

THE POSSIBILITIES OF EMBEDDED PEER WRITING SUPPORT FOR CRIMINAL
JUSTICE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

THE POSSIBILITIES OF EMBEDDED PEER WRITING SUPPORT FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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This dissertation explores the possibilities of embedded peer writing support in an upper division writing intensive course, the Writing Ambassador Program, by examining changes in students' writing performance, confidence in their writing, and sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom. Data from the full class were collected; however, this study focused primarily on the experiences of three students from diverse backgrounds and/or intersecting identities: one higher performing student was selected, one middle performing student was selected, and one lower performing student was selected. All students in the course received writing support from peer Writing Ambassadors who provided lessons on writing related topics, written feedback on drafts, one on one writing support appointments, and weekly writing tips and resources. The data collection tools included demographic questionnaires, three writing samples that were scored using the Association of American of Colleges and Universities' Written Communication VALUE rubric (2019), reflection questions, an end of course surveys, and end of course interview, and weekly dosage reports. Full class findings showed improvements in rubric scores across the three papers, and interviews with the course instructor and Writing Ambassadors indicated notable improvements in students' writing performance and confidence that aligned with the lessons and feedback provided by the Writing Ambassadors. The higher performing student in the case study showed improvement in performance, little to no change in confidence (which was already high coming into the course),

and improvement in their sense of empowerment. The middle performing student showed improvement in performance, confidence, and in their sense of empowerment. The lower performing student demonstrated the greatest improvements across the case studies in writing performance and confidence, as well as in their sense of empowerment. The students in the case study did not necessarily feel that their sense of inclusion and appreciation in the classroom had changed as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program. The findings from this study can be used to guide similar programs and future research. Implications for practice include increasing the frequency the Writing Ambassadors are physically present in class; offering more in person writing support options such as during class or immediately before or after class in a location near the classroom; providing a platform for asking simple questions that is less formal than email; continuing to utilize multiple Writing Ambassadors in each course to increase diversity; providing additional incentives for students to utilize one on one writing support; enhancing the training provided to Writing Ambassadors in time management and efficient feedback; and holding regular meetings with the course instructor and Writing Ambassador. Implications for research include providing more transparency into the program's goal of helping students from diverse backgrounds to feel included and appreciated in class; exploring different ways to isolate variables that may be affecting change; expanding the program and future studies to different disciplines; examining distal outcomes; incorporating more quantitative measures and testing for statistical significance; exploring changes experienced by Writing Ambassadors; collecting reflections in a different manner; and implementing a mid-semester survey.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my family and friends. My children, Aria, Emmy, and Eli are my reason for pursuing my PhD. They motivate me to be the best version of myself that I can be. Aria, Emmy, and Eli, always remember that the stars and beyond are the limit. As Walt Disney put it, “If you can dream, it you can do it.” I cannot wait to see where your lives lead you, though time can take its time on the way there. My husband, Ryan, helped me to stay level-headed throughout this process. Ryan, I thank you for your patience, love, and understanding. My mom, Marcy, has always been my biggest fan and believed in me even in times that when I was not worth believing in. Thank you, mom, for never giving up on me. My stepdad, Jim, has been my cheerleader me from afar. Thank you, Jim, for loving me as your own child. I am blessed to be surrounded by other relatives and friends who love me and encourage me. Thank you each for the important role you have played in my life leading up to this accomplishment.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study examined the possibilities of embedded peer writing support through the Writing Ambassador Program in a junior-level writing-intensive (WI) course, Diversity and Writing in Criminal Justice, in the Criminology and Criminal Justice (CJ) department at a Southwestern doctoral institution. In the Writing Ambassador Program, peer writing tutors from the university writing center provide writing support embedded within disciplinary writing intensive courses. Writing Ambassadors teach lessons on various writing related topics, provide written feedback on multiple assignments, offer resources and support, and lead individual and/or group writing support sessions available to all students in the course. Based on anecdotal data collected from a past study of the Writing Ambassador Program, all students are expected to benefit from the Writing Ambassador's presence in the course. In particular, the Writing Ambassador may help to support students who are black, Indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC); students of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations; students who are the first in their families to attend college; students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds; and/or students who feel unprepared for college level writing. For purposes of this dissertation, students who identify with these groups will be referred to as students from diverse and/or intersecting identities. Students from diverse and/or intersecting identities may be at an increased risk of withdrawing or failing WI courses, thus leading to higher attrition rates for these groups. National data suggests large disparities in 4-year college completion rates for students from traditionally marginalized racial groups. Specifically, Shapiro et al. (2017) reported that Hispanic and Black students had the lowest 6-year college completion rates at 54.9% and 45% respectively, compared to Asian students at 71.7% and White students at 67.2%. Faculty in the

CJ department from the university where this study took place have reported that the WI course is often where they see student attrition from marginalized groups (L. Fernandez, personal communication, March 21, 2022). By improving students' writing through embedded writing support in a course which often sees high rates of attrition, the Writing Ambassador Program may have the potential of improving student retention and graduation rates, which may be examined in future studies of this program. The possibility that the program may improve students' writing is supported by results from a study examining a similar intervention in a writing course in which students who worked with a peer embedded writing tutor made more improvements in their writing than students who did not work with the tutor (Regaignon, 2011).

This dissertation study explored how the Writing Ambassador Program affects students' confidence in writing and their writing performance, as well their experience in the classroom community as members of one or more traditionally marginalized groups. By taking primarily a case study approach, this design and development study followed the experiences of three students from diverse and/or intersecting identities. Exploring students' intersectional identities allowed for greater understanding of students' experiences with the Writing Ambassador Program who came from diverse and/or intersecting identities, thus allowing for greater insight into why participants experienced the program in the ways they did based on their holistic and intersecting identities opposed to considering just one aspect of their identities. Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, which sees social justice and democracy as inseparable from the classroom and in doing so uses tools that deepen learning and critical thinking, is the underlying theory for both the Writing Ambassador Program and study, thus aligning well with the focus on students' intersectionality, the subject matter content of the course which explores differences in the criminal justice system, and with the research questions. This study has paved the way for

research into more distal outcomes that may poise the Writing Ambassador Program as a means of increasing retention and graduation rates for students who identify with one or more traditionally marginalized groups. This introductory section provides background information about intersectional identities and their importance in higher education research, an introduction to WI courses and challenges that they face, and challenges in student writing in the criminal justice major and field. It ends with a presentation of the research questions that guided this study.

Within higher education, the intersectional identities of students have become an important framework for research, and as such, are carried into this study in an effort to examine how students' intersecting identities might affect the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador Program for students from diverse and intersecting identities. Intersectionality refers to the multiple identities of individuals, such as race, gender, class, and other characteristics, that may intersect to create new biases, privileges, and forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). Elaborating upon this,

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not only by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other.

Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2)

Intersectionality, then, is able to serve both theoretical and political purposes that are used in both feminist and anti-racist scholarship (Nash, 2008). Intersectionality diminishes the binaries of race and gender and instead allows for identity to be theorized in more complex ways. As Nash (2008) wrote, “The destabilization of race/gender binaries is particularly important to enable robust analyses of cultural sites that implicate both race and gender...” (p. 2). In this study, the intersectional identities of students were examined in order to better understand both how background and the intersecting identities of students may affect writing performance, as well as how the Writing Ambassador Program interventions may affect students from diverse and intersecting backgrounds within WI courses. Furthermore, the consideration of intersectionality in this study aligns with the guiding theory of critical pedagogy in an effort to not only deepen students’ learning, but also to incorporate diversity and inclusion in the curriculum.

WI courses are one of the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) High Impact Practices (Kuh, 2008). The AAC&U’s High Impact Practices are teaching and learning practices that have been researched and demonstrated to positively impact, and as particularly relevant to this study, have been shown to benefit students from diverse backgrounds who are historically underserved in higher education (Kuh, 2008). According to Kuh (2008), in WI courses, students should practice writing and revising various documents for multiple audiences. While Kuh (2008) mentioned that WI courses can happen at any academic level, at the institution where this study took place, WI courses occur at the junior level. Farris and Smith (1992) cited two reasons that most institutions have adopted WI courses: the first has to do with reinforcing writing between freshman composition and capstone courses, and the second relates to writing improvement as a result of engagement in subject matter. Even more, administrators

may see WI courses as opportunities to engage students in more critical thinking and in-depth learning experiences than typical disciplinary courses that may take a more transmission-based approach to learning (Ferris & Smith, 1992). McLeod and Miraglia (2001) explained that WI courses do more than just add writing to disciplinary courses: “they are designed to engage students more actively in their own learning through writing” (p. 17). With this approach, WI courses can serve as a conglomeration of students’ disciplinary ways of knowing, their critical thinking skills, as well as their disciplinary writing abilities, thus further enhancing students’ sense of belonging as an intellectual within the discipline (Ferris & Smith, 1992). However, to be effective, WI courses require an effective curriculum and teaching.

To be successful, Townsend (2001) suggested that within WI courses, in particular, the “...frequency of writing, the usefulness of instructor feedback, the opportunity for revision, and, most important, the design of the writing assignments and their ‘fit’ with the pedagogical aims of the course” are of high importance to their success. Specifically, Farris and Smith (1992) noted the importance of a low student to teacher ratio/low course cap in WI courses, as well as that the course is taught by faculty as opposed to teaching assistants, that there is a required page/word count, that revision requirements are stipulated, that writing be considered in students’ final course grade, that the course incorporates instruction and evaluation related to the writing assignments, and that support be available for both students and faculty.

Though they can play a valuable role in improving student writing, WI courses may experience high rates of failing grades and withdrawals, thus potentially contributing to increased attrition rates. Though research in this area is scarce, anecdotal evidence from faculty in the CJ department where this study took place affirms that the Diversity and Writing in

Criminal Justice course is often where they see student attrition (L. Fernandez, personal communication, March 21, 2022).

There are many reasons why WI courses can be so challenging: teachers assigned to these courses are often inexperienced or struggle with teaching writing, teachers may have inadequate preparation and support, courses may experience enrollment management difficulties, courses may incorporate poorly designed writing curriculum, and teachers may experience challenges with revision and feedback (Townsend, 2001). One of the most significant of these reasons is a lack of training and support available for instructors teaching writing intensive courses.

According to Zaretsky (2019), there is a need for improvement in disciplinary faculty's preparedness and willingness to teach and incorporate writing into their courses. In WI courses in the criminal justice discipline specifically, Blowers and Donohue (1994) noted similar issues at both the curricular and faculty levels. A primary concern for Blowers and Donohue (1994) was a lack of clarity on what it means for a course to be considered WI, which can lead to faculty confusion about what the course should include. Blowers and Donohue (1994) also noted that a lack of faculty support and professional learning opportunities affect faculty attitudes toward teaching WI courses, as well as their preparedness. The design of the Writing Ambassador program helped to address Zaretsky's (2019) and Blowers and Donohue's (1994) concerns through the incorporation of faculty consultations that can discuss both the course curriculum and the Writing Ambassador Program curriculum, thus preparing faculty to effectively incorporate writing instruction into their classes. Furthermore, faculty were invited to participate in professional development sessions that addressed various topics related to effective writing instruction. By addressing the issues that faculty may experience in teaching WI courses through

the Writing Ambassador Program, these courses may be more successful in accomplishing their intended outcome of improving student writing.

Students may also have poor attitudes toward WI courses. According to Blowers and Donahue (1994) students in the criminal justice discipline may be resistant to writing because they fail to see the importance of writing in their future careers. Writing, however, is prevalent in the criminal justice field, such as in “...on-scene evidence and note-taking, individual assessments, incident reports, case summaries, grant applications, letters to courts, and more” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 3). Writing in Criminal Justice requires detail and precision, and it “...must be able to withstand demanding readers up the chain of command,” as well as “...sometimes withstand cross examination in a court of law” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 3). As such, poor writing in the criminal justice field can lead to case dismissal, mistrials, and not guilty verdicts, as well as workers appearing dishonest when testifying (Houghland & Allen, 2020). This makes WI courses all that more important in helping prepare students for their future careers in criminal justice, and the Writing Ambassador program was designed to help students recognize the value and importance of writing to their academic and future careers.

Students in CJ, as with many academic disciplines, are often seen by faculty as underprepared for college level writing (Pfeifer & Ferree, 2006; Odom & Helfers, 2016). Some common issues include problems with organization, poor grammar, lack of completeness, and plagiarism (Pfeifer & Ferree, 2006). Pfeifer and Ferree (2006), in developing a WI course in criminal justice, researched faculty concerns regarding the writing of criminal justice students. These concerns included students’ information literacy skills, citation skills, academic writing skills, and organization (Pfeifer & Ferree, 2006). As such, they determined that WI courses should have two objectives, including strengthening students’ overall writing skills and helping

them to develop their disciplinary writing skills (Pfeifer & Ferree, 2006), which is reflective of the objectives of the course in which this study took place as well as the Writing Ambassador program goals. Johnson et al. (2011) wrote, “In all areas of criminal justice, no skill is recognized as more important than the ability to get messages on paper clearly in order to get business done” (p. ix), and the Writing Ambassador Program was designed to help prepare students to be successful in the writing they will do in their academic and professional futures.

This study addressed multiple issues in WI courses in higher education and in the CJ discipline. Firstly, it considered the intersectionality of students rather than only fixed groups, thus offering an opportunity to examine the experiences of students with the program with intersecting identities in a WI classroom. Secondly, the Writing Ambassador program addressed concerns related to WI courses, such as teacher attitudes and preparedness, as well as student attitudes. And finally, by addressing concerns often associated with WI courses and those in criminal justice in particular, the program helped to make WI courses in criminal justice more meaningful and effective in improving students’ writing performance and confidence.

The overarching goals of this study were to determine the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador Program related to students from diverse and/or intersecting identities’ performance and confidence in their writing skills. By drawing from critical pedagogy as a means of deepening learning and bringing culture into the program curriculum, all students were anticipated to show increased critical thinking about and appreciation toward cultural differences as well as disparities in the criminal justice and political systems. As a result, the classroom experiences of students from diverse and/or intersecting identities were explored. Specifically, this study explored changes in students’ sense of belonging in the classroom, sense of appreciation in the classroom, as well as their feelings of empowerment both within and outside

of the classroom. Employing a case study approach enabled an examination of the experiences of a higher, middle, and lower performing student in the course based on an initial diagnostic writing assignment and provided insight into how the program and its specific elements may or may not benefit students of differing baseline writing levels and from intersecting identities. By using critical pedagogy in both its design and interpretation of results, this study also explored how the incorporation of critical pedagogy influenced students' sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment. The specific research questions include:

- What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their writing skills?
- What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their confidence about their writing skills?
- In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways?

The following chapter examines literature relevant to this study. Specifically, it explores the underlying theory of this study, Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, and how critical pedagogy connects with the major components of this study. The chapter continues by examining the intersection of writing centers and writing across the curriculum (WAC) programs. Additionally, various forms of peer support, including their affordances and constraints, are presented. In the third chapter, the detailed methodology and data analyses are presented, thus providing a detailed description of the Writing Ambassador Program study that will take place in Spring 2023. The fourth chapter takes an in depth look at the findings of the program, and the final chapter offers a discussion of the findings, limitations, and possibilities.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The Writing Ambassador program had goals of supporting students from diverse and/or intersecting identities in their writing performance and confidence, as well as in their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom and beyond. The underlying theory supporting the program and study is Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, which, as demonstrated in the following sections aligns with intersectionality, writing courses, and CJ courses. The program design was largely based on the connections between writing center and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) theories, an intersection within which the Writing Ambassador Program falls. Research into the affordances and limitations of peer support, including peer tutoring, writing centers, and writing fellows programs also helped to shape the design of the program, as well as this study. The following sections discuss how critical pedagogy, the intersection between WAC and writing centers, and peer support have influenced the design of both the Writing Ambassador Program and study.

Critical Pedagogy

The Writing Ambassador Program and this study are rooted in critical pedagogy. The Program incorporated Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy in an effort to deepen student learning and confidence in writing and to bring diversity issues into the classroom, thus enhancing students' critical thinking, cultural appreciation, and intercultural communication skills. The study then included measures intended to examine how the incorporation of critical pedagogy affects students in the course.

Critical pedagogy sees political and social issues as inseparable from education (Freire, 1970). As Kincheloe (2005) wrote, "... proponents of critical pedagogy understand that every

dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically contested spaces” (p. 2). However, many who have had positive schooling experiences may fail to recognize the “political complications of schooling” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 2). According to critical theorists, traditional education serves to perpetuate the existing social and political orders, thus well serving those who already benefit from the existing social and political orders. However, critical pedagogy calls for education that provides students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be critical citizens who are empowered to contribute to social change and justice (Giroux, 2010). MacLaren (2002) wrote that critical theorists are united in their objectives, which are “to empower the powerless and to transform existing social inequalities and injustices” (p. 186).

One means of transforming social inequities and injustices through education is to move past more traditional teaching methods that see the teacher as a giver of knowledge and to embrace pedagogical practices that encourage critical thinking and awareness, which is integrated into the Writing Ambassador Program design. Critical pedagogy criticizes the “banking concept” in education, in which “...knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1970, p. 45) as a form of oppression. This banking concept fails to consider the importance of inquiry in education. As Freire (1970) discussed, when students see themselves as passive receivers of knowledge, “... the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them” (p. 46). As such, this banking model aims to assimilate students into the existing social order, thus perpetuating injustices and stifling social progress.

Instead, critical pedagogy calls for a reconsideration of the teacher-student power structures, allowing both to participate in education as students and teachers (Freire, 1970, p. 45). To do this, Freire (1970) called for problem-posing education: one that sees fluidity in the roles

of teacher and student and one that then incorporates dialogue reflective of this fluidity in roles. This type of education, which sees students as active contributors of knowledge as opposed to passive receivers, allows students to develop the critical consciousness they need to see themselves as “transformers of the world” (Freire, 1970, p. 46). Freire (1970) also called for dialogue in the critical pedagogy classroom. For Freire (1970) dialogue is “...an act of creation” (p. 62). It requires a profound love for the world, humility, faith in humankind, hope, and critical thinking (Freire, 1970). Importantly, Freire (1970) wrote that “Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking” (p.65). And even more importantly, Freire (1970) asserted that there is no communication without dialogue and “...without communication, there can be no true education” (p. 66). Through problem posing learning and dialogue, knowledge is constructed in the critical pedagogy classroom, and with this, comes critical thinking and the empowerment of students to be instigators of social and political change. As bell hooks (1994) wrote, “Freire’s work affirmed that education can only be liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labor” (p. 14).

The Writing Ambassador Program integrated dialogue and active learning experiences into the curriculum. The program began with a “This I Am” activity where students reflected on their writing backgrounds and experiences, and how their culture and privileges influenced those experiences. They then compared similarities and differences in small groups, and ended with a class discussion that considered how their differences and similarities affect communication with individuals from different backgrounds. This activity created a dialogue between students in their small groups, between students and the Writing Ambassador, and between all students in the class. This also helped to develop a classroom community where students from diverse and/or intersecting identities felt comfortable sharing their ideas and experiences. According to hooks

(1994), “Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy” (p. 39). Furthermore, “...a feeling of community creates a sense that there is a shared commitment and common good that binds us” (hooks, 1994, p. 39). hooks (1994) does this by making sure each student feels that their voice is heard and valued. Within the Writing Ambassador Program, this occurred through the “This I am” activity, through Writing Ambassadors’ feedback and interactions with individual students, through class discussions and activities, and through students’ reflections in which they discussed their learning and progress, as well as their understanding of culture and communication. The program attempted to create a sense of community through these multiple activities where differences and unique ideas and experiences were shared between the class as a whole, as well as between the Writing Ambassador and individual students. These differences, unique ideas, and experiences are not only embraced, but were foundational to the creation of knowledge, as well as the formation of a community in which the power levels between the Writing Ambassador and students were predominately equal. This sense of community helped the Writing Ambassador Program to be more successful in incorporating critical pedagogy as a means to deepen learning and encourage critical thinking and cultural appreciation in an effort to empower students of diverse and/or intersecting identities to be agents of change.

In all lessons and interactions with students, the Writing Ambassador was trained to take an interactive approach to teaching that incorporated small group and full class discussions, as well as interactive workshops and peer revision opportunities. These lessons and discussions used multicultural examples and case studies that encouraged problem based learning. For example, when teaching students how to write an effective thesis statement, the Writing Ambassador might have used a current political example that is related to criminal or social

justice that required students to think critically and develop a stance on the issue by considering multiple perspectives to then express in a thesis statement. Furthermore, a similar activity could have been used to teach information literacy skills, where students researched a political issue and assessed the credibility and reliability of sources. Students could consider bias in the sources and how their own views and beliefs affect how they interact with and respond to various sources.

In their individual interactions with students, the Writing Ambassador was trained to take a collaborative approach to support students in their writing, which is often done by asking questions and helping students come to their own answers. In all settings, students as well as the Writing Ambassador were expected to contribute their own ideas and experiences to enhance the learning of all. As hooks (1994) described, in engaged pedagogy, which builds upon critical pedagogy, “teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students” (hooks, p. 15). This means that along with students, teachers should be open to vulnerability, sharing, and transformation. As hooks (1994) wrote, “Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process” (p. 21). The Writing Ambassador's involvement was expected to help engage students and enhance their ways of knowing. Integrating problem based learning, dialogue, and engaged pedagogy into the CJ classroom was intended to not only deepen students’ learning in writing, but also to empower students, help them to think critically about and appreciate cultural differences, and to help them effectively communicate with individuals from backgrounds different than their own. This was expected to help students from diverse and/or intersecting identities to feel included, appreciated, and empowered.

Critical Pedagogy and Intersectionality

Critical pedagogy and intersectionality, while different in many ways, overlap and complement each other. Intersectionality, is

... a powerful tool for understanding, constructing, and deconstructing: the experience of identity, the complex and mutually constituting nature of social identities, the relationships between identity and larger social systems, and the interwoven nature of manifestations of social oppression (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 17).

It considers how “the major axes of social divisions in a given society at a given time...operate not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but build upon each other and work together” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 4). Intersectionality can act as a problem solving and analytic tool to address a variety of social issues (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 4). This can happen both in and outside the classroom. Similar to critical pedagogy, intersectionality as critical praxis also aims to “challenge the status quo” and to “transform power relations” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 33).

In this study, intersectionality primarily was incorporated in the program design as a problem-solving tool. The program explored the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador program for students who belong to one or more traditionally oppressed groups. As such, students completed a demographic questionnaire on which they indicated all groups with which they identify. From there, as much as possible, students for the case study were chosen who identified with multiple historically oppressed groups.

Intersectionality was also inherently brought into the curriculum of the Writing Ambassador Program due to its close ties to critical pedagogy and its importance in today’s world, where there is much overlap and fluidity in the groups with which individuals identify. In the “This I am” activity, students considered how their cultural backgrounds, which may have

included intersections, influenced their writing and communication with those who are different from them. In addition to the “This I am” activity, the curriculum aimed to incorporate materials that examined intersectional identities and draw from texts that are used in the course addressing intersectionality in the criminal justice system. For example, students could read journal articles, such as Bell’s (2017) “Prison Violence and the Intersectionality of Race/Ethnicity and Gender” and write reading responses that incorporate the writing lessons provided by the Writing Ambassador.

Critical Pedagogy in Writing Courses

Since the time of Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, discussions of critical pedagogy, liberatory teaching, and progressive education have been prevalent in the composition field (Olson, 1997). According to Bizzell (1991), Freire’s “banking concept” has largely been rejected in the “current-traditional” writing pedagogy (p. 848). Though writing classrooms may be seen both outside of and within English departments as “skills-based remediation or as gateway classes” that students must pass in order to engage in disciplinary courses that integrate more meaningful content, many composition instructors wish to do more than serve as a gateway and instead create an environment where students learn to think critically and engage in knowledge creation (Hardin, 2001, p. 35). As Bizzell (1991) commented, composition instructors largely wish to serve liberatory goals in the classroom. To do this, Schor (1992) discussed problem-posing in the writing classroom by integrating students’ diverse cultures, thus clarifying the “meaning and purpose of intellectual work” (p. 48). As Schor (1992) wrote, “... the multicultural class challenges the subordination of some groups in school and society and orients the curriculum to equality” (p. 48).

Integrating multicultural texts that explored political issues through the lens of social and criminal justice provided a means of infusing culture and issues of inequities into the writing classroom, while helping to create an environment in which students feel comfortable discussing their own ideas and backgrounds, as well as inequities in the world around them. hooks (1994) wrote, “When we, as educators allow our pedagogy to be radically changed by our recognition of a multicultural world, we can give students the education they desire and deserve” (p. 44). This can occur through the sharing of diverse student voices as well as through the course materials. Bizzell (1991) chose to incorporate solely American political documents in composition courses so that schooling could “work for radically democratic ends” (p. 67). For Bizzell (1991), political documents address negotiations of differences between groups, thus bringing multicultural perspectives into the classroom. hooks (1994) found that though faculty often demonstrate interest in including marginalized individuals and groups, they did not include their work in a way that correlated with this interest. For example, all materials about marginalized groups may be lumped together into one unit in the course (hooks, 1994). The course in which this study took place, however, examined marginalized groups throughout the semester, and the Writing Ambassador Program curriculum aimed to build upon this by drawing from the course materials and incorporating multiculturally authored texts throughout the semester, both in class activities as well as in resources shared.

In writing classes, dialogue may be incorporated in unique ways. Giroux (1988) described writing as “... an interdisciplinary process based on axioms of learning and behavior” (p. 72). Furthermore, writing is a pedagogical tool which encourages students to think critically (Giroux, 1988). In social studies courses, in particular, Giroux (1988) wrote that writing not only teaches students the connection between writing and thinking, but also helps students to “reshape

and restructure” their ideas and views of the subjects they are studying. Building on this, Thein et al. (2007) found that through writing, students may be willing to share controversial perspectives that they would otherwise not share in discussions, and that writing can give students the “...freedom to respond in ways that they might not have if they were directly arguing against or agreeing with a particular student” (p. 59). As such, writing may serve as a more effective means for some students to share their ideas, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences than class discussions (Townsend, 2011). Writing can offer students opportunities to think critically about injustices and share their unique thoughts and perspectives, thus encouraging them to contribute to their own knowledge creation, as well as their audience’s which may consist of their instructor and classmates. Through the feedback and revision processes, both with peers and with instructors, a dialogue similar to that discussed by Freire (1970) can occur that encourages students as both authors and audience members to further explore their own beliefs and ideas, as well as multiple perspectives on the topics which they are reading and writing about (Brock et al., 2020). In their study, which included interviews with instructors of WI courses across the disciplines, Brock et al., (2020) concluded that the assignments, feedback, and revision, “...fostered student development of rich, deep, and nuanced arguments about complex issues” (p. 1006). In the Writing Ambassador Program, dialogue occurred both through writing as well as through class discussions. Writing Ambassadors, who provided written feedback on students’ work as well as in person support, were trained to engage in this sort of dialogue that encouraged students to engage in critical thinking that explores different perspectives.

Bizzell (1991) pointed out that writing instructors’ efforts to create a liberatory classroom has created a juxtaposition: “...we want to serve the common good with the power we possess by virtue of our position as teachers, and yet we are deeply suspicious of any exercise of power in

the class” (p. 848). To reconcile, Bizzell (1991) explored the concepts of power and authority through an examination of works by Giroux, Ellsworth, and hooks, concluding that teachers should aim to persuade students to grant them authority (in contrast to coercion in which the teacher takes power from the institution) by demonstrating that the students’ best interests are at heart. Bizzell (1991) suggested using transparency and openness with students in this process. As hooks (1994) wrote, “In the transformed classroom there is often a much greater need to explain philosophy, strategy, intent...” (p. 42). By finding connections with students, Bizzell suggested that “...their joining together in a liberatory educational project will serve all of their best interests” (p. 852). The Writing Ambassador Program Curriculum, largely through the “This I am” introductory activity which included the Writing Ambassador was designed to build connections between the Writing Ambassador and students, thus positioning the Writing Ambassador as a facilitator of the class, in a way that that the Writing Ambassador’s lessons, feedback, and support were in the best interest of the students.

Critical Pedagogy in the Criminal Justice Discipline

Little published research about integration of critical pedagogy specifically in the criminal justice discipline exists; however, criminal justice education, unlike many other disciplines, has direct and tangible connections to politics and social structures. As such, critical thinking about social and political issues can be “central” in the social sciences (Howes, 2017), which while not one and the same as critical pedagogy is a tenant of critical pedagogy and can help to justify the incorporation of critical pedagogy into the social science classroom. As Howes (2017), wrote, “... in criminology, sociology, and social work, perhaps one key goal has been to foster the kind of thinking that promotes social justice, particularly within the critical (versus mainstream) traditions” (p. 893). To this end, Howes (2017) encouraged criminal justice students

to “...identify and question their own taken-for-granted assumptions and engage in developing their worldviews” (p. 893) thus empowering them to think critically about social and political structures. One means of encouraging critical thinking in criminal justice courses is through case study approaches. Contugno (2018) researched how case studies can help criminal justice students become stronger writers and critical thinkers. Though Contugno’s (2018) close-ended questions results did not demonstrate statistical significance, “...students' responses to open-ended questions demonstrated increased awareness of several aspects of critical thinking and a stronger sense of concrete resources available to them to assist with their critical thinking” (p. 617). Using case studies as a means of teaching writing, and with it, critical thinking skills, was a useful approach to the Writing Ambassador’s lessons with students. For example, when teaching a particular writing concept, the Writing Ambassador was able to present a case study that addressed political and social injustices which students could individually or collaboratively discuss and write about together while practicing the writing concept. This well aligns with Freire’s (1970) problem solving and dialogue, thus serving as a way to infuse critical pedagogy into the course.

Barton et al. (2010) researched how the integration of critical pedagogy in a criminal justice course benefited students. Some of their relevant findings included 30% of students reporting that they “now had a willingness to question and challenge the discriminatory comments or actions of others” and 8% “stated that they had become involved in political movements or campaigns, attending marches and demonstrations” (p. 35). Furthermore, Barton et al., (2010) found that some students felt they could connect with other groups that were traditionally marginalized, oppressed, or discriminated against. These promising results of this

study are encouraging for the Writing Ambassador Program in having the potential to reach its goals related to critical pedagogy.

The CJ department and course in which this study took place have adopted a critical approach to criminology. Critical criminology explores how inequities, particularly with class, race, and gender, influence crime (Long, 2015). Though there is no standard definition of critical criminology, there are several similarities between critical criminological perspectives, including the rejection of traditional criminological theories, the adoption of anti-essentialism that sees crime and deviance as socially constructed, and the emphasis of the “...interrelatedness of power and constructions of crime and deviance” (Ugwudike, 2015, p. 34). Furthermore, critical criminology recognizes that those who experience privileges related to race, gender and class are the individuals who hold power to make laws and avoid law enforcement (Ugwudike, 2015). With this critical approach to criminology, which encourages students to critically consider inequities within the criminal justice system, the learning outcomes of the course closely aligned with the Writing Ambassador Program’s goal of creating a classroom community in which students from diverse and intersecting identities feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.

The Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing Center Connection

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs, common in many institutions within the United States and worldwide, aim to enhance writing instruction and opportunities across the curriculum. The Writing Ambassador Program emerged as an initiative to improve student writing within a WAC program. The goal of WAC programs is not necessarily to add writing, but instead change how writing is used by both teachers and students across the curriculum (McLeod, 1992). Thus, McLeod (1992) defined WAC as “...a comprehensive program that

transforms the curriculum, encouraging writing to learn and learning to write in all disciplines” (p. 4). McLeod (1992) presented two complementary approaches to WAC programs, the second of which has often come to be called Writing in the Disciplines (WID). In the first approach, writing is used as a means of learning, thus aligning with constructivist theories in which knowledge is actively constructed (McLeod, 1992). This approach well aligns with the integration of critical pedagogy into the program. Farris and Smith (1992) wrote that “...pedagogy informed by the WAC movement has galvanized curricular change when the use that is made of writing has intellectual and social consequences for both students and instructors” (p. 72-23). The Writing Ambassador Program was designed with the intention of bringing about changes beyond that of students’ writing skills through the integration of critical pedagogy. The second approach has to do with socialization into discourse communities and emphasizes more formal assignments where writing is taught as “... a form of social behavior in the academic community” (McLeod, 1992, p. 3). These approaches are not necessarily rooted in different theories, but instead have different yet complementary pedagogies (Carter & Wiebe, 2007). The difference between WAC and WID can best be demonstrated by differences in pedagogical approaches as discussed by Carter and Wiebe (2007), whereas in WAC the focus is on writing to learn and learning to write in courses across the disciplines, while in WID, the focus is more on socialization into the disciplinary writing conventions. The types of assignments in WID tend to be longer and more rooted in demonstration of disciplinary genre and conventions than those in WAC (Carter & Wiebe, 2007); however, WAC and WID approaches are often used in tandem as they are largely complementary to each other.

In the Writing Ambassador Program, both WAC and WID approaches were considered in curricular design and in consultations with faculty. While many of the activities that the Writing

Ambassador did directly with the class are more rooted in WAC, such as the “This I am” writing and activity, faculty were encouraged to engage students in writing that replicates the type of writing that students may be expected to do in their future careers in criminal justice. These assignments then are based in WID and provided students with a sense of socialization and belonging within the discipline through their knowledge and practice of disciplinary writing conventions. The Writing Ambassador tended to more directly engage students in WAC activities in their lessons with the class, while supporting students in WID activities through feedback and small group/individual writing sessions.

Writing centers provide individual writing specific support to student writers across the disciplines. Writing centers often exist within WAC programs, though they can also exist externally. When existing within WAC programs, the writing center and WAC can work synergistically to improve student writing across campus. By operating together, WAC programs and writing centers can help faculty to enhance the writing curriculum by incorporating the writing center into the course design, thus improving the accessibility and quality of the writing support and instruction available to all students. Though their core functions are seemingly different, their successes in effectively supporting faculty and students can be largely attributed to their collaboration. In such a design, WAC efforts are primarily focused on supporting faculty and academic units in effectively incorporating writing into the curriculum, while the writing center provides support directly to students. There are benefits to the WAC/writing center connection, such as a shared goal and combined efforts to improve student writing throughout the disciplines, improved opportunities for assessment, and collaborative programming. The Writing Ambassador Program represents this type of collaboration, which is an intersection

between WAC efforts and the writing center. Mullin (2001) spoke specifically to the connection between writing centers and WAC initiatives, presenting several common agreements:

- Each discipline has genres, ways of performing, or conventions specific to its manner of constructing, supporting, and questioning knowledge.
- No discipline can effectively act alone: this fact implies a call for workplace alliances, interdisciplinary planning, and multidisciplinary exchanges of theory and practice.
- The most effective pedagogy is one-on-one or small-group instruction (p. 184-185).

With these commonalities, it seems natural that these programs work well in tandem, thus serving as an effective guide for the Writing Ambassador Program design. By combining the support typical of writing centers with WAC initiatives in a classroom setting, the Writing Ambassador Program was uniquely situated to provide students in the criminal justice classroom with discipline and course-specific writing instruction that reflected new and different approaches to teaching and learning. While the support from Writing Ambassadors was expected to benefit all students, having writing assistance embedded in the course helped to ensure that students from diverse and intersecting identities who may be at the highest risk of withdrawing or failing the course had immediate access to writing support, which, as later discussed, is one shortcoming of writing centers.

WAC programs, as suggested by LeCourt (1996) and as demonstrated previously by the connections between writing courses and critical pedagogy, may have the potential to instill critical pedagogy across the disciplines. In an examination of WAC programs, LeCourt (1996) discovered that WAC programs may be doing the opposite. Instead of serving liberatory purposes, WAC programs may be acculturating students into normalized discourses, reproducing dominant ideologies in these discourses, and suppressing cultural, gender, and other differences

and ways of thinking and knowing (LeCourt, 1996). This may occur because of resistance to and concern about a “missionary approach” to WAC consultations in which ideologies about writing are forced upon disciplinary faculty (LeCourt, 1996). LeCourt (1996), however, recognized that this concern need not result in “accommodation to that discipline” (p. 390). As such, LeCourt (1996) offered “...a model which mediates between the binary of ‘missionary’ and ‘accommodationist’ while still retaining some of the critical sense about discourse and ideology which pervades our approaches to writing instruction in our home departments” (p. 391). This then can lead to WAC faculty consultations approached with the understanding that both theoretical and pedagogical change is both appropriate and necessary, thus giving way for critical pedagogy to be infused in faculty consultations. Though LeCourt’s (1996) model was published over thirty years ago, it is still directly relevant to the Writing Ambassador Program in that critical pedagogy and its connection to writing will be prevalent in consultations with disciplinary faculty teaching the courses in which Writing Ambassadors are present.

Peer Support for Student Writers

Peer tutoring and its many forms, such as supplemental instruction, peer collaboration, and peer mentoring, are offered widely across higher education institutions world-wide (Colver & Frey, 2016). Some institutions offer writing support within general tutoring centers, where students can go to receive support in a variety of disciplines. Others provide writing centers, where writing-specific support is provided by trained tutors. In developing the Writing Ambassador Program, exploring the limitations and affordances of various forms of peer support, as well as efforts to measure the effectiveness of those supports, helped to shape the Writing Ambassador Program design as well as the study.

Peer Tutoring

Many campuses in the United States have peer tutoring centers where students can go to get support on their work from a variety of courses and disciplines. According to Falchikov (2001), “Peer tutoring is not a unitary concept,” and instead includes, “...a multitude of different ways of constituting learning pairs” (p. 4). For example, peers may be of equal status, the institution may assign unequal status, existing differences between the tutor and student may create unequal status, or tutoring may occur across two institutions (Falchikov, 2001). Peer tutoring can be individual or group based, and peer tutors engage in numerous techniques when working with students in groups or individually.

Falchikov (2001) presented several group approaches that may be helpful to the Writing Ambassador’s lessons with the class and that would also be congruent with critical pedagogy. These include guided reciprocal peer questioning and structured academic controversy. Guided reciprocal peer questioning promotes active learning by having students address general questions related to their learning, and then develop their own more specific questions (Falchikov, 2001). Students work through their questions in groups and may come together as a class (Falchikov, 2001). This active learning approach aligns with critical pedagogy’s problem based learning, and can allow for the integration of cultural and political issues. A structured academic controversy works to “...develop critical thinking skills by compelling students to examine issues for which there is no agreed interpretation” (Falchikov, 2001, p. 57). In this approach, according to Falchikov (2001), students practice:

- Advocating an intellectual position;
- Evaluating and criticizing the position advocated by others;
- Synthesizing;

- Consensual decision making (p. 57).

The emphasis of these skills well aligns with the Writing Ambassador's incorporation of case studies into the curriculum which allows students to practice similar problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Despite their widespread use, the effectiveness of peer tutoring programs has not been highly researched largely due to challenges in isolating variables and staffing/time constraints in tutoring centers (Holliday, 2012). Much of the existing research is limited by being exclusively correlational or qualitative or by having other limiting methodologies (Colver & Frey, 2016), which are limitations that also affect this current study. However, in their own study, Colver and Frey (2016) found promising results about the impact of peer tutoring. Specifically, students who attended tutoring showed greater academic improvements when attempting a course for the second time than their classmates who did not attend tutoring (Colver & Frey, 2016). Furthermore, students self-reported that tutoring benefited their understanding of the course content, their ability to complete course assignments, and their confidence (Colver & Frey, 2016). Importantly, Colver and Frey (2016) determined that the amount of peer tutoring was positively correlated with course grades.

Similarly, in a 2010 study, Munley et al. concluded that peer tutoring positively affected student learning. However, in order for tutoring to have an impact on students' grades, Munley et al. (2010) found that students needed to attend tutoring for 10-20 hours in a 14-week course. Cooper (2010) also examined peer tutoring and dosage, and concluded that freshman who sought tutoring over 10 times in a quarter had statistically significant higher rates of persistence and were more likely than students who did not seek tutoring to be in good academic standing; those who sought tutoring at least once during their freshman year were more likely to persist than

those who did not seek tutoring, but did not have significantly higher rates of good standing. Thus, the dosage of tutoring may impact its effectiveness, which was an important consideration in the design of the Writing Ambassador Program and determining how many hours the Writing Ambassador engaged in individual and small group writing support versus teaching lessons the full class and providing written feedback.

In a study involving peer instruction at Harvard University and a two-year college, physics students who received peer instruction across both institutions showed increases in conceptual understanding and problem-solving compared to those receiving traditional lecture-based instruction (Lasry et al., 2008). This demonstrates the benefits of peer tutoring to students at all levels, which supports how the Writing Ambassador Program was expected to have benefits for all students in the class, regardless of academic level.

Despite the limited research available, the studies examining peer support were helpful to consider in the Writing Ambassador Program design. Specifically, the promise of peer academic support helped to justify its application and further study in the Writing Ambassador Program. Additionally, studies concluding that dosage affected the effectiveness of peer tutoring influenced the composition of the Writing Ambassadors' time working with the class. Specifically, when determining the Writing Ambassador's expectations and responsibilities in the class, ample time was reserved for them to meet with students individually and in small groups. Furthermore, approaches to encouraging students to engage with the Writing Ambassador outside of class time, such as requiring students who score below a certain threshold, were considered in collaboration with the course instructor.

Writing Centers

Writing centers, sometimes existing within tutoring centers or within WAC programs, are different from tutoring centers in that they provide writing specific support from tutors or writing assistants who are generally trained to take a collaborative approach to supporting student writers at any level, from any course, and at any stage in the writing process (Salem, 2016). While once viewed as remedial entities for developing writers, writing centers have worked to overcome that stigma by positioning themselves as places that any student can go regardless of ability, discipline, or stage in the writing process to get support in their writing (Salem, 2016).

Collaboration is at the forefront of writing center work. As Hawkins (1984) wrote, writing tutors "...redesign the learning environment so that more of a responsibility and the activity of learning is shifted onto the learner," thus promoting a sharing of power which is much different from that typical of an instructor/student relationship (p. xii). This collaborative approach bears similarities to the problem-based learning and dialogue that the Writing Ambassador integrated into the classroom, thus allowing the Writing Ambassador to employ consistent approaches both in the classroom and in small group/individual writing support appointments that integrated critical pedagogy.

As with peer tutoring, there are limited studies available that examine the effectiveness of writing centers and this is largely because of the challenges in isolating variables to quantify the impact of writing centers. This study of the Writing Ambassador Program is not an exception, as it employs primarily a case study approach. However, the writing center studies that do exist show promising results. Neumann (1999) and Lerner (1997) both examined whether a writing center used by first-year composition students led to higher grades in students compared to students who did not use the writing center, and both studies indicated that students who used the

writing center received higher grades. These findings support the extension of writing center support through individual writing support sessions in the Writing Ambassador Program.

Another study conducted with first-year business students demonstrated that those who used the writing center received significantly higher grades on writing assignments, but only amongst those who scored in the top 40th percentile of the grade distribution (Bielinska-Kwapisz, 2015).

No effect was found for students below the 40th percentile (Bielinska-Kwapisz, 2015). While Bielinska-Kwapisz's (2015) results do not necessarily support the hope that the Writing Ambassador Program helped students who were at the greatest risk of failing or withdrawing from the course, they do support the assumption that even higher performing students benefit from the type of support offered by writing centers, thus justifying that all students in the course in which the Writing Ambassador is placed received the same support. Griswold (2003) examined the connection between writing centers and retention and concluded that writing centers combine a significant number of factors that contribute to retention, meaning that the benefits of writing center use may expand beyond a single assignment or class. While not addressed in this study, future studies of the Writing Ambassador Program may seek to explore the relationship between writing support and retention.

Despite the limited quantifiable evidence, Jones (2001) commented that there are other ways to validate the importance and value of writing centers. This includes testimony from students who report more comfort and confidence in the writing process and who are able to ask more meaningful questions after using the writing center. This also includes the growth of peer tutors in the quality of support they provide. Finally, feedback from faculty who appreciate organized and well-written student work that allows them to focus on content can also be used to validate the importance and value of writing centers (Jones, 2001). These qualitative findings

helped shape the qualitative data collection and analysis in the Writing Ambassador Program, which largely consisted of surveys, reflections, and interviews to learn about students' experiences with the Writing Ambassador Program, in order to help this study produce meaningful findings that may guide future programs and studies.

Writing centers offer many benefits to students who choose to seek support in their writing. These affordances include opportunities for students to simply discuss their writing, to ask questions, and to see the reaction of the peer tutor in a low stakes environment, thus helping students move forward with their writing; opportunities for students to receive affirmation and reassurance, thus helping to improve students' self-confidence in writing; and opportunities for students to recognize how an audience will respond to their writing, thus helping to improve rhetorical awareness (Rafoth, 2010). Writing centers accomplish this by providing individualized and collaborative support that meets the needs of individual student writers (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2016). Writing centers are sites where students can go to receive a sense of caring in the feedback they receive on their writing in ways not possible in many classrooms, and this helps create a sense of community and belonging for student writers in the writing center (Pitsone, 2010). While designed to support all students, writing centers can also help to level inequities by providing English writing support to students from diverse backgrounds, including L2 students (LaClare & Franz, 2013). Student writing center use has reciprocal benefits for faculty, such as enabling faculty to focus more on content when grading and allowing them to spend less time during and outside of office hours working with individual students on basic writing issues. Furthermore, many writing centers offer in-class presentations and workshops to assist faculty in teaching particular topics in writing. Because of the many potential benefits for students and

faculty, writing centers have become standard and valued within most higher education institutions in the United States since the rise of WAC programs (McLeod et al., 2001).

Despite their intentions to provide support in the best ways possible to meet the needs of all student writers, however, writing centers do have limitations. Rarely in a single session do writing tutors have the time to truly analyze what students need to learn to improve their own writing and instead simply help the writer meet the expectations of a particular assignment (Grimm, 1996). To this end, writing center work often focuses on appeasing teachers (Grimm, 1996), thus failing to teach students to identify and correct issues in their writing that will transfer to future assignments. Additionally, despite profound efforts, writing centers often struggle to move past their reputation as a remedial service for developing writers or that of a “fix it shop” (North, 1984). As Lerner (2013) more recently wrote, “Unfortunately, their institutional role might be seen as rather simple—a place for weak writers to get their texts fixed” (p. 230). Adding to this issue is the necessity for students to self-identify or in some cases be identified by their instructors as needing support which may mean that students who need help are unwilling to seek support through writing centers out of fear or shame that they will be considered poor writers (Salem, 2016). Furthermore, writing centers tend to function amorphously, meaning that they are external entities where students can go to receive support without having any connection with the course in which the student is seeking assistance. As such, there is typically no communication between the writing tutor and the course instructor in terms of the support the student may need, disciplinary conventions, and assignment requirements.

An additional limitation of writing centers has to do with covert racism that may occur as a result of the individual focus that writing centers boast. As Grimm (2011) noted, the very

design and theoretical underpinnings of many writing centers may unintentionally perpetuate racism. Of particular relevance to the Writing Ambassador Program and reflected in the design of the Writing Ambassador Program as a way to truly engage diverse students, is Grimm's (2011) discussion of how three common writing center mottos can perpetuate racial discrimination:

1. A good tutor makes the student do all the work.
2. The ultimate aim of a tutorial is an independent writer.; and
3. Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing (p. 82).

These mottos perpetuate discrimination because they often fail to address the needs specific to writers with diverse educational, ethnic and racial, and personal backgrounds. Much writing center theory focuses on the notion of the individual and meeting the needs of individual student writers. On the surface, this seems a practice devoid of racism, however, Villanueva (2006) emphasized that the focus on the individual excludes consideration of that individual's group affiliation. These mottos simply do not apply to every student and holding every student to these mottos or expectations can be detrimental to their experience in the writing center. For example, non-native English-speaking students visiting the writing center may not have the ability to "do all the work" and need the tutor to identify the same mistake multiple times in the document. Furthermore, students may be coming to the writing center because they need support to receive a passing grade on an assignment, caring less about their development as a writer and more about the urgency of passing an assignment or course. Not considering students' culture or background can also affect how tutors come to know their students. As Grimm (2011) described, "...we come to facile and judgmental conclusions" when failing to consider a student's culture or group affiliation (p. 78). For example, tutors may think that "...some students just don't work hard

enough’ or ‘some students just aren’t motivated enough,’ or ‘some students simply fail to take responsibilities to use the resources made available to them” (Grimm, 2011, p. 78) when the issue may actually be related to students’ cultural background, gender, sexual identity, or personal circumstances. One such example of a tutor coming to an incorrect conclusion about a student failing to take responsibility to use resources would be a lower division international student who is not familiar with searching library databases. In this example, the issue is not one related to the students’ work effort or willingness to take responsibility for their learning, but rather a lack of knowledge about the resource.

The Writing Ambassador Program addressed many of the concerns about writing centers, while providing students with meaningful writing support. The Writing Ambassador Program embedded peer support for all students enrolled in the course, thus eliminating the need for students to self-identify as needing support. Embedded support also helped students who may not have had time to visit the writing center receive helpful feedback and resources. Having the Writing Ambassador embedded in the course allowed the Writing Ambassador to understand the course content and writing expectations, and by being present for the full duration of the course, the support the Writing Ambassador provided can truly focus on skill development and refinement opposed to helping students meet the requirements of isolated assignments. By providing appropriate training to the Writing Ambassadors which directly addressed working with students of diverse backgrounds, approaching appointments collaboratively, inquiring about student needs and goals, and incorporating inclusive pedagogy, the Writing Ambassador was able to avoid covertly racist practices. Finally, the Writing Ambassador Program posed opportunities to infuse culture and diversity into the classroom in ways not possible in the

writing center while still bringing the same and even enhanced affordances as writing centers to all students enrolled in the course.

Writing Fellows Programs

Historically, writing centers have tried to maintain separateness from the classroom (Decker, 2005). This is because of the belief that a space separate from the writing classroom in which to practice writing is most conducive to student learning and improvement (Decker, 2005). However, Decker (2005) asserted that tutors can be sent into the classroom without “compromising integrity” (p. 18). In fact, placing tutors in courses can help develop relationships between the writing center and instructors, and can help the classroom to become a “...fertile ground, with writing center theory infusing the curriculum and instructors witnessing collaboration in action” (Decker, 2005, p. 19).

The concept of peer support embedded in disciplinary writing intensive courses opposed to existing externally in writing centers is generally credited to Harriet Sheridan from Carleton College and Tori Haring-Smith from Brown University around the same time as writing centers emerged (Regaignon & Bromley, 2011). These “writing fellows” programs provide support for student learning and also serve as an instigator for improving writing curriculum throughout the disciplines (Neely, 2017). As Zawacki (2008) wrote, “The central underlying goal of writing fellows programs is that fellows will act as change agents in writing courses across the curriculum” (p. 1). Most writing fellows and similar programs, the Writing Ambassador Program included, have been designed to specifically support students in writing intensive courses. Soven (2001), in a 1993 survey, found that in most “curriculum-based peer tutoring programs,” tutors from all disciplines were trained and assigned to courses through the disciplines to read and provide feedback on the drafts of all students. Writing fellows programs are based on the theory

that all students, regardless of ability, will benefit from the review of their drafts (Soven, 2001). Barnett and Blumner (1999), who shared information about the Write Project at Boise State University concurred with the importance of revision by emphasizing that revision is one of the most important aspects of writing: “Students’ failure to revise, or to understand revision, has always been one of the weakest links, if not the weakest, when teachers have tried to make writing assignments an important part of their course” (p. 73). In the writing fellows program at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Neely (2017) indicated that their writing fellows also provide feedback, and explicitly stated that writing fellows do not engage in grading. This is an important implication in the design of the Writing Ambassador program. In the Writing Ambassador program, Writing Ambassadors are positioned as peers to create a friendly, casual, and low-stakes environment for students to receive feedback and support in their writing. Being positioned as peers helps students to see the Writing Ambassadors as models: upper division students who are similar to themselves and who have faced similar situations and challenges, and who are successful in their writing. Adding in a responsibility, such as grading, would change this power dynamic and would be contradictory to the theories upon which this study is based.

While most writing fellows programs adhere to this draft review model, Spigelman and Grobman (2005) presented a model even more similar to the Writing Ambassador Program that embedded peer writing support that extended beyond revision. In their “on location tutoring” model, writing support occurred during class time and also involved tutors facilitating writing groups, presenting programs and workshops, conferencing during class time, and helping teachers implement assignments (p. 2). They considered this on-location tutoring to be a “generic hybrid” of writing center tutoring, writing across the curriculum theory and practice, supplemental instruction, and peer writing group theories (p. 5-6). As such, “on-location tutoring

involves multiple, and sometimes competing, voices and complex choreographies,” thus anticipating “...both consensus and conflict, collaboration and autonomy, agreement and resistance” (p. 6). Of the numerous benefits Spigelman and Grobman (2005) cited for students, tutors, teachers, and writing centers, one of the most significant was the sociality and the enactment of writing as collaboration in which new knowledge is created. This connects to the integration of critical pedagogy into the Writing Ambassador program, which sees knowledge as something that is created through problem-based learning and dialogue.

Few studies about the effectiveness of writing fellows programs exist. Hall and Hughes (2011) evaluated a writing fellows program using faculty evaluations to gather open-ended feedback. Faculty respondents widely remarked that having writing fellows in their courses caused them to “reevaluate the place of writing in their classrooms and to reconsider how to best teach it” (Hall & Hughes, 2011). Hall and Hughes (2011) provided several anecdotes that supported how writing fellows promoted faculty awareness of their own teaching practices related to writing. Similarly, Zawacki (2008) in exploring many of the challenges of writing fellows programs, noted that even writing fellows programs that are not successful help build momentum toward campus cultures that value writing across the disciplines, thus pushing forward WAC initiatives. However, there is still much research to be done into the impact of writing fellows and similar programs on students’ performance and self-efficacy about writing. The Writing Ambassador Program study helps to fill that gap by exploring changes in students’ writing performance and confidence, as well as their critical thinking, cultural appreciation, and intercultural communication. To accomplish this, the Writing Ambassador Program expands upon what is typically incorporated into writing fellows programs by incorporating lessons and

writing resources and by infusing the curriculum with critical pedagogy. The findings can help shape future Writing Ambassador programs and studies.

Summary

Grounding the Writing Ambassador Program in Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy provides theory and practice that helped guide the program toward reaching its goals of not only improving students' writing, but also in developing students' critical thinking, cultural appreciation, and intercultural communication skills. Specifically, the Writing Ambassador Program countered the "banking concept" in education, instead engaging students in active learning and dialogue designed to infuse the course with culture and critical thinking. As previously discussed, active learning and dialogue are two important components of Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy that were emphasized heavily in the Writing Ambassador's activities in the course. This chapter examined the connections between critical pedagogy and the key elements and characteristics of the program, including intersectionality, writing courses, and the criminal justice discipline, thus providing reasoning for the usefulness of integrating critical pedagogy in both the program design and in the study. To further contribute to the design of the program, the intersections of WAC and writing centers were explored to help justify and guide the Writing Ambassador program. An exploration of literature related to peer support, and more specifically to writing centers and writing fellows programs, allowed for insights into affordances and limitations of various forms of peer support as well to be considered and addressed in this study. The following chapter further explains the study design.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

To explore the ways in which the Writing Ambassador Program affects the writing performance and confidence of students, particularly those from diverse and intersecting identities, as well as their sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment, this study employed primarily a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2009). However, rubric scores were collected and analyzed from the full class to provide insight into possible changes in grades across writing assignments. As a design and development phase research study (Richey & Klein, 2007), the study explored how the individual interventions, as well as how the program as a whole, affected students' experiences in the course related to their writing performance and confidence as well as their critical thinking about and appreciation of culture and intercultural communication. Critical pedagogy was integrated into the Writing Ambassador Program to encourage students to explore their biases and privileges, to consider multiple and diverse perspectives, and to examine inequities in the criminal justice system through activities that complement the course objectives and pedagogical approaches in the Diversity and Writing in Criminal Justice course in which the program took place. The following sections discuss the history of the Writing Ambassador Program and the Criminology and Criminal Justice Program at the institution where this study took place, how the study aligns with design and development research, the research questions, the theory of change, the context of the study, the data sources, the data analysis techniques, and the role of the researcher.

Writing Ambassador Program History in Criminal Justice

The Writing Ambassador Program was originally implemented in response to the CJ Department's concerns about student performance and attrition in their writing intensive course. Writing Ambassadors were first integrated into several sections of the course in Fall 2019. In Spring 2020, a study examining the feasibility, usability, and satisfaction of the program was conducted; however, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the program and study from being completed as planned. Despite this setback, preliminary evidence gathered from interviews with faculty and Writing Ambassadors included much positive feedback in terms of their observations of improvements in students' writing skills. Furthermore, faculty commented that the Writing Ambassador helped with the "communication gap" between faculty and students by discussing assignment prompts and feedback in ways that were easily understood by students, thus contributing to perceived improvements in students' writing skills and confidence. This current study incorporated many of the activities included in the previous study with adjustments based on the findings of this previous study.

Design and Development Research

The Writing Ambassador program study is a design and development research project. As Richey and Klien (2007) explained, design research is "the systematic study of design, development and evaluation processes with the aim of establishing an empirical basis for the creation of instructional and non-instructional products and tools and new or enhanced models that govern their development" (p. xv). Specifically, this study aligns with "product and tool" design and development research which includes comprehensive design and development projects that consider specific project phases (analysis, design, development, and evaluation) and explore the development and use of tools and products (Richey & Klein, 2007). The Writing

Ambassador program study encompasses the characteristics that the Institute of Education Sciences and National Science Foundation (2013) deemed typical of design and development research, including developing a solution, creating measures to assess the implementation of that solution, collecting data related to the feasibility of implementation of the solution, and conducting a pilot study to determine the possibilities of reaching the intended outcomes. The iteration of the Writing Ambassador Program described in this dissertation builds upon previous studies of the Writing Ambassador Program in similar and different contexts, specifically a 2020 study in CJ described above, a 2020 study examining the feasibility of the Writing Ambassador Program for Chinese national students, and a 2021 study examining the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador Program for Chinese national students. The current study examined the possibilities for improving the writing performance and confidence of students from diverse and intersecting identities, as well as their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom that may come as a result of the integration of critical pedagogy in the Writing Ambassador Program. It drew from writing fellows program design and WAC and writing center theories. Furthermore, critical pedagogy was incorporated into the program design and data analysis. Multiple tools will be used to measure the program's possibilities in reaching its intended outcomes. Design research often incorporates mixed methods research, such as "... a way of using multiple approaches to answer given research questions" (Richey & Klein, 2007, p. 41). Though it primarily takes a qualitative case study approach, this study will also incorporate quantitative data. Using multiple tools and mixed methods will allow for enhanced trustworthiness of the findings.

Research Questions

The overarching goals of this study were to determine the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador Program related to students from diverse and/or intersecting identities' writing performance and confidence in their writing skills, as well as improvements to their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment that may come as a result of the incorporation of critical pedagogy into the curriculum. Employing a case study approach enabled an examination of the experiences of a higher, middle, and lower performing student in the course, and provides insight into how the program and its specific elements may or may not benefit students of differing baseline writing levels. By using critical pedagogy in both its design and interpretation of results, this study helped to explore how the incorporation of critical pedagogy influenced the program in reaching its goals of improving students' sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment in the class. The specific research questions include:

- What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their writing skills?
- What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their confidence about their writing skills?
- In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways?

Theory of Change

By embedding peer support in a writing intensive course, I anticipated that students would:

- demonstrate improvements in their writing performance and confidence,

- show increased cultural appreciation and confidence in their intercultural communication skills, which will lead to an improved sense of belonging, appreciation and empowerment for students from diverse and intersecting identities
- transfer the knowledge they gain through the Writing Ambassador's feedback, lessons, and support sessions to future writing assignments.

This embedded support has potential benefits above writing center use: the support is specific to the discipline, course, and assignment and is provided by a Writing Ambassador who is familiar with these expectations; all students in the course receive support, not just those who seek support from the writing center; the Writing Ambassador provides lessons, workshops, and feedback on drafts in addition to one on one tutoring sessions; the Writing Ambassador program provides unique opportunities to incorporate cultural awareness and appreciation in the program activities; and students have opportunities to reflect upon their learning and progress in the course. The Theory of Change (Table 1) examines the theoretical foundations, project resources, project activities, measures, proximal outcomes, and distal outcomes.

Table 1***Theory of Change for the Writing Ambassador Program***

Theoretical Foundations	Project Resources	Project Activities and Measures	Proximal Outcomes	Distal Outcomes (not measured)
Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970)	Writing Ambassador	Writing lessons, feedback, support sessions, and resources	Changes in students': • Writing performance • Writing confidence • Sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment	Increased student GPAs
Collaborative approach to writing center work (Lundsford, 1991)	Course instructor	Student writing samples and rubrics	Transference of writing skills	Increased student retention
Intersections of WAC and writing centers (Mullin, 2001)	Faculty sponsors	Training	Changes in Writing Ambassador's writing confidence and performance (not measured)	Decreased rates of withdrawals and failures
	Interdisciplinary Writing Program	Surveys		Transference of writing skills in future courses
	Previous Writing Ambassador Program studies	Interviews		
		Case study analyses		

Context and Participants

This study took place in a writing intensive course in criminal justice. Though the content of the course was largely focused on criminal justice issues surrounding differences, the course required writing instruction and for students to produce 20 pages of writing that have undergone the revision process. Furthermore, the objectives of the course aligned with the goals, pedagogical approaches, and activities within the Writing Ambassador Program (see Table 2). While this particular study happened within this writing course in criminal justice which, due to

these similarities, makes this course particularly well suited for the integration of the Writing Ambassador, the Writing Ambassador Program is ultimately meant to be compatible with writing intensive courses in any discipline. As such, the focus of the study is on the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course and how these activities impacted students' confidence and competence in writing, as well as their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment within the classroom community.

Table 2

Diversity and Writing in Criminal Justice Learning Objectives and Alignment with Writing Ambassador Program

Course Objective	Alignment with Writing Ambassador Program Curriculum
Recognize how social forces affect the perception and pursuit of justice in the U.S. and around the world.	Integration of critical pedagogy to bring awareness of social injustices and to empower students to be instigators of change (Freire, 1970).
Critically assess how cultural differences relate to power and privilege and impact law and policymaking, the administration of justice, offending, victimization, and the work of justice professionals	Integration of critical pedagogy to bring awareness of social injustices and to empower students to be instigators of change (Freire, 1970). Inclusion of “This I Am” activity to explore students’ privileges and biases, and to examine cultural differences and similarities to address inequities. Improve students from diverse and intersecting identities’ sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment. Inclusion of case studies in criminal justice to teach writing using problem solving approaches and dialogue.
Through written and oral communication, describe differential impacts on diverse members of society and provide sustained, focused justifications for the value of diversity for a more just society.	Integration of critical pedagogy to bring awareness of social injustices and to empower students to be instigators of change (Freire, 1970) Improve students from diverse and intersecting identities’ sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment.
Apply collaborative skills, ethical reasoning analytic skills to further develop students’ intercultural and written communication skills.	Explore changes in students’ writing confidence and performance. Improve students from diverse and intersecting identities’ sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment.

The Writing Ambassadors were responsible for teaching the majority of the writing lessons in the course and providing written feedback regarding writing related issues on the major course papers. The course instructor taught the disciplinary course content and provided content-related feedback on students' papers. This allowed for writing related improvements to be attributed largely to the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course, including the integration of critical pedagogy. Additionally, through various tools, students were asked how the Writing Ambassadors, course curriculum, and course instructor influenced any changes in their writing skills, thus allowing for insight into the mechanism affecting change in students' writing performance and confidence. Within this particular course, both the Writing Ambassador Program and the course content incorporated curriculum and pedagogy that encourages critical thinking, cultural awareness, and intercultural communication skills, thus meaning that both the Writing Ambassador Program and course curriculum may contribute to students of diverse and intersecting identities' feelings of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment. In an attempt to clarify and decipher any changes that came as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program, students were asked the ways in which the Writing Ambassador, course curriculum, and course instructor influenced their feelings of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment. The course met in person and ran for 15 weeks in Spring 2023. Prior to the beginning of the course, I sought approval from the Institutional Review Board.

There were 24 students enrolled in the course, 14 of whom consented to participate in the study. CJ does tend to see large numbers of students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, first generation college students, and non-traditional students (L. Fernandez, personal communication, March 21, 2022). Of the 14 students who consented to participate, 11 completed the demographic survey. Nine identified as female and two as male; eight identified as

heterosexual, one identified as gay, one identified as bisexual, and one identified as asexual; five identified as White, three identified as Hispanic/Latine, two identified as White and American Indian or Alaska Native, and one identified as Middle Eastern; and four indicated that they were the first in their families to attend college. Recruitment occurred during the second week of classes, and all students who were 18 and older were invited to participate in the study. I collected consent forms at the time I presented recruitment information to the class.

While data was collected for all students, three students were purposely selected for the case study. The final selection of these students took place after the course, and several students who met the selection criteria were invited to participate in the end of course interview. Postponing this selection helped the study to be successful in the case of students withdrawing from the course or failing to complete one or more of the activities. Students were selected based on their performance on the pre-writing sample. Specifically, based on rubric scores using the research-specific rubric for this writing sample, a higher performing student, an average performing student, and a lower performing student were selected relative to class performance. As much as possible, students were selected who had completed all of the program and study activities. By exploring students' intersectional identities, an effort was made to include students who identify with one or more historically marginalized groups that have been identified by CJ as being at the highest risk of failing or withdrawing from the course (L. Fernandez, personal communication, March 21, 2022). The higher performing student selected, Nathan, identified as male, gay, White, non-Hispanic/Latine, and not as the first in his family to attend college. The average performing student selected, Mandy, identified as female, heterosexual, Hispanic/Latine, and as the first in her family to attend college. The lower performing student, Sandra, identified as female, heterosexual, non-Hispanic/Latine, and not the first in her family to attend college.

Two Writing Ambassadors were recruited and selected from amongst the Writing Assistants working with the University Writing Commons. As much as possible, Writing Ambassadors from diverse racial/ethnic and/or educational backgrounds were chosen, thus enabling them to serve as a model to students in the course who also come from diverse backgrounds. One of the Writing Ambassadors identified as male, heterosexual, Hispanic/Latine, and as the first in his family to attend college. The other identified as female, heterosexual, White, non-Hispanic/Latine, and not as the first in her family to attend college. The Writing Ambassadors had both demonstrated excellence in providing writing support within the writing center. Prior to beginning their work as Writing Ambassadors, they participated in a meeting with me and the course instructor to determine their specific responsibilities and expectations in the course, thus allowing for some flexibility in the Writing Ambassadors' activities based on the instructor's curriculum and course design. This enabled the Writing Ambassador Program to be cohesive with the course curriculum and helped the Writing Ambassadors to develop lessons and activities for the class that incorporated texts and other materials already being used in the course. Together, the course instructor, Writing Ambassador, and I determined what the Writing Ambassadors would and would not do in the course. This included deciding how many papers the Writing Ambassadors would review and provide feedback on (three throughout the semester, including a draft of the final paper), and how many lessons would be planned and the topics of those lessons, which included the This I Am activity, APA style, citations, linguistic diversity, and peer review. We mutually decided that the Writing Ambassadors would not assign grades, but instead would offer constructive feedback on writing style. During this meeting, we also brainstormed possible topics for weekly writing tips, which came to include writing support websites/resources, showing and not telling in writing, citation support, a TED Talk about

linguistic diversity, staying relevant to the writing topic/task, writing concisely, the writing process, outlining, argumentative strategies, and numerous reminders to schedule appointments with the Writing Ambassadors for support. The course instructor developed and shared a tentative schedule for the lessons and feedback on papers. This initial meeting helped clarify the positionality of the Writing Ambassador as equal to students and helped to navigate pedagogical differences between the course instructor and the Writing Ambassador that may have come as a result of their differences in positionality with the students in the class. During the first and second week of the course, the course instructor and Writing Ambassadors were recruited to participate in the study and consent forms were collected.

The Writing Ambassadors completed an orientation with me in which they were introduced to the Writing Ambassador Program and study curriculum and activities, the integration of critical pedagogy and cultural appreciation into the course, their positionality in the course, and their expectations as a Writing Ambassador. From there, the Writing Ambassadors met with me every week of the semester aside from Spring Break and an additional week when we were unable to find a time to meet. While these weekly meetings remained largely flexible to the needs of the Writing Ambassador, content included developing effective lessons and workshops, providing effective and efficient written feedback, fostering communication between the course instructor and students, infusing culture and diversity into course activities, leading meaningful group and individual writing support sessions, and researching/developing appropriate and culturally diverse writing resources. Additionally, as necessary, I worked with the Writing Ambassadors to develop the lessons they taught in the course. This involved me reviewing slides for one lesson and helping to plan an additional lesson. As a design and development research project, each of the Writing Ambassadors' activities on the course were

meaningfully developed and implemented based on findings from previous studies. Additionally, based on the findings from this study, each activity was explored to guide the design of future Writing Ambassador Program studies.

The orientation and first two training sessions incorporated information about the Writing Ambassadors' positionality in the class. The Writing Ambassadors were trained to primarily assume a level of equal power in their interactions with students, where they took a collaborative approach to supporting students in their writing. Fitzgerald and Ianetta (2016) described tutoring as a conversation in which the tutor and student "engage in a dynamic back-and-forth in which both of them talk, listen, and answer" (p. 54). However, the Writing Ambassadors learned to be flexible in various situations. As Davies and Harre (1990) wrote, "With positioning, the focus is on the way in which the discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in certain ways and yet at the same time is a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions" (conclusion section, para. 1). Positionality incorporated into the training helped the Writing Ambassadors to recognize that while their focus should be on positioning themselves as a peer and collaborator at an equal level as students, opposed to an authoritative figure, the position was dynamic and sometimes would require a shift in power/negotiation of a new position depending on the situation. For example, when teaching lessons, while taking a casual, friendly, and collaborative approach, the Writing Ambassador would need to facilitate the sharing of ideas and knowledge. Another example of this would be if, during a group support session, a student was dominating the conversation and not allowing others to ask questions or contribute, the Writing Ambassador would need to manage the situation by asking the student to allow others to speak, thus temporarily assuming more of a leadership role. However, the Writing Ambassador was directed to defer to the course instructor for all student issues that arise.

Clarifying the positionality of the Writing Ambassador helped to alleviate any questions or issues that may arise as a result of positionality differences between the Writing Ambassador and course instructor.

The Writing Ambassadors collectively spent approximately 12 hours each week carrying forward their activities with the class. This included developing and presenting several brief lessons and workshops on various relevant writing topics, providing written feedback on multiple papers and/or drafts of papers, meeting with students individually and in small groups to provide writing support, identifying and developing helpful writing resources shared in weekly writing tips that were emailed to the class, and integrating critical pedagogy into all activities with the class. Table 3 details how these activities aligned with critical pedagogy.

Table 3***Writing Ambassador's Activities***

Activity	Connection to Critical Pedagogy
"This I am" Activity	• Examines privileges and biases, allows for dialogue discussing how these affect writing/communication • Engages students in critical thinking about inequities and opportunities for social change • Encourages dialogue to explore how similarities and differences affect communication
Lessons and Workshops	• Active, problem-based learning that incorporates justice related political/cultural examples and case studies • Multicultural examples and literature • Encourages dialogue and critical thinking in which students share their understandings, ideas, and experiences to aid in knowledge creation • Writing activities that allow students to critically consider justice related political/cultural issues and share thoughts and ideas that they may be uncomfortable sharing in class discussions
Written Feedback	• Creates dialogue where the Writing Ambassador poses questions and ideas to enhance students critical thinking and understandings about the topic
Individual and Small Group Support	• Collaborative approach to supporting students in their writing allowing students to share thoughts, ideas, and experiences that create knowledge and critically consider justice related cultural/political issues
Resources	• Writing resources authored by diverse individuals

Data Sources

Data were gathered from all consenting students, though this study primarily took a qualitative case study approach focusing on a higher, average, and lower performing student in the course as determined by prewriting samples. This allowed for exploration into how the program affects the writing performance and confidence of students from diverse and intersecting identities, as well as their feelings of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom community. The data sources included a demographic questionnaire, writing

samples and associated rubrics, reflection questions, end of course surveys, end of course interviews, and dosage reports.

Demographic Questionnaire

All students were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). This questionnaire allowed for an exploration into the intersectional identities of students in the course. On this questionnaire, students were asked about their racial/ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual identities, socioeconomic statuses, and educational backgrounds, as well as whether they are the first in their family to attend college. The Writing Ambassadors completed this same questionnaire.

Writing Samples and Rubrics

Throughout the course, three writing samples that were part of the course activities were collected: a pre-writing sample, a mid-semester writing sample, and a post-writing sample. The prompts for these writing samples were already part of the course curriculum. The writing samples collected were progressive in nature, meaning that students were expected to incorporate feedback they received from previous papers, as well as information they learned about writing from the Writing Ambassadors' lessons and weekly writing tips into subsequent writing samples, thus representing a "reading-and-writing-to-learn approach" which helps to develop literacy and critical understanding that can empower students to be agents of social change (Schor, 1992, p. 187). A research-specific rubric, specifically the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2009) Written Communication VALUE rubric (see Appendix B) was used to assess student performance on these writing samples, with attention given to writing style as opposed to content.

Reflection Questions

Near the time that each of the three writing samples were collected, students were asked to submit an informal one page letter reflecting on the writing process, as well as the development of their critical thinking, cultural appreciation, and intercultural communication skills and their feelings of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment within the classroom. This allowed for insight into any changes that occurred in students' perception of their writing skills, as well as their sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment. These reflection questions (see Appendix C) engaged students in critical thinking about their learning and about culture, thus serving as a tool to help infuse critical pedagogy in the course, while also serving as a means of exploring changes in students' learning and sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom. As with the writing samples, the reflection questions are also a component of a "reading-and-writing-to-learn approach" (Schor, 1992, p. 187), and they also helped to engage students in a written dialogue that is synonymous with critical pedagogy where they may feel more comfortable sharing their ideas and perspectives related to inequities and culture.

End of Course Surveys

Students completed surveys (see Appendix D) at the end of the course using Google Forms that measured changes in their confidence in writing, as well as in their cultural appreciation and intercultural communication skills that specifically relate to their experiences with the Writing Ambassador in the course. These surveys included several questions that were ranked using a Likert scale as well as open ended questions that asked for deeper reflection on their experiences in the course. This tool allowed changes to be explored, as well as students' experiences with the specific interventions. In line with design and development phase research,

these surveys offered some insight into the usefulness of the Writing Ambassadors' different activities in the course to inform future implementations of the Writing Ambassador Program.

End of Course Interviews

Select students, the course instructor, and the Writing Ambassadors were invited to participate in separate post course interviews (see Appendix E) allowing for additional insight into the possibilities of the program. Questions were open ended and focused not only on changes observed in all students, including students of diverse and intersecting identities' confidence and performance in writing and sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom, but also encouraged an examination of why any changes occurred as well as additional possible benefits of the program and improvements that could be made to future iterations of the program and study. While the interview was semi-structured, allowing for students to share their experiences naturally and holistically, a list of common questions can be found in Appendix E.

Dosage Reports

The Writing Ambassadors were asked to complete weekly dosage reports (see Appendix F) through Google Forms in which they provided an overview of their activities in the course each week. These dosage reports include the number of lessons they taught and the focus of those lessons, the ways in which critical pedagogy was integrated into their activities, the papers on which they provided written feedback, the students with whom they worked with individually and in small groups, and the number of and type of resources they shared with the class, including their weekly writing tips. Collecting these reports helped to provide insight into the mechanism affecting change in students' performance and confidence in writing, as well as their sense of belonging, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom. These dosage reports also

provided a way of assessing to what extent critical pedagogy was incorporated into the program activities.

Data Analyses

Data were collected for the full class, with more in depth analysis of data collected from students participating in the case studies. Table 4 demonstrates each method, its purpose and/or corresponding research question, its connection to critical pedagogy, as well as the data analysis technique(s) used. The following sections further discuss the data analysis techniques.

Demographic Questionnaires

Demographic questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to allow for insight into the class demographics. Furthermore, these surveys were used to help select students for the case study who come from backgrounds that consist of one or more traditionally marginalized groups, and ideally students with intersecting identities.

Table 4***Methods, Research Questions, and Data Analyses***

Method	Purpose/Research Question Addressed	Data Analyses
Demographic Questionnaires	Identify students' backgrounds for case study selection	Descriptive statistics
Writing Samples and Rubrics	What changes, if any, do students show in their writing skills?	Descriptive statistics
Reflection Questions	What changes, if any, do students show in their confidence about their writing skills? In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways?	A priori coding and coding for emerging themes
End of Course Surveys	What changes, if any, do students show in their confidence about their writing skills? In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways? Provide insight into students' experiences with specific tools and interventions to shape future studies	A priori coding and coding for emerging themes Descriptive statistics
Interviews	What changes, if any, do students show in their confidence about their writing skills? In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways? Provide insight into students' experiences with specific tools and interventions to shape future studies	A priori coding and coding for emerging themes
Dosage Reports	Provide insight into why changes are or are not occurring on the class and individual level based on student engagement.	Descriptive statistics

Writing Samples and Rubric Scores

Writing samples were scored using a research specific rubric for all students in the course and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, allowing for trends toward improvement in the areas measured by the rubric across the full class to be identified. Furthermore, spikes in improvement in specific areas measured by the rubric that may align with the Writing Ambassadors' lessons in those areas were identified, thus allowing for possible improvements in those areas to be largely attributed to the Writing Ambassador's activities in the course. The writing samples for students participating in the case study underwent additional analyses to identify specific examples of improvements across the three papers as well as to find evidence of students' incorporation of specific lessons from the Writing Ambassadors. Furthermore, analysis explored students' consideration of multiple perspectives and incorporation of diverse/multicultural examples and sources, which helped to examine how the integration of critical pedagogy affected students' critical thinking about and appreciation toward cultural differences and inequities demonstrated through their writing. Papers were thematically coded (see Table 5) (Saldana, 2021). This in depth case study analysis allowed for more insight into specific changes that occurred in students' writing, allowed for analysis of whether students are transferring the Writing Ambassador's writing related lessons and feedback to future assignments, and provided insight into how the incorporation of critical pedagogy and diversity in the Writing Ambassador Program is expressed in students' writing.

Table 5***Thematic Codes for Writing Samples***

Thematic Category	Codes Included	Description/Examples
Writing Skills	Organization and Structure	Paper begins with an introduction that includes a thesis, body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion
	APA Style	Paper follows APA conventions for formatting and citations
	Source Integration	Appropriate and credible sources are included that consider multiple perspectives. Paper includes paraphrases, quotes, and summaries that are well integrated.
	Sentence Fluency	Sentences are coherent and flow well.
	Grammar	Most grammar conventions are followed, including use of inclusive language.
	Tone/Voice	Tone/voice is appropriate for an academic context.
Critical Pedagogy/Cultural Appreciation	Awareness/tolerance of different cultures	“Three strikes laws unfairly impacted African American individuals.”
	Awareness of privileges internal biases	“Due to their often negative portrayal in the media, I recognize that I grew up with a stigmatized view of African Americans; however, my own awareness of this has helped me to overcome this bias.”
	Culturally diverse examples	“Similarly, in Mexico, the majority of the population supports same-sex
	Multiple perspectives	“When examining the ethics related to the death penalty, it is important that perspectives from multiple groups be considered.”
	Culturally diverse sources	Inclusion of sources authored by diverse individuals.

Reflection Questions

Reflection questions were analyzed using thematic coding for students participating in the case study. This allowed for insight into students' perceived improvements in their writing skills/increased confidence and their cultural awareness/intercultural communication skills. Furthermore, attention was given to whether students attributed these improvements to the Writing Ambassador's activities in the course, thus providing insight into whether the Writing Ambassador was the mechanism affecting change in students' writing performance, confidence, and cultural appreciation/intercultural communication skills. Table 3 provides the a priori codes that were assigned, however, emerging themes will also be considered. Considering emerging themes in addition to a priori codes aligns with Saldana's (2021) "Foundation principles" for coding about which Saldana (2021) wrote, "...some methodologists recommend determining codes a priori to 'harmonize' with the study, but then also to consider emergent codes" (p. 98). The a priori codes, demonstrated in Table 3, do align with the expected outcomes as well as with the tools and program design, thus allowing for trustworthiness amongst data. Some similar codes were used for the reflection questions as were used for the writing samples, however, there are some differences as shown in Table 6.

Table 6***Thematic Codes for Reflection Questions***

Thematic Category	Codes Included	Description/Examples
Writing Skills	Organization and Structure	Paper begins with an introduction that includes a thesis, body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion
	APA Style	Paper follows APA conventions
	Source Integration	Appropriate and credible sources are included that consider multiple perspectives. Paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are well integrated.
	Sentence Fluency	Sentences are coherent and flow well.
	Grammar	Most grammar conventions are followed
	Tone/Voice	Tone/voice is appropriate for an academic context.
Critical Pedagogy	Sense of belonging, inclusion, and empowerment	“After reading the Writing Ambassadors’ comments on my papers I did feel a bit more of reassurance and empowerment in class”
	Awareness/tolerance of different cultures	No relevant comments were provided on the reflections
	Awareness of privileges internal biases	No relevant comments were provided on the reflections
	Multiple perspectives	“My paper incorporates diverse perspectives on the issues we discussed because of the history of slavery, exploitation, forced labor, violations of our basic human rights.”
	Sense of responsibility to advocate for equality	No relevant comments were provided on the reflections
	Intercultural communication skills	No relevant comments were provided on the reflections

End of Course Surveys

Quantitative data from the end of course surveys was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using a priori coding (see Table 7) as well as coding for emerging themes, with particular focus on students participating in the case study. Specifically, open coding was used to look for emerging themes and similar codes were grouped into themes. The themes that arose included attitudes toward writing and time management, as shown in Table 8. These data helped to identify possible trends in improvement for the full class, and also provided additional insight into specific changes that occurred for students in the case study thus helping enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

Table 7***Thematic Codes of End of Course Surveys and Interviews***

Thematic Category	Codes Included	Description/Examples
Writing Skills	Organization and Structure	No relevant comments were provided
	APA Style	“We dived deeper into APA formatting. I had never had a comprehensive overview before”
	Source Integration	“The Writing Ambassadors provided detailed, in depth information about citations”
	Sentence Fluency	“We went over areas of struggle...” including, “...repetitiveness.”
	Grammar	“We went over areas of struggle, including grammar, vocabulary, and...”
	Tone/Voice	No relevant comments were provided
Critical Pedagogy	Sense of belonging, inclusion, and empowerment	“With learning more about writing, I feel more empowered.”
	Awareness/tolerance of different cultures	“In one lesson, [The Writing Ambassador] talked about different dialects and how people speak...We can all have different backgrounds and ways of speaking. This made me think differently about people and writing. It took away judgment, and takes away feeling bad about writing/talking.”
	Awareness of privileges internal biases	No relevant comments were provided
	Multiple perspectives	“Just because you’re different you can still learn from others even if you don’t know them.”
	Sense of responsibility to advocate for equality	No relevant comments were provided
	Intercultural communication skills	“Just because you’re different you can still learn from others even if you don’t know them.”

Table 8*Emerging Themes Codes for End of Course Surveys and Interviews*

Thematic Category	Codes Included	Description/Examples
Attitude	Confidence	"[The Writing Ambassador] helped most with confidence. Went through middle school told I would never be a good writer, I was not taught English until senior year."
	Comfort Writing	"She didn't change my opinion, but she changed my willingness to write."
Time Management	Procrastination	"I did not procrastinate as much."

End of Course Interviews

The end of course interviews with students, the course instructor, and the Writing Ambassadors were recorded and later transcribed. They were thematically coded for a priori codes, as well as emerging themes using a similar process as the end of course surveys, as well as using the same a priori codes shown in Tables 7 and 8. While it was anticipated that responses may align with improvements in students' writing performance, confidence in writing, and cultural appreciation/intercultural communication skills, these interviews provided the opportunity to gain additional insight into other potential benefits of the program as well as improvements that can be considered in future studies. In particular, data from students who participated in the case study were analyzed separately to allow for comparisons to be considered amongst multiple data sources.

Dosage Reports

Dosage reports were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Tracking dosage for both the class as well as individual students enabled further insight into why changes may or may not be occurring at the class level determined by rubric scores, as well as whether spikes in improvement in particular areas aligned with the Writing Ambassador's lessons in particular areas. Additionally, dosage data collected about students participating in the case study were useful in data interpretation by providing information about students' engagement with the Writing Ambassador and the areas and types of support the Writing Ambassador provided to those students.

In total, the Writing Ambassadors reported spending two hours and twenty minutes teaching in class lessons, which they spent a total of 17 hours planning. The Writing Ambassadors reported spending 42-43 hours providing individual feedback to students on their papers. They reported spending 37 hours crafting weekly writing tips. They reported spending 48-50 hours working individually with students and 5-7 hours meeting with small groups of students. In total, they reported spending three hours in the class on days they were not teaching lessons. The Writing Ambassadors met with three of the students who consented to participate in the study one or more times throughout the semester in addition to students who were enrolled in the course but who did not consent to participate in the study.

Case Study Construction

Using the criteria previously described in this chapter, three students were selected to participate in the case study: a lower performing student, an average performing student, and a higher performing student. This approach allowed for insights about differences that the program may have on students with different baseline writing abilities as determined by the first writing

sample. Using multiple data sources and corresponding analysis techniques to explore the research questions allowed for data from multiple measures to be synthesized. To do this, I maintained analytic memos for each student participating in the case study, which will help to show “... the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes and concepts...” in the data (Saldana, 2021). Analytic memos helped me to connect the findings from the various measures in cohesive and meaningful ways.

Data collected from students participating in the case study underwent analyses to determine if and how well the expected outcomes were achieved. Specifically, a pattern matching approach was employed. Yin (2009) considered pattern matching to be one of the most “desirable techniques” in case study analysis (p. 136). Specifically, this case study used nonequivalent dependent variables as pattern technique. According to Yin (2009), the pattern matching technique allows for multiple outcomes (descriptive and qualitative), thus well aligning with the multiple anticipated outcomes of this study. Within each of the case studies, these outcomes included improvements in writing performance across the three writing samples, improvements in students’ confidence about writing, and improvements in students’ cultural appreciation and intercultural communication abilities. Using a pattern matching technique, if students do demonstrate these anticipated improvements, then a “solid conclusion” can be drawn from the data (Yin, 2009, p. 137). However, as Yin (2009) commented, if the predicted pattern is not demonstrated, “...even if one variable does not behave as predicted,” the original outcome assumptions will need to be questioned (p. 137). In this situation, future research into the Writing Ambassador program could incorporate design changes that may help produce the desired outcomes.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, it is common that the researcher acts as the research tool. As such, it is important that the researcher demonstrate awareness of their values, assumptions and biases (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). As both an Assistant Professor of Teaching in English and as the Director of the Interdisciplinary Writing Program, I am a strong advocate for providing writing support to students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds who may be less prepared for the writing expected of them than their peers. It is my personal view that peer writing support, such as that offered through the university writing center or the Writing Ambassador program, can help to level inequalities and help students find success who otherwise may not be able to pass writing intensive courses. My work with faculty across the disciplines indicates that faculty also appreciate and see the benefits of this support for their students. These experiences provide me with a strong background and knowledge about peer writing support that benefits this study.

These experiences, however, also lead to certain biases for this study; namely, my investment in yielding positive results that would support the continuation and growth of the Writing Ambassador program in similar and different contexts. As such, efforts will be made to ensure as much objectivity as possible in the interpretation of the findings. This is further detailed in the Verification section below.

Verification

To help ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. Firstly, awareness of my own biases and how these could affect my interpretation of the data, particularly in qualitative analyses, helped me to approach data analysis and interpretation. Additionally, both Writing Ambassadors were responsible for scoring all students' papers using the research rubric. Discrepancies in scores that were four or more points different were

discussed and the Writing Ambassadors then had the option to adjust their scores if desired. Furthermore, the use of multiple measures to gather data about each of the research questions allows for enhanced trustworthiness of the findings.

Summary

The Writing Ambassador Program study is a design and development research project that explores the possibilities of embedded peer writing support in a disciplinary writing intensive course. Using multiple measures through a primarily case study approach, this study examined potential changes in students' performance in writing, confidence in writing, and cultural awareness/intercultural communication skills. Rooted in WAC and writing center theories and practices, the Writing Ambassador Program curriculum was reflective of the types of assignments and activities encouraged in WAC/WID, as well as the type of individual and small group writing support supported in writing center theory. Furthermore, this program drew heavily upon Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy both in its design and interpretation of data. To this end, critical pedagogy activities such as active learning and dialogue were incorporated in the Writing Ambassador Program curriculum. Even more, the Writing Ambassadors' activities integrate the exploration of students' biases and privileges; the incorporation of diverse and multicultural examples, perspectives, and resources; and the development of students' cultural appreciation and intercultural communication skills in an effort to increase students' cultural awareness and sense of responsibility to become agents of change in their communities. Writing Ambassadors were oriented to the program and received ongoing training to support them in their positions. The Writing Ambassadors provided writing related lessons, feedback on written assignments, individual and small group writing support, and writing related resources/weekly writing tips. As a design and development project, the usefulness of the design components as

well as the tools and analyses were considered to inform future iterations of the study. Though some data was presented from the full class, this study primarily took a qualitative case study approach that provided in depth analysis of the case study participants' writing samples and rubric scores, answers to reflection questions, answers to the end of course survey questions, and responses to the interview questions. Dosage data collected from the Writing Ambassadors were used to gain insight into the mechanisms affecting change for the case study students. From the full class, writing samples were collected and scored using the research specific rubric, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Furthermore, all students' responses to the end of course surveys and interview questions were recorded and thematically coded to help draw connections between the rubric scores and students' perceptions of their improvements in the course, thus helping to provide further insight into changes at the full class level and to heighten the trustworthiness of the findings. Through the Writing Ambassador Program, it was expected that students from diverse and/or intersecting identities would demonstrate improvements in their writing performance and confidence in writing, as well as their sense of inclusion in the classroom, appreciation in the classroom, and empowerment in the classroom and in their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Using the tools and data analysis techniques described in the previous chapter, the findings presented in the following sections include those for the full class, as well as each of the case studies.

Full Class Data

Data collected and analyzed for the full class included rubric scores for three writing samples and end of course surveys from students who consented to participate in the study. Additionally, interviews with the course instructor and the Writing Ambassadors addressed issues related to the full class.

Writing Samples

Overall rubric scores for all consenting students demonstrate trends toward improvement across the three papers. The mean overall score for paper 1 was 14.19/20, paper 2 was 16.64/20, and paper 3 was 17.5/20. The standard deviation for paper 1 was 2.14, paper 2 was 1.91, and paper 3 was 1.04.

End of Course Surveys

Quantitative data collected from the end of course surveys is provided in Table 9. Eight consenting students completed this survey. As these quantitative results indicate, students overall found the Writing Ambassador to be helpful to their learning, as well as to their awareness and appreciation of cultural differences and their sense of inclusion, appreciation and empowerment in the classroom. Looking to specific activities, overall, students found written feedback on papers to be most helpful, followed by in class lessons, individual writing support sessions, and weekly writing tips. Students did have the opportunity to share comments about why they chose

several answers, as well as for suggestions for future Writing Ambassador Programs. While this data was primarily gathered for the case studies, it is worth noting that there were eight responses across all of the qualitative questions that did indicate students would have liked the Writing Ambassadors to have had a greater physical presence in class. Some specifically noted that they would have liked to have had more support available during class so that writing support sessions did not always need to be scheduled outside of class time.

Table 9

Responses to End of Course Survey

Question	Mean Ranking
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador Program was overall to your learning of writing in the course.	3.5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' IN CLASS LESSONS were to your learning in the course	3.875
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON PAPERS was to your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WEEKLY WRITING TIPS were to your learning in the course	2.625
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' INDIVIDUAL WRITING SUPPORT SESSIONS were your learning in the course	3.375
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your awareness and appreciation of cultural differences	3.125
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were in helping you to feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.	3.625

Interviews

Interviews were completed with the course instructor and with the Writing Ambassadors to help gain a greater understanding about their experiences with the Writing Ambassador program, and any changes they noticed in students' performance and confidence, as well as any recommendations for future iterations.

Course Instructor. The course instructor noted several possible benefits to students in the course. In particular, they felt that the face to face time when the Writing Ambassadors were presenting lessons were important ice breakers that opened communication between students and the Writing Ambassadors. The instructor noted that several students would stay after class to approach the Writing Ambassadors with questions, and in general they felt that some students were more comfortable approaching peers than faculty. Throughout the semester, the course instructor encountered feedback from students stating that they gained confidence over the course of the semester in their writing. The instructor stated that, "The atmosphere, even if students didn't use the Writing Ambassadors, created climate in the classroom. Students gained confidence in part by feeling supported, even just knowing the resource was there." As such, the instructor felt that students experienced a greater sense of confidence by having support in place if and when they needed help. The instructor also spoke to the value of the multiple modes of support that were available: "Multiple modalities are good. The in person lessons, slides, writing tips, and individual support created a climate of support that hit all registers and preferences for how [students] want to interact."

The course instructor saw students transfer the lessons and feedback from the Writing Ambassadors into future assignments. This was particularly the case with APA style and citations, where the course instructor mentioned that students would refer back to the Powerpoint

slides that the Writing Ambassadors posted on the learning management system. One benefit to this lesson that the course instructor pointed out was that the Writing Ambassadors helped students to understand why they need to cite.

The course instructor felt that the detailed feedback on assignments from the Writing Ambassadors was likely the most helpful activity. As the instructor stated, “This allowed me to focus on providing more conceptual feedback, while the Writing Ambassadors provided the nitty gritty feedback.” By this, the course instructor implied that they were able to focus more on content and the Writing Ambassadors focused on stylistic feedback. Students appreciated receiving feedback in both areas and the course instructor specifically stated that “this dynamic was most helpful.”.

The peer to peer model, the course instructor felt, was an important conduit for diversity and inclusivity: “This has a lot of promise for increasing community and support.”

When asked to compare teaching a writing intensive course with a Writing Ambassador to one without a Writing Ambassador, the course instructor commented that the “Writing Ambassador Program is an invaluable resource to have that allows the instructor to offer a student a much more holistic and supportive experience.” The instructor noted that the instructor alone cannot provide the type of feedback offered by the Writing Ambassador program. They stated,

When we think about student success, this model is integral to meeting those objectives.

If one of our goals is for students’ writing to improve, offer as many resources as possible, but embeddedness in class is critical versus telling them to go to the Writing Center. Presence in the class is what sets this model apart from encouraging the use of resources.

The only recommendation offered by the course instructor for future iterations, which was echoed in responses from students and Writing Ambassadors, was a greater presence in class particularly in the second half of the semester.

Writing Ambassadors. The Writing Ambassadors participated in an interview together. During the interview, the Writing Ambassadors carefully considered their activities within the course, as well as their experiences working with students. Considering the benefits to students, one of the Writing Ambassadors used a consenting student whom they met with regularly as an example for a student who showed significant improvements to their writing skills and confidence. This student's first paper was "completely lost," but throughout the semester this student's skills in citing, organization, and capitalization improved immensely. Along with this, the student became less self-conscious about their writing and showed growth in their confidence. Overall, this Writing Ambassador saw improvements in students' use of quotations, thesis statements, and topic sentences. The other Writing Ambassador noticed, through their reviews/feedback on papers, that students seemed to be incorporating the writing lessons and weekly writing tips. Additionally, this Writing Ambassador stated, "The biggest things I noticed collectively were more rhetorical analysis and less summarization." By this, he clarified that he noticed more "critical engagement" with the course texts. This was affirmed by the other Writing Ambassador who also saw improvements in students' critical thinking skills: "I saw summaries move to critical thinking."

When asked about which activity they felt was most useful in the course, one Writing Ambassador stated the weekly writing tips because "...they reinforced that the Writing Ambassadors were there to offer support even when they were not physically present in the class." Furthermore, the Writing Ambassadors noted that the writing tips were curated to the

issues they saw in papers and not random, therefore, they were directly applicable to students' writing. The other Writing Ambassador felt that the lesson they presented on incorporating evidence was the most useful activity because "...getting reliable sources and implementing them is a learning curve that every writer has." This Writing Ambassador noted improvements with the use of evidence as students became more familiar with this in their writing.

The Writing Ambassadors did note some implications of the incorporation of critical pedagogy into the Writing Ambassador Curriculum. Firstly, one of the Writing Ambassadors emphasized the ways in which they attempted to incorporate diverse perspectives through the sources and examples they provided, as well as through the content of the lessons themselves (such as dialect). As a result, this Writing Ambassador did notice students' feeling comfortable using their own voices, which for one included some Spanish words, in their more personal papers. The other Writing Ambassador stated that they did see more cultural understanding of inequities that marginalized groups faced. This Writing Ambassador also looped back to the "This I Am" activity, which they felt addressed "underlying factors that marginalized groups might struggle with." They specifically then spoke to their ability to relate to students from marginalized groups in this activity and how this can help foster an inclusive classroom community where all students feel supported and welcome.

As far as suggestions for the future, both Writing Ambassadors felt that a greater physical presence in the classroom would have been beneficial for students. One of the Writing Ambassadors noted that it would be helpful "... to have both of the Writing Ambassadors on site." This Writing Ambassador also mentioned that "it would have been better for students to put a face to the name" consistently throughout the semester. Additionally, they both brainstormed new and enhanced ways of supporting students within the course, such as some

sort of writing chat group where students could send simple questions to be answered, having more low stakes application activities, and offering incentives—such as books—to help encourage students to attend writing support sessions.

Summary

As indicated by changes in rubric scores and quantitative data from the end of course surveys, as well as interviews with the course instructor and Writing Ambassadors, the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course were likely to have helped students to improve their writing skills and confidence in their writing abilities. Furthermore, data from the end of course surveys and interviews support the possibility that the Writing Ambassador Program can help students to feel included and empowered while deepening their learning through the incorporation of critical pedagogy activities. Finally, recommendations shared by the course instructor and Writing Ambassadors, as well as by students, for future iterations were similar, particularly in terms of having the Writing Ambassadors physically present more often.

Case Study #1: Nathan

Nathan was selected as the high achieving student based on rubric scores from his first writing sample, where the Writing Ambassadors scored him as receiving 18/20 and 16/20. Nathan identified as a male, gay, White, student who was not the first in his family to attend college. Nathan was selected for the case study because of the unique perspective he could bring as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, along with his involvement in the study activities. Nathan completed all three writing samples, the demographic survey, the end of course survey, and the group interview. Nathan submitted only the first set of reflection questions, so his responses to the second and third set of reflection questions which really explored how the integration of critical pedagogy had impacted his experience in the classroom were unable to be

considered; however, Nathan's sense of inclusion and empowerment was also touched upon in the interview and in the end of course survey allowing some data to be gathered in these areas.

Writing Samples

As already noted, Nathan scored 18/20 and 14/20 by the Writing Ambassadors, respectively for an average of 16/20 on the first writing sample. The initial scores for Nathan's first writing sample from each Writing Ambassador, however, did reflect a greater discrepancy. One Writing Ambassador had initially scored Nathan at an 11/20 and the other at a 19/20. I provided the Writing Ambassadors with an opportunity to talk through and explain to each other why they scored Nathan the way they did in each area of the rubric, and then they each chose to adjust the score; there was no expectation or pressure for them to adjust their scores. The Writing Ambassador who provided the higher score noted that Nathan "nailed the prompt" and had good rhetorical awareness; however, this Writing Ambassador also commented that the conclusion could use "tuning up" and that Nathan had too many ideas in each paragraph which presented some structural issues. The Writing Ambassador who provided the lower score similarly noted structural issues with too many ideas presented in each paragraph. Additionally, they felt as though the paper did not demonstrate awareness of Criminal Justice (CJ) disciplinary conventions and contained several typos. After discussing, both Writing Ambassadors made adjustments to their scores, which as previously mentioned led to an average score of 16/20 on this paper.

On the second writing sample collected, Nathan's scores increased to a 20/20 and a 19/20, averaging at a 19.5/20. These were the original scores provided by the Writing Ambassadors and did not require any deliberation. The Writing Ambassador who scored Nathan at a 19/20 commented: "execution of the piece is near perfect and I enjoyed reading it. I did not

see any glaring mistakes other than perhaps some citations to provide ethos for their argument in some pieces of the paper.” The Writing Ambassador who provided the score of 20/20 offered only a few suggestions for eliminating unnecessary words and phrases. Overall, this second writing sample demonstrated significant improvements in all areas noted by the Writing Ambassadors on paper 1. Specifically, Nathan’s paragraphs were well structured, focusing on one main idea. This indicates that Nathan likely considered the feedback provided to him by the Writing Ambassadors on his first paper, as well as the weekly writing tips which did address organization and structure.

On the third and final writing sample, Nathan’s scores were both 20/20. As with the second paper, these were the original scores provided by the Writing Ambassadors and did not require any further discussion. One of the Writing Ambassadors noted:

[Nathan’s] final paper is very solid. Considerations of audience and purpose for writing are clear. [Nathan] includes several definitions, examples, and in-text citations when appropriate. Quoted sentences are framed. Verbiage is sophisticated and clear. The only thing that stands out for revision would be breaking up some long walls of text into smaller sections to avoid reader fatigue.

As such, Nathan showed improvements to his writing which continued to reflect his attention to the feedback, lessons, and weekly writing tips provided by the Writing Ambassadors. Nathan’s performance across the three papers matched the expected pattern (Yin, 2009) that scores would increase as students received feedback, lessons, and information about writing. As demonstrated by Nathan’s performance, there are indications that Nathan incorporated specific feedback about writing, specifically related to paragraph structure and disciplinary conventions, into his subsequent papers.

End of Course Survey

Nathan completed all questions on the end of the course survey, allowing for a deeper exploration into his experiences with the Writing Ambassador program and any changes that may have occurred. Table 10 provides all of Nathan's responses to the quantitative questions included in the survey.

Table 10

Nathan's Responses to the End of Course Survey Quantitative Questions

Question	Rating
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador Program was overall to your learning of writing in the course.	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' IN CLASS LESSONS were to your learning in the course	5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON PAPERS was to your learning in the course	5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WEEKLY WRITING TIPS were to your learning in the course	5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' INDIVIDUAL WRITING SUPPORT SESSIONS were your learning in the course	1
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your awareness and appreciation of cultural differences	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were in helping you to feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.	3

The first question simply asked Nathan to rank on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors were to his learning of writing in the course. Nathan selected “4.” When asked to explain, Nathan wrote, “The writing ambassador was helpful to me by providing in class lessons, weekly writing tips, and personal feedback on a few of my essays.” This response did not align with any of the a priori codes which were designed in anticipation of students indicating specific areas in which they improved and instead was coded for emerging themes related to the usefulness of the Writing Ambassadors’ specific activities.

The next four questions asked Nathan to rank, again, on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the highest how helpful the Writing Ambassador’s specific activities were to his learning in the course. The first of these asked about in class lessons, which Nathan ranked a 5. The second asked about written feedback, which Nathan ranked a 5. The next asked about weekly writing tips, which Nathan ranked a 5. However, when asked about individual writing support sessions, Nathan ranked this at a 1, which he later explained was because he did not utilize individual writing support from the Writing Ambassadors.

The next several questions related to critical pedagogy and inclusion. When asked how helpful the Writing Ambassadors’ activities were to his awareness and appreciation of cultural differences, Nathan selected a 4, and when asked how helpful the Writing Ambassadors’ activities were in helping him feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom, Nathan selected a 3. In response to the later question, Nathan commented, “The writing ambassador's activities didn't necessarily strike me as inclusive or appreciative. I think the focus of the activities was primarily writing support. However, an effect of providing writing support is empowerment. Therefore, by the ambassador supporting my writing skills I felt more empowered.”

Finally, the survey asked if there is anything Nathan would have liked for the Writing Ambassador to do differently in the classroom, to which he responded: "I would have liked the writing ambassadors to be in class with us more often, specifically on workshop days and the couple of weeks leading up to our midterm/final papers."

Interview

Nathan participated in a small group interview with one other student. The answers to Nathan's questions were thematically coded using a priori codes and emerging themes, which allowed for greater insight into Nathan's experience with the Writing Ambassador Program. In terms of Nathan's experiences related to writing skills, Nathan found the Writing Ambassadors' lesson on APA formatting to be most beneficial. Nathan commented, "I had never received a comprehensive overview of APA before." He mentioned that he referred back to the lesson slides throughout the course. When asked about changes to his confidence in writing, Nathan stated, "My confidence generally remained the same. There was not a significant increase because I already felt confident coming into the course." However, Nathan later discussed that as a result of deepening his learning about writing, Nathan felt more empowered: "With learning more about writing, I feel more empowered." This sense of empowerment was one of the goals for using critical pedagogy as a guiding theory for the Writing Ambassador Program.

Nathan commented that the most useful activities for his learning were the weekly writing tips and written feedback that the Writing Ambassadors provided on drafts of his course papers. Nathan stated, "The weekly writing tips were really helpful because I could always go back if I needed to see them again." Additionally, he commented that "The written feedback was really helpful because [the course instructor] focused on content, while the Writing Ambassadors provided comprehensive in-depth feedback on mechanics, grammar." The only activity that

Nathan did not find helpful was the individual writing support sessions. He said that this was, “...because I did not feel like I needed this type of support.” Nathan felt this way due to his confidence in his writing skills, which was affirmed by his high grades and feedback from the Writing Ambassadors. Additionally, Nathan stated, “With setting up a one to one appointment, I worried about the time commitment and afraid I wouldn’t need the full time.”

When asked about how his experience with the Writing Ambassador Program might benefit him in his future academic studies or academic career, Nathan mentioned that he will transfer his enhanced knowledge of APA style and “quote sandwiches” to future courses. Finally, Nathan had one suggestion for future iterations of the Writing Ambassador Program: having the Writing Ambassadors physically present in class more frequently, particularly during midterms and finals. In particular, Nathan mentioned that he was hesitant to schedule a one-on-one session because he felt he would not need a full hour to ask questions, so having the Writing Ambassadors present in class would allow him to ask minor questions in person.

Summary

Nathan’s case study was useful in considering the possibilities of the Writing Ambassador program for higher performing students, White students, male students, those who may identify with the LGBTQIA+ population and/or any combination of those identities. Some of the key findings are that students from backgrounds similar to Nathan’s may experience little to no changes to their confidence, particularly if they come into the course already feeling confident in their writing skills; may be less likely than other students to take advantage of individual appointments due to feeling as though they will not need a full 50 minutes of help; may find specific, written feedback on papers particularly helpful; may appreciate writing tips and information being shared and stored electronically for them to look back on; and may like

the opportunity to work with the Writing Ambassadors during class time to address minor questions. Nathan's experiences offered valuable insights into the possible changes that students with similar backgrounds might experience, as well as insights into programmatic changes for future iterations of the program and study that will be further explored in the following chapter.

Case Study #2: Mandy

The mid-performing student, Mandy, identified as female, straight, Hispanic/Latine, and first in her family to attend college. She received a 14.5/20 score using the research-specific rubric on the first writing sample. Mandy did not complete the end of course interview or the second reflection; however, she did complete the demographic survey, all writing samples, the first and final reflections, and the end of course survey. Despite not completing the interview, Mandy was selected based on her background and performance which was expected to elicit meaningful findings that could provide insight into how students with similar backgrounds to Mandy's might experience the Writing Ambassador Program.

Writing Samples

On the first writing sample, Mandy received scores of 13 and 16 from each of the Writing Ambassadors, with a mean score of 14.5 out of 20. The Writing Ambassador who assigned the lower rubric score noted a lack of topic and closing sentences, as well as lack of depth and support for ideas. The Writing Ambassador who provided the higher rubric score felt that Mandy performed at an average level in all rubric areas and did not note any particular suggestions for improvement. My own analysis of this paper aligned well with the first Writing Ambassador's feelings that the paper lacked depth and was missing topic sentences, closing sentences, and transitions. Furthermore, her integration of sources and citations could use improvement.

On the second paper, Mandy initially received scores of 15 and 19. Because of this discrepancy, the Writing Ambassadors had an opportunity to discuss their reasoning behind these scores and to make any adjustments as they felt appropriate after the discussion. After the discussion, each Writing Ambassador independently adjusted their score to 17. The Writing Ambassador who assigned the lower initial score felt that she may have been “a bit harsh” in some areas considering the assignment prompt. The second recognized that some of the claims needed “more explanation” though, “Overall, the writing was going in the right direction.” Mandy showed improvement in integrating and citing sources, as well as her use of topic and closing sentences demonstrating that she may have applied what she learned from the Writing Ambassadors’ lessons, feedback, and writing tips that addressed these specific areas.

On the final paper, Mandy received scores of 18 and 16, for a mean score of 17. The Writing Ambassadors both praised Mandy’s integration of sources and her use of citations, which further supports the possibility that Mandy continued to draw from the Writing Ambassadors’ lessons and feedback in this area. One of the Writing Ambassadors also highlighted Mandy’s organization, “I really like how she frames her paper with some background history for readers to understand, then ending her content paragraphs with solutions/implications, then a summarizing conclusion.” Comparing Mandy’s writing samples, she made noticeable improvements in her organization which again may be demonstrative of Mandy’s application of the Writing Ambassadors’ feedback, lessons, and writing tips. Both Writing Ambassadors noted “minor” grammar and syntax errors which affected her overall rubric scores on this final paper.

Mandy showed improvements across the three writing samples, particularly with her use of sources/evidence, organization, and depth of thought. Though her mean rubric scores

remained the same between the second and third writing samples largely due to minor grammar and syntax errors in the third papers, she continued to show growth in these areas between the second and third writing samples. Mandy's rubric scores, when considering the impact of the grammatical and syntax errors on the final followed the expected pattern (Yin, 2009). The areas in which she showed improvement aligned with the Writing Ambassadors' feedback, writing tips, and lessons, which may indicate that the Writing Ambassadors' activities were helpful to Mandy in improving her writing throughout the semester.

Reflections

Mandy completed the first and third reflections. The first set of reflection questions asked Mandy to reflect on her feelings about writing and inclusion in the classroom. Mandy wrote that she did not have positive feelings about writing: "I would say that I am not feeling too great about my writing right now because I feel like my formatting isn't as good as it should be." As such, Mandy felt that her "format and fluency" needed the most improvement. Considering feedback she had received about her writing in the past, Mandy stated, "Previous feedback I have received was that I need to read over my work before turning it in because I tend to have many grammatical errors." Mandy indicated that her goal for her writing in the course was to improve her confidence: "My goal is to be able to talk confidently about my writing and I'm not there yet." When asked about her comfort participating in college courses, as well as her sense of inclusion and empowerment in the classroom, Mandy wrote, "I would say that I am proud of how far I have come and yes I am comfortable in participating in college courses."

On the final reflection, Mandy was asked to further reflect on her feelings about writing, her experiences with the Writing Ambassador program and changes she has made to her writing,

her incorporation of multiple perspectives, and her sense of inclusion and empowerment. When asked about her feelings toward writing, Mandy stated,

I feel like I have definitely improved in my length of my paper. Before I would get stuck and run out of information but now I am able to go into detail and further explain my information provided.

She wrote that the most helpful feedback she received from the Writing Ambassadors was the need for subsections in her writing, “so that my paper flows better.” She also stated that from the Writing Ambassadors, she learned “that my main mistakes are minor things that I miss while writing.” In her final paper, Mandy felt that her greatest strength was her citations, while her greatest weaknesses were her reference page and outline.

To explore Mandy’s experiences with the incorporation of critical pedagogy, the next several reflection questions asked Mandy about her incorporation of multiple and culturally diverse perspectives and her sense of comfort, appreciation, inclusion and empowerment in the classroom. She wrote that her paper, “incorporates diverse perspectives on the issues we discussed because of the history of slavery, exploration, forced labor, violations of our basic human rights. Considering her sense of empowerment, “After reading the Writing Ambassadors comments on my paper I did feel a bit more reassurance and empowerment in class.” She went on to say,

This course was one of my favorites. I feel like I was really able to see where I lacked and needed improvement on my writing. I appreciate my instructor and am happy and blessed. I am not self conscious of my writing and information.

Mandy’s comments demonstrate improvement in her confidence about her writing and sense of empowerment in the classroom.

Considering Mandy's responses on the first and final set of reflection questions, changes can be observed that Mandy attributes to the Writing Ambassador Program. Most noticeable is Mandy's improvements in her self-confidence about writing. In the first reflection, Mandy did not have confidence in her writing, but by the third reflection, Mandy indicated that she was no longer self-conscious about her writing. She also indicated why she felt this improvement, citing specific areas in which she had improved, such as citations and organizations. These improvements align with the feedback provided to her by the Writing Ambassadors, as well as the topics addressed in the Writing Ambassadors' lessons and weekly writing tips. Again, as with the rubric scores, Mandy's responses to the reflection questions demonstrate the expected patterns of change in the areas explored (Yin, 2009).

End of Course Survey

Mandy answered all questions on the end of course survey, which enabled a deeper understanding of her experiences with the Writing Ambassador Program and the changes that occurred. Table 11 shows Mandy's responses to the quantitative questions asked on the survey, which were ranked on a 1-5 Likert scale with 5 being the most helpful. The following paragraphs further explore these responses considering the qualitative data collected and coded.

Table 11***Mandy's Responses to the End of Course Survey Quantitative Questions***

Question	Rating
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador Program was overall to your learning of writing in the course.	3
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' IN CLASS LESSONS were to your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON PAPERS was to your learning in the course	5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WEEKLY WRITING TIPS were to your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' INDIVIDUAL WRITING SUPPORT SESSIONS were your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your awareness and appreciation of cultural differences	2
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were in helping you to feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.	3

The first question asked Mandy to rank how helpful the Writing Ambassador Program was to her learning in the course, and she selected 3 of 5. When asked to further explain, Mandy wrote, "I think they could have been around more at the end to help with the final paper but I did utilize the one on one for my mid term paper which was helpful." The next several questions asked Mandy to choose how helpful each of the Writing Ambassadors' activities were to her learning in the course, which she ranked on a 1-5 scale with 5 being extremely helpful. She indicated that feedback on papers was most helpful (5), followed by in class lessons (4), weekly writing tips (4), and individual writing support sessions (4).

The next two questions explored the incorporation of critical pedagogy into the Writing Ambassador curriculum and the possible benefits. When asked how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' activities were to her awareness and appreciation of cultural differences in the classroom, Mandy selected a 2. She explained, "I think they helped with my confidence in writing, I learned more of the cultural appreciation from [the course instructor's] activities." When asked how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to helping her feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom, Mandy selected a 3: "I think I interpreted the writing ambassadors' activities more as to boost confidence with writing instead of these aspects which I think is also great, I felt [the course instructor's] activities aligned more with this."

Finally, when asked whether she had suggestions for future iterations of the program, Mandy again emphasized that she would have liked the Writing Ambassadors to be physically present in class to help with the final paper. She wrote, "I think just being around more in class when we were doing the scaffolded assignments for our final paper to help with questions for the students."

Summary

Mandy's responses helped to provide insight into the experiences that students with similar backgrounds and intersecting identities—female, straight, Hispanic/Latine, and first in the family to attend college—might have with the Writing Ambassador Program. Mandy showed improvements in her writing confidence and skills, and she did indicate that this increased confidence helped her to feel more empowered in the course. However, she did not necessarily attribute any changes to cultural awareness and appreciation or her sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the course to the Writing Ambassadors. Instead, she felt that this came more from the course instructor. Mandy felt that the most helpful activity to her

learning was the feedback provided on papers; however, she ranked all activities highly, also feeling that the lessons, writing tips, and individual support sessions were helpful. Additionally, she would have liked the Writing Ambassadors to have had a greater physical presence in class to offer support for the final paper.

Case Study #3: Sandra

Sandra was selected as the lower performing student, having received a mean score of 11.5 out of 20 on her first writing sample. Sandra identified as female, straight, White, and not the first in her family to attend college. However, in the interview Sandra disclosed that she had what she considered to be a poor K-12 education, particularly in writing where she said she had no writing instruction between middle school and her senior year of high school. Sandra completed most of the course activities, including the demographic survey, the three writing samples, the end of course survey, and the interview. She did not complete either of the reflections. Sandra did meet weekly with the Writing Ambassadors throughout the semester, which allowed for unique insights into the program.

Writing Samples

As previously stated, Sandra received a mean score of 11.5 out of 20 on her first writing sample. One Writing Ambassador gave her a score of 10 and the other a score of 13. For both Writing Ambassadors, organization was the key concern, which included awkward paragraph breaks and other issues with flow. Additionally, both noted grammatical and syntax errors.

On the second paper, Sandra's scores improved. One Writing Ambassador gave her a score of 16 and the other a 17 for a mean score of 16.5. Both of the Writing Ambassadors noted continued issues with genre and disciplinary conventions. One wrote, "The formatting of the work is fine, the presentation of the work could use some improvement." Both Writing

Ambassadors noted large improvements in rhetorical awareness and content development, and some improvement in sources/evidence and control of syntax and mechanics. These improvements are demonstrative of the feedback that was provided to Sandra, the support provided in individual writing support sessions, the Writing Ambassadors' lessons, and the weekly writing tips. As such, Sandra may have transferred what she learned from the Writing Ambassadors into her writing.

On the third writing sample, Sandra received scores of 18 and 19 from the Writing Ambassadors, for a mean score of 18.5. This represents a continued improvement of Sandra's writing skills. One Writing Ambassador noted that the only area for improvement was content development. The other noted that control of syntax and mechanics could also use some improvement. On the rubric, this Writing Ambassador went on to state:

Most improved paper written by [Sandra] thus far. Her use of integrating sources, grammar, theses, and cultivation/organization of ideas have all improved greatly. She seems to have worked very hard on this final paper. I try not to be biased, but since she met with me consistently throughout the semester, I have been able to watch her writing progress in more obvious ways than other students' papers. Formatting for this final paper looks very neat and easy to follow. Some content is repeated, but not so much as to construe the flow of ideas or understanding. Some verbiage and repeated phrases take away clarity, but it makes sense overall. Paragraphs would flow better if chunked into smaller paragraphs instead of being giant blocks of texts. She backs up claims with sources and examples.

Both Writing Ambassadors indicated through rubric scores and comments that they saw noticeable improvements in Sandra's writing throughout the semester that integrated their

feedback, lessons, and weekly writing tips. Sandra's performance across the three papers demonstrated the expected pattern (Yin, 2009).

End of Course Survey

Sandra completed all questions on the end of course survey. Table 12 below offers her responses to the quantitative questions asked on the survey, which were ranked on a Likert scale with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. These questions explored her experiences with the Writing Ambassador Program.

Table 12

Sandra's Responses to the End of Course Survey Quantitative Questions

Question	Rating
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador Program was overall to your learning of writing in the course.	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' IN CLASS LESSONS were to your learning in the course	3
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON PAPERS was to your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' WEEKLY WRITING TIPS were to your learning in the course	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassadors' INDIVIDUAL WRITING SUPPORT SESSIONS were your learning in the course	5
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your awareness and appreciation of cultural differences	4
Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were in helping you to feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.	3

When considering how helpful the Writing Ambassador was overall to her learning in the course, Sandra selected 4. She further explained, “[Writing Ambassador] was very helpful when it came to my essays. She taught me things I was never taught which overall brought up my grade and confidence.” From there, she indicated that the individual writing support appointments were most helpful to her learning with a score of 5. Sandra voluntarily met with the Writing Ambassadors weekly throughout the semester, more so with the female Writing Ambassador than the male. Sandra may have felt more comfortable with the female Writing Ambassador because she was able to better identify with a female with a similar background to her own. Meeting weekly with the Writing Ambassador allowed Sandra to grow and refine her skills, so it is understandable that these sessions were particularly useful to her. During these sessions, she was able to learn basic writing strategies which she had not learned in her K-12 education. Sandra did not find the Writing Ambassadors’ in class lessons as useful, which she ranked a 3. However, she found the weekly writing tips and written feedback helpful, both of which she scored a 4.

When answering questions about how the incorporation of critical pedagogy affected her awareness and appreciation of cultural differences, as well as her sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom, Sandra provided rankings of 4 and 3 respectively. Regarding the latter, Sandra explained, “I am a very antisocial person, so getting me to feel confident and empowered in a class is extremely difficult.”

When asked if she would have liked for the Writing Ambassadors to have done anything differently, Sandra wrote, “Absolutely not. [The Writing Ambassador] was very helpful in my writing processes.”

Interview

Sandra completed an individual interview at the end of the semester where she answered various questions about her feelings about writing, experience with the Writing Ambassador Program, and experience with critical pedagogy in the course. Because Sandra had worked regularly with one Writing Ambassador in particular through weekly meetings, most of her responses focused largely on her experiences during these appointments. It was clear throughout the interview that Sandra really looked to this Writing Ambassador as a mentor, thus showing that the Writing Ambassadors have the ability to be mentors or models to students in the course, and in the case of Sandra, to lower performing students.

When asked about changes to her writing skills and confidence, Sandra spoke largely to discrepancies in her past education: “We focused on my areas of struggle—grammar, vocabulary, repetitiveness.” Furthermore, “[The Writing Ambassador] helped me most with my confidence. I went through middle school told I would never be a good writer and I was not taught English until my senior year.” Despite her past educational experiences, when asked about changes to her feelings about writing, Sandra stated

I have always loved writing. I write small stories and articles. So, [The Writing Ambassador] didn’t change my opinion, but changed my willingness to write. I write on my own and [The Writing Ambassador] changed my confidence and willingness to write essays that are required.

After this, Sandra continued to point out some of the specific ways she had changed: “I did not procrastinate as much. [The Writing Ambassador] made me look forward to the tutoring

sessions. I was excited for the meetings and got the essays done before Friday.” As such, the Writing Ambassador helped to motivate Sandra and provide a sense of accountability.

As expected, when we discussed the usefulness of the Writing Ambassador’s activities, Sandra stated that the individual writing support sessions were the most helpful. Sandra stated, “I am antisocial, so I have difficulty asking questions in class.” She went on to describe her experience with the writing support appointments: “They were hard at first, but once I got comfortable, they were good.” The second most useful activity that Sandra mentioned was the lesson specifically on APA and sources, about which she stated, “I did not know how to do that before. I took notes and went back to them.” When asked about the least helpful activity, Sandra mentioned that she did not really look at the writing tips; she prefers more hands on and in person activities. Interestingly, Sandra did rank the writing tips at a 4 on the end of course survey, even above the in class lessons which she ranked a 3. One partial explanation for this could be that Sandra found the lesson on APA and sources, in particular, to be helpful. Additionally, Sandra later commented that she was only physically present for one lesson, so it would make sense why she overall did not find the lessons to be as helpful as other activities.

Considering transferability, Sandra found the lessons learned from the Writing Ambassador to be very useful. As she spoke, “I have already used what I learned in other classes. I have a lot of essays.” In particular, she stated that she will continue to apply what she learned about citations and clarity in future courses.

When asked how the Writing Ambassadors’ activities affected how she sees herself and those around her, Sandra stated, “Well, the activities made me realize I can write. I may not be perfect, but I can write and get my point across.” Additionally, she commented, “I saw a new version of myself with confidence.” Sandra, when asked about changes to her sense of inclusion

appreciation, and empowerment, remarked, “[The Writing Ambassador] has taught me that everyone has personalities, and that people may be different and that is okay. Just because you’re different, you can still learn from others even if you do not know them.”

Sandra had no suggestions for what the Writing Ambassador could have done differently to improve her experience. In fact, she stated that, “If anything was different, I would not have been comfortable enough going back to [The Writing Ambassador] for help. If things changed then the outcome would change. I do not want the outcome to change. I gained confidence and I learned about grammar.”

To conclude the interview, Sandra wanted to highlight two benefits. The first was improvements to her grades: “With [The Writing Ambassador’s] help, I was able to get my essay grades from low “C”s to “A”s.” This led right to the second benefit of improvements to her confidence: “When I see “A”s I get more confidence,” and “[The Writing Ambassador’s] constant cheerfulness, encouragement, personality, belief in me” helped.

Summary

As a lower performing, female, straight, White student who was not the first in her family to attend college, but who did emphasize that she had a subpar K-12 educational experience, particularly in English and writing, Sandra’s experiences with the Writing Ambassador Program can provide some insight into how students from similar backgrounds may also experience the Program. Sandra’s case study was unique from the others in that she clearly developed a mentoring relationship with the female Writing Ambassador and looked to that Writing Ambassador as a model. The regular individual writing support appointments likely helped to create this mentoring relationship, which led to the most noticeable improvements in writing and confidence across the three case studies. Sandra’s writing and confidence improved throughout

the semester, and these changes can likely be attributed, at least in part, to the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course. Furthermore, Sandra did express some changes to her sense of empowerment and how she sees herself and those around her, indicating the usefulness of critical pedagogy.

Chapter Summary

The previous sections described data from the full class, as well as the experiences of three students in the course: Nathan, Mandy, and Sandra. Nathan, the higher performing student, identified as male, gay, White, and not the first in his family to attend college. The middle performing student, Mandy, identified as female, straight, Hispanic/Latine, and first in her family to attend college. Sandra, the lower performing student identified as female, straight, White, and not the first in her family to attend college. Following these students' experiences provides insight into how students from similar backgrounds and writing levels may experience the Writing Ambassador Program, as well as helps to identify programmatic adjustments that may help improve the program in the future.

Nathan, Mandy, and Sandra all showed improvements to their writing performance across the three writing samples collected, which was consistent with the full class data. Though Mandy's scores did not show improvement between the second and third papers, examining the feedback provided by the Writing Ambassadors revealed that while she did show improvements overall, she had several minor syntactic and mechanical errors that pulled down her grade. All three students demonstrated improvements in areas that were addressed through the Writing Ambassadors' feedback, lessons, and writing tips, which may be demonstrative of students' making efforts to incorporate what they learn from the Writing Ambassadors to make improvements in their writing. The responses on the reflection questions, end of course surveys,

and interviews affirm that all three students did make an effort to improve their writing based on what they learned from the Writing Ambassadors through written feedback, lessons, individual writing support appointments, and/or weekly writing tips.

Both Mandy and Sandra, the middle and lower performing student, respectively, noted improvements to their confidence in writing. Nathan, the higher performing student, felt that his confidence did not necessarily improve since he came into the course with a high level of confidence. Overall class data did indicate improvements to students' confidence which may be attributed to the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course.

The three case study students had mixed feedback about any changes to their cultural awareness and understanding, and sense of appreciation, inclusion, and empowerment. Both Nathan and Sandra did indicate that the Writing Ambassadors' activities improved their cultural awareness and appreciation, while Mandy felt that the course instructor's activities impacted her cultural awareness and appreciation. Nathan, Mandy, and Sandra all indicated that their deepened learning improved their sense of empowerment. Full class data was similar in indicating that, overall, students showed trends toward improvement in their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment.

The case studies indicate that students of all levels and of diverse backgrounds may benefit from the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course. The following chapter will further explore how these findings can address the original research questions and fill gaps in existing research, while providing the implications and limitations of this study for practice and research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study provides one example of how the application of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) to writing support within the disciplines has promising outcomes in terms of students' writing skills and confidence, as well as their sense of empowerment within the classroom. This chapter includes a discussion of how the findings of this study address the research questions and how this study connects and contributes to the relevant literature presented in Chapter 2. Additionally, this chapter explores implications for practice and future research.

Research Questions

This study examined whether and in what ways the Writing Ambassador program affected students' writing confidence, performance, and sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment of students, with a focus on the experiences of students from diverse and/or intersecting identities and of differing incoming writing skills. The previous chapter presented the findings of three case studies with a higher, middle, and lower performing student, and the following sections will explore how these findings address the guiding research questions.

Research Question #1: What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their writing skills?

All three students chosen for the case study did show improvements in their writing skills evidenced by improvements to their rubric scores across the three papers, as well as by examining their papers for specific improvements. Additionally, they all demonstrated improvements in areas in their writing that were addressed in feedback and/or in lessons and weekly tips provided by the Writing Ambassadors. These findings—that students of all baseline levels showed improvement in their writing abilities—are in agreement with Lassey et al.'s

(2008) study of students enrolled at a community college and at Harvard University, which found that all students regardless of ability benefited from peer instruction.

The most significant improvements, supported by the rubric scores and assessments from the Writing Ambassadors, were seen in the lower performing student, Sandra. According to the Writing Ambassadors, Sandra demonstrated noticeable improvements in her writing. The Writing Ambassadors both commented that Sandra's writing went from "all over the place" to "A" quality work. Sandra utilized the individual writing support offered by the Writing Ambassadors much more regularly than the other two students, attending weekly appointments with one of the Writing Ambassadors and occasional appointments with the other. As detailed in Chapter 2, Munley et al. (2010), Colver and Frey (2016), and Cooper (2010) all found that tutoring dosage impacted outcomes, meaning that the more tutoring the student received, the greater the benefits. The findings of this study concur with those results given that Sandra showed the greatest improvements evidenced both by her rubric scores and in comments provided during the interview with the Writing Ambassadors, and Sandra also attended more one on one support sessions than the other two case study participants.

The middle performing student, Mandy, showed improvements to her writing between the first and third writing samples. While her mean score remained the same from writing samples two and three, she did still show improvements in several areas and her score was influenced largely by the presence of minor sentence/lower level thinking issues. The areas in which she improved aligned with the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course, thus offering evidence that Mandy was incorporating what she learned into future papers.

Nathan, the higher performing student, demonstrated improvements to his writing as demonstrated by his scores across the three writing samples collected and scored by the research

rubric. There was evidence that Nathan incorporated feedback, lessons, and writing tips provided to him by the Writing Ambassadors both in terms of analyzing specific improvements in his writing as well as by considering his responses to questions on the end of course survey and in the interview. This is in line with Bielinska-Kwapsiz's (2015) study, discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, that found that the top 40% of students from a business course who used the writing center experienced significant improvements on their writing assignments. However, Bielinska-Kwapsiz's (2015) found that those below the 40th percentile did not experience improvements, which was not the case in the Writing Ambassador Program study.

While all students did show improvements, the results of this study may indicate that students who have characteristics similar to Sandra, such as identifying as female, feeling they had a subpar education in writing, and who come into writing courses with lower baseline writing skills and with low confidence about their writing, might make the most significant improvements. Sandra's improvements may also be in part because Sandra felt a strong connection to the female Writing Ambassador, thus supporting the program's intention of utilizing Writing Ambassadors from diverse backgrounds to serve as models to students in the course who also come from diverse and intersectional identities. Though Sandra showed the largest improvements, both Nathan and Mandy also showed improvements across the three papers in areas that aligned with the Writing Ambassador's focus areas. It is impossible to attribute these changes to the Writing Ambassadors alone; however, by examining students' papers for improvements that coincided with the Writing Ambassadors' lessons, feedback, and writing tips, as well as by having the Writing Ambassadors solely responsible for stylistic feedback and instruction, it is likely that these improvements were at least partially due to the Writing Ambassadors' support. Comments made during interviews and on end of course surveys

completed by Nathan, Mandy, and Sandra also support the Writing Ambassadors' positive influence on their writing skills.

Chapter 2 presented several alternative ways that the usefulness of writing centers might be assessed, one of these being feedback from faculty, and this can apply to embedded writing support as well. Jones (2001) specifically discussed how faculty feedback recognizing well organized and well written work that allows them to focus on the content of the assignment is an indicator of the value of writing centers. In the Writing Ambassador Program study, the instructor spoke heavily about how the Writing Ambassadors' emphasis on feedback related writing style allowed them to focus on the content. Moreover, the instructor noticed students transferring the Writing Ambassadors' lessons and feedback into future assignments, which was echoed in interview responses with the Writing Ambassadors. These qualitative findings further affirm the value of the Writing Ambassador Program in improving students' writing skills.

The findings across the three case studies related to this research question, as well as considering the experiences of the instructor and Writing Ambassadors, do follow the pattern that was expected in which students of all writing abilities and backgrounds would show improvements in their writing (Yin, 2009). This demonstrates the Writing Ambassador Program's effectiveness in incorporating critical pedagogy and research related to writing centers and peer support to develop a support program that helps students to improve their writing abilities. Critical pedagogy was utilized in the program curriculum to deepen student learning (Freire, 1970), and as previously described, critical pedagogy was at the forefront of all the Writing Ambassadors' activities in the course largely through dialogue and active learning experiences. Critical pedagogy aims to enhance students' ability to problem solve and think critically (Freire, 1970), and feedback from the Writing Ambassadors indicated improvement in

students' ability to critically think and express these ideas in their writing. Additionally, the Writing Ambassadors worked to create a sense of equal power levels between students and the Writing Ambassador by emphasizing collaboration and knowledge creation where the Writing Ambassadors were also demonstrating vulnerability and gaining new knowledge as in hook's (1994) description of engaged pedagogy. The performance improvements reflect the program's success with critical pedagogy as the guiding theory. The findings related to this research question contribute to the limited number of available studies that examine the possibilities of writing fellows-type programs in improving students' performance and also demonstrate the effectiveness of adopting critical pedagogy in writing fellows programs.

Research Question #2: What changes, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities show in their confidence about their writing skills?

Unlike performance changes, in which all three case study participants experienced improvements, they demonstrated varied levels of changes to their confidence. Specifically, the higher performing student who came into the course feeling very confident about his writing did not note any improvements to his confidence in his writing. On the other hand, the middle and lower performing students did express that they felt more confident about their writing skills. Chapter 2 presented a study by Colver and Frey (2016) which connected tutoring to improved confidence. The findings of the Writing Ambassador Program study, particularly considering the middle and lower performing students, are similar.

Nathan, the higher performing student, mentioned that he came into the class with high confidence in his writing, so he did not necessarily experience any improvements in his confidence. However, he did feel that his skills in writing grew as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program, giving him an enhanced feeling of empowerment, which will be further

explored with the next research question. Nathan's perception that his confidence did not improve may indicate that high performing students who come into writing courses with already high levels of confidence about their writing skills may not experience noticeable changes in their confidence. However, also important to consider is that, while Nathan was engaged in the Writing Ambassadors' lessons, feedback, and weekly writing tips, he did not participate in any one on one writing support sessions with the Writing Ambassadors. Having spent one on one time with the Writing Ambassadors may have helped Nathan further refine his writing skills and receive even more encouragement and praise about his writing. This could have affected Nathan's confidence about his writing. As discussed previously, Munley et al. (2010), Colver and Frey (2016), and Cooper (2010) all found that various benefits of tutoring were correlated with dosage, thus supporting the possibility that Nathan could have seen greater benefits to his confidence had he engaged with the Writing Ambassadors through individual appointments.

Mandy, the middle performing student, expressed that she became less self-conscious about her writing. On the first reflection, Mandy commented that she had no confidence in her writing abilities. By the third reflection, however, she spoke heavily to her improved sense of confidence. This is in line with Colver and Frey's (2016) study and supports the possibility that the Writing Ambassador Program may help students with similar characteristics to Mandy, including being female, Hispanic/Latine, first in her family to attend college, with average writing abilities, and/or who do not feel confident about writing coming into their writing intensive course, to improve their levels of self-confidence through the various support offered in the Writing Ambassador Program..

As with Mandy, the lower performing student Sandra also experienced improved confidence as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program. Sandra felt that her improved

confidence came as a result of her improved grades/writing skills, as well as from her positive experience working with the Writing Ambassadors. Sandra's experience, like Mandy's, demonstrates the possibility that the support and resources offered by the Writing Ambassador Program can help to improve students' confidence.

The expected pattern for the findings related to this question were similar to the actual findings; however, I did anticipate that the higher performing student would notice at least some increase in their confidence, while I expected larger improvements for the middle and lower performing students. Nathan did not feel that his confidence improved when asked directly, however, he mentioned several times that his writing skills improved, which does indicate that he experienced improvements to his feelings about his writing skills. With this in mind, the findings for this research question do seem to match the expected pattern quite closely (Yin, 2009).

The findings related to changes in students' confidence about their writing indicate that the incorporation of critical pedagogy, as well as consideration of research related to writing centers, peer support, and writing fellows programs, proved useful in improving students' confidence about their writing skills through the Writing Ambassador Program. Critical pedagogy is designed to empower students, and one way to accomplish this is through the active construction of knowledge, where students feel that their experiences, ideas, and knowledge matters (Freire, 1970). The design of the Writing Ambassador Program, particularly with the collaborative approach to writing support, was meant to build a community in which each student felt valued. This sense of community, as well as positive feedback and encouragement, and deepened learning about writing likely helped students to gain confidence about their writing. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is limited research about changes to students' confidence that comes as a result of writing center use, peer support, and/or writing fellows

programs, as well as such programs that incorporate critical pedagogy activities.. This study helps to fill that gap by highlighting the experiences of students in the case study and changes to their confidence about their writing.

Research Question #3: In what ways, if any, do students from diverse and/or intersectional identities feel appreciated, included, and empowered in the classroom community? Is this different from other courses and in what ways?

Rooted in critical pedagogy, one of the goals of this study was to help students from one or more traditionally marginalized backgrounds feel a greater sense of appreciation and inclusion in the classroom, as well as a sense of empowerment. Though the study intended to compare any changes to students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment to their experiences in other courses, none of the students selected for the case study commented on their experiences in this CJ course versus other courses. Instead, they only discussed their experiences in this particular course and the Writing Ambassador Program. All three students did note improvements to their sense of empowerment, which they attributed largely to their improved writing abilities. Exploring changes to students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in this CJ course, which is already focused on exploring differences and empowering students, made it especially challenging for students to decipher changes that came as a result of the course instructor and materials versus those that came from the Writing Ambassador Program. As discussed in Chapter 2, the CJ program at the university where this study took place takes a critical approach to criminology which explores how class, race, gender, and other inequities influence crime (Long, 2015). While certainly complementary to the Writing Ambassador Program's incorporation of critical pedagogy and goal of empowering students from intersectional and diverse backgrounds, this critical approach heightened the challenge of

isolating variables influencing students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment that may have come as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program activities.

All three of the case study students did remark that their improved writing skills, which came as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program, provided a sense of empowerment. Nathan stated that by growing his knowledge about writing, he felt more empowered. Mandy also felt empowered by her improved writing skills but felt that changes to her sense of appreciation and inclusion in the classroom came more as a result of the course instructor and activities and less as a result of the Writing Ambassadors and associated activities. As with Nathan and Mandy, Sandra expressed a heightened sense of empowerment as a result of her improved writing skills, as well as positive changes in the way she sees herself and those around her. These experiences are supportive of the program's intention of helping to empower students by deepening their learning through critical pedagogy activities, such as dialogue and active learning approaches (Freire, 1970). While the Writing Ambassadors did bring in diverse examples and resources in an attempt to infuse culture and diversity into the course, aside from Sandra who discussed how one of the Writing Ambassadors' lessons which addressed communication practices across different cultures helped to change the way she sees herself, the case study participants did not speak specifically to how the diverse examples and resources influenced their sense of inclusion and empowerment.

Though the case study participants did not all overtly recognize how the program's efforts to include critical pedagogy activities, as well as diverse texts and examples influenced them, the changes that the Writing Ambassadors observed in students' writing, largely in terms of improved critical thinking skills may demonstrate that students did experience changes to their own recognition and appreciation of cultural differences, and possibly, then, to their own feelings

of inclusion. To enhance students' critical thinking, and thus to improve their sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment, the Writing Ambassador Program drew from the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and integrated active learning activities and dialogue (Freire, 1970), incorporated culturally diverse texts and examples to promote equity (hooks, 1994; Schor, 1992) which included awareness of intersectional identities (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 33), and took an individual approach to writing support (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2016) that considered students' unique backgrounds in an effort to avoid covert racism (Grimm, 2011). However, a lack of transparency to students about why the Writing Ambassador Program included these pedagogies and activities may have contributed to students' lack of awareness of changes in themselves that could be attributed to the Writing Ambassador Program.

As discussed in Chapter 2, LeCourt (1996) posed the possibility of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs as a means of instilling critical pedagogy across the disciplines, while cautioning that they may also easily do the opposite, largely by perpetuating structural racism in the academy. The Writing Ambassador Program, and the findings related to students' sense of empowerment, are one example of a joint WAC and writing center initiative that can effectively bring critical pedagogy into courses across the disciplines.

Depending on interpretation, changes in students' sense of inclusion and appreciation did not necessarily follow the expected pattern of change (Yin, 2009). However, changes in students' sense of empowerment did match the expected pattern (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), "if results fail to show the entire pattern as predicted...your preposition would have to be questioned" (p. 137). This includes all dependent variables including changes to performance and confidence (Yin, 2009). The findings related to this research question and the pattern can be approached in a few ways. Firstly, considering the lack of transparency in the study design, the

multiple sources that could be contributing to students' sense of inclusion and appreciation, as well as the fact that students did, indeed, feel more empowered, it might be appropriate to decide that the pattern has, indeed, been matched despite the presence of overt responses from students in terms of improvements to their sense of inclusion and appreciation. Alternatively, this lack of expected pattern could be used to inform future studies to either modify the expected outcome to exclude students' sense of appreciation and inclusion, to offer more transparency to students about the intentions of the program design to help them recognize whether they experience any changes as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program in particular, and/or provide different or additional content and pedagogical strategies to try to enhance students' sense of inclusion and appreciation. Overall, the findings do demonstrate that the students in the case study experienced improvements to their sense of empowerment as a result of the Writing Ambassador Program activities, which provides a unique contribution about the possibilities of embedded peer support in writing fellows and similar programs to the field.

Research Questions Summary

The Writing Ambassador Program design and study itself incorporated research related to critical pedagogy, peer support, writing centers and WAC programs, and writing fellows programs presented comprehensively in Chapter 2. This study attempted to contribute to the limited body of research that exists in these areas while considering limitations of other studies to show the possibilities of embedded peer support rooted in critical pedagogy. The findings and their connections to the research questions demonstrate the promise of the Writing Ambassador Program in improving students' writing skills, confidence, and sense of empowerment. Though it is unclear whether the findings related to the third research question match the expected pattern, as discussed in Chapter 2, Zawacki (2008) noted that even unsuccessful studies into writing

fellows programs are useful in helping to create a culture across colleges that value writing across the curriculum that further accelerate WAC initiatives. In this particular study, even if the findings are interpreted as not matching the expected pattern in changes to students' sense of inclusion and appreciation, much valuable information was gained that can help to guide similar programs and studies in the future. Though this study is far from unsuccessful, if the pattern related to changes in students' sense of inclusion, appreciation and empowerment is not considered to be matched, much valuable information was still gained that can help to guide similar programs and studies in the future.

Implications for Practice

Throughout the program and study, several new ideas and potential adjustments for the Writing Ambassador Program were identified by me, the Writing Ambassadors, the students, and the course instructor. Incorporating these ideas and adjustments may help to improve the program outcomes and experiences of students in courses with Writing Ambassadors or other forms of embedded peer support.

One of the most commented on adjustments that could be made was the frequency that the Writing Ambassadors were physically present in the course. While we had planned for one of the Writing Ambassadors to be physically present in class one day a week, this did not happen for several reasons. Firstly, the city in which the university where this study took place experienced an unprecedented amount of snow during the semester of study, leading to multiple snow days toward the beginning of the semester. This resulted in course activities being canceled and/or moved to an online platform. Secondly, the Writing Ambassador who was planning to be present weekly in class experienced some personal issues which required them to be absent frequently during the second half of the semester. Additionally, the course instructor did not

consider having the Writing Ambassadors present during in class work/lab time for their final papers. As indicated by students, Writing Ambassadors, and the course instructor, having had the Writing Ambassadors present during these work periods would have been helpful for students and likely would have enhanced the interactions between students and Writing Ambassadors. So, increasing the Writing Ambassadors' time physically present in the course and strategically having the Writing Ambassadors present during in class work/writing sessions may yield even more positive program outcomes and may engage students who otherwise would not reach out to the Writing Ambassadors for support.

In this iteration of the Writing Ambassador Program, writing support appointments outside of class time were offered exclusively in an online format unless special arrangements were made. As one of the Writing Ambassadors suggested, students may have felt more comfortable meeting in person with the Writing Ambassadors. As such, similar programs may want to consider having an area designated for writing support appointments near the building or classroom where the class takes place. The course instructor noticed that when the Writing Ambassadors were physically present in the classroom, students often came up to them before and after class with questions. Perhaps offering drop-in support near the physical classroom space either before or after class would be constructive in engaging more students and/or providing additional support.

In the interview, one of the Writing Ambassadors suggested having a platform for students to ask simple questions about writing that do not necessarily warrant a full 50-minute appointment, and in a way that is less formal than sending an email. The Writing Ambassador suggested Google Chat or similar. While this would require setting some boundaries and parameters in terms of how quickly responses would be sent and the nature and amount of the

questions that can be asked, having a casual platform like this does sound like a promising addition to the program that would help encourage the more casual peer to peer approach to writing support. However, this question and answer platform should not replace an appointment for a student who does have more complex questions or require more extensive support and feedback.

One unintended benefit to the iteration of the Writing Ambassador Program explored in this study was the use of two Writing Ambassadors. This allowed for more diversity in the Writing Ambassadors, which in turn helped students connect with the Writing Ambassador with whom they shared more characteristics or with whom they felt more comfortable. This likely engaged more students in seeking support from the Writing Ambassadors, while also helping the Writing Ambassadors to have more balanced workloads in terms of leaving feedback on papers, teaching lessons, sending weekly writing tips, and meeting with students individually.

Another possibility for future programs is to require and/or offer incentives for students to utilize individual appointments with the Writing Ambassadors. In this iteration, students were offered extra credit for working with the Writing Ambassadors mid semester and at the end of the semester; however, having a more consistent incentive may help students to further develop their writing skills throughout the full course of the semester. Required appointments for students who are noticeably struggling may also be useful, though this could also lead to students who are disengaged during the writing support session. The benefit of required appointments, however, is that they do not require the students to self-identify as needing support, and instead the Writing Ambassadors could reach out directly to the students to schedule appointments. This would help to open the door for struggling students to make future appointments once they become comfortable and realize that the appointments are not intimidating.

Though the program curriculum was designed with critical pedagogy at the forefront, one of the Writing Ambassadors did note that it would have been helpful for students to have had even more opportunities to apply what they learned during the Writing Ambassadors' lessons in low stakes assignments or activities attached to the lessons. This may require additional time and coordination with the course instructor; however, enhancing application opportunities would even further the incorporation of critical pedagogy in the course and could deepen students' learning, confidence, and sense of empowerment.

In our weekly meetings, Writing Ambassadors did express some challenges with time management and leaving comprehensive yet efficient feedback. These are two training topics that would benefit from additional attention in future iterations of the program. Once I worked with the Writing Ambassador who struggled with leaving feedback efficiently, we were able to significantly reduce the time she spent leaving feedback on drafts. So, explicit instruction and practice could be beneficial. As far as time management, having had a mid-semester training that involved the Writing Ambassadors actually writing out weekly schedules and to-do lists may have helped them to be more physically present in the course during the second half of the semester while still managing their own academic and personal commitments.

Finally, having occasional meetings during the semester that included both the course instructor and Writing Ambassadors would have been useful in coordinating the Writing Ambassadors' activities and training topics, and in making adjustments that could have benefited the program. Instead, I met with the Writing Ambassadors weekly and checked in with the course instructor approximately every month. While this was certainly helpful, having all parties included in a regular monthly meeting to discuss the program successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement could have strengthened the program and outcomes.

Implications for Future Research

The Writing Ambassador Program study showed promising results that support continued research into similar embedded peer writing support programs. However, the study did experience several limitations that can be addressed in future studies. This section discusses those limitations and their implications, as well as suggestions for different approaches and areas of focus for future studies.

As previously discussed, students had difficulty recognizing the connections between the Writing Ambassadors' activities and possible changes to their sense of inclusion and appreciation in the classroom. This may have been because of a lack of transparency in the goals or learning objectives of the Writing Ambassador Program and in how the activities connected to the goals and objectives. As such, future studies that are attempting to explore how similar programs affect students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom could offer students with more detailed learning objectives for the Writing Ambassador Program independent of those for the course, and could explicitly connect the pedagogical approaches and lessons to equity and diversity, as well as to students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment. This could occur during the consent process, as well as through reminders throughout the course. In future studies that continue to explore changes in these areas, making these explicit connections could help students better speak to any changes that they experienced as a result of the program.

Similar to past studies described in Chapter 2 that aimed to determine the possible benefits of writing centers and writing fellows programs, it was impossible in this study to isolate the variables that may be affecting change. This proved to be a shortcoming when attempting to identify how the Writing Ambassador Program affected students' sense of inclusion,

appreciation, and empowerment. As previously mentioned, students struggled to connect the Writing Ambassador Program versus the course content and instructor as the mechanism that affected any changes in their sense of inclusion and appreciation. Additionally, as with similar studies, it is challenging to attribute change to the independent variable, as there are other variables that affect changes in students' writing performance, confidence, and so on. For example, practice or feedback from the instructor, peers, or outside tutors could also bring about changes in these areas. While this study made an effort to limit writing related instruction and feedback to the Writing Ambassadors in an effort to control variables, it is still impossible to attribute improvements solely to the Writing Ambassador Program. As such, future studies should continue to make similar and enhanced efforts and should strongly consider a design which includes a control group.

This study provided just a glimpse of the Writing Ambassador Program experience for a small number of students in a single course. As such, the results are not generalizable. To further explore the possibilities of the program, future studies may consider exploring the program across multiple disciplines that incorporate a larger number of students. While this case study provided meaningful in-depth details about the experiences of three students of different baseline writing levels and from diverse and intersecting identities, future studies could include more students in the case study and/or place a greater emphasis on data collected from the full class in order to produce results that are more generalizable. Additionally, exploring the program in different disciplines and courses, such as those in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, that do not necessarily integrate critical pedagogy and/or diversity issues would allow for insight into the possibilities of the program in enhancing students' sense of inclusion,

appreciation, and empowerment in different contexts and would also help to control variables that may be influencing changes in these areas.

This study examined the proximal outcomes for students. Future research can explore more distal outcomes, such as graduation rates and improvements to overall GPAs and/or grades in any proceeding courses that incorporate writing, such as capstone courses. As discussed in Chapter 2, Grizwold (2003) found that writing centers combine many factors that have been found to help increase student retention; the Writing Ambassador Program is an extension and enhancement of writing center support. Because of the high emphasis on student retention at many universities, particularly amongst students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds, studies that examine these distal outcomes could help to position the Writing Ambassador Program and similar programs at the forefront of efforts to improve student retention.

As primarily a qualitative case study, this study did not test for statistical significance of the quantitative data collected. Future studies may want to collect additional quantitative data and test for statistical significance, which would allow similar programs to be studied from multiple angles and which would enhance the quality of the findings for any quantitative data collected.

While this study focused solely on changes experienced by students, future studies may consider exploring possible changes experienced by the Writing Ambassadors. For example, Writing Ambassadors may experience improved self-efficacy, improved grades on their own writing assignments, and/or an increased sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment themselves. Understanding the possibilities of the program for Writing Ambassadors and being able to demonstrate the benefits of the program for multiple groups of students could increase program support and visibility.

As the study was taking place, there were two additional issues that I identified. Firstly, it was challenging to collect reflections from the students. These were intended to be attached to three writing samples throughout the semester. Though the instructor did include the questions as requirements to be submitted with the first writing sample, only a small number of students actually answered the questions. The instructor forgot to include the questions with the second writing sample, so attempted to include them with a different assignment mid-semester. In this case, an even smaller number of students answered the questions. The final set of reflection questions were administered as an in class writing exercise, which did yield more responses. Based on this experience, I would recommend administering the reflection questions as either in class writing assignments that students might complete immediately after submitting written assignments or administering these as surveys that are part of the study and not the course curriculum. This would allow for additional data to be gathered that could provide insight into which activities were most helpful throughout the course. For example, in reflections, students might write about specific feedback or activities that were helpful to them in completing the associated writing assignment. The other issue was that, aside from the mid-semester reflection questions, this study did not include any plans to gauge progress mid-semester. Having administered a mid-semester survey completed by students, Writing Ambassadors, and faculty could have been useful in both making programmatic adjustments during the course as well as by offering additional data that could be useful in determining the program's possibilities.

Conclusion

The Writing Ambassador Program was designed to support students who may be at the highest risk of failing or withdrawing from writing intensive courses across the disciplines. This study explored the experiences of a higher performing, middle performing, and lower performing

student from diverse and/or intersecting identities in a CJ course, Diversity and Writing in Criminal Justice. The goals of this study were to explore any changes to students' writing performance and confidence, as well as students' feelings of belonging and empowerment in the classroom. The program and study were grounded in critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), while considering existing research related to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), writing centers, and various forms of peer support, including writing fellows programs. Little research exists regarding the possibilities of embedded peer writing support, so this study sought to fill that gap by gathering meaningful information about students' experiences, particularly those from diverse and intersecting identities, with the Writing Ambassador Program and its various activities. This study intended to pave the way for future studies into similar programs that might explore more distal outcomes related to retention and grade improvements.

Mixed methods were employed that did gather some data from the full class, but that primarily focused on the experiences of the three students selected for the case study. The measures included a demographic survey; reflection questions administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester; three writing samples scored with a research rubric; an end of course survey; end of course interviews; and weekly dosage reports. Using mixed methods allowed for greater understanding of why any measurable changes were occurring, particularly in terms of performance improvements across the three papers.

There were three research questions that guided the study and related directly to the goals of the Writing Ambassador Program. The first of these focused on changes to students' writing skills. As rubric scores indicated, the full class did show trends toward improvements between papers 1 and 2 and between papers 2 and 3. Rubric scores for the students in the case study also followed this pattern, with the most impressive changes occurring with the lower performing

student. The second research question explored changes in students' confidence. Amongst the case study participants, both the middle and lower performing students indicated drastic improvements in their confidence about their writing, while the higher performing student, who came into the course already confident about his writing, expressed a growth of skills versus a growth in confidence. The final research question examined any changes to students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom. While all three case study participants did feel more empowered as a result of their improved writing skills, they did not necessarily feel that the program helped them to feel included or appreciated in the classroom. As described earlier in this chapter, there are several factors that may have contributed to students' lack of connection between their sense of inclusion and appreciation and the Writing Ambassador Program.

To help determine if and how the intended outcomes were achieved, this study employed the nonequivalent dependent variables as pattern technique (Yin, 2009). As previously described in this chapter, in most areas, the findings were well aligned with the expected patterns; however, depending on interpretation, the expected pattern related to the third research question that considered students' sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment in the classroom may or may not have been matched. Regardless, this study produced relevant and meaningful findings related to the experiences of the students in the case study, as well as the full class, that are important to consider for similar programs in the future, as well as for future studies.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board for the
Human Research Protection Program

525 S Beaver St
PO Box: 4062
Flagstaff AZ 86011
928-523-9551
<https://www.nau.edu/IRB>

To: Alana Kuhlman, MA
From: NAU IRB Office
Approval Date: January 6, 2023

Project: The Possibilities of Peer Writing Support for Criminal Justice Students: A Case Study
Project Number: 1972090-2
Submission: Revision
Action: APPROVED
Project Risk Level: MINIMAL RISK
Approval Expiration Date: January 6, 2028

Review Category/ies: **The project is not federally funded or supported and has been deemed to be no more than minimal risk.**

This project has been reviewed and approved by an IRB Chair or designee.

- Northern Arizona University maintains a Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (FWA #00000357).
- All research procedures should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the guidance.
- The Principal Investigator should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that affect the protocol and report any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others. Please refer to Guidance Investigators Responsibility after IRB Approval, Reporting Local Information and Minimal Risk or Exempt Research.
- All documents referenced in this submission have been reviewed and approved. Documents are filed with the HRPP Office within IRBNet. If subjects will be consented, the approved consent(s) are available within IRBNet upon approval notification from the HRPP Office.

Important

The principal investigator for this study is responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals before commencing research. Please be sure that you have satisfied applicable external and University requirements, for example (but not limited to) data repositories, listserv permission, records request, data use agreement, [conducting University surveys](#), [data security](#), [international](#), [conflicts of interest](#), [biological safety](#), [radiation safety](#), [HIPAA](#), [FERPA](#), [FDA](#), [sponsor approval](#), [clinicaltrials.gov](#), [tribal consultation](#), or [school approval](#). IRB approval does not convey approval to commence research in the event that other requirements have not been satisfied.

Appendix B

Demographic Survey

What is your first and last name?

What is your age?

18-24

25-32

33-41

42-49

50 or older

What is your sexual orientation? (select all that apply)

Asexual

Bisexual

Gay

Heterosexual or straight

Lesbian

Pansexual

Queer

Other

What is your gender identity? (select all that apply)

Male

Female

Transgender

Gender Nonconforming

Other

Which group best describes your ethnic background?

Hispanic or Latino

Non Hispanic or Latino

Which group(s) best describe your racial background? (Choose all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Black or African

White

Other

Are you the first in your family to attend college?

Yes

No

Appendix C

Research Rubric

Association of American Colleges and Universities (2009) VALUE Writing Rubric

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3 2		Benchmark 1
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

From “Written Communication VALUE Rubric” by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2009, <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value>. [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

Appendix D

Reflection Questions

- How do you feel about writing?
- What kinds of feedback have you received about your writing in previous courses in college and/or high school?
- What areas of your writing need the most improvement?
- What areas of your writing are you most confident about?
- How comfortable are you participating in college courses? Do you feel appreciated, included, and/or empowered, and in what ways?
- What are your goals for writing in this course?
- What grade would you give yourself on this assignment and why?

Specific questions that students will address on the second and third reflections include:

- How do you feel about writing? Has the Writing Ambassador influenced your feelings about yourself as a writer and in what ways? Has the course curriculum influenced your feelings about writing and in what ways? Has the course instructor influenced your feelings about writing and in what ways?
- What feedback have you received from your Writing Ambassador on previous papers in this course that you have incorporated into this assignment?
- What did you learn through the Writing Ambassador's lessons and/or writing support sessions that you incorporated into this assignment?
- What is your greatest weaknesses in this paper?
- What is your greatest strength in this paper?

- In what ways does your paper incorporate multiple and culturally diverse perspectives on the issue(s) discussed? Have the Writing Ambassador's activities influenced your ability and/or comfort in doing this?
- Has the Writing Ambassador influenced your sense of comfort, appreciation, inclusion, and empowerment in the classroom? Has the course curriculum influenced your sense of comfort, appreciation, inclusion, and empowerment in the classroom? Has the course instructor influenced your sense of comfort, appreciation inclusion and empowerment in the classroom?
- What grade would you give yourself on this assignment and why?

Appendix E

End of Course Surveys

- Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador was overall to your learning of writing in the course.
 - Please explain your answer to the above question
- Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful each of the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your learning in the course:
 - Lessons
 - Written Feedback
 - Group Writing Support Sessions
 - Individual Writing Support Sessions
 - Writing Related Resources
- Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were to your awareness and appreciation of cultural differences.
 - Please explain your answer to the above question.
- Please rank on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest possible, how helpful the Writing Ambassador's activities were in helping you to feel included, appreciated, and empowered in the classroom.
 - Please explain your answer to the above question.
- Was there anything you would have liked the Writing Ambassador to have done differently in your class? Please explain.

Appendix F

End of Course Interviews

Please describe your experience with the Writing Ambassador in your course?

- In what ways, if any, do you feel the Writing Ambassador helped you to improve your writing skills?
- In what ways, if any, did the Writing Ambassador affect your confidence in your writing skills?
- Have your feelings about writing changed as a result of the Writing Ambassador's activities in the course?
- Which of the Writing Ambassador's activities were most helpful to your learning and why (lessons, written feedback, writing support sessions, resources)?
- Which of the Writing Ambassador's activities were least helpful to your learning and why?
- Is there anything the Writing Ambassador could have done differently to improve your experience with the Writing Ambassador Program?
- Do you think you will transfer what you learned about writing from the Writing Ambassador into future courses or into your professional work? What specific lessons will carry into your future work/profession?
- Did the Writing Ambassador's activities affect how you see yourself and others around you? In what ways?
- Did the Writing Ambassador's activities influence your sense of inclusion, appreciation, and empowerment both within and outside of the classroom? In what ways?

Questions for the course instructor and Writing Ambassador will include:

- In what ways do you feel the Writing Ambassador's activities in the course benefited students? Do you have any specific examples of these benefits?
- What changes, if any, did you see in students' writing skills as well as in their confidence, that may be attributed to the Writing Ambassador's activities?
- Did you notice students transferring the lessons and feedback they received from the Writing Ambassadors into future assignments?
- Which of the Writing Ambassador's activities do you think was most helpful to students and why?
- Which of the Writing Ambassador's activities do you think was least helpful to students and why?
- Is there anything the Writing Ambassador could have done differently in the course to enhance students' learning?
- How did you think the integration of critical pedagogy into the Writing Ambassador Program curriculum, specifically, affected students in the course? Did you see evidence of improved cultural appreciation and/or advocacy for equality? Did you see evidence of students from diverse and intersecting backgrounds have an improved sense of inclusion, appreciation, and/or empowerment?
- What suggestions do you have for future iterations of the Writing Ambassador Program?
- (Instructor only) If applicable, what differences, if any, did you experience in teaching this course with a Writing Ambassador versus without a Writing Ambassador in previous semesters?

Appendix G

Weekly Dosage Report

Approximately how many hours did you spend doing each of the following activities:

Teaching lessons:

Lesson planning:

Providing written feedback:

Developing/sharing resources:

Meeting individuals with students:

Meeting with groups of students:

Other:

If you presented a lesson or shared resources, what were the topics addressed?

Provide the names of all students whom you met with this week and the approximate length of the meeting. Indicate if the meeting was individual or group and provide a brief description of the topics you addressed in the meeting.