Clary-Lemon (2009) narrowed to specific journals in the field and work done by those in the scholarly organizations of writing studies. Currently, work by Clary-Lemon, Mueller, Phelps, and Williams (2016) focuses on research being done by those in writing studies in Canada and how that research intersects with work being done internationally.

5.5 Summary

Respondents to the survey provide a picture of the people of writing studies through the materiality of their demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions. Most respondents were female, senior scholars with PhDs. Respondents worked in nine provinces, most often in research universities. They occupied 17 kinds of positions in 22 departments and areas, and reported to eight kinds of Deaneries. The majority of respondents had full-time permanent, but untenured positions. Just over half belonged to a union and earned annual salaries of $81,000 or more. In the past five years, just over half had access to research leaves and applied for grants. Just under half were co-applicants. Only about one quarter, though, were nominated for an award. In sum, respondents were predominantly female, senior scholars working in a broad range of departments and areas across the country in full time positions with some degree of support for research. Chapter 6 adds to this definition ways we can begin to define a collective identity for writing studies.
Chapter 6: Identity: definitions and uses of the term, “writing studies,”

membership in scholarly organizations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter adds to a growing definition of writing studies as, thus far, determined by the Canadian writing studies literature, my life writing, and the quantitative questions from the survey. So far, the literature demonstrates that the field is defined by its opposition to the myth, my life writing demonstrates a distinct body of knowledge acquired through study and mentorship, and the quantitative survey seems to confirm that the multitude of locations characteristic of the field historically survives today. Importantly, the survey gives more defined shape to those locations and adds data about demographics and working conditions to begin to make visible the people of writing studies, their understanding of themselves, their field, and their experiences in their daily work.

The “identity” section of the survey is informed by Smith’s (1990) framework in two ways. First, as with the quantitative elements of the survey, it acts as a way to begin outside objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling because it legitimizes an otherwise largely invisible, unheard, or misunderstood version of, in this case, the myth. The questions about identity value a history told by the people rather than by depoliticized systemic, male discourses. Second, the questions about identity are an attempt to unite women and men in writing studies with their experiences of the world and their understandings of themselves within it such that the subject avoids a “bifurcated consciousness” in Smith’s conception. Put another way, respondents are offered a chance to tell their own versions of themselves as members of this field, a field which, by definition, stands outside objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling.
This chapter presents themes from the qualitative data about respondents’ identities as members of writing studies. More specifically, respondents were asked about their definitions and uses of the term “writing studies,” their membership in and understanding of the scholarly organizations, and their identities as in writing studies or not. The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2008) procedures for thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke noted that themes can be established based on prevalence and determined inductively through “some level of patterned response or meaning” (p. 82). Themes can also be established deductively, chosen for salience to the research questions.

My analysis employed both approaches. I used an inductive approach by establishing themes within each question based on prevalence. Doing so was in concert with the shared aim of a people’s history and the framework of Smith’s (1990) alternative sociology of women because both aim to make the words of the otherwise silent and unheard more visible. The survey offered a somewhat informal space for writing, and I wanted to preserve respondents’ voices as I read and understood them. So, this chapter is mostly descriptive; the responses are largely unedited, and many responses appear in full. My analysis is also deductive in terms of my selection of specific data extracts to highlight, driven by their salience to the research questions.

This chapter presents data from seven qualitative questions about identity grouped into four subsections: definition of writing studies, uses of the term, “writing studies,” membership in scholarly organizations and subscription to list-servs, and identity as in writing studies or not. Within each subsection, the qualitative data are analyzed to determine themes based on prevalence or salience as appropriate. That is, I report on the themes within each question. Where clear themes emerged inductively, I analyze based on prevalence. Where themes are not clear, I analyze deductively, based on salience to the research question.
6.2 Definitions of writing studies

In attempting a collective definition of writing studies, respondents were asked to “[d]escribe their understanding of the term, ‘writing studies’” in Question 25 of the survey. Forty-eight of 53 respondents answered, for a total of 90.6%. The four most prevalent themes included the following: 1) the study of the teaching and learning of writing in predominantly academic settings, 2) the study of the sociality and complexity of language, 3) the wide scope of the term, “writing studies,” and 4) opposition to the myth. First, mention of the study of the teaching and learning of writing was found in 52% of responses. Within those, the focus was on academic, professional, and public settings, respectively. Second, 37.5% included, in their definition of writing studies, description of the study and teaching of the sociality and complexity of writing. The third most prevalent theme, at 27%, was of the term, “writing studies” as an umbrella, a catch-all for a broad, multi-disciplinary field built from, encompassing, or intersecting with an array of other fields and foci. A fourth theme, mentioned by 23% of respondents, was defining writing studies in opposition to essentialist notions of good writing, belletrism, and any combination of American rhetoric and composition, composition, or writing studies.

Respondents’ answers to Question 25 were complex; many included reference to most themes, and almost every response included more than one theme. There will, then, be considerable overlap in themes, but it is important to leave the respondents’ answers intact to demonstrate the complexity of individuals’ definitions. Most responses to Question 25 appear in full in the subsections of 6.2. The respondent and line numbers are cited parenthetically.
6.2.1 The study of the teaching and learning of writing in academic, professional, and public contexts

An obvious theme arose from the most mentioned characteristic of writing studies, at 52%, as the study of the teaching and learning of writing. Within this theme, there were frequent mentions of academic contexts, apparent, also, in most of the responses below. One respondent said, “my understanding is that writing studies represents a body of growing research and critical and theorized methodological approaches to understanding texts and contexts” (3, 753). Another noted, “[i]t is the study of how adults teach and learn how to write well, with particular attention to writing in the academy” (14, 764). A third wrote that it is the “study of various genres, types and purposes of writing. It would involve study of various styles of writing, the objective of writing and writing for various fields” (20, 770). One respondent similarly explained, “I understand it quite broadly to encompass theory, research, and pedagogy around writing. Although the term doesn't necessarily denote this, I do think of writing studies as centred around university writing” (47, 797). Likewise, “Writing Studies,” said one respondent, “encompasses what we know about language, genre, writing structures, and writing practices in disciplines and departments” (9, 759). In addition to “the academy,” “fields,” “university writing,” “disciplines and departments” some respondents mentioned professional and public contexts. One respondent included all three: Writing studies “examines writing pedagogy in advanced formal education as well as professions and public settings…” (24, 774). The key aspect of the most prevalent theme is that writing pedagogy in context is the main subject of study for respondents.

The emphasis on the study of the teaching and learning of writing in context is oppositional to the element of the myth that sees writing instruction as remediation. Remedial models reduce writing to error and instruction to repair of said error, which means writing
pedagogy is neither studied nor theorized. Respondents showed, on the contrary, that they studied a common subject, writing pedagogy. Moreover, “writing” is theorized as the sociality and complexity of writing from a number of angles related to its multi and interdisciplinary constitution, which is also counter to the myth, which reduces good writing to only adherence to the rules of Standard English.

6.2.2 The study and teaching of the sociality and complexity of writing

The study of the teaching and learning of writing, and of writing itself, is rooted in and driven by the epistemological belief in the sociality, and thus complexity, of language; almost all responses discussed the sociality of writing in some way, and roughly one third of respondents, 37.5%, paired the study of the sociality of writing with the teaching of it. Others pointed to the scope of writing, while others, still, mentioned rhetoric, rhetorical genre theory, genre, or discourse studies as the theoretical frameworks informing the study of that sociality.

The connection between the sociality of writing and the teaching of it was common. I have selected a few responses to highlight these emphases. One respondent noted the following: “I am committed to the study of the whole complex of what writing entails. What it means to express concepts in particular ways, genres, modes with particular rhetorical genres and strategies at play. What it means to teach what that means” (2, 752). Another noted, “I would say that the term takes in all the scholars and teachers interested in how people write (and teach writing) in many contexts and why they write in particular ways” (37, 787). Two responses similarly focused on teaching how writing works: writing studies is “the study of how writing works and how to teach it” (25, 774), and “[w]riting studies to me is a focus on the teaching and learning of writing” (16, 766). One respondent described writing studies as “[t]he study of how and why we write (‘write’ being a catch-all term for all communication—that is, rhetoric),
as well as the study of how to teach writing” (31, 781). Another response focused on the how and why of writing, noting that that the term refers to “[s]tudies of the conscious processes of writing clearly, using the conventions of the particular genre” (10, 760). One respondent similarly said, “[r]esearch into the teaching of writing. I see rhetoric as integral to writing studies” (36, 786), emphasizing that the teaching of writing is researched, and that the necessity of rhetoric is theorized sociality. One response perfectly captures the entanglement of scholarship and teaching:

It's an area of research, informed by classical and ‘new’ rhetorical theory, genre theory, pedagogical theory, and discourse analysis, that focuses on the rigorous analysis of writing as a social practice and of writing pedagogy. Scholarship in this area is often motivated by pedagogical issues, though it's not restricted to pedagogical question[s]. It tends to take a loosely social-sciency approach to the study of writing, but it has some humanities-style values and seems to still appreciate rhetorical theory and analysis. (34, 784)

This definition highlights writing studies as “an area of research,” then defines it as informed by 5 theoretical and methodological frameworks and focused on two topics of study, writing as social practice and writing pedagogy. It also points to interdisciplinary, indeed interfaculty, approaches using both social sciences and humanities traditions.

The sociality of language was addressed by other respondents through mention of its scope. One respondent said,

[w]riting studies is concerned with the role that written discourse plays in all parts of society including how writing is taught and acquired both formally and informally, as well as how written discourse mediates a wide variety of contexts such as academic, professional, and public contexts. (13, 763)

This response included the sociality of language, especially through the notion of discourse as mediation, the teaching and learning of writing, “acquired both formally and informally,” and a
range of contexts “in all parts of society.” Similarly, a respondent focused on the scope of the social action of writing:

The study of writing in all its many situations--everyday writing, writing inside institutions and organizations, research writing, public writing, political writing, and also literary writing. The study of writing in all its media. The study of the diverse roles and functions of writing in human societies, contemporary and historical. (28, 778)

These comments open up writing as social, as having “diverse roles and functions,” as living in the “every-day,” in “all parts of society,” in “human societies, contemporary and historical” in “all its media” and “all its many situations.” The size and scope of writing, and the fact that writing is something almost everyone does, means that it is not generally perceived as a subject of inquiry studied from specialist theoretical and methodological approaches. Respondents’ answers, though, demonstrate that the sociality of writing is itself a subject of study. My point is that writing studies is specialist. A person in writing studies is able to study writing anywhere. This is not to suggest, however, that such study means that a researcher in writing studies is able to understand a given context to the degree of those acting within that context. Of course they are not. They are not experts in the social activity of others. What they bring to the table, any table, is the ability to study the sociality of the language of people interacting in any given context and to make that sociality more apparent. What they gain is a deeper understanding of how the social actions of people are embodied in their texts. Writing pedagogy that is theorized and informed by research runs counter to the myth; teaching students and others to write in academic, professional, and/or public contexts means teaching them rhetorical adaptability not rules of grammar. It means teaching them how to study and assess texts and contexts to understand their own motivations, processes, and choices as writers within the available genres used by a given community. To the growing definition of writing studies we add that respondents defined the
term in ways that tell an oppositional version of the myth, of writing instruction as theorized and
good writing as rhetorically effective. Such versions are what Smith (1990) called “ruptures in
the fabric” of objectified forms of knowledge and relations of ruling. The presentation of a view
not normally heard exposes that which is normative, rendering it political and opening it up to
critique. One ways writing studies ruptures is through its diversity and multiplicity.

6.2.3 “Writing studies” as broad, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary

Theorizing and teaching the sociality of writing opens up complexities, so it is no
surprise that the term “writing studies” is broadly applied. The third theme, in order of
prevalence, was writing studies as a broad, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary field. It was
built from 27.5% of responses, all of which included use of the terms “catch-all,” “umbrella,” or
“broad,” as well as mention of multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, or connection to other
areas, disciplines, fields or approaches that respondents said fit, or were distinct from, writing
studies.

A few respondents took extremely overarching views. Two chose the term, “catch-all.”
One said, “I find it a loose catch-all for anything to do with writing. I wouldn't even call it a
field” (18, 768). The other stated that “writing studies” is “a catch-all term for all
communication—that is, rhetoric as well as the study of how to teach writing” (31, 781). Two
respondents did not use the term, “catch-all,” but described similar scope. The first noted that
writing studies included “[a]ny research that focusses on writing, writers or texts” (48, 798). The
second said, “[i]n my experience ‘writing studies’ can have a myriad of meanings, ranging from
the teaching of basic grammar to the study of stylistics and linguistics, with everything in
between (rhetoric, genre theory, composing theory, pragmatics, etc.)” (23, 773). These sweeping
definitions do not ring true with the majority of respondents’ answers, Clary-Lemon’s (2009)
literature review of the scholarship of the field over five decades, nor my experience.

Descriptions such as “anything to do with writing,” and “any research” focused on “writing, writers, or texts” do not reflect what the majority of respondents noted, which is that writing studies is focused on the study of the teaching and learning of writing in predominantly academic contexts and that it studies the sociality of writing. Likewise, these sweeping accounts do not match Clary-Lemon’s findings that there were five “topoi,” which she defined as “themes that might be seen as a loose taxonomy of Canadian writing research” (p. 98). They included the following: scholarship of definition, of the social construction of writing, of writing across the curriculum, of professional and technical communication, and of genre (p. 98). Her findings are in accordance with the majority of respondents. Writing studies is disciplinary: though it is a broad, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, across differences it shares an epistemological position, a subject of study, a body of knowledge, and a set of methodological and pedagogical approaches.

Some respondents narrowed from generalized definitions while preserving a sense of the breadth of writing studies work; three respondents referred to the term, “writing studies,” as an “umbrella,” providing detail by listing a combined 15 fields covered by it. One respondent said, “it’s a[n] umbrella term to consolidate composition, teaching, discourse studies, rhetoric, writing theory, educational practices and research on teaching, writing and reading, linguistic analyses of language and communication studies that explore discourse, genre theory and the disciplines”(29, 779). A second reflected:

I’ve thought of it as an umbrella term for all that I do (DA [discourse analysis]. RGS [rhetorical genre studies], Corpus studies, rhetoric, SOTL [scholarship of teaching and learning]), but also see in the U.S a distinction is made between Rhetoric, composition (studies about teaching and learning university writing), and Writing Studies (which I'm
thinking includes DA, corpus stuff, and Rhetorical and other kinds of studies of functional texts more broadly). (1, 751)

The third explained that “[t]his umbrella term covers a broad area of research and teaching fields that include rhetoric, composition, communication, genre studies, English (language), TESL and TEFL.” (42, 792). These are in accordance with Clary-Lemon’s (2009) findings about areas within writing studies which she noted as “discourse analysis, text linguistics, classical rhetoric, technical communication, genre studies, composition, pedagogy, and to a lesser extent, communication studies and English as a second or additional language” (p. 98). These definitions rebut claims that writing studies is a catch-all by establishing some parameters around writing studies activity.

Four respondents chose the term, “broad,” each narrowing their meaning of broad to different degrees. Two general responses were the following: “I understand this to be a broad term that covers anything connected with the scholarly exploration of writing” (11, 761), and writing studies “is often defined very broadly. For me the definition that best fits is one that emphasizes how people learn to write and are taught to write” (32, 782). A third respondent added considerable explanation in the following answer:

The study of how and why people write, how to teach writing, and the study of the modes of written texts. Also includes the variations in style, mode, and purpose of different groups, the politics related to these variations, and power exhibited through written text. Anything related to what writing is, how it is learned and taught, what uses it has, how it evolves and changes (especially related to the introduction of technology and multimedia), who uses it and for what purposes.... Writing Studies is a very broad field. (44, 794)

A fourth reflected on its utility: “it’s very broad. I like its plainness as a term, which allows for multiple disciplinary and theoretical entry points. Some of the research is less focused on the daily practicalities of writing instruction” (21, 771). A fifth used the term, “broad-based” and
explicitly mentioned multi-disciplinarity; writing studies, is “broad-based, multi-disciplinary, encompass[ing] rhetoric and composition” (38, 788). Another said it “[c]overs both professional and academic writing. In effect can also include personal writing. It is a multidisciplinary field” (41, 791). As with respondents’ uses of the term, “umbrella,” their uses of “broad,” follow much the same pattern, with some respondents noting a lack of parameters and others establishing parameters by defining what fits.

Descriptions of intersections and borders of related fields are included in the third theme of writing studies as a broad, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary field with its most prevalent emphasis on academic writing. The next set of responses either includes or makes distinctions between writing studies and other fields, namely creative writing and communications. There were contradictory responses in terms of creative writing. Three said it is included, two that it is not. One respondent wrote:

The study of the process of generating and producing texts/written discourse as well as the study of those texts themselves and of genre. Includes composition, rhetoric, and so-called ‘creative’ writing, as well as discourse analysis and stylistics. Illuminated as appropriate by linguistics, including grammar(s). (22, 772)

It is not clear what the respondent means by “so-called ‘creative’ writing” but she or he included it alongside other areas of study. A third agreed that creative writing is included in writing studies and also offered a list of areas:

Writing studies is an academic field of study focused on understanding the development of writing abilities, on understanding texts (in all the meanings of the term) and how they work, on improving the teaching of writing and communication in a variety of areas (including technical writing, creative writing, academic writing, media and oral communication), and on carrying out research on writing and writing instruction. (45, 795)

This response mentioned the first two themes, research on writing pedagogy and research on the sociality of writing, and then listed a variety of areas, including creative writing as second in the
list. The other areas listed, technical writing, academic writing, media and oral communication, were mentioned frequently.

Two respondents distinguished creative writing from writing studies but similarly included media and communications studies and oral communication. One said the following:

Writing studies: the academic study of writing. That is, as distinct from Creative Writing programs that may lead to an MFA (though there are certainly overlaps), writing studies is the study of writing as a medium of communication in all its diversity. As such, it might be considered as part of Media Studies or Communication Studies. (19, 769)

This respondent also focused on research, mentioning the study of writing “as a medium of communication in all its diversity.” This response also highlights the scope and complexity of writing. Similarly, another respondent preferred communications studies, arguing that writing also involves graphic and oral communication:

I see ‘writing studies’ as a term that encompasses communication because writing can (and does) include various forms of communication, many of which are incorporated in some way into a written piece, such as graphic communication. Even oral communication has a basis in writing in its use of speaker notes and slides. We use writing, in other words, to organize our thoughts and express our ideas. However, as a term, it can be restrictive, simply because it does specify writing. Personally, I would prefer ‘communication studies’. (35, 785)

Both respondents seemed to say that the communicative aspects of writing, its explicitly studied sociality, distinguished it from creative writing, and both preferred the use of “communication.” In addition to mentioning creative writing as distinct from writing studies, one respondent provided a lengthy discussion about which fields ought to be included and related to writing studies, as well as disciplinary alliances useful to writing studies. This response is particularly useful because it includes rationale to a greater degree than most.

The discipline in Canada should (and mostly does) include both the teaching of writing (especially academic and professional writing but not necessarily creative or literary writing), and research and analysis of writing and reading practices in academia and contemporary cultures (occasionally historical cultures). It may be related to cultural studies, but should
have a clearer focus and perspective on teaching and learning actual practices along with self-reflection and awareness. To reflect Canadian reality, it should also include applied linguistics, especially language acquisition as experienced by English language learners. An awareness of differences in global practices goes along with that. This list suggests some of the disciplinary alliances that are necessary and useful: English literature only perhaps, certainly education, linguistics, history, philosophy, anthropology. Writing studies needs to respect and when possible collaborate with any and all of the disciplines in which one’s students are studying, not just serve them or (worse) impose an external perspective on their discourse and communicative practices. (15, 765)

This response is evidence of the findings of this question generally. Writing studies is defined, at least in part, by its subject matter, the study of the teaching and learning of writing, predominantly academic writing but also professional and public, and the study of the sociality of language. Furthermore, it is a broad, multi and interdisciplinary field. This response suggested a relationship with seven additional disciplines.

Respondents defined writing studies as a broad, multidisciplinary field, describing a number of methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks in conjunction with various intersecting fields, including the following: rhetoric, writing pedagogy, rhetorical genre theory, discourse studies, discourse analysis, corpus studies, scholarship of teaching and learning, composing theory, composition, communications and media studies, education, linguistics, stylistics, pragmatics, grammar, TESL and TEFL, personal writing, as well as both inclusion and rejection of creative writing. Writing studies is united by its objects of inquiry, which are the study of the teaching and learning of writing in academic, professional and public contexts as well as the study of the sociality of writing. This is indeed a broad umbrella; a myriad of approaches, positions, and intersecting fields of study are evidenced by mention of 18 other fields in respondents’ definitions.

This multiplicity, coupled with diverse institutional locations, can render writing studies difficult to see and position it as non-disciplinary. In Smith’s (1990) terms, writing studies could
thus be said to exist outside objectified forms of knowledge in academia and the regulations of ruling that are disciplinary parameters, fluid though they may be. Exposing the accounts of those who are, in Smith’s words, “obliterated,” causes rupture. The fourth most prevalent theme within the responses that defined writing studies was opposition; contemporary, Canadian writing studies is also defined by what it is not and by the alternative versions of the myth that it tells.

6.2.4 Opposition

I move, now, to highlight responses that act as evidence of opposition to essentialist notions of writing perpetuated by the myth, to belletristic writing instruction, and to American composition. One respondent explicitly opposed, through use of “rather than,” “essentialist” notions of what makes good writing, which she or he described as “unhelpful” and “damaging”:

a social constructionist approach to writing that recognises the importance of discourse communities and the situated nature of writing practices - where the forms of communication reflect and reinforce the communication situation. Also an approach that considers writing effectiveness from a user’s perspective rather than unhelpful and damaging concepts associated with essentialist notions of what makes 'good' writing. (6, 756)

This respondent positioned social constructionism in opposition to essentialist notions, noting that the effectiveness of writing is considered “from a user’s perspective.” Another respondent made opposition to remediation explicit, arguing that it is a product of schooling connected with unhelpful and damaging concepts. The respondent opposed the myth through emphasis on the field’s study of the sociality of writing:

This is a tough one. I think my colleagues and I (in the Canadian associations mentioned above) have worked implicitly and explicitly to define (and in part control) the definition of writing studies -- not as a field that studies remedial activity (a product of schooling), but a field that has complex and varied interests in all the ways we write, the reasons we write, the selves and communities we write into being, and the power relations implicit in all this 'writing'. (46, 796).
This response is interesting, also, in that it affirms a sense of community for writing studies and a position that writing studies scholars “have worked implicitly and explicitly to define (and in part control) the definition of writing studies.” For this respondent, writing studies is defined by its opposition to the element of the myth that positions writing instruction as remedial. Moreover, the implicit work to which this respondent refers is a kind of opposition to the third element of the myth, that writing instructors are non-disciplinary.

The theme of opposition defined the field, at least in part, by what it is not. One such opposition was to the belletristic tradition. One respondent explained:

I think this term addresses the teaching of and research into discursive practices (i.e., written and verbal communication) with a particular emphasis on underlying social motives and related rhetorical practices as opposed to belletristic features. The field of Writing Studies is richly informed by various, often complementary, theoretical perspectives, including but not limited to genre studies, discourse analysis, linguistics, classical rhetoric, popular rhetorics, composition, literacy studies, technical and workplace writing, and cultural studies. (5, 755)

A few respondents explicitly distinguished Canadian approaches from American ones, yet, others explicitly described them as synonymous. Two respondents separated Canadian and American approaches through uses of the terms, “distinguish,” and “differentiate”:

Pedagogically I locate the term within a writing-in-the-disciplines approach and a rhetorical genre studies approach to teaching academic writing. I distinguish these approaches and thus the term ‘writing studies’ from an American approach to teaching something called ‘composition,’ which does not historically account for disciplinary differences and as such tends to be prescriptive and universalizing. (33, 783)

I think of ‘writing studies’ as the scholarly investigation of the best ways to support academic writing. By defining it that way, I am trying to differentiate it from Comp Rhet. In other words, I see my scholarly work as a direct extension of my classroom work: in the classroom, I teach writing and in my research I try to understand the best ways to do that. In some ways, this makes writing studies closer to Education than to English. (26, 776)
Both explicitly separated writing studies from American composition, the first on the grounds that it tends not to account for disciplinary differences. The second respondent does not make clear what is distinct, the “scholarly investigation” or the “academic writing.”

Two respondents addressed American terminology, as the term “writing studies” is also used in American contexts. Both noted a relationship with discourse studies, one saying that writing studies does not include discourse studies and another that it does. One noted the following:

‘Writing studies’ has a distinctly American sensibility for me, perhaps because I trained there, but I do not identify with the US rhet/comp tradition at all and thus tend to avoid ‘writing studies.’ ‘Discourse studies’ feels more inclusive to me and I was [able to] easily associate that term with SFL, ESP, and emerging Brazilian and Scandinavian traditions with the term. (27, 777)

This respondent’s perspective is interesting in terms of a core difference between it and the respondents who reported that they used “writing studies” precisely to differentiate from a U.S. approach. This respondent described association of the term “writing studies” with “a distinctly American sensibility.” While the respondent trained in the U.S., she or he does not identify with that tradition “at all.” This respondent chooses “discourse studies” as a term that “feels more inclusive” in that she or he could associate it with specific traditions.

Another respondent distinguished some terminology used in the U.S. and saw discourse studies as under an umbrella of writing studies:

I've thought of it as an umbrella term for all that I do (DA, RGS, Corpus studies, rhetoric, SOTL), but [I] also see in the U.S a distinction is made between Rhetoric, composition (studies about teaching and learning university writing), and Writing Studies (which I'm thinking includes DA, corpus stuff, and Rhetorical and other kinds of studies of functional texts more broadly). (1, 751)

This respondent noted that in the U.S., writing studies is understood as the study of “functional texts more broadly,” whereas rhetoric is distinct, as is composition, which is more about “the
teaching and learning of university writing.” This study’s finding is that respondents group the study of the teaching and learning of academic writing and the study of the sociality of writing, of the functionality of texts, into the single term, “writing studies.”

An interesting, because contradictory, finding is the fact that 16% of respondents listed “composition,” “composition studies,” or “composing theory” as part of writing studies rather than separate from it. It is not clear to what extent the term, “composition,” is associated with American contexts. One respondent enacted this uncertainty in the following statement: “I don't have a good sense of this. I taught composition for years in a US institution, so have a good grasp of composition studies. Is that the same?” (7, 757). Two explicitly said that they equated the terms. The first explained that “Rhetoric and Professional Writing is the focus of the discipline at [my university]. I equate writing studies with composition studies” (43, 793), and the second reflected, “It's not a term I use, but I do see it as an equivalent to what I would mean when I use the term Composition Studies” (17, 767). Others mentioned composition as included in writing studies (5, 7, 8, 12, 22, 23, 38, 40, 42). One respondent captured the intricacies and complexities of intertwined terminology, describing relationships among writing studies, rhetoric and composition, and discourse studies:

Writing Studies, for me, implies the study both of how writing works to accomplish things in the world (including but [no]t limited to professional and technical writing, Rhetorical Genre Studies, etc.) and how skill in writing is taught and learned. It does not exclude speech and other textual forms, making it sayable in the same breath as Discourse Studies, but the name implies that a concentration on writing is paramount. I see it as roughly synonymous with Rhetoric and Composition, without as much of the remedial feel that bedeviled composition and without as much of the philosophical and historical turn that can accompany Rhetoric in the speech communication tradition. Writing Studies emphasises that side of the field most closely associated with English departments. Unfortunately I have found that even fewer people outside the field know what Writing Studies means than know what Rhetoric and Composition means, so the shift in terminology may not be working very well. (30, 780)
This response is interesting in that it explicitly describes the invisibility of the field in the sense that those outside the field tend not to know what it means. Moreover, this respondent described a shift in terminology from rhetoric and composition, which is different from two respondents, one who felt the term was “outmoded,” (39, 789) and the second who said: “Well, this is the first time I've heard it. I suppose it includes composition theory and pedagogy, as well as the social/psychological/interpersonal aspects of writing and revising” (8, 758). This last response demonstrates that even while this respondent had not previously heard the term, she or he defined it, even if rather generally, in terms of the teaching of writing and its sociality.

Respondents made clear that the term, “writing studies,” means different things to different people in different contexts, but that there are three uniting themes prevalent: writing studies is the study of the teaching and learning of writing in predominantly academic contexts, the study of the sociality of language through specific theoretical frameworks, most commonly genre studies, rhetoric, and discourse studies, and that its breadth includes a number of other areas and fields.

I am interested, particularly, in respondents’ uses, or not, of the term because, as one respondent put it, the term is “meant to be inclusive and broad….It is an attempt to create a broad enough label that each university or college could use it to group their own particular version of courses and programs”(12, 762). This response resonates with me; I do think that across the country we use it to “group [our] own particular version.” The term, “writing studies,” registered for me around 2008, most notably at the CASDW conference, and I felt, from then on, that even if I was not sure what it meant, and even if it was only recognizable to the people in it, that at least I had a name for the field to which I belonged.
6.3 Uses of the term, “writing studies”

Respondents were asked, in Question 27, about their uses of the term: “[e]xplain your use, or lack thereof, of the term, ‘writing studies.’ If you use it, when do you use it? If you do not use it, describe ways you name your field or discipline.” Fifty of 53 respondents answered, for a total of 94.3%. As in section 6.2, I derived themes based on prevalence, the number of mentions of particular points and included in the subsections of 6.3 most of the responses. I also selected data extracts for salience. From the points of view of the marginalized, it seems clear that few people outside writing studies have ever heard the term, let alone know what it means. Eliciting respondents’ accounts of their own uses of the term, or rejection of it, puts the term on the table at least, puts the subject back in, for Smith (1990). The most prevalent theme was that uses of the term “writing studies” by respondents were situationally dependent, that people alter the term depending on whom they are talking to and why they are using it. Within this theme, there was debate about the degree to which the term is recognizable as well as its capacity to hold the field’s activities. Where and when it is used by respondents, it is most often used to point to research activity. Third, some respondents reported that they do not use the term and offered alternative terms, descriptions, and rationale, while others combined it with another term to better reflect what they do.

6.3.1 Situationally dependent: recognizability and capacity of the term

Respondents’ answers suggest that they assess what others know about their field before they chose words to describe it, tending to use “writing studies” within the field where it is recognizable. There were a number of mentions of lack of recognizability, an invisibility which
points to the necessity of a people’s history informed by an alternate sociology of women. One respondent said,

I do use the term, but it depends whom I'm talking to. I also sometimes say, ‘rhetoric and composition studies,’ if I'm speaking with someone more familiar with the US system or if I want to be sure they don't think I do creative writing. If I'm talking to someone in CASDW, say, I'd say ‘writing studies.’ (33, 848)

The respondents’ report of using the term with “someone in CASDW” indicates insider use.

Another noted:

I use the term ‘writing studies’ to define the area I work in and the body of research and methodologies that inform the way I think about text and contexts and teach writing. I use this term in professional contexts...outside of professional contexts, I just say I teach writing.(3, 818)

This respondent reported using the term “in professional contexts.” Similarly, a third respondent described using the term with “colleagues” and explained contingencies that inform his or her choice of term:“[w]ith colleagues, if/when asked about my theoretical orientation to the teaching of writing, I might use this term, and then follow it up with more specific details regarding what the field essentially entails -- I don't expect it to be familiar to others”(5, 820). This respondent explicitly stated that she or he does not expect others to be familiar with the term, and noted that even if using it with colleagues, she or he would “follow it up” with more information about the field. The need to explain the term with its use is evidence that “writing studies” as a term is foreclosed upon by relations of ruling because it is not visible on a normative landscape.

Another reported similar choices arising from a lack of familiarity with the term outside the field:

I use the term writing studies mostly within my department to distinguish myself from the many other fields of study that fall under the umbrella of applied linguistics and discourse studies in the department. I sometimes use it with friends and family as an alternative to discourse studies when the word ‘discourse’ elicits blank stares. Mostly I find that it is a
term only known to people who consider themselves a part of writing studies and not really recognized outside of that group.

This respondent also described using the term in insider ways, making decisions to use writing studies to distinguish what she or he does within a department as well as with family and friends to replace the word, “discourse,” which “elicits blanks stares.” As with previous respondents, there was explicit reference to the lack of recognizability of the term, “only known to people who consider themselves part of writing studies.”

The lack of familiarity with the term among those outside the field and use within insiders is confirmed by yet another respondent, one who also showed a sense of humour:

I use it with people in or near the field who will know what I am talking about. With others I use Rhetoric and Composition, which requires somewhat less explaining. My one-line answer to the ‘What do you do’ question usually goes something like ‘Rhetoric and Composition, which means that I study how people learn to write and how we can best facilitate that.’ Or if I don’t want to get a puzzled look or a long discussion of how awful writing is these days, I just say ‘I’m a welder.’

The description of avoiding “a long discussion of how awful writing is these days” points to evidence of complaint about language and persistence of the myth that student writing is deficient. The joke about telling people she or he is a welder is important because it speaks to the myth’s ubiquity; tell people one teaches writing and a discussion about deficient writing ensues. Equally, this respondent joked about being a welder to avoid “a puzzled look.”

While the previous five respondents noted that the term is not recognizable outside the field, some have, paradoxically, noted that they use it precisely because it is “more widely understood” and is “easily understandable,” though neither of these usages indicates to whom. There is also some debate about the capacity of the term to capture the full range of activities that happen in the field. One respondent showed that it does have capacity to capture the range of his or her scholarship.
I use ‘writing studies’ to explain the field in which I have my doctorate, though officially it is from ‘Education studies.’ I also use the term when I introduce myself and my academic background because it is easily understandable and seems to me to encompass my interdisciplinary academic background which includes English, psychology, and education. Neither of these alone really cover[s] what I view as my area of interest and expertise as well as ‘writing studies’ does. (46, 861)

This respondent described writing studies as able to “encompass [her or his] interdisciplinary background” and noted that none of the disciplines in that background “really covers” what she or he does as well as the term, “writing studies.” Another conveyed, similarly, that

[w]riting studies captures the full range of academic, research and teaching experience which includes education, literacy, creative writing, curriculum theory and implementation, critical theory about social institutional life, [and] the teaching of research and academic writing.(28, 843)

One respondent explained, “I like it because it's a very broad term that gets at the multi-disciplinary aspects of what I do and the collaborative work [I] do with others in different disciplines. It goes well beyond English departments” (38, 853). Another noted it as a term useful for describing a secondary interest:

I use it as a synonym for composition studies, but it is preferable nowadays because it is more widely understood and seems more broad. My main discipline is rhetorical studies, or rhetorical communication, or rhetorical history, and writing studies is a secondary area of interest, insofar as it intersects with rhetoric. (23, 838)

This respondent positioned her or his primary discipline as rhetorical studies, with writing studies as a secondary area preferable to the term, “composition studies,” because it is more widely understood and is broader.

On the other hand, one respondent did not feel the term could encapsulate the work of the field because it narrowed the notion of texts to written texts, because of “writing.”

I am not certain that ‘writing studies’ is going to be able to hold space for the kind of work emerging from our field. There is too much digital work coming down the pipeline that uses our disciplinary framework but cannot be easily ‘read’ as writing by outsiders. Like everyone else in the field, I look at how texts move people to take action.
But it's 2015 and there are many kinds of texts that do this that cannot be read as writing, particularly online. I tend to go with ‘rhetorician’ or ‘digital rhetorician’ because it lets me avoid assumptions that I'm (limited to) studying traditionally understood writing. (36, 851)

I also find interesting in this response the phrase “like everyone else in the field, I look at how texts move people to take action,” an affirmation that one unifying aspect of the field is its study of the sociality of language.

Returning to the notion of capacity, to which of the field’s activities the term is useful for, most respondents noted that they use “writing studies” to describe their research and make distinctions between their scholarship and their teaching. One response, in particular, made a crucial distinction between teaching writing and teaching writing studies, a distinction that warrants discussion. The respondent said:

I like the term and do use it to describe my scholarly work. The weakness of the term, however, is that it doesn't describe my teaching very well. It seems inaccurate to describe myself as a professor of writing studies (because I don't teach writing studies, I just teach writing).(25, 840)

This response makes an interesting point that I think is core to a definition of the field. The respondent said, “It seems accurate to describe myself as a professor of writing studies (because I don’t teaching writing studies, I just teach writing).” Based on respondents’ definitions, the two premises upon which one identifies as in writing studies or not are whether they study both the teaching and learning of writing and the sociality of writing as well as whether or not they consider themselves to teach writing studies or just to teach writing. Three themes were identified in respondents’ definitions of the term, “writing studies.” Those themes were the following: the study of the teaching and learning of writing, the study of the sociality of writing, and “writing studies” as a broad multidisciplinary field. I think the differences within writing studies come from different relationships to the three themes. For instance, if a person studies the
teaching and learning of writing but not its sociality, they may be more inclined toward pedagogical research, education, ESL, academic and professional writing. If a person studies the sociality of writing but not the teaching and learning of it, they may be more at home in discourse studies, genre studies, communications, or linguistics.

I would argue, for instance, that I do teach writing studies even when I am “just” teaching writing. That is, I can distinguish between an upper level course in new rhetorical genre theory and a first year writing course that helps students learn to read and write effectively in academic genres. But, I still teach the students in that first year course the epistemological framework of language as socially situated, of good writing as dependent on use. I still teach them methodologies of rhetorical and discourse analysis. And because I teach these explicitly, I consider myself to teach writing studies no matter what I teach. I explicitly teach the sociality of writing. Respondents have argued that writing studies is the study of the teaching and learning of writing in academic, professional, or public contexts as well as the study of the sociality of language. Respondents also believed that the term is broad and multidisciplinary, so there is room to use it in different ways for different reasons. It is difficult, too, to illustrate that the subject matter of writing studies can be how to write well by applying theoretically informed pedagogical frameworks to the reading and writing of texts. Given that respondents reported that they use the term to distinguish their research from their teaching, it is important to explore these distinctions further.

6.3.2 To describe research

Some respondents reported that they used “writing studies” to describe their research, but tended not to use it to describe their teaching. One noted, “I use it as a designation for my affiliation within the University; for grant proposals when I need to identify my scholarly area”
Yet others pointed to a discomfort with using the term if they were not actively engaged in research. For instance, one respondent explained:

> If I have to identify my place in the university, I usually use the term ‘writing specialist’ since I don't actively contribute to the scholarship in the field. I feel like I would need to do so in order to identify as being part of ‘writing studies’ - as it is, all I do is absorb the scholarship out there and do the occasional conference presentation.

This respondent linked research contributions to identity as part of writing studies, making the point that teaching writing does not equal identification with the field. Likewise, another said, “I would probably use it fairly infrequently as I'm not in a position to define myself as a researcher. I do…research but it's not required of me in my job”.

A fourth respondent stated the following: “[i]n the normal course of my work, I tend to use the term 'writing instruction' because most of my work is pedagogical rather than research. I tend to use 'writing studies' when I'm talking about the research on my field”.

A number of respondents reported using writing studies to refer to their research or to the scholarship in the field as distinct from their teaching.

On the other hand, two respondents reported using the term to refer to both their teaching and research. The first said, “[p]rimarily, I use the term to describe the university writing studies courses I teach. However, sometimes I use the term to describe to outsiders (academics who are not rhetoricians) some of the objects of study in the fields of writing and rhetoric”.

This respondent separated use of the term primarily to describe courses taught and occasionally with “outsiders” to make visible “some of the objects of study in the fields of writing and rhetoric.” A second respondent mentioned both teaching and research, but explained “the research and theoretical frameworks” that inform pedagogy:

> We use the term writing studies when we refer to the research and theoretical frameworks in which we position our Writing Centre's pedagogy. Primarily, we would use it in when...
speaking with faculty, instructors, and administration. We use it in our own teaching discussions and in discussion with writing centre colleagues at other institutions. We refer to Composition Studies in similar contexts. (40, 855)

This respondent highlighted use within their “own teaching discussions and in discussions with writing centre colleagues at other institutions.” Another respondent reported use of “writing studies” to describe and legitimize teaching:

I use Writing Studies whenever I speak of teaching writing—though it is not an official term in my university, it is on my business card (English and Writing Studies). I use it to ensure that what I do is more highly regarded than the value placed on ‘comp’. (21, 836)

Included in this response is the use of writing studies to distinguish it from “comp” such that it is “more highly regarded.” Moreover, another respondent focused on legitimacy, reporting that she or he uses “the term ‘writing studies’ when training TAs and collaborating with disciplinary faculty. The term helps to legitimate a field that is widely misunderstood” (8, 823). Respondents’ descriptions of their uses of the term, “writing studies,” work in concert with the most prevalent theme in their definition, the study of the teaching and learning of writing in predominantly academic contexts. It appears that they most often use the term to describe their study as well as to demonstrate that their pedagogy is informed by research.

6.3.3 Alternative terms

A fair number of respondents did not use the term, “writing studies,” offering various alternatives including the following: spins on “rhetoric and composition,” “discourse studies,” “communication,” “engineering,” and “writing centres.” As is the case in the literature, the terms “rhetoric” and “composition” are so entangled as to require much study to understand that relationship; moreover we see evidence of the distinction between U.S. rhetoric and composition and Canadian writing studies reflected in responses here:
• “I do prefer ‘rhetoric and composition’ or ‘comp/rhet,’ but I’ve begun to use ‘writing studies’ since returning to Canada since it's the most familiar to most people.” (30, 845)

• “I actually identify with the term Composition and Rhetoric, probably because of my training and orientation towards NCTE and CCCC.” (16, 831)

• “The other term that best applies is ‘composition studies.’” (31, 846)

• “I identify as a rhetorician.” (26, 841)

• “It is in the name of the courses that I teach, so I have to use it. I also choose to use it, since it seems to me both broader and more accurate that ‘Rhetoric and Composition’ (which also carries U.S. American baggage): that is ‘writing studies’ includes rhetoric (insofar as one is looking at the rhetoric of writing) and composition but is not reducible to either.” (18, 833)

• “Alternatives are ‘composition’. I usually identify my field as ‘rhetoric and writing studies.’” (35, 850)

There are also combinations fusing rhetoric with discourse studies. For instance, one respondent noted:

I usually join the term 'writing studies' with rhetoric and discourse analysis because others often interpret 'writing studies' as teaching remediation. I want to convey a sense of the complexity of the field and the sorts of theoretical/analytical frameworks that inform it (I like the focus on 'studies' and the methods I use to study writing are rhetorical and discourse analytic). (47, 862)

This use of writing studies acts as explicit opposition to the myth, to counter interpretations of writing studies as “teaching remediation” and “to convey a sense of the complexity of the field” as informed by theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches.

Another noted a preference for discourse studies: “I tend not to use it to describe what I do. I prefer to use terms like discourse studies, discourse analysis, rhetorical genre analysis, professional writing, academic writing” (22, 837). One respondent provides extensive rationale for a similar choice in terminology:
I have stopped using ‘writing studies’ a few years ago and am now using ‘writing & discourse studies’ instead. Adding ‘discourse’ moves us away from unwanted stereotyping as ‘writing teachers’ and links us productively with the rich field of discourse studies, which is very active in European universities and also allows us to highlight connections to related academic disciplines (we need all the allies), e.g. subfields in sociology, linguistics, political science, journalism. I use the term ‘writing & discourse studies’ all the time; it is my field. (27, 842)

It seems that the preference for “discourse studies” or the pairing of it with “writing studies” is meant to highlight the study of the sociality of language as a key definition of writing studies. Discourse studies refocuses attention that misinterprets or stereotypes writing studies work as simply teaching writing, opposing the myth as an objectified form of knowledge that tells an inaccurate story.

Still others identified in communication, often also in engineering, as the discipline within which they teach and study writing. One respondent said:

I name my field as engineering communication, more broadly as communication. Writing studies sounds pretty arcane, and I couldn't even give it a reasonable definition…. If I wanted a larger professional designation around writing, I would use 'Rhetoric’ because I'm much more interested in argument than in comma placement (which is what writing studies makes me think of). (17, 832)

Interesting, too, that this respondent said the term sounded arcane, while another noted, “I don't use it often, as it seems archaic,”(39, 854). In addition, this respondent identified a difference between her or his field as engineering communication and a “larger professional designation around writing,” noting that “writing studies” seems like grammar instruction rather than a preferred term, “rhetoric,” which refers, here, to argument. Two others similarly reported the following: “My field specifically is engineering communication, though the broader field is engineering education. This has been more and more the case in the last few years,”(34, 849) and “I use the terms ‘engineering writing’, ‘technical writing’ and ‘professional communication’
interchangeably” (42, 857). It appears that within writing studies are communities that study the teaching and learning of writing in specific disciplinary and/or professional contexts.

There was some evidence that those working in writing centres tend not to use the term because it does not reflect their work. One respondent noted that she or he rarely had to name her or his field, an indication, perhaps, of this respondent’s institutional role:

I generally only have to name my field when talking to people who are not familiar with it. I often use the term ‘writing development’ because my role as a Writing Centre Director and as a teacher of a first year academic writing course is focused on developing student writing skills in our particular academic setting. (45, 860)

This respondent’s answer has the marks of institutional location and the widely perceived role of writing centres as providing developmental instruction in skills. Another respondent who worked in a writing centre described an entirely different identity than writing studies: “[m]y discipline is management. Our business is providing great writing tutorials. Our research ensures that our programming meets its learning outcomes, we are helping enough but not too much, and that we are serving the entire campus” (7, 822). This response has obvious disciplinary differences focused on running a business and managing a service. It would be interesting to learn more about what it might mean to help “enough but not too much.”

The data demonstrates that the contingency and diversity of the use, or lack thereof, of the term, “writing studies,” embodies the diversity of demographics, institutional locations and professional roles, and of epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical priorities. Another way to flesh out collective identity for the field, alongside identification with, and definition and use of the term “writing studies,” is to examine respondents’ belonging to and identification with scholarly organizations as well as descriptions of the ways in which those organizations are similar and distinct.
6.4 Membership in scholarly organizations and subscription to list-servs

Question 21 was quantitative, asking respondents to “rank order [their] interest in the following organizations, CASDW, CASLL, CSSR, CWCA, and CCCC.” Forty-nine of 53 respondents answered, for a total of 92.5%.

Table 6.1 Percentage of respondents who ranked the organizations first

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Percentage of first place ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASDW</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWCA</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCC</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASLL</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSR</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASDW was the preferred organization, ranked first by 49% of respondents. CWCA was ranked second, at 24.5%, and CCCC third at 20.4%. Substantially fewer respondents, 4.1% and 2% respectively, ranked CASLL or CSSR first. Interestingly, no respondents ranked CASDW last and 55.6% of respondents marked CSSR last.

Subscription to list-servs is another way to begin to understand why people belong to the communities of writing studies. Question 23 asked respondents to indicate which list-servs they subscribe to, and they could choose more than one. Forty-five respondents, 85%, answered. There was an error in the initial survey such that one list-servs’ respondents were only able to click one list-serv, but this error was repaired and resent correctly a number of times. Subscription to the list-servs reflects the same interest in CASDW and comparative lack of interest in CSSR, but shows considerably more interest in CASLL than its rank in the previous question suggests.

Table 6.2 Percentage of respondents who subscribe to list-servs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization’s List-serv</th>
<th>Percentage of subscribers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASDW</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASLL</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWCA</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSR</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASDW had the highest percentage of subscribers, indicating its primacy. This section examines the scholarly organizations through respondents’ descriptions of their choice of ranks for the organizations and ways they said that the organizations are similar and distinct. The choices present combined answers to Questions 22 and 24, which read as follows: “Describe the focus of the organization you ranked first, and explain why you ranked it first,” and “Discuss ways in which you see the organizations as similar and distinct.” Fifty-one respondents (96.2%) answered Question 22, and 44 (83%) answered Question 24. As before, the parenthetical reference to the survey will begin with the question number, followed by the respondent and line numbers.

6.4.1. CASDW

The majority of respondents who chose to rank CASDW first reported that they did so because it is research or theoretically based, focused on genre and discourse studies, and most closely tied to respondents’ areas of interest. Additional reasons included that it is the broadest in scope, that it is familiar and provides a sense of community, and that it is Canadian. I present descriptions of CASDW in relation to the rankings and descriptions of the other organizations in the subsections that follow.
6.4.2 CWCA

Whereas respondents stated that CASDW is the most theoretically oriented, CWCA was notable to respondents, they said, for its obvious focus on writing centres, practice and pedagogy. One respondent said, “CWCA focuses on “research-informed practice in writing centres” (22, 10, 636). Another said, “I ranked the Canadian Writing Centre Association first because the only academic focus of my work in this position is writing centre work. At this time, I need to stay focused on writing centre work as I don't have the time or resources to engage with writing studies generally” (22, 11, 637). One respondent explained, “[w]e are all interested in teaching writing. The downside of CWCA is that it is more marketing driven and interested in discussing how WCs survive in Student Services. The members are sometimes more academically focused in one organization compared to another” (24, 34, 731). One respondent distinguished CWCA from CASDW on similar grounds: “CWCA is concerned with the field of the practice of writing, writing tutoring, and writing centres, specifically. CASDW is concerned with the writing discourse and research” (24, 35, 732). CWCA is focused on writing centres, and the fact that it was ranked second suggests that a number of respondents work in writing centres.

6.4.3 CCCCs

While CCCCs is American, it was ranked above CASLL and CSSR and described as ranked first because it is the highest profile and the most comprehensive. CCCCs originated in 1949, at least 30 years before the first Canadian organizations. So Canadian scholars had to rely on the U.S. literature, and do so, still, due to its sheer volume compared to work in Canada. Moreover, a number of Canadian scholars have been trained in the U.S. or trained by American scholars who were trained in the U.S. One respondent explained, “I was trained in the US, so I'm most familiar with CCCC, though I worked to get involved with CASDW and CASLL even from
afar. But CCCC remains the most comprehensive and active organization I'm involved with” (22, 31, 657). One respondent referred to CCCC’s size as a strength: “I've presented at CCCC a few times but I've never attended the Canadian conferences. (This is not for a lack of interest, but rather that flights within the US are hundreds of dollars cheaper. I can also meet with people in my sub-field far more easily due to the size of the conference)” (22, 37, 663). On the contrary, one noted CCCC’s size as a limitation: “CCCC is a major international professional organization with a broad global focus on the development of writing studies, composition and communication. However, it is HUGE. CASDW is great for interpersonal research interaction and development of team projects” (22, 43, 669). One respondent helped me to see other organizations I ought to have included while also choosing that organization based on size: “If I'd had the chance, I would have ranked the organization WAC ahead of CCCC/NCTE, for its relevant focus, connection with others in my field(s) of interest, and its manageable size,”(15, 641). The ranking of U.S. organizations, especially CCCC's, indicates an interest by Canadian writing studies scholars in American scholarship.
6.4.4 CASLL

CASLL has recently engaged in a number of list-serv discussions about its future and has refurbished itself as an organization that meets adjacent to CASDW and provides a forum for members to bring drafts of work in progress and to receive feedback from friendly colleagues. I offer one response that highlights the role of CASLL while usefully defining CASDW and CCCCs simultaneously:

There is much overlap in memberships and structure. There is also the common problem of encouraging membership and participation, especially when institutions may not be willing to support professional memberships. Though the focus of each organization is different, I think the organizations would benefit by combining forces and creating SIGs for particular interest groups. (24, 41, 738)

The organizations serve different, but overlapping, purposes, and responses showed that there was some appetite for “combining forces.” There has been, in recent years, some talk of the relationships among the organizations, as well as whether or not some of them should combine and if so which ones. At the CASDW AGM in May 2016, it was noted that only four people had paid CASLL membership, and that those members, and those of CASDW, may want to think about what should become of CASLL. For the time being, it seems that each organization has an overlapping interest in some aspect of writing studies, but that generally speaking, the data show respondents’ interest in the organizations as motivated by the following:

- CASDW is the primary organization of Canadian writing studies, is the most research oriented and focused on genre and discourse studies.
- CWCA is focused on writing centres in terms of administration, practice, and theory.
- CCCC is the most reputable and largest organization and has a U.S. focus.
- CASLL is focused on pedagogy and on scholars as writers, providing a sense of intimacy, community, and connection.
- CSSR is focused on the study of rhetoric, especially historical rhetoric.

Whether or not the organizations combine forces, they stand as a collection of organizations that mirrors the scope and complexity of the field itself.

**6.5 Identity as in writing studies or not**

Respondents were asked, “Do you identify your field as writing studies?” in Question 26 of the survey. Fifty-one of 53 respondents, 96.2%, answered. Approximately 2/3 of the respondents identified as in writing studies (63%), while just over 1/3 did not (37%).

Respondents were also asked, in Question 31, to “describe any benefits of identity as a writing studies researcher and instructor.” Only 37 of 53 respondents answered, 69.8%, which is considerably fewer than for any other question. The answers were diverse. While a few respondents felt that identifying in writing studies was not beneficial, most did report that they thought it was useful. Their responses were grouped into a number of themes in order of prevalence. First, respondents noted that they identify as in writing studies to accurately describe their work and to show the field as legitimate. Second, respondents felt that there were benefits for flexibility of work and employability in terms of versatility. Third, respondents felt that identifying as in writing studies honours their pedagogy, and there was mention of a sense of community.

Before presenting respondents’ answers, it is important to note that some did not see identifying in writing studies as a benefit. As was reported by respondents in their answers to other questions, two respondents reported that they do not identify as in writing studies because of lack of recognizability to others. One respondent claimed that “[n]o one understands what it
means” (20, 1068). Another said they like “[h]aving a precise label. The problem is that most people don’t know what writing studies is. I think that it’s worse in Québec, because the discipline is even more recent” (37, 1085). Others reported that they choose other descriptors. For instance, one said the following:

see my previous comment about using ‘writing & discourse studies’ as the phrase of choice. Some people outside the field continue to sneer at ‘writing studies.’ Doesn't seem sufficiently theoretical-sounding, perhaps, or not enough steeped in old world academic tradition. But it is what we do: study the work of writing and discourse. And crucial work it is. (19, 1067)

This respondent argued that “people outside the field continue to sneer at ‘writing studies’” so she or he adds “discourse studies.” One said about benefits, “don't see any. I'd rather identify as a communication expert” (12, 1060), and another explained, “[a]gain, I always say that my field is Composition and Rhetoric” (11, 1059). Another respondent does not believe there are benefits of identifying as in writing studies, and usefully points to an issue with the question:

I don't see it as a benefit (that's kind of a leading question, isn't it?). I do research because running a good service means that I am checking the quality of existing programming, piloting new programming, and ensuring that the work we do incorporates new, best practices at other institutions. I also do research to prove why we are worthy of being funded, year after year. (1, 1049)

This respondent seems to see the term as not applicable to his or her work “running a good service,” “checking quality, piloting new programming” and incorporating “new, best practices,” doing research to justify funding. These are terms of management and business; this respondent’s motivation for doing research does not appear to match a scholarly notion of study, described as research in service of economic accountability rather than knowledge making.

Three respondents reported identifying as in writing studies as a benefit, and though they did not say anything about their own identities, referred to the ways they thought others see
them. One explained that while he or she does not identify as in writing studies, there is
credibility in the term:

Since I don't identify as a writing studies researcher and instructor, I don't really see any
benefits as such. However, many of my colleagues consider me the "go-to" person with
issues of writing and look to me to prepare our students for the rigours of the senior
design project and the profession. In this sense, this kind of credibility is a benefit! (25,
1073)

Two others offered similar sentiments. For instance, one said, “I'm taken as one of the few
people at my institution who know something about writing and writing pedagogy, and people
seem to respect that” (24, 1072). The other explained, “I am pleased at the credibility I now have
(as compared to the attitudes from 40 years ago). Research is research, and I'm pleased that my
area of study is now recognized by my colleagues as worthwhile” (32, 1080). So, for some
respondents, identifying in writing studies located it on the discursive landscape, which rendered
it, and them, more legitimate.

Others took a more personal approach to benefits of identifying as in writing studies
because it fit their sense of who they are, where they belong, and what they do as well as its
benefit for the field’s legitimacy. For instance, one said, “I'm not sure how to answer this one. I
suppose people find it interesting when I tell them what I do, but I'm not sure of any particular
benefits. I find it personally fulfilling, if you mean 'identify' in that sense” (36, 1084). Another
noted the following: “It's what I love and what I care about, so I wouldn't want to identify as
anything else. It also signals certain interests and tendencies—a focus on students and on
teaching, for example” (22, 1070).

A number of respondents seemed to feel that identifying as in writing studies did help
them explain what they do to others as well as to feel a sense of legitimacy. One noted that it
allowed her or him an “[i]dentity with a focus on academic writing rather than creative writing or
ESL. (6, 1054). A second said, “[t]he focus is on the art and craft of writing across disciplines, not as an English subject. One has access to a broader range of theory and approaches to writing as such” (4, 1052). Three respondents explicitly positioned their identities as in writing studies as a way to oppose notions of what they do as remedial. One explained,

It provides an opportunity to explain what it is I do. That is, if I just said that I taught 'writing', people assume that I'm teaching a 'skills' course. 'Writing Studies' (emphasis on 'studies') forces me (and others) to think of the field as something more than teaching remedial skills (e.g. like Gender Studies, First Nations Studies, and so on). (35, 1083)

This respondent harkens back to previous discussion about the need to show the field as more than remedial, as more than the myth makes it out to be. A second noted the following:

Besides the inherent interest of the field, being able to name a "home" discipline gains more respect than having to position oneself as an instructor of basic skills; it helps in indicating (even implicitly) that one's practices and recommendations for practice are based on theory and research. (9, 1057)

This respondent explicitly mentioned respect gained from positioning oneself as more than “an instructor of basic skills” but whose practice is “based on theory and research.” A third respondent focused on legitimacy for teaching by connecting it to research: “It's obvious, but I think continuing to connect our work in the classroom with scholarly work is useful for our institutional position. And when working with graduate students, I find it helpful to explain that the work that we do is supported by research” (18, 1066). A primary benefit of identifying as in writing studies is the increased legitimacy that comes with an emphasis on research.

Two others noted its utility in connecting with other areas and building community. The first said:

I haven't really thought about this too much. The area gives me lots of interesting projects to work on, some of which the funding bodies have identified as worthy of support, so that has enabled me to travel and network across North America and recently in Europe. I have also encountered a few students interested in this area so I have been able to build a
small intellectual community that makes me feel less like a hermit or a pariah among my English colleagues. (26, 1074)

Certainly, “feeling less like a hermit or pariah” is a desirable goal. Another respondent found it useful because it does not threaten other areas:

I love identifying as a writing specialist because it's non-threatening to faculty members who feel that they ‘own’ writing and because it's a non-denominational identifier that makes it easier to engage with faculties like Science, Applied Science, Education, etc. Everyone needs to write, and I have general expertise that can be useful to almost everyone. (5, 1053)

I find the uses of “non-threatening” and “non-denominational” interesting, insofar as they make me curious about which terms are threatening and why that might be so. What about the term, “writing studies” is considered, in this respondent’s opinion, as “general expertise?”

A number of respondents similarly identified as in writing studies because of its flexibility, and others still for its contribution to their employability. One respondent explained:

[t]he benefits are that many people within academia see the value in writing and can identify with the difficulty and complexity of developing writing abilities. Another benefit is that writing scholars can be chameleons and adapt to a wide range of departments, faculties, and positions, which I have experienced by being able to conduct research in a law faculty and teach writing for an economics department. The versatility that a writing studies background provides may be a huge benefit as university budgets are shrinking and full-time permanent positions are disappearing. (7, 1055)

The first benefit noted is about visibility, so the value and complexity of developing writing abilities can be seen within academia. The flexibility of writing studies scholars “as chameleons” who can “adapt to a wide range” of locations through the “versatility” of “a writing studies background.”

Another pointed to the flexibility of the term as evidenced through past experience:

Writing studies is a global, broad and rapidly developing field. It presents numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary projects and pedagogical intervention. In the past, I worked on joint projects with chemical, mechanical, civil and biological engineers,
This respondent focused on numerous opportunities for interdisciplinarity informed by “many regions of the world.” One respondent agreed, noting flexibility as useful across disciplines: “It gives me a flexibility to study a wide range of things and collaborate with colleagues from different disciplines and use different methods” (28, 1076). Similarly, another noted that “[w]riting studies crosses into many fields and research areas, and there's an opportunity for career movement into alt-ac positions” (29, 1077). I am not sure what an alt-ac position is; perhaps it stand for alternate academic? Another respondent pointed to interdisciplinarity: “It enables one to be very interdisciplinary in one's teaching and research. [One] can study and teach history, media, culture, etc. through its theories and methods” (17, 1065). In addition, a respondent said, “[t]here is such a broad range of areas that you can work in as writing is found everywhere” (15, 1063). Two respondent answers that demonstrate more explicitly pragmatic motivations. One explained that “[i]n the current dismal academic job market, a high percentage of the jobs that do exist are in writing studies or rhetoric and composition (or want experience in the field as a secondary area)” (13, 1061). Another said, “I think that it helps with national funding” (27, 1075).

An additional benefit of identifying as in writing studies reported by respondents was pedagogical, the rewards of the work itself. One said, “[t]t can be, despite the many challenges and frequent insults a rewarding occupation, especially when seeing students succeed, sometimes brilliantly” (23, 1071). Another agreed: “The benefits come from being able to work with students one-on-one and having the knowledge about both writing, and teaching and learning to be able to do that” (8, 1056). Yet another expressed reward in the benefit to students:
The biggest benefit and source of satisfaction is the feeling that we are contributing to improvement of the writing skills of the students. It is the single most important source of adding to the knowledge base for the future generations. All research, in whatever field, has to be finally reduced to writing for posterity. (14, 1062)

This respondent connected benefit to the success of future generations as “the single most important source adding to the knowledge base.” Another respondent also reported the benefits as those experienced by students:

> Writing studies, especially graduate research writing is my core research area. Although I teach two courses on writing, I also teach other courses on adult education content. I also started a faculty writing group which has been very successful. The benefits are seeing the difference it makes for students. Often students struggle needlessly [..] especially with thesis writing. When they've been through my course or workshops, it can be the difference between them persevering or dropping out. It's very satisfying when a student moves over a hurdle and they find their way. (10, 1058)

This respondent is rewarded by “seeing the difference” for students, seeing them “move over a hurdle and find their way.”

An additional reason for identifying as in writing studies is to enjoy a sense of community, twice described by respondents as supportive. One respondent expressed that “[t]he writing studies community is supportive, strong, and determined. This is amazing. I also feel that I have flexibility with the work that I do because I can relate to faculty and students across disciplines” (34, 1082). This respondent refers, as others have, to flexibility and to relatability.

The final response in this section captures, especially meaningfully, this sense of support, in concert with pride at the work of the field:

> The writing studies community is wonderfully supportive and generous. It is a pleasure to be part of this group. Although many academics in other fields don't recognize writing studies as a legitimate field of its own, it is very understandable to students and others outside of academe. I am proud to promote the field and its work. (3, 1051)
Paradoxically, this respondent said that while many academics in other fields do not recognize it as a field, students and others outside of academe do. Irrespective of the degree to which it is recognizable, visible, or legitimate for others, writing studies understands itself as a community.

6.6 Summary

Like its multitude of diverse demographics and institutional locations, a collective identity for writing studies looks, in part, like diversity is its collectivity. In terms of defining writing studies, respondents’ answers revealed four themes in the following order of prevalence: 1) the study of the teaching and learning of writing in predominantly academic settings; 2) the study of the sociality of writing, usually through frameworks of rhetoric, genre, and discourse studies; 3) writing studies as a broad and multi-disciplinary field; and 4) opposition. Respondents’ descriptions of their uses of the term, “writing studies,” revealed that its use, like all language use, is situationally dependent, especially because the field is not generally understood as recognizable to those outside of it. Respondents also used the term to describe their research. Where they did not use the term, respondents often provided alternate names for their professional identities. The data addressing definition of, identification with, and participation in the scholarly organizations and list-servs of writing studies revealed that CASDW is the primary organization of the field. Finally, 69% of respondents identified as in writing studies, and saw a number of benefits including legitimacy, fit, utility, meaningfulness for students, and community.
Chapter 7: Experience: routes in, perceptions of change, tensions, and aims to improve teaching and learning conditions

7.1 Introduction

To augment a growing definition of writing studies, Chapter 7 reports on themes derived from respondents’ answers to qualitative questions focused on experience. The emphasis on experience provides a sense of the history of writing studies through the eyes of the people who lived it. Furthermore, I invited respondents to write frankly about their day-to-day experiences, past and present, in order to expose some of the consequences and implications of demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions in relation to the myth in contemporary times. The previously unheard, invisible, or unexamined experiences of those in writing studies rupture the myth as an objectified form of knowledge (Smith, 1990) and trouble the institutional structures that sustain it. The final section of the survey contained six questions (Questions 28-33): 1) respondents’ routes into the field, 2) their perceptions of the ways in which writing studies has changed, or not, in the past two decades, 3) tensions in their day-to-day work, 4) two questions about their aims to improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions, and 5) their sense of future directions for the field. There was also a final question, 34, that asked if there was anything respondents wanted to add.

The questions about experience were derived from the literature, my life writing, and Miller’s (1991) work. The question about respondents’ routes into the field was inspired by the American collection edited by Lunsford (1999), Living Rhetoric and Composition Studies. The contributors to that volume were asked to write about where they were when they fell in love with the theory/practice of rhetoric and composition. I was struck by the fact that where they fell
in love was at once a story of their journeys into the field and of what they fell in love with. Moreover, the question about routes into the field was driven by my life writing, in that the intersections of mentorship, coursework, work experience, and unique scholarly interests inform a definition of writing studies as experienced by one person who identifies as belonging to that community. Such individual experience can then be understood in relation to others.

The remaining questions in the experience section of the survey were inspired by Miller (1991) insofar as I adapted, for a contemporary, Canadian context, her questions about tensions, perceptions of change within the field over time, and aims for change (p. 209). As in Chapter 6, my analysis was both inductive and deductive. It was inductive in that I identified themes in terms of prevalence and often present respondents’ answers in full, and it was deductive in that I chose data extracts for salience to the research questions. This chapter parallels the survey questions about experience, proceeding in the following order: respondents’ routes into the field, their perceptions of the ways in which writing studies has changed, or not, in the past two decades, tensions in their day-to-day work, their aims to improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions, and their sense of future directions for the field.

7.2 Routes in

Respondents were asked to describe their routes into their field, with particular attention to factors that affected their choice of career and path to their current position. Question 28 read as follows:

Describe how you arrived at your current position. Please include: a) factors that affected your choice of career, b) factors that influenced your pathway to your current position and institution. (You may want to include information regarding undergraduate and graduate coursework and teaching positions, as well as other relevant positions you may have held.)
Fifty-one of 53 respondents, 96%, answered. Two themes emerged in terms of prevalence. The first is that 39% of respondents explicitly mentioned accidental or circuitous arrival, often through falling in love, revelatory experiences, or good fortune. The second theme is that 31% of respondents arrived through English literature, compared to 47% through all other stated routes combined. Origins in related areas of study included the following: writing centres (9.8%), editing, publishing, and journalism (7.8%), linguistics (5.9%), education (5.9%), ESL (3.9%), translation (1.9%), and creative writing (1.9%). A few respondents arrived from traditionally less related fields including geography, biotechnology, psychology, and management, all at 1.9%. Origins were not explicitly stated in 22% of responses. I have chosen a few responses and labelled them, “pragmatic,” for salience to issues of working conditions and gender. The overall goal of this section of the survey was to expose respondents’ experiences, so a largely inductive approach was taken; the respondent and line numbers appear parenthetically.

7.2.1 Accidental arrival through love, revelation, and good fortune

Experiences of accidental arrival, circuitous routes, falling in love, revelation, and good fortune were reported by 39% of respondents. Most of the responses in this section appear later in the chapter within the context of an individual’s entire response; here I offer truncated versions to highlight the frequency of accidental arrival, the presence of the language of love, and the experiences of revelation and good fortune. There were reports of respondents who “‘happened’ into this field” (5, 879), who “didn't choose this career per se,” but “stumbled into it” (11,885), “fell into it” (18, 892; 29, 903), or did not “really think of [their] career as an intentional choice” (8, 882). Others reported having taken “a complex, circular route” (45, 919) and “a curious path” (35, 909).
There were many references to love and many epiphanies like mine. One respondent said only, “I love teaching” (25, 899). Another noted that her or his career “began with a love of writing” (14, 888); another said, “I have always been fascinated by writing” (6, 880). Others “became enamored with the many theories associated with writing studies” (13, 887), or “fell in love with rhetorical studies” (3, 877). One respondent reminisced:

> My first two degrees (BA and MA) are in literature…[I intended] to study 19th century American literature, but fell in love with the teaching of writing and the field of Composition and Rhetoric in my first semester. I immediately switched and have now been in the field for over twenty years. (17, 891)

Two respondents used the word, “revelation.” The first explained: “I ‘happened’ into this field through graduate course work in genre studies and linguistic pragmatics. This…work was a revelation to me, to the extent that I reconsidered my former pursuits in literature studies” (5, 879). Another revealed: “My first CCCC—I discovered the organization completely by accident—was a total revelation” (30, 904).

Respondents also noted good fortune as part of their descriptions of their routes into their field. Four respondents used the word, “fortunate,” one of whom used it twice (30, 904). One noted, “I was fortunate to be recruited to fill a maternity leave and enjoyed the work (4, 878), while another said, “I arrived at my current position(s) through a series of fortunate events” (19, 893). A third said, “I was also fortunate to work with [my mentor]” (48, 922). Two respondents reported similar good fortune but used different words. One said, “[l]uckily for me, I had some experience near the end of that part of my career with teaching Nursing students” (49, 923), and another, “[t]o put it bluntly, I was always in the right place at the right time” (44, 918). Reports of luck and happenstance were common.
Interestingly, the contributors to the American collection commonly reported accidental arrivals and circuitous routes into composition studies, as well as similar accounts of love, revelation, and good fortune. I am curious about whether or not this kind of experience is shared by academics in other fields or unique to the field in Canada and the U.S.; is there something about the lack of visibility of writing studies as a field that translated, at least in respondents’ experiences, to the sudden discovery of it in a way that is perhaps less common for academics in other fields?

7.2.2 While pursuing other fields of study

Almost all respondents reported origins elsewhere, arriving at their current positions through encounters with the field’s pedagogical, theoretical and methodological approaches during some combination of work experience, course work, and/or mentorship encountered in related fields of study. In sum, 31% of respondents arrived through English literature, and 47% through all other stated routes combined. This subsection reports on respondents’ origins in and moves away from or out of English literature, usually during graduate degrees or work as TAs or professional positions in departments of English. It then presents responses of those who found the field through related areas including writing centres, editing, publishing, and journalism, linguistics, education, ESL, translation, and creative writing. Section 7.2 ends with discussion of a few responses of those who arrived from less traditionally related fields including geography, biotechnology, psychology, and management.

7.2.2.1 Origins in English literature

Most who graduated with literature degrees found themselves working as teachers of writing because that was the only work available in academia. The shared experience of not knowing how to teach writing generally led them to the field in the form of community. Some,
whose graduate work was initially in English literature, discovered the field through coursework and mentors. I include, here, a few voices of respondents with these origins and routes.

I begin with two “historical” accounts, wherein respondents trace careers that began in the late 1970s. To the question of how one arrived, one respondent answered this way:

The usual way. In 1977, with an MA in English Literature I found no jobs teaching English Literature. After a year packing boxes in a factory, I landed a sessional position teaching remedial composition, about which I initially knew nothing. I was incredibly fortunate to be promoted to Instructor, which carried with it the possibility of tenure and assisted study leave. By that time I had realized that there was a true academic discipline here, hiding invisibly in plain sight. My first CCCC -- I discovered the organization completely by accident -- was a total revelation. I took three years of [f] to get a PhD in the area and did not look back. Unfortunately the area never took root at [my institution], but I have been fortunate to be able to teach Communications Studies, which is close enough, while continuing to research and publish in Writing Studies. (30, 904)

Several aspects of this response are compelling. First, the length of her or his career allows us to think about what has changed or stayed the same over time. The story in this response is that, forty years ago, a literature scholar with no work “landed a sessional position teaching remedial composition,” knew nothing about teaching writing, and discovered, “completely by accident,” “a true academic discipline…hiding in plain sight.” Respondents coming out of literature for the next two decades tell much the same story: Earn a literature degree or three, come to teach writing (often accidentally), realize that one does not know how to teach writing, seek resources and discover a field, have a revelatory experience, learn how to teach writing through study and experience while working for a long time as contingent labour, eventually securing a permanent position, if fortunate. A second senior scholar wrote:

Starting by teaching literature in the English Department, I embraced my few chances to teach writing (composition, as it was called then) and to learn how it was taught elsewhere because I liked the individual contact with students and the sense of real development in their skills and confidence….I started reading widely and attending conferences in the US, where I met Canadian colleagues. By the early 1990s, the first studies of writing instruction in Canada (Inkshed, Graves) were exciting and inspiring,
and so was meeting people with the same interests -- and much more experience and knowledge…. (15, 889)

Though this respondent does not state the year that her or his teaching began, we can assume that “by the early 1990s” suggests the respondent was working in the 1980s, detailing a time roughly a decade before the previous historical account.

This trend of origins in English literature and factors responsible for reported moves away from literary studies toward rhetoric and composition, or more recently, writing studies, continued into the 1990s and 2000s. The “conversions” usually occurred when people were inspired to learn about how to teach writing after finding themselves doing it and/or when they discovered theoretical and methodological frameworks during graduate school. Key in both scenerios is the role of community in facilitating the transition. The responses below highlight the discoveries of a few aspects of writing studies, including process pedagogy, pragmatics, relevance theory, and genre theory. One respondent, who did not indicate time frame, reported an experience of “conversion” from unconscious to conscious pedagogy and noted the role of the Inkshed community in helping facilitate it:

I came to my work from literary studies with an interdisciplinary bent. When I needed to start working, I began teaching composition part-time, and continued that in four different universities, until a tenure-track position in composition opened up at one of them. By then I had been converted from unconscious current-traditionalism to passionate process focus, and soon, to a great extent with the help of Inkshed and Inkshedders, developed a scholarly as well as practical strength in writing pedagogy. (Note my appointment still includes occasional teaching of literature.) (22, 896)

This respondent refers to her or his conversion in relation to rhetorical, pedagogical traditions. Current-traditionalism is a rhetorical, pedagogical theory aligned with positivism, which Berlin argued, almost 30 years ago in 1988, “clearly dominates thinking about writing instruction.
today” (p. 51). He explained, “Current-Traditional Rhetoric views the rhetorical situation as an arena where the truth is incontrovertibly established by a speaker or writer more enlightened than her audience” (p. 59). This is in line with bellettristic approaches in Canada that exalted the substance and style of the greats of the literary canon and taught students to write through appreciation and imitation. Process approaches, in contrast, mean that “the dialectical view of reality, language, and the audience redefines the writer” (p. 57). This respondent noted the point of revelation as an epistemological and pedagogical transformation.

Others highlighted the role of mentors and encouragement from others. One said, “I moved from a BA in English to an MA in Creative Writing. Then, encouraged by instructors who commented favorably on my talent for teaching, I took on part-time teaching of mostly English Composition” (32, 906). Both respondents reported arrival from related fields, English literature and creative writing, and both were working part-time teaching composition. Another similarly noted invitation and opportunity in teaching:

> [m]y degrees are in English literature. I arrived at my current position(s) through a series of fortunate events: I attended a workshop on contract grading, which led to an invitation to participate in a workshop on comp theory, which led to the opportunity to teaching a writing studies course at a First Nations college, which led to the opportunity to teach writing studies at [my institution]. (19, 893)

Employment opportunities meant that people sometimes found themselves teaching writing in disciplinary areas, as was evidenced by the writing studies literature that demonstrates the field’s work in and amongst the disciplines. Two respondents reported coming to teach writing in engineering:

> Mine is a curious path since my doctoral work was in English literature. However, as a graduate student, I taught both Composition and English Literature. In the late 1970s, the Faculty of Engineering approached our Composition coordinator and asked her to find people to teach a 6-week course in technical writing. I was one of the graduate students who taught this 1st iteration. Later, this course was incorporated into the faculty’s
curriculum, and I was hired to teach it. So, given the scarcity of jobs at the time, I seized what looked like an exciting opportunity to pioneer something new. The exciting part for me was designing a brand new course in a brand new field of study. Over the years, as I learned more, and as the field grew, so did the course and the program.\textellipsis

The respondent used positive language, “seized,” “exciting opportunity,” “pioneering something new,” “designing a brand new course in a brand new field of study,” while looking back to the field’s beginnings forty years ago and at the current instantiation of her or his life’s work.

Another described her or his route, an accidental route, into teaching writing in engineering 20 years ago, in the mid-1990s:

\begin{quote}
I fell into it. I did not plan to wind up here, but began teaching writing and communication in disciplines such as architecture and engineering and working in that area during grad school, so when this position came open I applied. I thought it might be short term but \textellipsis 20 years later it looks like it’s not. (18, 892)
\end{quote}

This respondent, like others reported on in this chapter, did not plan the route in, but obtained a position through teaching writing and communication in other disciplines. A third reported a similar branching out into sciences to obtain employment:

\begin{quote}
Upon graduation…with a PhD in Writing Studies I started working as a sessional lecturer [in a Dept. of English.] There were very few opportunities for career growth there. Therefore I branched out into technical communication and accepted an Instructor’s position in the Faculty of Applied Science. This position offered much better career prospects and more opportunities for research and program development\textellipsis There are also exciting opportunities for research and program development in the fields of leadership and intercultural communication. (43, 917)
\end{quote}

This respondent’s route is similar to others in that she or he began as a sessional instructor in an English Department and branched out for “better career prospects” and “more opportunities for research and program development” than were available in English. This respondent also reported being fortunate to have “exciting opportunities.”
In addition to discovery of the field through employment opportunities for English literature specialists to teach writing, mentorship during graduate school and the discovery of theoretical frameworks in writing studies were mentioned by a number of respondents. One noted that she or he was “[m]entored into the field by a charismatic teac[h]er” (1, 875). Another noted a combination of course work, mentorship, and community through scholarly organizations:

When I entered my PhD I aimed to become a professor who taught writing and rhetoric…..My graduate course work [in the U.S.] enabled me to develop both as a writing instructor and as a researcher of rhetorical history. The mentorship of Nan Johnson and Andrea Lunsford were crucial to my graduate studies. The CSSR, CASLL/Inkshed, and CASDW have played formative roles in supporting my identity within the Canadian academic world as one of many writing and rhetoric teachers & instructors serving in diverse departments and institutions. (24, 898)

Likewise, one respondent credited the choice of supervisors as key in her or his career, alongside attraction to methodologies:

Key factors in embarking on my career in writing & discourse studies: 1) choice of supervisors during graduate school, and 2) better sense of direction in projects using writing, discourse and rhetorical studies methods (literary study appeared to be too random and method-less). I had not had exposure to writing & discourse studies during my undergraduate degree. But I had a very solid linguistic education, and this became unexpectedly useful when I moved from literary to rhetorical work in the early years of my PhD program. (26, 902)

Several aspects of this response are interesting. First, the respondent explicitly said that literary studies “appeared to be too random and method-less,” reinforcing, whether or not this is true about literary studies, the fact that writing studies has its own methodologies, a core component of disciplinarity. Second, the respondent pointed to invisibility, noting that she or he “had not had exposure to writing [and] discourse studies during [her or his] undergraduate degree.” Third, the respondent, by describing a move “from literary to rhetorical work” points to the sociality of language through use of the word, “rhetorical.”
Another respondent highlighted experiences similar to those reported thus far, the influence of a mentor during doctoral work, attraction to methodology, the role of community, and work experience. She or he explained:

I was very influenced by [a professor], when I was doing my PhD: I started and finished my graduate study as a literature scholar, but I quickly wound up building my approach to analyzing literary discourse out of a combination of linguistic pragmatics, relevance theory, and (loosely used) genre theory. These approaches to language really interested me and made a lot of sense to me. I really enjoyed the company and conversation of other students in [that professor’s] circle…. (34, 908)

Respondents most often had origins in English literature and accidentally discovered the field through work experience teaching writing and/or graduate work supported by mentorship and community.

7.2.2.2 Arrival through Writing Centres

Writing centres were the second most prevalent point of entry, but significantly fewer respondents reported arriving this way than from other kinds of positions teaching writing, namely as sessional labour. Despite differences in institutional location between departments and writing centres, the experience of discovering theorized writing pedagogy is reminiscent of responses presented earlier:

Although I am working primarily in educational research, for the past decade I have also worked part-time at a university writing centre….I have combined my teaching experience and knowledge with best practice in writing studies to help university students gain confidence and skill as writers. I have also used my research experience to explore ways in which university professors can help students to become skilled in writing in the disciplines. (10, 884)

This respondent alludes to the coming together of theory and practice, combining teaching experience and “knowledge with best practice in writing studies.” Perhaps the discovery of the field is necessitated by this coming together. Another respondent reported a journey out of English into teaching writing in a writing centre:
My path was tortuous and long. I began with a shiny PhD in English as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at [an Ontario university]. After 12 years of one contract after another, I had not succeeded in landing a tenure-track position. Luckily for me, I had some experience near the end of that part of my career with teaching Nursing students. So when [my university’s] provost decided to fund a writing centre for students in the Health Sciences faculties (Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Education & Health, Social Work), I was the only candidate for director with any relevant experience. It was a lifesaver from both financial and intellectual perspectives. I had already been feeling that I would scream if I had to teach Hamlet one more time -- now I had five entirely new disciplines to jump into and learn about. To this day, I am still learning. And I work with both undergraduate and graduate students, which I also love. And I’m very happy not to be teaching courses where I have to assign a grade -- my relationship with my students is always a positive one because there’s no power dynamic. (49, 923)

While this respondent noted the journey as “torturous and long,” 12 years as a contract worker, she or he ends positively, describing an accidental position as a director of a writing centre as “a lifesaver” both financially and intellectually, alongside phrases like “jump into,” “I’m still learning,” “which I also love,” and “I’m very happy.”

Two responses, in particular, emphasized the interconnection of writing centre work and graduate study. One respondent said:

I took a rhetoric course at [a British Columbian university] and fell in love with rhetorical studies...from there, I got a job in a Writing Centre...a few years into that job, I did a MA in rhet/comp, which grew up into the field of Writing Studies. (3, 877)

Similarly, the following respondent described arrival in a writing centre through practicum, in concert with work experience and graduate school:

As an undergraduate student, I took a language/writing course that had a practicum in a writing centre. After I finished my degree, I applied for a position in this same writing centre...then went on to do my Master’s degree, which involved courses in rhetorical genre studies (my first introduction to this area) and linguistic pragmatics. These courses deepened my interest in language and writing. I was also fortunate to work with [a professor]. During my Ph.D. work, I was introduced to the field of language ideologies -- this is the field that spoke to me more personally. My Ph.D. thesis directly addressed/engaged questions from this field (and uses linguistic pragmatics and rhetorical theory to do so)....(48, 922)
This response is noteworthy for similar attractants to the field as others: work experience teaching writing, theoretical frameworks, a mentor, good fortune. It is also noteworthy in terms of my overall claim about lack of visibility. This respondent reported her or his MA as the “first introduction to this area” and her or his PhD as a time when a mentor “introduced [her or him] to the field of language ideologies.” Writing centres were a common route into the field for respondents. The field is encountered where there is work, where it is taught, or where there are theoretical or methodological intersections with other fields.

7.2.2.3 Arrival in writing studies through other fields

In addition to routes into the field through English literature or writing centres, writing studies is a diverse, multidisciplinary field in part because its people’s origins and routes in are diverse and multidisciplinary. Many, 27%, came from fields traditionally associated with writing such as editing, publishing, journalism, linguistics, education, ESL, translation, and creative writing. Important because it speaks to writing and writing studies as embedded in disciplines, a few respondents, 7.8%, reported arrivals from less traditionally related fields including geography, biotechnology, psychology, and management. I have selected one response from each origin.

One respondent reported consultancy work, love of science writing, and intersection of these with writing theory and writing studies:

I have always been fascinated by writing and pursued study that appealed to me. Journalism, media studies and writing, editing and publishing. I was introduced to writing studies by the work of Charles Bazerman and Greg Meyers. They connected the world of science writing to more general writing studies considerations for me. Bruno Latour also had a major impact. I worked as a researcher and writer for a consultancy for ten years and taught science writing/communication part time. When I decided to give full time academia a go, I looked for areas that combined writing theory and practice such as grant writing and advocacy. Science writing is still my love. But I am influenced by my
environment so I have ended up doing research work looking at social work writing and Indigenous academic writing. These projects inform my teaching. (6, 880)

This response echoes the language of love and fascination alongside a somewhat circuitous route. A respondent who arrived from linguistics similarly mentioned being “enamoured” and mentioned the role of mentors:

I was introduced to the field of writing studies during my MA. My BA was in applied linguistics and I began pursuing that path for my MA, but became enamored with the many theories associated with writing studies I was exposed to in my classes and wrote my MA thesis from a writing studies perspective….I chose to do my PhD at [an Ontario university] to work specifically with the writing studies scholars there and because I knew I would have the freedom to combine my interest in writing studies and my experience and interest in health policy. I also knew that I would have the opportunity to teach writing studies-related courses including and beyond second language academic writing and writing centre positions at [my university], which was a huge draw for me. (13, 887)

Like the literature scholars who found writing studies, this respondent was first introduced to the field during early graduate work. She or he reported becoming “enamored with the many theories associated with writing studies” and choosing the institution for doctoral work based on mentors, “to work specifically with the writing studies scholars there” and because of the “freedom” to combine interdisciplinary interests, in this case writing studies and health policy.

Other respondents reported origins in ESL, and their responses reflected circuitous routes and accidental arrivals surrounding a poor job market. One said:

I have tutored since I was a teenager. In university, I began volunteer tutoring ESL students from around the world, volunteered with a literacy society, and studied English and Linguistics. When I graduated 20+ years ago, it was into a rotten job market, so I headed to Japan to teach ESL. There, I did my MEd at an American university’s outpost campus and shifted into teaching at Japanese colleges and universities, eventually ending up teaching for the American university itself in their first-year composition program. (7, 881)
Two respondents noted French as a second language as entry points. The following response reflects the same arrival through teaching writing and expertise gained only after teaching writing:

I have my PhD in Education (focus on ELLs, French as a Second Language, pedagogy). While I was completing my PhD, I began tutoring and then teaching writing courses at my institution (at the Writing Centre, in the Dept. of Modern Languages). I have always been interested in languages, teaching languages, manipulating language, etc. Teaching writing specifically, however, only came my way later on. I do not have formal training in writing, writing studies, genre studies, rhetoric, or composition. (9, 883)

Three respondents arrived from or worked in three additional fields not traditionally associated with teaching writing: geography, psychology, and biotechnology. One respondent reported a route in through teaching, arising from a chance opportunity that led to a switch in career:

I completed my PhD in Geography and while I was waiting for the outcome of a job interview, a colleague asked me if I would help out at an Adult Literacy organisation in South Africa. I enjoyed that so much that I stayed on… (16, 890)

Two respondents reported their attraction to the theory as primary, followed by work in the field. One respondent explicitly noted the sociality of language as the draw from her or his field, and mentioned being fortunate: “I came to writing studies through attention to the power of narrative and social constructions as a psychologist. I was fortunate to be recruited to fill a maternity leave and enjoyed the work” (4, 878). Another was similarly drawn to lines of inquiry in science studies and genre studies:

When I began my studies I began in biotechnology, but quickly found I was interested in some rather different questions than that line of study was interested in or equipped to answer. What I didn't realize at the time was that my interests were in ‘science studies.’ At [an Ontario university], I found science studies and genre studies and then went on to work in these areas… (27, 901)
This response is interesting insofar as this respondent had a “discovery” experience. She or he said, “I didn’t realize at the time…that my interests were in ‘science studies,’” and explicitly noted, “I found science studies and genre studies and then went on to work in these areas.” The data suggest that respondents who entered the field from areas other than English literature reported similar experiences as those who arrived from English, interest in and enjoyment of teaching writing, the appeal of methodologies like genre studies, and happenstance.

7.2.2.4 “Pragmatic” factors influencing routes into writing studies

A few scholars deliberately embarked on graduate work in writing studies, all at the PhD level, interestingly, most often in American programs. For instance, one respondent explained her or his direct route from the writing studies programs for a BA at a Canadian university straight to a PhD at an American university (37, 911). Another explained, “[m]y first two degrees are in literature. I did a PhD in rhetoric and composition…” (39, 913). Likewise, one respondent noted, “I did a PhD at [an American university] as a way to get professional training to teach writing at the post-secondary level” (12, 886). Two respondents, who attended graduate school in Canada, explained their deliberate choices to pursue graduate work in writing studies as partly driven by the job market:

I continued to build my profile in both literary and rhetorical study by presenting at conferences for both…..Overall, the market for rhetoric/writing positions was a better fit for someone like me. There are many many more literature graduates in Canada for an ever-shrinking number of jobs--the chances seem somewhat better for jobs in rhetoric/writing/discourse. I also learned that my research has more traction in rhetoric/writing/discourse studies than it does in literary studies, and so I'm going right now with where most of my readers and interlocutors are. (28, 902)

This respondent pointed specifically to the Canadian job market, noting the number of literature graduates and the better prospect of jobs in “rhetoric/writing/discourse” in concert with research having “more traction” than in literary studies. One respondent commented that her or his
interests and work in writing studies has acted as excellent preparation to be competitive in the Canadian job market:

So, in short, my interest in writing studies has driven where I've worked and with whom. I have been extremely fortunate to have done course and dissertation work in the area (or nearby), which has prepared me to take on positions in writing studies as these become available. It has also made me highly competitive in that there are few of us who have this background in/from Canada, and so when positions in these areas come up we almost always get shortlisted. (48, 922)

This respondent noted that people with expertise in writing studies are highly competitive for positions, but does not report the same dwindling of positions as does the previous respondent. It would be interesting to conduct a study of the job postings across the four list-servs in the last decade to track the nature of positions to map in relation to writing studies as a field.

Anecdotally, many are part-time contracts, one year lecturer positions; there are few tenure-track positions available, a point made by respondents in answer to the survey question about what they would change to improve teaching conditions at their institutions.

 Relatedly, two respondents pointed, especially, to choices made pragmatically, in order to obtain full time work. These act as evidence of issues of contingent labour and gender that are scant in the Canadian writing studies literature and need to be addressed. One respondent said her or his position was “[t]he best available work that's closest to my research/field while looking for something better--more money, a modicum of respect, supports research, and more fulfilling. In no way is being a non-continuing sessional instructor my ‘choice of career’” (33, 907). The mention of looking for a “modicum of respect” says a lot about the demoralizing aspects of working as a contract worker, especially for as long as most people in writing studies have done. One respondent noted that “the willingness to move has been a key component to avoid being shut out of advancing my career” (12, 886). Another explained:
the fact that this was a full time permanent position that involved teaching (of tutors) was very appealing to me. I had experience as an editor, sessional (in English and business communication), tutor, and workshop facilitator for business and government. I was wanting a full time position. (21, 895)

In addition to pragmatic moves related to choice of graduate programs or need for employment, a few respondents brought up gender, the first through explicit mention of “institutional forces” both “patriarchal and hierarchical” that affected her or his career, noting, though, that “things have improved since then.” She or he explained:

I began with an M.A. in English Literature, teaching literature, academic writing, and communication. At the college where I taught for 35 years institutional forces (patriarchal and hierarchal) narrowed my options for permanent full-time work to a position in Communications, then in a professional writing program. (Things have improved since then.) (23, 897)

Though the respondent does not name specific ways in which institutional forces narrowed options, her or his account that they did is enough cause for exploration of gender in relation to the myth in recent and contemporary times. It is these forces, institutional, patriarchal, hierarchal, that Smith (1990) meant by objectified forms of knowledge. An explicit examination of gender as experienced by the members of writing studies, both female and male, is needed to better understand the ways in which subjects are foreclosed upon. Enos (1996) found that composition studies professionals in the United States tend to experience a kind of “double bias” based on discipline and gender. It is important to examine to what degree Canadian writing studies professionals might be experiencing similar biases. It is particularly interesting to examine the experiences of those belonging to both genders relationally. Do they experiences biases and if so, what kinds? When, and how? Are there similarities and differences in the experiences of those of different genders?
Two respondents explicitly mentioned interruptions to their careers for child rearing. One explained:

Upon graduating with my MA, I was offered a position as ESL specialist in the newly developed writing centre, and I was promoted to Writing Centre Manager the following year. Having children interrupted my career, and I worked for many years as a sessional writing instructor and ESL teacher. When my children were older, I assumed the position of Director of our English Language Institute. Accepting a position as interim Associate Dean in 2001 was my first foray into administration. I became Administrative Dean in 2008, a position which I still have. To put it bluntly, I was always in the right place at the right time. I have never had a job interview. I have written and co-authored six books.

This respondent reported an impressive administrative and scholarly career obtained in addition to raising children. It would be significant to study the experiences of parents in the field over several decades to better understand how gender roles associated with parenting and the practicalities of balancing career and family play out in the field. A second respondent described her or his experience of parenting while building a career:

I began working part-time as a Writing Tutor after I had completed my Master's Degree in Literature and had small children at home. The work offered a very small income (enough to pay for the child-care!) and a chance to talk to adults, and was connected to the career I thought I wanted in teaching in a university setting. I also taught classes in a language school, intro composition and intro literature at a university, and taught the language, comprehension, and logic sections. I decided to take a B.Ed. degree focusing on writing development to provide more specialized qualification for teaching. I also began working on limited term full-time contracts teaching writing courses and tutoring at the university. Eventually, I won a permanent faculty position as Writing Resource Director in which I am responsible for running a part-time writing centre (in lieu of teaching one course per semester) as well as the usual teaching / research / service elements of a university faculty position.

Both respondents worked as contingent labour during the years they raised children, and both became directors. While their administrative positions do not suggest negative consequences of raising children, these two respondents reported contingent labour as a way to raise children and
have at least some income. It is important to explore the role of gender in shaping careers in the field.

Others mentioned family as motivating decisions for work. For instance, one respondent explained: “[w]hen I entered my PhD I aimed to become a professor who taught writing and rhetoric. I am a Canadian and Albertan by birth, so I wanted to work close to home and family” (24, 898). Another noted a choice of position based on geography as related to family:

I chose this position because it was near my family and in my field. I've remained here for a number of reasons: I wasn't interviewed for or hired for the one tenure-track position I applied for that was also geographically ideal (and I agree—it wasn't a good fit!); I'm thrilled by the relatively low teaching load for a lecturer position; I can still do a little research; there are possibilities to get involved with programs, etc. that I'm passionate about; and the pay is good. (31, 905)

While the respondent chose a position to be close to family and did not get a tenure-track position, she or he is “thrilled” with the conditions of a lecturer position because it affords most of the activities that come with tenure-track positions, research, involvement with programs one is passionate about, and good pay. One respondent discussed her experience as part of a spousal hire:

….P]ublications raised my publishing profile sufficiently that my current institution was interested in offering me a position as part of a dual career couple hiring. Can't say I enjoy(ed) being the ‘trailing spouse’ but from a financial position it was essential since we were barely breaking even on one academic income in central/eastern Canada….I got into teaching writing as a Master's student when I was employed as a GTA teaching a writing course without any background or knowledge beyond coaching in the finer points of English grammar. When I discovered that you could take advanced degrees in teaching writing rather than literature, I felt that was something that I wanted to do. Since the only institutions offering advanced study in rhetoric and composition in the 1980s were in the US, we moved there to complete PhD degrees.(36, 910)

In addition to this respondent’s comment about being “the ‘trailing spouse,’” it is noteworthy, also for its echoes with earlier responses in terms of arriving as a writing teacher who did not know how to teaching writing, trying to teach “without any background or knowledge beyond
coaching the finer points of English grammar.” The response is also reminiscent of the myth, which says that good writing is good grammar, so anyone who can write can teach writing. Those in writing studies choose writing studies because they tend to believe that expertise is required to teach writing. This respondent also referred to discovery, noting, “when I discovered that you could take advanced degrees in teaching writing rather than literature, I felt that was something I wanted to do.”

In sum, respondents’ routes into writing studies are varied. The most common theme among respondents’ answers, based on prevalence, was accidental or circuitous arrival into writing studies through a revelatory experience of love, discovery, and/or good fortune. The second theme was origins in English literature with arrival in the field through positions teaching writing, usually as a sessional instructor or instructor in a writing centre. A third theme was arrival from other areas of study, with respondents describing origins from 11 areas in addition to English literature. Descriptions of pragmatic factors affecting careers were chosen for salience to issues of contingent labour and gender. This data about routes into the field reveals much about the field of writing studies in terms of its diversity and multiplicity, as well as what holds it together. The revelatory experience, respondents reported, usually came through teaching and/or introduction to theory and methodology in graduate work, often through mentors and community. In both cases, the revelation comes from the sudden ability to see something previously not seen and the sudden realization of deep connection to it. That which was not previously seen is another side to the story, another version of the myth, an invisible field, hiding, as one respondent put it, in plain sight. The data suggest that the field has been marginalized historically and continues to be so. In order to better understand how the myth is
operating in contemporary times, it is important to obtain a sense of respondents’ ideas about the field’s status over the last two decades.

### 7.3 Perceptions of change

Part of describing a people’s history for writing studies is hearing about people’s own sense of their field’s history. The question about perceptions of change was inspired by Miller (1991), who asked her respondents to “please assess the nature of any changes in composition’s status in your department in the last 5 and 10 years” (p. 210). I wanted to access a longer time frame and to elicit some voices who could speak at once to both earlier and current status of the field. To this end, Question 29 read: “Describe any changes you perceive in the status of writing studies over the past 10-20 years.” Forty-seven of 53 respondents answered, 88.6%. In 83% of respondents’ answers were three themes regarding perceptions of change. First, respondents noted that the status of writing studies has improved (27.7%). The second theme was that change has fluctuated (21.3%). A third theme was that there has been no change or that writing studies has decreased in status (14.9%). Some respondents stated that they had not been in the field long enough to comment (12.8%) or that they had trouble answering (4.3%). In 8.5% of responses, perceptions of change in relation to composition in the U.S. were debated.

#### 7.3.1 Improved status

Within the group of respondents who reported improved status, respondents’ answers revealed two aspects of change, the first of which is the status of the field in terms of visibility, legitimacy, and reputation. The second is improved status for the field in terms of greater interest in writing studies as a field that contributes to knowledge making in academia. Most respondents reported improvement in status on the grounds of more visibility, greater legitimacy, and enhanced reputation as a field. This is interesting given that respondents noted, in answer to a
previous question about ways in which they use the term, “writing studies,” that it was not recognizable outside the field. They seem to be saying that while the term is not recognizable, the field itself is at least more visible and more legitimate than it once was. In terms of visibility, one respondent said, “[t]here are many more full-time faculty teaching writing now than when I started, and the field is more visible to senior administration” (46, 980). Another respondent agreed that writing studies is more apparent to administrators: “[t]he field is growing and attracting more interest from academic administrators and tenure track faculty” (7, 941), and a second reflected, “I think the field is now recognized by others [rather] than those within the field” (3, 937). In addition to recognizability and visibility, one respondent spoke of “reputation,” though he or she does not say amongst whom: “[s]peaking of status in the sense of reputation, I would say that it has gone up…considerably” (45, 979). Those who reported increased status for writing studies often did so on the basis of visibility and recognizability, pertinent given the aims of a people’s history and Smith’s (1990) framework. For the field to be perceived as “more visible” and “more apparent,” it has to be perceived as having been less visible and less apparent. This research makes writing studies more visible through the accounts given by respondents, and it acts as a way of rupturing objectified forms of knowledge through what they have said. Put another way, respondents explicitly discussed the status of their field, and in doing so, opened up points for critique of normative discourse and the institutional structures that sanction it.

Another way that the field has improved visibility, according to respondents, is through increased programming, especially graduate programming. One respondent noted “visibility of programs” as a “key change” (12, 946). Likewise, one respondent connected programming to legitimacy:
Speaking of Canada in particular -- writing (with preceding and subsequent words as desired) is now recognized as a possible departmental and program name. Writing programs can stand alone! There is a general recognition that writing instructors can draw on a body of knowledge (including theory and research as well as a documentation of ‘best practices’) that is valuable in itself as well as useful to other faculty members and administrators, e.g., in discussing issues of curriculum and programming. There is now clearly a well-respected body of scholars in the field in Canada, with a few graduate programs producing more. Unfortunately, writing centres in many institutions don’t always share in this recognition; teaching and even leadership roles are being allotted to staff positions, resulting in a loss of scholarly perspective as well as reduction in status and power. (15, 949)

This respondent highlighted the disciplinarity of writing studies through mention that “there is general recognition that writing instructors can draw on a body of knowledge…There is now clearly a well-respected body of scholars in the field in Canada, with a few graduate programs producing more.” The term, “body,” is mentioned twice, as both body of knowledge and body of scholars. This study aims to give shape to the second of those bodies. Others, namely Clary-Lemon (2009), gave shape to a collective body of knowledge; a people’s history, an alternative sociology of women, gives shape to the body of scholars. Another way that “body” matters is in the case of writing centres, through excoriation of both a body of knowledge (expertise in writing studies) used by a body of scholars (experts in writing studies).

Improved status for writing studies in terms of legitimacy and reputation is tied to perceptions of writing studies as its own field, as shown by one respondent’s comment: “I see the field as being taken more seriously and viewed as less of a ‘fringe’ discipline” (11, 945).

Similarly, another respondent focused explicitly on increased theoretical rigor:

I have seen, over the past 20 years, a more theoretically informed, research-based trend in writing studies. When I first attended writing studies conferences, about 20 years ago, I noticed that many presente[rs] simply reported on classroom activities and practices. Now, I notice that most presenters report on research on writing (in the educational settings, but also elsewhere). This research is almost always framed by past research in the area and/or theoretical frameworks that move the conversation about writing along. (44, 978)
This response traces growth in the field from discussions of pedagogy to research on writing in “educational settings, but also elsewhere.” Disciplinary behaviour is evidenced by the account that conference presenters report on research on writing that “is almost always framed by past research in the area and/or theoretical frameworks that move the conversation about writing along.” This response, and the response before it, highlighted positive change in the field as writing studies scholars continue to build a body of work.

A second theme within the group who described improved status for writing studies focused on greater interest in writing as a subject of study alongside greater interest in the field’s epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical lenses. Two respondents took a broad approach to the importance of studying writing, one noting, “I think that it is more widely acknowledged that communication is important to people first as part of their careers and, lately, as a way of critically thinking through issues and ideas. I think that is a positive trend” (35, 969). The other, similarly, observed:

There are many changes indeed, e.g., the new rhetoric of genre, interdisciplinarity, multiple Englishes, intercultural communication, multimodality, etc. The most exciting changes for me are the emergence of global trends and openness to ideas that originate in other cultures and disciplines. (39, 973)

This respondent included the theoretical and methodological framework of new rhetorical genre theory alongside current contexts of diversity and multiplicity in cultures, languages, and disciplines. Others focused on writing pedagogy and the complexity of the learning and teaching of writing. One respondent explained a change of attitude about student writers, noting that “[t]here's a growing awareness that grad students need support and I think it is being driven by the increasing numbers of international students. I think the status of writing studies is still low but I think there is a growing recognition of the need for support” (16, 950). The “need for
support,” noted in this response is also apparent in a comment that, “[s]lowly Canadian institutions are taking a greater interest in the ability of their students to write…” (34, 968).

There is evidence of progression in phrases such as “growing awareness,” and “growing recognition,” as well as evidence of increased visibility and legitimacy in “awareness” and “recognition.”

Another respondent noted disciplines “developing a greater interest in writing studies” and “incorporating the research in their disciplines.” But this seems offset by a reported “lack of resources and recognition” as well as subsequent “enormous frustration”:

Within my institution disciplines other than English are developing a greater interest in writing studies and incorporating the research in their disciplines. I see a very complex pattern of stating interest and recognizing the need without wanting to invest any resources in writing studies. All writing instructors at my institution have expressed enormous frustration at the lack of resources and recognition for the complex field. I'm not sure that many faculty appreciate Writing Studies as a separate field of research. My writing centre has no budget and, apart from my small salary, receives no additional support for teaching assistants or research. I've tried to connect to the research community and do attend conferences in the summer but with increasing frustration have decided to try to do less work for free. (41, 975)

This respondent connected the lack of investment of resources in writing studies with “lack of recognition for the complex field,” lack of appreciation for writing studies “as a separate field of research.” So despite this respondent’s report of greater interest in writing studies by disciplines and greater incorporation of their research, there was also explicit mention of lack of resources and legitimacy.

In addition to reports of greater interest in writing studies by institutions and disciplines, even if it is only interest, not action, one respondent noted increased respect, and another tentatively claimed that writing studies “seems to be gaining purchase in Canada.” The first situated the change in relation to English:
English departments used to look down on people whose expertise was in composition and grammar. They no longer do. In fact, it’s now understood that communication skills are developed over time in undergraduates and graduates. There's a healthy respect campus-wide for the work we do now. (40, 974)

The use of expertise in “composition” and “grammar” is unusual; the term, “composition,” was used by some respondents and explicitly opposed by others. Most respondents tended to resist describing their expertise as in grammar. At any rate, this respondent reported a “healthy respect campus-wide” for the work they do, evidence that perceptions of writing studies have improved in many regards.

As with the respondent who noted an interest in writing studies offset by an unwillingness to support it, one respondent noted that writing studies’ success and growth can be attributed to the “way it can be pitched to flatter a neoliberal institution’s goals”:

I'm not sure I can say for sure, but it seems to be gaining purchase in Canada -- probably underpinned, unfortunately, by the way it can be pitched to flatter a neoliberal institution's goals of practical, saleable, skills-based education. But it's also being taken up as having something valuable to say about pedagogy -- at least among some literary scholars, for instance, who are starting to pay attention to what writing studies is saying.(32, 966)

Ironically, the field’s presence is dependent on the very myth it opposes. “Practical, saleable, skills-based education” tends to simplify writing, as “skills” discourse has historically, something to be learned quickly and efficiently in a single course. This response echoes others, though, observing that fields and disciplines are “starting to pay attention to what writing studies is saying.” Despite perpetual issues of false perceptions of student writers and teachers of writing, and despite perpetual lack of institutional support for the field, a number of respondents felt that there has been a change for the positive in the status of writing studies over the past two decades.
7.3.2 Fluctuating change

Respondents’ perceptions of change for writing studies over the last decade or two position its status as subject to the mood swings of larger social trends as well as to individuals in powerful roles in institutions. A notable trend is the vulnerability of writing centres. A number of responses highlighted change in writing studies over time. One respondent noted:

In a word, roller-coaster. When I began as a writing instructor a decade ago, I perceived a move toward student-centred approaches to writing. Unfortunately, with the tightening of funding, writing centres began to be seen as an ‘extra’ and not a central focus of student development. The centre does not directly generate revenue, and therefore exists at the pleasure of the administration. (10, 944)

“Roller coaster” captures the up and down of the field, shifting with the perceptions of writing centres as extra, rather than central as they may have been in earlier times. The metaphor of a roller coaster might also say something about the abruptness of change and the anxieties that go with it. Similarly, one respondent used military metaphors of advance and retreat and spoke of “an impending sense of threat”:

I can't speak to the state of the discipline as a whole (though my sense is that there have been advances and retreats); at my primary institution there is an impending sense of threat, mainly tied to budgetary issues and political infighting. Compared with 10 years ago when writing studies was being created at [my institution] or even 5 years ago when I started teaching writing studies, things seem increasingly precarious. (19, 953)

These two respondents noted funding as the main driver of change. The first referred to “the tightening of funding,” and the second to issues as “mainly tied to budgetary issues.” The second respondent also pointed to “political infighting,” though it is not clear who was involved. This respondent is worried as, over time, “things seem increasingly precarious.”

In addition to fluctuating change described as a“roller coaster” or as “advances and retreats,” one respondent said, “[i]t has improved, but at times it seems in a two steps forward one step back fashion”(30, 964). Another agreed, “[n]ot much [has changed]. Writing studies is
still marginalized institutionally, even where there are bright lights [there is struggle] for recognition and resources” (23, 957). Two respondents noted growth in terms of recognition of the term “writing studies” and of the field, but stagnation institutionally. The first said:

The term ‘writing studies’ became more well known, but writing programs have not gained more ground. The status of ‘writing centers’ has decreased as they are becoming detached from academic units and academic staffing by qualified writing specialists with secure positions, and are increasingly staffed by non-academics, short-term workers, and/or students. (24, 958)

This respondent said that the term is better known but “programs have not gained more ground,” which is opposite a respondent I referred to earlier who believed that the term had not gained ground but programming had. This respondent affirmed the concern expressed by many respondents about the devolution and deprofessionalization of a number of writing centres.

The fluctuating status of writing studies is apparent in a fair number of respondents who noted that the status of the field has improved, but in all cases, they include an oppositional point. For instance, one respondent said: “On the one hand, writing studies seems to be developing; on the other, institutional insecurity still seems a serious concern for writing studies people” (25, 959). Development is positioned opposite “institutional insecurity” as a “serious concern.” Another explained:

[i]n general, there's a slight increase in status, with institutions increasing their attention to teaching pedagogy and practice, and to student learning and retention/success strategies. Fields such as genre studies have helped bring focus to communication in disciplines that are traditionally not engaged with writing. However, from my experience, many of those outside writing studies fields continue to associate writing with mechanics, grammar, and remediation. (37, 971)

Here, increased attention to pedagogy and practice and methodological focus to communications in other disciplines is offset by the myth, as “many of those outside writing studies continue to
associate writing with mechanics, grammar, and remediation.” Another respondent pointed to “attention” in terms of visibility with a “but” in terms of misperceptions of writing instruction:

It has become more visible, to the point that it is seen as a standard element of university instruction and research. At the same time, there is a bit of a divide between the perception that this is an equal area of study to other areas and the perception that this is a support service area that could be carried out by (cheaper) people in non-faculty positions where there is usually less support for research. (42, 976)

Yet another respondent noted fluctuation, confirming an increase in status perception wise, coupled, as occurred previously, with unwillingness on the part of institutions to support the writing they claim is so important. The respondent explained:

I think writing studies has gained standing in the academic community, but this has not resulted in substantial changes to the conditions under which many of us are employed….Too many writing instructors are still part-time, contract, sessional, etc. Too many are from English literature and are hired because other academics make little distinction between people with degrees in literature and those with degrees in writing studies. Too many programs are created and nurtured only to be cut and dismantled by later, less-sympathetic administrations. I am glad to see that our organizations are maintaining our memberships and possibly even growing, but it feels as though we are still not as strong as we ought to be, given the central role we play in helping our students develop literacy skills for school and beyond. (43, 977)

This respondent touched on a number of core issues in the data: working conditions, expertise dismissed, along with “empty rhetoric” on the part of administrators and frustration on the part of instructors. These accounts of fluctuating change show a perceived “increase in status,” that writing studies has “gained standing,” and “become more visible” and recognizable as a discipline. At the same time, there is the “impending sense of threat,” “vulnerability,” “marginalization,” and “serious concern” that writing studies programs and writing centres, especially, are still associated with remediation and understood as support services that can be staffed by non-academics and short term, untrained workers. It is an old story.
7.3.3 No change in status or worse status

A number of respondents did not think there had been change in status for the field or thought that it was worse off than it has been historically. One said, “[i]n the context of teaching in my university, I am not sure it has progressed very much” (38, 972). Two referred to marginalization: “Well, the major change is the institutional active disdain for the work, for writing studies in general. Marginalization that speak[s] to the neoliberal agenda, which truly does not find students interesting except when their wallets are open…” (2, 936). Reduced status was most often apparent in writing centres. One respondent noted, for example:

The status has not really changed much in the time I've been working in writing studies. It is still marginalized in that faculty tend to think that anyone can teach academic writing. It's seen as an ‘add on’. This has been exacerbated by the trend to see writing studies as ‘skills teaching’, and to house writing centres in libraries, skills centres, and ‘academic success’ centres. In this view, writing studies is not a field of study like literature or history, but more akin to study skills and time management. (14, 948)

This respondent situated marginalization in relation to skills discourse and to the perception of faculty who “tend to think that anyone can teach academic writing.” A few respondents referred explicitly to the deprofessionalization of writing centres. One described “[t]he truly awful transition away from university and college writing centres run by and staffed with PhDs who are experts in their field to some so-called student success model run by ... wait for it ... students” (31, 965). Another agreed that the field has been hurt by the closing of writing centres:

It hasn't grown the way I expected it to. With the closing of so many writing centres it has been seriously undermined. I do see continued potential for research and teaching growth, however, and I hope that comes to fruition. At this moment in history, writing in all its forms is incredibly ubiquitous, and so is the need to teach and study it. (26, 960)

Relatedly, one questioned the field's ability to rebound after losses of programs:

At one time, we offered a course in composition, and the students seemed to appreciate it, mostly because they needed it, but also because it offered them a chance to hone their skills. At my institution, this course has not been offered for some time now. The reason
for its demise is unclear, at least to me, as it offered a valuable service. ‘Writing studies’ to date has not seemed to rebound since I am unaware of any formal courses being offered, although writing centres are more common…(33, 967)

Those who did not think there has been change in status for writing studies or who think there has been a change for the worse seemed to argue that the recent neo-liberal agenda has resulted in serious losses of programming, especially in terms of widespread deprofessionalization of writing centres.

Four respondents spoke to the field’s status in relation to the U.S. Three respondents stated that the status of the field in the U.S. is stronger than in Canada, and one that writing studies has grown in Canada because of U.S. trained scholars bringing their knowledge here. Three mentioned the status of writing studies as better in the U.S. One said that “[t]he status of writing studies in the [U.S.] is much stronger” (36, 970), another that “…there is still much less knowledge of the field among university faculty here than there is in the United States” (17, 951). A third reflected: “[w]ell, it seems that writing studies will never have the sort of recognition or privileged status that it has at universities in the states” (8, 942). On the other hand, one respondent credited the training of Canadian scholars at American universities for an increase in status, noting that “[writing studies] has grown in Canada. There are more US-trained folks returning home and bringing their knowledge and understanding of comp/rhet back with them” (29, 963). In light of the literature, which generally positions Canadian writing studies as defining itself in opposition to the U.S. and in light of the fact that a number of respondents were educated in the U.S., there is need for contemporary, comparative work between the fields in both countries.

I end this section with two responses that offer histories over decades, both of which indicate that there has been both change and stagnation for the field. The first response is a kind
of sweeping history pointing to economic trends as they shaped the field into the present

“dismantling of writing centres”:

In Canada [writing studies] flourished as a viable field from the 80s because of money poured into education and a perceived literacy crisis. It began to thrive as a research field in the late 90s and 2000s because it became interdisciplinary and there was a recognition of the research as well, it supplied huge numbers of grad student worker bees for various service centres and there was a push to develop writing centres and entice teachers and English students to do MAs. Currently it is now being dismantled because its departments did not actively develop enough tenure/research viable positions for staff and faculty [and] because the universities are dismantling writing centres because they are resource heavy, [committing instead] to peer tutoring and learning commons or 'excellence centres’…(27, 961)

This respondent outlined historical trends that fueled writing studies, first financial support and expansion of a research field and now lack of positions and resources, notably the “dismantling” of writing centres in contemporary times.

The second response that covered decades presented a political account of how perceptions of the field have not really changed, noting, too, that it has a “better chance” of becoming “a proper field of scholarship and praxis” where it is located outside of departments of English:

Changes over those years [1995-2015] are far less dramatic than in the 10-15 years previous to that, although I would say that where writing is taught in English Departments, for the most part, those departments are stuck in the very old ways of thinking that anyone who can write a master's thesis in English literature can teach writing, that learning to write an ‘English essay’ is equivalent to learning ‘how to write,’ and that the task is fundamentally remedial and therefore best done by part-timers in the hopes that one magical day, students will enter literature classes ‘knowing how to write.’
Where writing has escaped from English -- into writing centres, stand-alone writing programs, or sometimes communications programs -- it has stood a better chance of becoming writing studies -- a proper field of scholarship and praxis.(22, 956)

“Very old ways of thinking” fuel the myth that anyone who can write can teach writing and that learning to write is “fundamentally remedial and therefore best done by part-timers.”

Respondents’ accounts of change for writing studies over time suggest that writing studies may
be slightly more visible, more recognizable than it has been historically. Yet, the data show that it is not better off in terms of legitimacy or working conditions; its students and its teachers are subject to the myth as they have always been. Moreover, there seems to be particular attention paid to the loss of professionalized writing centres in current times. Respondents demonstrated that, overall, change within the field has fluctuated, depending on local conditions and larger social and economic national trends. Respondents’ answers also reveal a key paradox: institutions care about writing but they are not willing to invest in the field whose expertise it is to teach it. This is precisely because of the myth and the classist motivations that have always driven it. In recent times, education has become increasingly a business, and perceptions of writing instruction as simple and cost effective are causing serious concerns for respondents.

7.4 Tensions

Tensions, as part of experience, tell us much about writing studies in relation to the greater constellation of academia and to larger socio-economic and political trends. The survey question about tensions was inspired by Miller’s (1991) request for respondents to “please identify as precisely as you can the sources of any tensions associated with composition that you have experienced in your department” (p. 209-210). In question 30 of this survey, respondents were asked, “[i]n your institution, are there tensions associated with your day to day work? If so, please explain.” Forty-nine of 53, or 92.5% of respondents, answered. More respondents than I would have guessed, 20.4%, reported feeling supported, described tensions as positive, or reported no or minimal tensions. One noted:

I imagine you would get a yes from some [writing centres], but that isn't the case in mine. I enjoy tremendous support from the Deans I report to; I've got a fantastic crew of writing instructors who have generally been with me for a long time; and both students and faculty value what we do very highly. (47, 1037)
This respondent usefully explained the lack of tensions as “tremendous support” from the Deans, “a fantastic crew of writing instructors” who have been working together for a long time, and “value” of the work by students and faculty. This respondent recognizes that there may be tensions from other writing centres. Similarly, some respondents said that they experience minimal tensions or no tensions, but then included some. For example, one respondent noted that “[a]t the day to day level tensions are fairly minimal: I live with the fact that I am the only full-time writing person in the department, and that everyone else is hired on a course-by-course basis” (22, 1012). So despite this account of “fairly minimal” tensions, the use of contingent labour is brought up.

In contrast to reports of no tensions or minimal tensions, 79.6% of respondents described an array of tensions. Themes determined by prevalence among those who did report tensions include, first, 14.3% describing those tensions as pervasive. Second, respondents reported issues of territory arising from inaccurate perceptions of students’ learning, notably writing instruction as a quick fix (10.2%). Furthermore, respondents reported with equal frequency at 6%, the following tensions: the role and nature of writing instruction, the lack of fit within institutions, what I have called “square pegs in round holes,” vulnerability to administrative tides, particularly for writing centres, and lack of positions and qualified scholars.

7.4.1. Pervasiveness

One of the things Miller (1991) said about the myth was that it was “widely believed” (p.1), which seems to be similarly reflected in some of the respondents’ comments about “persistent” tensions. For example, one respondent noted:

[i]n my former position as a Writing Centre instructor, I periodically noted what seemed like ‘territorial’ tensions related to an instructor's discipline-specific expertise, and the writing-in-the-disciplines expertise that I and/or my colleagues would bring to
conversations about research or teaching. A more significant and persistent tension is that involving students' and other instructors' expectations that grammar instruction is the route to ‘good’ writing. And finally, I think there is, overall, limited appreciation at my institution for the significance of explicit writing instruction, in all courses, as a key factor in students' academic success. (4, 994)

This respondent named several tensions, beginning with tension with faculty related to areas of expertise, which speaks to the third element of the myth that questions the disciplinarity of writing studies. “A more significant and persistent tension” is the “expectations that grammar instruction is the route to ‘good’ writing,” which harkens back to complaint and prescriptivist traditions. Third, this respondent pointed to a tension as “limited appreciation” for the “significance of explicit writing instruction, in all courses,” which points to the second element of the myth, the perception that writing instruction is remedial rather than enculturative.

Pervasiveness was also apparent in the fact that some respondents possibly thought tensions could be assumed, or that the question should make that assumption. For instance, one explained:

[O]f course there are! Is it possible for there not to be? For me, my position as a lecturer is tricky, and I'm working out what I'm encouraged or allowed to do in that position and what I'm not. And there are some misunderstandings from my literature, rhetoric, and linguistics colleagues about what writing studies entails. (31, 1021)

This tension might best be described as “territorial” in the sense of trying to understand and negotiate roles and misunderstandings. Another respondent also used, “of course,” and pointed to territorial tensions in particular with colleagues in English, as above:

Of course. Colleagues in English perceive writing studies people as either a threat or not in their field so they mostly ignore us, especially at parties. They seem to resent us getting anything in case it somehow takes away from what they might have gotten. We are also never included in any program development or on committees to develop new programming even when we have expertise in the area (for example, media studies). (36, 1026)
One respondent was playfully sarcastic, pointing to a different angle of tension: “No tension here! But seriously, yes, of course. Key tension: writing support funded by many different players, so a coordinated approach to writing centres and programs is difficult” (12, 1002).

Similar to the previous respondent who highlighted fields, this response highlighted “different players.” There were also descriptions of the tensions as “persistent” and existing “[a]bsolutely and all the time” (6, 996). One respondent reported “ongoing struggles”:

Yes. There are ongoing struggles to maintain the ties of writing courses, communications courses, and writing centres to academic units. The fad is for all-inclusive ‘learning commons, often under the direction of student services administrators, where jack-of-all-trades instructors and tutors help everyone with everything. This diminishes our professional capabilities, diminishes the recognition of writing development as a specific and necessary academic activity, and leads to considerable tension between tutors. (45, 1035)

This respondent pointed explicitly to tensions associated with trying to maintain ties to academic units. This struggle comes from having to battle the fad of removing the writing studies expertise from writing centres which “diminishes” professional capabilities and the recognition of the importance of “writing development.” Such diminished capacity is also apparent in another respondent, who answered, “Yes. My institution is under severe financial pressure which permeates every aspect of my work, and everyone else’s work, and makes it difficult to inspire others to get involved in improving student writing across the curriculum” (44, 1034). Both respondents pointed to struggles associated with doing one’s work well in contexts and institutions that devalue that work.

Devaluing arises from the assumptions of the myth, in particular, a notion of good writing that neglects its sociality. One respondent reported credit and recognition for expertise, but a tension around “commonplaces about writing,” normative notions about what makes good writing. She or he noted:
Our unit is credited with writing studies expertise by those outside our unit (for the most part). I also work in a multi-disciplinary context where my colleagues recognize my expertise. The only time I really feel tension is when colleagues say things about writing that aren't informed by research/writing theory -- instead, these statements are commonplaces about writing (e.g. writing should be clear, accurate) that over-simplify writing practices in particular contexts. It's frustrating to have to unpack these sorts of assumptions about writing all the time. (46, 1036)

This respondent feels tension when colleagues use commonplaces that “over-simplify writing practices in particular contexts” and reported frustration at the pervasiveness of having to “unpack these sorts of assumptions about writing all the time.”

One respondent pointed to pervasiveness through use of the word, “endemic.” She or he explained: “Institutions typically want their graduates to be adept and flexible writers, but seldom do institutions want to properly support the teaching and research that would ensure this...that creates a tension that seems to be endemic to this field” (2, 992). This is the same story other respondents have told; institutions want students to write effectively, but they do not want to support “the teaching and research that would ensure this.” If writing instruction is perceived as a quick fix, if it is decontextualized and not informed by research, then it will continue to be ineffective. The use of “endemic” is important because it points to the embeddedness of tensions; it is the nature of the beast, the field, by its very definition, opposes the myth about writing, writing instruction, and writing instructors.

Crucially, tensions arise when non-experts, whether they intend to or not, do not recognize the sociality of writing or the study of teaching it as subjects of study, thus do not recognize the field or its experts. Tensions faced by writing studies scholars might be different than those faced by academics in other fields. Three perceptions specific to writing can result in non-experts announcing and defending unfounded claims. The first is that writing is something almost everyone does; the second is that the idea of good writing as good writing irrespective of
context leads to the belief that anyone who can write can teach writing. The third perception is a sense of declining language use, complaints about language as deficient. In order to better understand how, and in what ways, tensions are pervasive, as well as to better understand the nature of the tensions themselves, it might be useful to conduct qualitative research using more intimate approaches like narrative inquiry, focus groups, and interviews. It would also be interesting to examine perceptions of writing instruction as gendered.

7.4.2 The role and nature of writing instruction, territory

Respondents noted tensions arising from perceptions of writing instruction as remediation in grammar; one respondent described the tension as arising from “[t]he association of what I do (teaching writing) with remediation” (1, 991). Relatedly, there are tensions surrounding whose job it is to teach writing and its importance relative to “content.” One respondent explained: “[l]ots of faculty want me to teach grammar, grammar, and more grammar. Most faculty want me to improve their students writing without taking time and attention away from the core content of their courses” (7, 997). One respondent directly countered the remediation argument, as those in writing studies often do, positioning the students as capable and the curriculum as inadequate: “I am no longer a part of those conversations in my isolated role as a sessional instructor. I just see capable students who have had no writing research experience well into their undergraduate programs” (29, 1019). One respondent mentioned the tension between time for writing instruction and time for the students’ main study as a tension amongst students and faculty:

[s]ome tensions exist. For example, students are more willing to accept the need for a communications course now than they previously were, but they still harbour some resentment that they have to take a class in communication. I also ask them to do a lot of writing as well, something they often don’t feel very confident about. There are still some residual tensions with the faculty, many of whom see the course as taking valuable time
away from the students’ technical studies. Overall, however, there is far more acceptance now than when I first started. (35, 1025)

This respondent noted that, overall, there is more acceptance of the writing course that this respondent teaches than there was previously. Many reported tensions between faculty in other areas and faculty in writing studies that arose from differences in ideas about student writing and writing instruction.

Moreover, conceptions of writing instruction as grammar instruction can manifest as programming simplified as a quick fix, that is, offered in a single course at the first year level. Tensions surrounding programming are evidence of conflicting values about writing. One respondent explained tensions that arose when a course proposal met with resistance from faculty members:

> When I applied to develop a course on Graduate Research Writing, I met with strong resistance from many faculty members who felt that this was not our core business. They argued that students complete English courses in undergraduate programmes and that should be enough. Also that the English department should be dealing with writing….

(16, 1006)

This respondent explained that she or he met with resistance while trying to run a course in graduate research writing because faculty members felt it was not their “core business,” that students should have learned to write in a single undergraduate English course, and that teaching writing is the business of the English department. These aspects of this response are all evidence of the myth. The idea that writing can be taught in a single course simplifies and decontextualizes writing, which is more in line with models of remediation than models of enculturation. Jurisdictional issues show perceptions by faculty outside of English departments that English should teach writing, and perceptions of teaching graduate student writers as not the “core business” of writing studies. Both perceptions fail to acknowledge the discipline of writing studies whose core business it is to teach writing, especially in academic contexts.
Faculty outside of English often perceive English departments as the place for writing instruction, but within English departments, sometimes “colleagues just don't want to have to deal with issues of writing, other than within the context of their own (literature) courses” (17, 1007). One respondent pointed to tensions experienced in a writing centre in relation to an English department:

My writing centre tensions have been related to limited, and sometimes non-existent, work space and widely diverse faculty expectations for a job that is underfunded and very loosely defined. While the vague definition offers opportunities for experimentation, it also means that support tends to be in words only…. Our writing program and courses have been supported outside of our division but have faced significant under-support, and some direct attacks, from the home English department. (43, 1033)

Tensions arise from disparities between the ways in which writing support is best imagined for students. It is clear that in at least some institutions, entanglement with English remains problematic. Interrelated tensions about the nature, role, and jurisdiction of writing instruction are evidence that the myth persists, especially in terms of misperceptions of writing instruction as remediation. The responses are evidence, too, that tensions arise from opposition to this misperception.

7.4.3 Square pegs in round holes

Respondents identified tensions related to a lack of fit within traditional institutional structures. This lack of fit arises, as with tensions surrounding the nature and role of writing instruction, from inaccurate perceptions of writing studies that can lead to inappropriate locations and categories for work and difficulties associated with occupying multiple categories. This is particularly true in the case of writing centres. Two respondents referred explicitly to “fit,” the first noting that “[w]orking out where and how the Writing Centre fits in the institution is a current problem ….” (39, 1029). One respondent, similarly, noted an inappropriate location:
I do not believe my institution actually knows where to ‘fit’ the Writing Centre. We currently share office space with Academic Advising. This makes absolutely no sense to me. Our paths don't cross, we don't interact, our student tutors do not speak with the advisors, we have issues over sharing space, etc. It's problematic.(9, 999)

This respondent explained why locating a writing centre with advising is neither logical nor useful. Such pairings are indicative of the myth insofar as writing centre instruction, in particular, is not understood by others as disciplinary but something more akin to study skills.

One respondent reflected on a mismatch with her or his location and job, noting, like others have, an incommensurability with Student Services areas:

> It is difficult to be a faculty member in a Student Services unit. The people with whom I work have no understanding of what it means to teach or be a teacher. The position causes all sorts of misunderstandings. For example, seeing somebody in a director position at a writing centre appears to admin people as unambitious. Why would somebody work for years at the same job?”(37, 1027)

Another respondent focused on negotiating roles as well as “misunderstandings” about writing studies work. She or he explained: “For me, my position as a lecturer is tricky, and I'm working out what I'm encouraged or allowed to do in that position and what I'm not. And there are some misunderstandings from my literature, rhetoric, and linguistics colleagues about what writing studies entails”(31, 1021). Writing studies as a field, we are reminded by the literature, grew in Canada wherever it could given local conditions, so its locations are extremely diverse.

Oftentimes, those locations are default options rather than ideals driven by commitment to the field. Notably, writing centres are increasingly located in Student Service areas as part of a rapid deprofessionalization across the nation. This often results in writing studies experts, faculty and directors, being separated from the academic divisions of universities, away from conversations about research, pedagogy, and curriculum that are immediately relevant and necessary for their daily work.
7.4.4 Vulnerability to administrative tides, particularly for writing centres

Writing studies has always been vulnerable to administrative whim precisely because it is located in multiple institutional locations depending on what works in local conditions. In the last 10 years, especially, the diversity of writing centre models characteristic of earlier times seems to have been largely reduced to a single location within student services. It would be useful to contrast the 2006 Directory of Canadian Writing Centres with the 2014 Canadian University and College Writing Centres "contact list," though that list may not reflect recent changes. It does not, for instance, record the change at my institution. Respondents noted that recent relocations of writing centres has often meant deprofessionalization in the forms of job loss or reconfiguration for directors and faculty with expertise in writing studies in favour of management experience and/or heavier reliance on more inadequately trained peer tutors. One respondent reflected:

Writing centres can be the focus of writing skills improvement for students, and a hub of writing studies research; however, the very existence of the centre is threatened. One never knows if the centre will close next year, next semester, or next week. There are also tensions between those who provide academic instruction, and those who would commodify student services using a business model. I fear that those who have authority over writing centres lack the knowledge of theories associated with learning, and learning to write. There are assumptions that students learned all that they need to know about writing in secondary school. Writing occurs there for a very different reason (knowledge telling) than at post-secondary institutions (knowledge creation). (10, 1000)

This respondent importantly noted what writing centres can be central places within academia for informed writing pedagogy and “hub[s] of writing studies research,” but their existence “is threatened” when people who are not writing studies experts are in charge of writing pedagogy. Furthermore, this respondent addressed commonplace ideas that negate the sociality and complexity of writing through comment that “there are assumptions that students learned all that they need to know about writing in secondary school.” This simplified way of understanding
writing, if adopted by administrators, can contribute to inadequate programming. “The central tension,” one respondent argued, “is around convincing administration that the writing centre needs and is worthy of adequate resourcing” (14, 1004). Another mentioned tensions between writing centres and administrators:

Writing centres still need to be justified to new administrators-- some of whom don't stop to listen before making harmful decisions. In general, though, the WAC programming associated with writing centres and writing (-studies) programs has been well accepted and its practitioners are respected as academics. Day to day, my academic appointment (like that of most of my colleagues in writing studies at my institution) protected me from serious challenges…. (15, 1005)

While this respondent generally reported that programming associated with writing centres and writing studies has been accepted and respected, it seems that the field and its practitioners have to re-earn respect with each administrative shift. Vulnerability was apparent: “The tensions are mainly administrative due to budget issues (as mentioned above), the low priority placed on first-year writing courses, and the fact that Writing Studies 101 is staffed entirely by contract academic staff (making it highly precarious)” (19, 1009). It seems that the precariousness of the field is reflected in the conditions under which writing studies experts are employed. The perpetuation of the myth simplifies the acts of learning and teaching writing, often reducing writing instruction to one-off courses at the first year level taught by contingent labour and/or writing centres run by people without expertise in writing. The field has responded to an urgent need: "A Call for Responses: Special Section on The Future of Writing Centres in Canada" in *The Canadian Journal for Studies in Discourse and Writing* was recently issued across the CASDW (Aug. 4, 2016) and CWCA (Aug. 5, 2016) list servs.
7.4.5 Lack of positions and qualified scholars

Respondents’ answers suggest that the field in Canada is underfunded and undersupported in terms of working conditions, that it has always been predominantly staffed by non-permanent workers. Some respondents pointed to issues related to contingent labour, including a respondent who said, “At the day to day level tensions are fairly minimal: I live with the fact that I am the only full-time writing person in the department, and that everyone else is hired on a course-by-course basis” (22, 1012). Others pointed to lack of positions: “No TT [tenure track] positions, not even lecturer positions available. Ten years later I am still stuck in adjunct work” (25, 1015).

Not only are permanent positions increasingly rare, some respondents are worried for the future of the field as those who are in permanent positions retire. One respondent wrote:

Increasingly the Rhetoric side of Communications Studies is being neglected (quelle surprise.). We have not has a new hire in the area in a dozen years and there are only about three of us left. With the downsizing of the former Faculty of Communication and Culture to a department within the Faculty of Arts, there is steady but unremitting pressure to normalize -- to do only what departments of Communication, Media and Film are normally expected to do. That can mean a bit of rhetoric but not really Writing Studies….I am retiring next year and will likely be replaced (if at all) with a much more typical Communications person.(30, 1020)

The respondent’s use of “quelle surprise” gives a sense of the pervasiveness of neglect, that neglect is expected. There is a sense of stagnation, no new hires and only three people left. Her or his comment about “steady but unremitting pressure to normalize” is evidence of established parameters of disciplinary behaviour and the erasure of writing studies through this practice. There seemed to be concern for the future of the field in terms of a lack of qualified graduates, largely because there is a lack of graduate programming. One respondent explained:

I have always been a strong advocate for rigorous writing and rhetoric courses within the curriculum and I want to see the development of more Canadian graduate programs in the
area. However, it is difficult to keep these courses staffed with qualified full time people (rather than a graduate student or sessional/adjunct with little or no graduate training in the area). It is challenging to persuade colleagues to hire academics in the areas of writing and rhetoric, as they perceive it as an American field of study and say it’s hard to find young Canadian academics with degrees in the area. (24, 1014)

This is especially interesting given respondents’ widespread comments that there are not enough tenure-track or permanent positions, giving the impression that there are young Canadian academics with degrees in the area. Yet, the data revealed a 19.3% decrease in the number of respondents in the 20-30 year old age range and minimal decreases across previous generations. That is, the data suggests that there are increasingly fewer scholars entering the field than retiring from it.

The survival of writing studies has always been tenuous, but it is perhaps more so now than ever. One respondent made the key point that if writing studies does not have “equal status as others in an organisation, it is impossible to maintain a Writing Studies Field as an independent entity.” This respondent is optimistic and inspiring in so far as she or he saw the best in people:

[There are] the usual pedagogical tussles but nothing that prevents me from teaching courses in ways that make[s] me happy. I feel valued and respected - even as a newcomer. Any tensions come from places of ignorance or fear of irrelevance or lack of respect, not of genuine malice….There is strength in diversity. This box isn't big enough to deal with my own displeasure over the recent Writing Centre closure or my lack of efficacy in suggesting a more workable model but from what I see, if you don't give Writing Studies Faculty equal status as others in an organisation, it is impossible to maintain a Writing Studies field as an independent entity. It becomes embedded in departments, which has pros and cons. (5, 995)

This embeddedness contributes to invisibility. As with the previous respondent who noted that the pressure to normalize writing studies into expected Communications Studies behaviour could mean that there will not be a space allowed for writing studies, and without experts to tell their
version of the story, a version that opposes the elements of the myth, opposition to that myth will go unheard.

At present, opposition to the myth as an objectified form of knowledge, in Smith’s (1990) terms, exists in the form of the tensions described by respondents. Tensions were described as pervasive, most often arising from opposing beliefs about the role and nature of writing instruction as well as jurisdictional issues as manifestations of misperceptions of the work of teaching writing. Moreover, respondents reported a lack of fit within traditional institutional structures for writing studies that contributes to the field’s vulnerability. Writing studies grew where it could, so it is particularly subject to administrative tides. Writing centres are almost exclusively located in student service areas, rendering them unprotected, unsupported, and even more misunderstood and devalued than writing studies colleagues located in other institutional areas. Furthermore, the field as a whole is precarious because it is not able to hire or train new scholars except into limited, contract positions and writing centres directed and staffed by disciplinary experts are on the verge of extinction.

7.5 Aims to improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions

It is important, once tensions have been uncovered, to continue to try to work through them in whatever ways possible in local conditions. In seeking an explicitly political account, I wanted to know what respondents would change if they could. I was inspired by Miller’s (1991) question to her respondents, “[i]f you could make one change in composition’s relation to your department/institution, what would it be?” (p. 210). I opened up the question by asking respondents two separate questions about their aims to improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions. Question 32 read, “[i]f you had the opportunity to improve the learning experiences of students, what changes would you make at your institution?” and was answered
by 48 of 53 respondents (91%). Question 33 read as follows: “If you had the opportunity to improve teaching conditions at your institution, what changes would you make?” It was answered by 47 of 53 respondents (89%). Respondents’ answers were repeated across both questions because learning conditions and teaching conditions are inseparable, so in presenting the data, I collapsed the questions. There were 95 responses to questions 32 and 33. In the few cases where respondents mentioned multiple themes, I categorized them by what seemed to be the most important theme in their answers.

The first theme, at 22.1%, was professionalization, namely more tenure track positions, more security for contingent labour, and additional support for research. The second theme, at 21%, was improved working conditions, especially pedagogical conditions, namely class size. The third theme, 16.8%, was more programming through creation of a department and/or program, most often a WAC program and/or programming in writing studies. Other themes included collaborations amongst writing studies and other areas (8.4%), faculty development (7.4%), and support for writing centres (6.3%). Section 7.5.1 presents data from two questions, so the parenthetical information includes the question number.

7.5.1 Professionalization

Respondents noted, at a rate of 22%, that they would improve teaching and learning conditions through an increase in tenure-track positions, more security for contingent labour, and increased support for research. The inextricability of teaching and learning conditions was described pointedly by one respondent: “[i]nstructors' working conditions = students' learning conditions. Improve the first through t-t [tenure track] jobs and the second follows” (33, 31, 1182). A number of respondents explicitly suggested the creation of tenure track jobs. One argued: “[e]nsure that writing studies positions are tenure track positions. I work in a unit at a
prestigious research university where there are 2 t-t faculty and about 12 sessional instructors” (32, 31, 1125). Two respondents mentioned teaching stream appointments. One suggested, “[i]nstitute a tenure-track teaching stream of appointments” (33, 11, 1162), and the other, “[o]ffer permanent teaching stream positions” (33, 23, 1174). Two stated, “I would give myself a full time tenure track job” (33, 1, 1152) and “I'd give myself a tenure-track position that still emphasized teaching, and I'd alter the way teaching was evaluated” (33, 29, 1180). Another made simple call for “more full-time faculty” (33, 46, 1197). In addition to calls for legitimate positions, there were aims for professionalized positions to hire qualified people.

Two respondents detailed more specific requirements for positions, both noting the need for experts as well as a need for people with ESL expertise. One argued:

Add more tenure lines to Writing Studies so that we could offer improved writing instruction from informed and qualified teachers, as well as specialized writing instruction in the disciplines and at the graduate level. We could also use a good ESL/Writing Studies scholar with interpersonal skills who could develop programs to help improve the writing skills of our many International students. (32, 34, 1128)

The call for “informed and qualified teachers” as well as “specialized writing instruction in the disciplines and at the graduate level” is indicative of the need for experts to teach writing. A second respondent explained the need to

[h]ire more faculty in communication. We are stretched very thin and depend on a large pool of sessional lecturers and TAs but the variability in expertise in that group makes our work challenging. At the very least, our unit needs a full-time dedicated ESL specialist -- something we used to have but lost that person. (33, 17, 1168)

The comment about the challenges of “the variability in expertise” of sessional lecturers and TAs suggests a need for experts. Though the respondent does not say in which ways the issue of varied expertise is challenging, presumably the need is for faculty whose expertise is less variable, that is held together by the disciplinary qualities, at a generalized level, of a shared
epistemological position about the world, shared subjects and methodological approaches to studying them, and shared pedagogical philosophies. Hiring experts was also said to contribute to stability. One respondent referred to tenure track positions in the field as needed “to foster a better sense of stability and community”:

Most of the faculty in our unit are precarious faculty (sessional instructors) who come to us with little or no training in writing studies. First, I would hire more permanent faculty - - tenure-track or limited term -- to foster a better sense of stability and community. Second, although our faculty are wonderful and have much to offer our students, I would like to see more hiring in our field -- to acknowledge that it is indeed a field, with members who have studied/researched the area. (33, 44, 1195)

This respondent also explicitly noted a need for acknowledgement of the field’s legitimacy.

Furthermore, respondents offered alterations to current hiring practices as one desired improvement to teaching and learning conditions at their institutions. One explained: “I would like to see more hiring in our field – to acknowledge that it is indeed a field, with members who have studied/researched the area. (33, 44, 1195)

This respondent also explicitly noted a need for acknowledgement of the field’s legitimacy.

Furthermore, respondents offered alternations to current hiring practices as one desired improvement to teaching and learning conditions at their institutions. One explained: “I would make it much more difficult to hire multiple contract and sessional staff … and require that full-time faculty positions be created to ensure stability and excellence” (33, 43, 1194). A second noted: “I would hire all contract academic staff who wanted to be to full-time rolling 12-month contracts (that is, they would not need to wait until the summer to sign a contract for the fall)” (33, 18, 1169). A third said that she or he would “[p]revent very specific writing courses [from being] taught by whoever has the seniority” (33, 38, 1189).

A few respondents also mentioned support for research. One explained: “I would
encourage teaching-only positions, with the caveat that adequate provision is made to support pedagogical research done by those holding these positions” (33, 43, 1194). Another noted similarly that, “[i]n the current budgetary climate, not much [could change.] Course releases for writing studies-related research or student support with writing?” (33, 5, 1156) A third argued for change to “[p]rovide teaching stream with (more) access to research funds” (33, 7, 1158). One noted, positively, that “[t]here really isn't much to improve. But [they] have a woefully small research office, and very little internal funding, so this obviously hampers faculty members' ability to carry out larger-scale research projects” (33, 8, 1159). Overall, respondents called for enhanced working conditions in the form of tenure-track and permanent full-time positions that honour expertise. One response was explicitly political: “Invest in full-time faculty, who would then form a critical mass to be reckoned with” (33, 21, 1172). It is not clear what this respondent meant by “to be reckoned with,” but as the first respondent I referred to noted, respondents argued that improving teaching conditions for those in the field of writing studies equals improved learning conditions for students.

7.5.2 Working conditions

Respondents reported, at a rate of 21%, that a crucial aspect of improved working conditions was improved pedagogical conditions, namely class size. One argued that “[b]etter resourcing would improve teaching conditions by decreasing teaching loads” (33, 13, 1164), while another wanted “[s]maller class sizes so that more meaningful writing could be assigned” (16, 1167). Some combined class size with other pedagogical changes. For example, one respondent suggested a need to “[m]aintain reasonable class sizes in writing classes and offer some variations beyond just writing courses” (33, 34, 1185). Another explained: “[w]e are working hard to limit all our writing classes to 25 students maximum. This is a very costly
proposition, but it works. We are looking at ways of making marking less arduous and more valuable” (33, 40, 1191). Another noted that “[t]eaching conditions’ covers a lot of ground. A couple of immediate ones I would like to see would be smaller class sizes and downplaying of grades as a focus of attention” (33, 30, 1181). Two respondents mentioned the need for more support for English as an additional language learners. For instance, one said, “I would want more help with English Second Language students. I would want better classrooms so that students could move around and work in groups. Smaller class sizes would be helpful” (33, 35, 1186).

Three responses that list class size first were particularly complex, all mentioning support and respect for faculty through tenure-track and full time positions as well as research. For instance, one respondent noted:

Reasonable size for writing courses needs ongoing defense and justification….Extension to sessional / part-time / graduate-student instructors of the respect given to full-time faculty members in the field, including opportunities for professional development and participation in research. Also extension to instructors specializing in English Language Learning of those elements. (33, 14, 1165)

This response included the defense and justification of class sizes alongside training for tutorial leaders, but it is most noteworthy for its mention of respect for contract works and ELL specialists that is on par with full-time faculty members in the field and includes improvements to working conditions in terms of professional development and support for research. Another respondent, likewise, discussed reduced class sizes as an improvement and, likewise, mentioned the need for full-time faculty in the field:

I'd shrink class sizes first. I'd mandate one course release per year per instructor that's explicitly about professional development in teaching. Ideally, I'd outlaw contract (sessional) positions and replace them with tenurable full-time positions with either a teaching-and-research or just a teaching focus …. (33, 32, 1183)
One respondent noted, as previous respondents have, both class size and the need to protect programming through expertise as aims to improve teaching and learning conditions. She or he produced a lengthy list of improvements to assessment, working conditions, and evaluation mechanisms. The need to protect programming through expertise is noteworthy: “I would eliminate any leadership opportunity for an administrator with zero training in writing studies to be managing or impacting a writing program” (33, 39, 1190). Respondents reported that teaching and learning conditions could be meaningfully improved through additional tenure-track positions, the hiring of experts in the field, and pedagogical conditions that better support students.

7.5.3 Programming

The third theme, at 16.8%, was enhanced programming, notably WID strategies like additional writing courses with writing instruction embedded in disciplines across an entire program and/or the creation of WAC programs. The need for creation of a department and/or program to offer courses in writing studies and at the graduate level was also mentioned. Desires for all of these kinds of programming are evidence that writing studies still operates in opposition to the myth of writing instruction as remedial. Respondents demonstrated commitment to contextualized, enculturative writing instruction provided by experts.

7.5.3.1 WID and WAC Programming

A few respondents made mention of writing instruction in disciplines and/or across the curriculum, approaches that are enculturative rather than remedial. One respondent explained:

I would introduce writing courses in each year of engineering programs. I would add writing labs and tutorials….I would use more scenarios and case studies for teaching engineering writing and technical communication. I would introduce a writing portfolio as a requirement for graduation. I would emphasize the importance of life-long learning and the fact that writing skills will never become obsolete…(32, 40, 1134)
This respondent opposed the myth through the idea of situating writing instruction in engineering programs in each year rather than just in first year. Importantly, she or he also recognized other contextual factors important to the learning and teaching of writing, such as life-long learning and writing assignments which aim to enculturate students in disciplinary cultures. Similarly, a second respondent suggested programming beyond first year:

The first change I would make is the introduction of a 6 credit-hour class in communication, one that we could offer in the 2nd year of the program. I would then like to offer modules that focused on particular kinds of communication - such as oral communication, the various engineering genres, and writing strategies. These modules could run in the 3rd year. Then, when students reach their senior design project, they would be fairly well-prepared for what was expected of them. Along the way, I would get rid of those colleagues who are not specialists in the field and hire those that are. (32, 33, 1107)

This respondent offered a model for writing instruction across four years, and noted the need for specialists in the field. Another respondent connected programming to expertise, noting the need for experts in administrative positions: “I would hope for a first-year writing course; I would want a course for graduate students that was in their discipline; I would want more faculty members working in the admin units; and so on” (32, 35, 1129). Interestingly, this respondent hoped for a first-year writing course. It would be interesting to know more about what she or he envisioned. The desire for graduate courses in students’ disciplines was also noted by this respondent. An additional respondent described a model that espoused ....a scaffolded understanding of how research practices and research writing ought to be gradually introduced to students over four years of study -- rather than expected of them in their first year....I'd introduce a combined WAC-WID program: a first-year WAC course that sets the foundation of rhetorical genre understanding and differences between types and situations of writing, and a sequence of upper-level courses in the disciplines that emphasize specifically disciplinary writing practices and genres.(33, 32, 1126)
Phrases like “scaffolded,” “gradually,” and “sequence” point to the complexity of writing instruction as more than a quick fix obtained through a single course.

Writing Across the Curriculum programs were mentioned frequently, and respondents also described difficulties with WAC. One said: “Implement a real WAC program with core courses team taught by tenure track and writing studies faculty” (32, 6, 1100). This response echoes the need expressed by many respondents to have experts at the helm. Similarly, another respondent reported the importance of faculty WAC coordinators to support professors:

WAC hasn't been adopted for ignorance of what it actually is, and for financial reasons… I think the institution should hire college faculty WAC coordinators so that it can be deployed really well, and so that professors are well supported. There would then need to be more funding for writing tutors as they would be a complement to WAC. (32, 20, 1114)

This respondent also brought up the important issue of the costs of a legitimate WAC program that make writing instruction a core aspect of curriculum across all faculties and programs.

Another respondent pointed to financial implications: “Implement a full Writing Across the Curriculum program. I was on a committee about ten years ago that did a lot of work in that direction, but everything was dropped when the university realized that substantial resources would be necessary” (32, 16, 1110). One respondent explained a gap at her or his institution, noting that faculty and administration haven't developed any WAC or institution-wide approach to bolstering students' writing skills. My university doesn't offer any writing courses for students… so students really don't have a structured environment in which they can develop their skills. I really hope that the university will one day offer a writing and basic research methods course…. (32, 7, 1101)

One respondent stated simply, “[i]ncreased focus on writing in the classroom. Implementation of a writing across the curriculum program” (32, 38, 1132). The increased focus on writing was also noted in the following response: “…[m]ainly, I would recentre writing as a core practice in the
professional, pedagogical and academic practices of the university - instead of a 'skill' taught in a ENGL 101 course on fiction” (32,27, 1121). This respondent, like the one before, opposes notions of writing as remedial, calling for increased focus on it as core. This respondent also opposes the belletristic tradition captured by “a ‘skill’ taught in a[n] ENGL 101 course on fiction.” The same respondent also included a comprehensive list of improvements to programming:

[I] would make more research and disciplinary writing courses available in every faculty, re-establish a writing centre tied to research in the disciplines and get it out of the service sector and the English Department. I would develop more outreach writing workshops/seminars for faculty and grad students, create disciplinary internships for UG and grad students to become writing/researchers mentors; create a senior position for a writing director with tenure and advancement; develop separate but rigorous resources for international and EAL resources. (32, 27, 1121)

The multitude of approaches espoused by respondents counters the element of the myth about writing instruction as remediation in a first year course. WID and WAC programs embed writing instruction of various kinds throughout students’ programs.

The writing studies literature demonstrated that successful WAC programs are almost obsolete and difficult to implement and sustain. A senior respondent was explicitly skeptical:

If I thought that a true Writing Intensive program, applying to all students and providing proper support and incentive for writing in the disciplines, would actually take root and continue to be supported, that's the way I would go. After thirty-odd years of championing exactly that without success, some time ago I decided to save my breath…. (33, 28, 1179)

This respondent realized that effective programming requires reconceptualization of all three elements of the myth, financial resources, and widespread buy-in.

7.5.3.2 Writing studies programming

In addition to WID and WAC programming, opposition to the myth by writing studies professionals is an explicit assertion of disciplinarity in their call for writing studies
programming. One respondent suggested the creation of a stand-alone department in an academic deanery:

I would create a Department of Writing and Communication Studies, and ensure it had links to an academic dean and VP. Further, I would promote this department and ensure it received sufficient attention from the development and funding arms of the university, because such programs are tailor-made for public involvement and support. Such a department would be able to advocate for the kinds of programming, courses, and support services that all students need to develop their writing abilities. (32, 44, 1138)

The department proposed would report to an academic dean, receive adequate funding, and empower advocacy.

There is also opposition to the myth apparent in the words of two respondents who explicitly connected programming to the visibility of writing studies as a discipline. One usefully linked what could generally be described as writing courses situated within disciplines and programs and courses in “writing and discourse studies.” To the question of how to improve conditions for the learning and teaching of writing in one’s institution this respondent stated:

More permanent positions to teach academic writing courses. And the creation of at the very least a minor in writing & discourse studies so that the work we do in academic writing classes has a visible place inside the discipline where it belongs. There's a good deal of research that tells us students need the sense of a course belonging to a discipline, being part of something bigger, to take it more seriously and appreciate the things they are asked to learn as part of a larger scheme. (32, 26, 1120)

This respondent pointed to the need for programming in writing and discourse studies because it contributes to visibility by situating that work as part of a discipline. This response also inspires an interesting question: Is teaching writing also teaching writing studies? Teaching writing from a writing studies perspective using its theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical principles is teaching writing studies. But if that perspective remains hidden by the myth that eclipses it, the disciplinarity, the legitimacy, is not visible within the academy. One respondent discussed visibility of writing studies for students:
If I ran the universe, I would implement a Writing Studies minor at my institution (and eventually a major). This would give the field (or perceptions of the field in my institution) a more easily identifiable place in the institution as a field of expertise. In turn, students would benefit from being able to ‘point to’ a thing that is more easily identifiable (e.g. I have a degree in Writing Studies). As it stands now, students take one of the two academic writing/research courses we offer and never have the opportunity to pursue writing studies as a course of 'studies' that could map onto their career aspirations.

This respondent spoke of programming in writing studies as making it more identifiable, increasing visibility in the institution and among students. Crucially, this respondent noted that presently, students “never have the opportunity to pursue writing studies.” If students cannot pursue writing studies officially, perhaps they can continue to stumble into it by encountering it where it has managed to survive.

Respondents’ aims for changes that would improve the teaching and learning conditions at their institutions were various. They included support through working conditions, namely tenure-track positions, reduction or elimination of contingent labour, and support for research, support for writing through improved pedagogical conditions, notably class size, and support for writing through programming in terms of WID and WAC, writing centres, faculty development and collaboration, as well as programming in writing studies. Those in writing studies have been advocating for change since the inception of their discipline. One respondent summed it up well: “We've written proposals about this for years. We need a coordinated approach; we need a[n] evidence-based, research-driven approach; we need a student-focused approach; we need to assess, formally not casually, how things are working” (32, 11, 1105). This inquiry attempts a formal, research-driven, evidence based approach to understanding writing studies so that it, as a national field, can continue to advocate for the changes that define its opposition to the myth.
7.5.4 Collaboration, faculty development, funding and support for writing centres

Relatedly, alongside improvements that would come from WID and WAC programs and programming in writing studies, respondents noted the need for increased collaboration with other areas (8.4%), enhanced faculty development (7.4%), and adequate funding and support for writing centres (6.3%). Respondents focused on collaboration with areas in the academy through varied means. Some expressed the desire, simply, for “[m]ore workplace contacts” (32, 48, 1142) while others presented a number of models for collaboration, all of which simultaneously noted the need for tenure-track positions. Genuine collaboration requires equality. One respondent seems frustrated by a lack of recognition for important work: “I would love to see more recognition of people like me….We need to be seen as professionals in the same way engineers are” (33, 33, 1184). One respondent argued: “I would like to see teachers collaborate more and learn from each other. Teaching is often very isolated….I’d also like to see more faculty members with PhDs in secure tenured positions, rather than have their positions gradually replaced by less-educated staff in more precarious positions” (33, 22, 1173). Others mentioned employment status in discussing faculty collaboration. One suggested that her or his institution “[i]ntegrate the English Department Writing Program with the Writing Centre; forge closer curricular links with the department of communication studies. Invest in full-time faculty” (32, 21, 1115). Similarly, one respondent wrote: “[a] Writing Fellows program! More collaboration between the Writing Centre and the English department” (32, 29, 1123). Collaboration and learning from each other, as well as forging “closer curricular links,” and being “fellows” requires mutual respect, which can be gained, often, from more exposure. One respondent explained the desire to have institutions
provide opportunities for more interaction between professors in one discipline; provide opportunities for more interaction between professors in each discipline and the writing centre director and staff; provide opportunities for more interaction among professors across departments and disciplines. Currently, the workloads of professors make this a challenge, but sometimes it is the attitude, supported by administration, that writing centres are an "extra" for students who are struggling…. (33, 9, 1160)

Likewise, one respondent noted a need for “more open dialogue between full and part-time faculty” (33, 41, 1192). Another respondent proposed a kind of liaison structure:

There would be a designated ‘writing person’ in each faculty or department, someone who had an interest in writing their own discipline and who would liaise with the writing center to ensure that students graduated with writing skills appropriate for an undergraduate or graduate student. For the most part, I would suggest that that is not happening now in my own or in other institutions in Canada. (32, 13, 1107)

A formal liaison structure works to connect areas in the institution in a sanctioned, visible way.

Similarly, one respondent explained:

... I would also encourage more of a cross-disciplinary culture through a Writing Studies program of some sort, so that students and faculty could, in a more formalized and sustained way, gain deeper insight into a greater range of academic and professional discursive practices. (32, 3, 1097)

This respondent highlighted the desire for a shift in culture that formalizes the work of the field.

Respondents talked about collaboration in a more informal, organic sense connected to value placed on teaching and the teaching of writing. One respondent wanted

[more support for teachers….If teachers had time to discuss pedagogy, to work collaboratively, and to discuss with each other what the shared goals of the institution and it’s programs were, we might be better able to provide a better experience for students in the classroom. (32, 43, 1137)

This respondent focused on the need for support through time to discuss pedagogy, shared goals of the institution, and its programs, reinforcing the need for discussions of writing pedagogy that do not happen in isolation. One respondent called for more value placed on writing pedagogy:

It would be great to see writing pedagogy become a bigger focus across academia at all levels of education. Writing is such a big part of a lot of academic work, it is hard to
understand why it is such a struggle to convince the university to invest in writing pedagogy instead of cutting back on it. (32, 12, 1106)

Two others reported wishing for higher value placed on their work. One explained that she or he wanted “[l]ess lip-service to the value of teaching. Research is god. I put a lot of work in to teaching, but nobody seems to care (but for my students, of course)” (33, 20, 1171). Similarly, another reflected:

I would somehow magically buy beleaguered departments a chance to breathe, so that they could regroup and determine how to better teach the students they suddenly have….Teaching the same way, the same curriculum, to a student body that is fundamentally different, leads to burnout. (33, 6, 1157)

An important part of support for collaboration is providing teachers with ways to keep up with the changing conditions of their classrooms by working together. Respondents reported a multitude of ways to enhance collaborations between writing studies and other areas, noting that a necessary ingredient for collaboration is visibility and legitimacy as an equal partner in academia.

Related to collaboration within the academy, respondents reported that faculty development is an aim that would improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions. Two respondents provided brief answers. The first said, “[f]urther development of faculty training” (33, 37, 1188), and the second, “[b]etter facilities, better support for teacher development” (33, 42, 1193). Other respondents described more specific initiatives. One explained: “I would hire a curriculum designer to work with more instructors (one per department?) to help better design learning opportunity, including assignments and in-class activities, to support students' development of academic communication skills” (32, 5, 1099). This respondent suggested faculty development in the form of a curriculum designer working
with instructors in departments. Another respondent suggested workshops with faculty as a way to enhance curriculum, alongside additional ideas:

I would have a day-long graduate student writing conference once a year. This would gather faculty with writing experience/interest together to run workshops or give presentations. I would also run workshops with faculty on how to include writing scaffolding in their courses. I would provide the Writing Centre with more support so they could expand their activities. I would also make the Writing Centre manager's position tenure track so that it involved research.”(32, 15, 1109)

This respondent hit on a number of key suggestions made by others: scaffolded writing instruction, more support for writing centres, and a tenure-track position involving research for the Writing Centre’s manager.

A number of respondents, in answer to a call for what changes they would make to their institutions to enhance the learning and teaching of writing, noted adequate funding and support for writing centres. Two respondents called for the return of lost centres. One suggested, simply, “Reinstate the Writing Centre” (33, 3, 1154), and another argued the following: “Unroll the termination of the writing centre, turn it into a centre for studies in writing. And offer courses that foster student engagement with writing support at the level of understanding through the lens of new rhetorical genre theory” (32, 1, 1095). The second respondent explicitly connected writing centres to research and theory, to writing studies as a discipline. This move opposes the myth of writing instruction as remediation and writing centres as student services by arguing that writing centres should be informed by writing studies research and pedagogy. Another respondent explicitly linked them, saying simply, “Adequately fund writing studies and writing centres” (32, 2, 1096). One respondent focused on expanding the centres’ work: “I would extend the reach of the writing centres to include groups who currently have very little support, notably the Faculty of Medicine, which is the university's second largest faculty” (32, 46, 1140).
One respondent noted, as many others have in response to different questions, the need to move writing centres out of student service areas:

I would really like to teach (or co-teach) a writing course. I also would move the Writing Centre to its own space or partner with an academic department or the library. I do not think that the Writing Centre fits naturally with the other units in the Centre for Student Success (accessible learning, academic advising, math assistance, learning skills). (32, 8, 1102)

This respondent pointed to the lack of fit of the Writing Centre with Student Success areas. This lack of fit arises from a mismatch between the myth and the opposition to it. Where writing instruction is imagined as remedial, it is imagined as addressed by remedial models that remove the disciplinarity from writing centres. One respondent captured this misperception well by noting that relocating writing centres could mean that “[a]dministration would see the writing centre as a critical element of learning, not a service that students might need to access occasionally during their career. This vision would lead to greater support from administration and hence greater buy-in from professors” (32, 9, 1103).

As has been previously noticed in respondents’ accounts of their experiences, writing studies, especially writing centres, are subject to the shifting winds of idiosyncratic administration. One respondent explained the dire situation for writing centres in detail:

Writing centres are rather vulnerable. There have been several instances where Colleges within the university have decided to save money by destroying their writing centres. They have, for example, turned them into 'student services' so that the writing instructors no longer have faculty status and the academic protections that affords. Or one College, which made its tenured writing centre director into a course instructor and then gave over writing instruction to librarians who have neither the time nor the training to do it well. So although as individual academics, we have made progress here, the writing centres in which we teach can be damaged or destroyed on an administrative whim. (33, 45, 1196)

The role and place of writing centres within the academy seems a particularly contentious site for the myth. Writing centres are structured and funded based on the elements of the myth; they and
their employees exist outside disciplines, rendering them particularly invisible. Experts in writing studies generally argued that writing centres need to be located in academic deaneries and supported as legitimate and equal disciplinary partners in universities’ efforts to support students in their writing.

In discussing their aims to improve teaching and learning conditions at their institutions, respondents noted three themes, professionalization, improved working conditions, especially pedagogical conditions, and programming through WID and WAC as well as programming in writing studies. They also noted additional important aims, namely collaboration with other areas in academia, faculty development in writing pedagogy, and adequate funding and support for writing centres.

7.6 Advocacy and future directions

The final survey question was included to allow respondents space for anything they might wish to say. Question 34 read,“[i]s there anything that you would like to add? Please add your thoughts, concerns, or ideas here.” A little over half of the respondents, 28 of 53, or 53%, added comment. I excluded 50%, those who expressed appreciation or interest in the research or did not answer in useful ways. I included 50% of the responses, ordered by four themes: the field’s relationship to the U.S., concern for writing centres, concern for the future of the field, and love.

The field’s relationship to the U.S. was mentioned by two respondents. One explained,

I think Canadians in our field are going to have to take a very hard look at the working conditions of many of our American colleagues in order to a) recognize how their conditions shape their scholarly & pedagogical contributions to the field and influence our disciplinary norms, and b) ask how this affects our professional work as Canadians. (21, 1228)

This respondent called for comparative work between the U.S. and Canada, particularly with
regard to working conditions and the scope of the American field’s influence in Canada. Another noted:

After a year teaching in a writing studies program in the US as a visiting prof, I was interested to find that, although the writing folks got a lot of respect and even power in the English department, and that many had respected tenured positions, the program still had many of the same old issues -- jillions of sections of first and second year comp taught by underpaid faculty with no job security and less academic background in teaching writing. I doubt that this will ever change all that much. (18, 1225)

This respondent argued, as I have, that there are striking similarities between the working conditions of the field despite considerable national differences.

Three respondents focused on writing centres. The first focused on advocacy through the lens of support for writing centre managers and the need for equality:

...there is very little talk about the management of writing centres, which is unfortunate given how many people I've met run writing centres but come to that role with a teaching background only - no big budget experience, no staff professional development experience, etc. One of the best discussions ever on the CWCA listserve, years ago, was how to argue for continued/increased funding. I used those ideas to create a template that I've passed on to my manager - a template that's been very successful. I'd love to see writing centres grow in stature and importance, but this can only be done by working with both students and instructors in an equal manner. (5, 1212)

Another respondent focused on writing centres, on the nature of expertise, but in terms of the difficulty of re-establishing them once they are gone. She or he reported: “I'm concerned by the lack of dialogue between people working on writing at my institution and by how difficult it is to undo the damage of years of poor management of a vital student support service like a writing centre” (8, 1215).

In examining directions for the field, two respondents spoke of writing studies’ relationship to the disciplines, one noting that writing studies should become more embedded in
others, one noting the others should become more embedded in it. The first also included writing 
centres:

I think that writing studies and rhetoric studies should seek to become more embedded and 
essential within traditional academic disciplines and departments where they are 
currently housed in institutions, i.e. English, Communication, Engineering, or whatever the 
case may be. I do not think it is wise in our academic environment for writing / rhetoric to seek independent program/department status. I also think that we should seek 
to embed writing tutoring & instruction systematically into course structures and credit-
based requirements rather than seek to protect or revive the academic writing center as a 
structural unit within postsecondary institutions. (15, 1222)

This response is particularly interesting on two fronts, both of which counter the data presented 
so far. Programming in writing studies was expressed as an ideological aim, but this respondent 
argued against independent program status given the current environment. Similarly, adequate 
funding and support for writing centres was also reported as desired by a number of respondents, 
yet this respondent argued against reviving the writing centre as a structural unit. Though this 
respondent does not say why, it seems that both strategies embed, hide, and protect writing 
studies from the whims of contemporary administrators advancing neo-liberal agendas.

Another respondent seems to argue the opposite, focusing on open collaboration:

More opportunities at the institution to involve other disciplines in writing studies. 
Writing studies is a collaborative field and without a broad institution-wide base of 
support, it won't flourish…in Canada. I'm not advocating for a deficit model. We need to 
reach out and collaborate with others across the disciplines….Being generous with our 
time and expertise could be [seen] as ‘handmaiden’ behaviour but it might also encourage 
others to champion this important area of research and pedagogy. We are too small to do it alone. (4, 1211)

This respondent reported the particular importance of collaboration in advocacy efforts. One 
respondent pointed to issues of invisibility, through fleshing out a concern evidenced by the data, 
that there is a lack of programming in writing studies such that the perpetuation of the field is 
vulnerable:
As a student and relative newcomer to the field of writing studies, I am not really sure where newcomers to the field come from and how they enter the field. I only accidentally stumbled into it. It is not really a field that seems recognized outside of the people who are already a part of it, which may make it difficult to attract and ‘apprentice’ new scholars and instructors to the area. The future of writing studies in Canada may require a more cohesive ‘face.’ Even small things like knowing where someone can do graduate studies in the field takes a lot of prior knowledge of who’s who in the field to know where you can pursue this career path. (10, 1217)

This respondent seems to be advocating for unity in order to increase the visibility of the field.

Similarly, three respondents argued for more aggressive efforts towards change. The first provides a list of contemporary issues that have persisted since the inception of rhetoric and composition in Canada in the 1980s: the lack of central attention on writing, the subsumption of the field by student services, the “institutional exploitation of writing faculty,” “insecure positions and contract workers,” and vulnerability to administrators who “really do not understand what it is we do” (17, 1224). The respondent argued: “[w]riting studies etc. is not going to flourish until its own practitioners, faculty, writing centre administrators and researchers, [and] deanlets fight for the centrality of the field again….I think we have to become much more militant” (17, 1224). As with the suggestion for greater militancy in the quest to get administrators to understand what we do, one respondent claimed a need for activism:

The international movement to gather together as writing studies scholars is encouraging, and I am optimistic that positive things will continue to come our way, especially as other nations grow their writing studies profiles. Unfortunately, I feel that significant positive changes for us will only happen if we as a community of scholars become more activist and demanding. Administrators at Canadian universities seem to be failing to see us as a valuable and necessary resource for students, faculty, and even staff. We have a ‘unique value proposition,’ but they don't recognize it. (26, 1233)

This respondent said that writing studies needs to be more aggressive in its advocacy efforts.

Both responses point to the fact that writing studies remains largely invisible, and where it is
invisible, it is usually deeply misunderstood. One respondent described the peril writing studies is in:

I am writing at what I see as a crucial tipping point in Writing Studies history, I think...[O]ur Writing Studies knowledge making, indeed knowledge, is in danger of becoming unwelcomed to the point of extinction. This is/would be a real loss and one of significance to other fields of research as well. (1, 1208)

This respondent described a “crucial tipping point” in the field’s history, which hints at the urgency of the need for militancy, activism, and demands. Writing studies opposes the elements of the myth, elements that current governments espouse. Just like in England in the 1880s, as more and more students from diverse cultures using diverse languages attend Canadian universities, their language is imagined by those institutions as deficient and thus in need of remediation, usually through a first year writing course or peer support in deprofessionalized writing centres. Moreover, the field of writing studies, then, remains relegated to the realms of the non-disciplinary, not visible then as a legitimate way of seeing the world, a shared body of knowledge, or shared methodological and pedagogical approaches. Its people are often imagined as unimportant and illegitimate service workers.

This story ends, as it started, with love. Three respondents, in particular, offered hope in their answers to the final survey question. One said: “I love working in this area in Canada. It is interesting, challenging, and enlightening” (20, 1227), and another that she or he “enormously appreciate[s] the opportunity to connect with Writing Studies researchers and educators. We need to support one another” (25, 1232). A respondent at the end of her or his career said:

I am about to retire, so my perspective may be a little weary. Also, I think I have had a quite anomalous position for many years and that has undoubtedly affected my perceptions. Teaching writing/thinking has been the best work of my life. I wish we all had the resources to do it properly. (14, 1221)

Writing studies was born of, and remains defined by, its opposition to the myth and its
persistence and tenacity in enacting and telling a different story told about writing, about student writing, about writing instruction, and about writing instructors.

7.7 Summary

This chapter presented respondents’ accounts of their day-to-day experiences in their field, more specifically their routes in, perceptions of change in recent decades, tensions, and aims for improvement of teaching and learning conditions at their institutions. Respondents reported accidental arrival through love, revelation, and good fortune that occurred while pursuing other fields of study or working as writing teachers. They most often arrived from English literature, but also through writing centres and other fields. Respondents also described pragmatic factors that influenced their routes into writing studies. In terms of their perceptions of change for the field over time, there was debate, with respondents indicating improved status, fluctuating status, no change in status, or worse status. A number of pervasive tensions were described, including the role and nature of writing instruction, territory, lack of fit within traditional institutional structures, vulnerability to administrative tides, and lack of positions and qualified incoming scholars. Accordingly, respondents advocated for change in terms of improved support through professionalization, improved working conditions, and enhanced programming. The experiences of the respondents, taken together, give shape to the work of writing studies. They also make visible the collective power of its people. While conclusive answers elude us, the findings stand as a working definition of writing studies and a naming of what counts as disciplinary expertise.
Chapter 8: God bless the grass

I set out to answer the question I fell into twenty years ago, what is this field? From the beginning, I wanted to give shape to it, and to understand why it seemed that no one other than the people in it knew what it was. This people’s history for writing studies does both. It gives material shape to the locations and conditions of respondents’ working lives through quantitative survey data about demographics, institutional locations, and working conditions. This work also gives shape to writing studies through qualitative data about identity that is used to establish a working definition of writing studies from within. Shape is also given, through Smith’s (1990) framework, to collective experiences of working in writing studies and of being self-reflexive and ideological in that work.

As for the second curiosity that drove this work, why it seemed that no one other than the people in the field had ever heard of it, data about demographics, institutional locations, working conditions, identity, and experience point to reasons for the invisibility of writing studies: the perpetuity and ubiquity of the myth position it in locations that sanction it. Yet, the material shape of writing studies and at least some of its scholars’ identities and experiences, as in the literature and in my life writing, reveal an ideological component of the definition of writing studies. Generally speaking, writing studies opposes the myth. Miller’s (1991) account, a people’s history, and Smith’s (1990) framework all give the floor to the otherwise silent or unheard. This research offers an alternative story of writing as socially constructed, student writing as novice behaviour, writing instruction as enculturation, over time and with practice, in communities, whether academic, professional, or public. Mostly, it tells a previously untold story of a sample of people who work in writing studies.
The extended working definition of writing studies I provide in this chapter contributes
two things to the field. The first is visibility. Primarily it can allow those in writing studies to
understand each other relationally and have data to demonstrate that relation. If we can better
understand ourselves and our field, we can offer more when advocating for social change and
social justice. Visibility of writing studies to faculty members from other fields, to
administrators, students, and the public might mean more contexts in which to tell a different
story of writing itself, of student writing, of post-secondary writing instruction, and of those who
study and teach writing. Second, this account preserves a historical moment in our field that may
be useful to propel it forward. This chapter contains three sections. The first presents a succinct
definition of writing studies compiled from respondents’ definitions as well as an extended
definition determined by the quantitative data about demographics, institutional locations, and
working conditions presented in Chapter 5 and the themes of identity and experience from the
qualitative data presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Second, it discusses implications of the research,
limitations of the study, and possibilities for future research. The dissertation ends, as it started,
on a personal note.

8.1 Definition of writing studies

The succinct definition is compiled from three themes identified within the definitions of
writing studies that the respondents provided in the survey. Contemporary, Canadian writing
studies is abroad, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary field dedicated to the study of the
learning and teaching of writing and to the study of the sociality of language in academic,
professional, and public contexts. The extended definition is built from the quantitative data
about respondents’ demographics, institutional locations and working conditions, as well as the
qualitative data about their identities and experiences. Respondents were predominantly female,
senior scholars who held PhDs and occupied an impressive range of diverse positions within diverse institutional locations. They were in predominantly permanent but untenured positions, and about half had some kind of support for research. Respondents reported that they do tend to identify with the term, “writing studies,” though their uses of the term are situationally dependent, and many choose other terms. When used, it is most often used to describe research. Respondents generally see CASDW as its primary organization, and more subscribe to its list-serv than any other organization. Most respondents arrived in the field accidentally, most often from English literature through initial experiences of teaching writing. Others arrived from writing centres and other fields of study. Some chose the field through graduate work in writing studies or for pragmatic reasons. Respondents’ answers about the degree to which the field has changed show disagreement, with respondents arguing that its status has improved, that it has fluctuated, that it has not changed, or that its status has worsened. They consistently experience a myriad of tensions in their day-to-day lives, usually connected to the role and nature of writing instruction, lack of fit within the structure of the university, the vulnerability of the field to administrative tides, and the lack of positions and qualified scholars. Respondents reported aims to improve teaching and learning conditions through professionalization, support for working conditions, and programming. Respondents expressed concern for the future of the field and called for increased advocacy. Though writing studies is a heterogeneous field, members share common concerns.

Applying Rodman's (2003) characteristics of the discipline of technical communication, respondents' answers suggest that writing studies qualifies as a discipline. Its academic community is, by no means exclusively, those who belong to CASDW. Its agreed upon subjects of study are the sociality of writing and the teaching and learning of writing in primarily
academic contexts, though also in professional and public ones. Its methods of research seem to be broader and possibly more contentious but generally involve genre theory, discourse analysis, and rhetorical analysis of various kinds. Its body of knowledge is perhaps the least agreed upon, as the bodies of knowledge acquired by scholars are often brought to writing studies through various routes in, which feed, then, into a broader knowledge base to be continually revised. Importantly, there seems to also be a specific identification and set of experiences common to those in writing studies, namely, opposition to the myth. This dissertation ruptures the fabric of a myth that says those who teach writing are not-disciplinary. That rupture is meant to fuel future discussions.

8.2 Implications, limitations, future research

The most significant implication is visibility, a visibility that ruptures the myth imposed on writing studies through the insertion of an opposing story. I see respondents, in their material shape, identities, and experiences, operating in opposition to the ever-persistent myths that good writing is good grammar, student writing is deficient, writing instruction is remedial, and writing instructors are non-disciplinary. They tell a different story of students and lobby for programming and pedagogy that are enculturative rather than remedial. They negotiate and make cases for institutional locations that are embedded in disciplines and programs rather than separate from them. They exist as a group of people whose material body, daily work, and disciplinary orientation interact to give shape to writing studies.

There are at least four significant limitations of the study as well as a number of minor limitations. Four prominent limitations that ought to be addressed in future work are the following: 1) it did not adequately distinguish those who teach and study writing from those who teach it, 2) it did not capture data about Francophone Canadian writing studies, 3) it did not
gather demographic data about ethnicity, and 4) it lacks an explicit analysis of gender. A core aspect of a useful definition of writing studies is the necessary disentanglement of those who teach and study writing from those who teach writing but whose scholarship is in a different area. Using list-serv subscribers as the sample does not make these distinctions clear. Research conducted with those who teach writing courses could allow more exacting looks at how each group defines themselves and their beliefs about their teaching and scholarship, thereby contributing to further discussion about the disciplinary characteristics of writing studies and what writing studies might mean and to whom.

A second limitation is that this work is a history of Anglo-Canadian writing studies. While I invited French speaking respondents through a letter of information and the survey in French, only one respondent completed the French survey. All the associations are bilingual, but participation by Francophone colleagues at CASDW has notably dwindled in recent years. When I first began attending in the early 2000s, there was at least one set of sessions in French, sometimes an entire day’s worth. Graves’s (1994) response rates were 90% for English language universities and 57% for French language universities. It would be interesting to hear about the work of Francophone scholars, in particular, perceptions of what good writing is, what values around writing instruction exist, and where writing instructors are located, as well as something of their identities and experiences. It might also be interesting to see collaborations between French and English universities to begin comparative work.

Another significant limitation is that I did not ask respondents to identify their ethnicities or status as a visible minority. The intersection of such identities and experiences with gender and with the myth would reveal important aspects of privilege and power. My failure to gather this data exposes the ways in which writing studies scholars, including myself, perpetuate a
Eurocentric, western, white, privileged version of day-to-day life. An additional fundamentally important characteristic of the people of writing studies is not adequately addressed by the current study. While I asked respondents to identify their gender, I did not ask specific qualitative questions about their experiences of gender. I hope that the current study signals the need for an analysis of writing studies as a gendered field, perhaps through qualitative methodologies like narrative inquiry, interviews, or focus groups.

A number of more minor limitations exist. The survey was onerous (34 questions that took a minimum of ½ hour), and the response rate was low, at approximately 13%, based on a reception of 53 responses by an estimate of 400 subscribers. A further limitation is that the exact number of subscribers to whom the survey was sent remains unknown due to the overlap in subscriptions across list-servs, so it is possible that the response rate is actually significantly higher. The relatively low response rate could have occurred because the majority of subscribers to the list-servs do not identify as or have interest in writing studies, an interesting finding in and of itself. It also could be because of survey fatigue; informal surveys addressing specific issues are frequently posted on the list-servs. Relatedly, the length of the survey generally produced shorter answers than might be gathered through qualitative methodologies such as interviewing, participant observation, or field notes. That said, the goal of the study was breadth more than depth; it aimed to gather a small amount of data from a greater number of respondents.

Future research would do well to examine writing studies as it might be defined by Francophone scholars in the field. Moreover, research should focus on ways in which gender and visible minority status impact a definition of contemporary, Canadian writing studies. This data could also inform work focused on writing studies in international contexts and for international comparison. It is also important, given the tangled nature of writing studies, that the conduct of
future research relies on more than the overlapping list-serv subscription. It is important to an alternative sociology of women to gain more intimate knowledge of identity and experience through qualitative methodologies and methods. One idea that I have discussed with a colleague arises from the urgent need to capture the expertise of the field, to gather stories from the founders of the field, especially those who have retired and are soon to retire, as well as to elicit younger people’s stories of the role of their mentors in shaping their belonging to the field.

8.3 On a personal note

I know, now, what I fell in love with. I fell in love with a way of seeing and studying and teaching the world through the vibrancy and life of words as social action. I fell in love with writing instruction that was different than any I had encountered because it asked me to think about whom I was writing to, why, and under what contextual and textual conditions. I fell in love with a group of people who inspired and taught me. And I fell in love with a way to teach students to write that tries to honour the best in them.

Twenty years ago, I foresaw myself telling a story something like Susan Miller’s (1991) because I wanted rhetoric and composition in Canada to be seen, and I wanted its people to be heard. I still want those things for writing studies. I want them so that we can oppose the myth from a position of legitimacy. If writing studies, both the term and the field itself, were recognizable and legitimate, there would be a better chance that stories of writing, of students, of writing instruction, and of writing instructors that oppose the myth could be options for others. People have usefully asked me whether it is not better to remain invisible because invisibility is protection: when unseen, one cannot be unchosen, manipulated, hurt, or destroyed. My answer is possibly, yes, it might be wiser to remain invisible, especially for now. But my answer is also no; I do not want invisibility to be my commentary, or ours. As one respondent put it:
In Canada, [the field] has gained a small degree of acceptance and understanding over the years, although it is still extremely spotty across institutions and subject to the constantly changing winds of administration regimes. It still reminds me a lot of Pete Seeger's song: God bless the grass that grows through the crack. They roll the concrete over it to try and keep it back. The concrete gets tired of what it has to do, It breaks and it buckles and the grass grows thru. (28, 962)
References


writing seminars, writing culture: Teaching writing in Canadian universities. (pp. 61-94). Winnipeg, MB: Inkshed Publications.


Marche, S. (2008, April). Who cares about writing anyway? We all do, of course. But when it comes to teaching effective writing, we talk a better game than we play. University Affairs, 35-36.


Appendix A: Writing studies survey

This survey has four sections. Sections one and two are predominantly quantitative, gathering information about demographics and institutional locations. Sections three and four are predominantly qualitative, gathering narrative data about respondents’ identities and experiences in relation to institutional locations.

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age? (20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61+)
2. What is your gender? (Female, Male, Choose not to answer, Other, please specify)
3. What are your academic qualifications? (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Master’s in progress, PhD, PhD ABD, PhD in progress, Other, please specify)
   Please name institutions. (click qualification and beside it list institution)
4. For how many years have you worked in your field? (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21+)
5. For how many years have you worked in academia? (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21+)
6. Current employment status. If employed at more than one institution, please indicate the percentage of your contracts. (Full time/Permanent, Full time/Temporary, Part time/Permanent, Part time/Temporary, Other, please specify)
7. Current position(s) (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Coordinator, Director, Instructor, Lecturer, Sessional, Professor, Administrator, Senior Administrator, Other, please specify)
8. Annual salary (If multiple positions, please explain breakdown of salary in "other.") ($20,000-$30,000, $31,000-$45,000, $46,000-$60,000, $61,000-$80,000, $81,000-$100,000, $100,000+)
9. Are you a union member? (Y,N)
10. Do you have tenure? (Y, N)
11. How much of your time is devoted to the following activities: (drop down with %)
12. Do you have access to research leaves in your primary position? (Y, N)
13. Have you been nominated for any awards in the last five years? (Y, N)
14. Have you applied for a grant in the last five years? (Y,N)
15. Have you been co-applicant on a grant in the last five years? (Y,N)
Section 2: Institutional location(s)

16. What type(s) of institutions do you work at? If you wish to provide additional details about your institution, please do so. (College, University 4 year, University Research, Other, please specify)

17. Is your primary institution in Canada?

18. Select the province, territory, or country of your primary institution.

19. What is your department/area (Cross appointment, English, Writing Centre, Other, please specify)

20. To whom does your department or area report? (Academic deanery, Student Services, Other, please specify)

Section 3: Identity

21. Rank order your interest in the following scholarly organizations (CASDW, CASLL, CSSR, CWCA, CCCC, Other, please specify)

22. Describe the focus of the organization you ranked first, and explain why you ranked it first.

23. To which list-servs do you subscribe? (CASDW, CASLL, CSSR, CWCA, Other, please specify)

24. Discuss ways in which you see the organizations as similar and distinct.

25. Describe your understanding of the term “writing studies.”

26. Do you identify your field as writing studies? (Y,N).

27. Explain your use, or lack thereof, of the term, "writing studies." If you use it, when do you use it? If you do not use it, describe ways you name your field or discipline.

Section 4: Experience

28. Describe how you arrived at your current position. Please include a) factors that affected your choice of career and b) factors that influenced your pathway to your current position and institution. You may want to include information regarding undergraduate and graduate coursework and teaching positions, as well as other relevant positions you may have held.

29. Describe any changes you perceive in the status of writing studies over the past 10-20 years.
30. In your institution, are there tensions associated with your day to day work? If so, please explain.

31. Describe the benefits of identifying as a writing studies researcher and instructor.

32. If you had the opportunity to improve the learning experiences of students, what changes would you make at your institution?

33. If you had the opportunity to improve the teaching conditions at your institution, what changes would you make?

34. Is there anything that you would like to add? Please add your thoughts, concerns, and/or ideas here.
Appendix B: Explication of “other” categories in Table 5.3.2

Current position, other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Professor, Teaching Stream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title was Senior Lecturer (would now be Associate Professor, Teaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my institution, we designate 'instructor' for those in the tenure-track teaching stream; I'm a tenured member of this stream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position title doesn't match up with anything traditional, but I'm somewhere between Coordinator and Director. I am solely responsible for the service and decisions made about it with the exception of available budget. To complicate matters, however, it is (on paper) only a small part of my role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently revamping, have been &quot;instructor&quot; and &quot;director&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Director position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member - Writing Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral student working as a TA (instructor of record)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department or area, other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>30.8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Centre</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross appointment</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative Structure, other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Research Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics and Language Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appointed by Provost, reported via Dean of one faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (U of A); Masters of Arts in Integrated Studies (Athabasca)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Arts, Undergraduate Research and Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
engineering education

Writing Across the Curriculum so cross-departmental
Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Applied Science
modern languages
Historical and Critical Studies
Graduate Studies
Language studies

Department/area: Cross appointment

Learning and Teaching Centre, Faculty of Business
Translation /French Studies and Professional Writing (French)
Writing Studies and Vantage College

Administrative Structure: Academic deanery

Arts (7)
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Education
Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Engineering
Dean of Applied Science
Writing Centre directly to the Academic Dean
Council of Health Sciences Deans

Academic deanery: Other

Registrar (strange, I know!)
Continuing Studies
Provost
Indirectly through deanery to university provost
The University Library
Principal
Vice President Academic
Vice-Provost, Academic