INTRODUCING WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM INTO CHINA: FEASIBILITY AND ADAPTATION

Dan Wu
Clemson University, wudanwang@gmail.com

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INTRODUCING WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM INTO CHINA:
FEASIBILITY AND ADAPTATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design

by
Dan Wu
August 2010

Accepted by
Dr. Andrew Billings, Co-Chair
Dr. Arthur Young, Co-Chair
Dr. Xiaobo Hu
Dr. Tharon Howard
ABSTRACT

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is a successful educational movement initiated in the US in the 1970s to promote better teaching and learning. It has developed to incorporate writing, speaking, digital educational technologies, and other communication modalities in the past several decades. WAC initiatives have now been successfully transplanted outside of the U.S. in nations and areas such as Australia, Sweden, Germany, and Hong Kong, yet one country that has not endorsed a WAC approach is China. Given the current tension between access and quality for Chinese higher education after an unprecedented enrollment expansion, incorporating WAC approaches is currently a debated option for easing this tension.

Using a historical review of the political and cultural realities of Chinese higher education system, this study investigated into the feasibility of introducing WAC in China. A qualitative study composed of 8 interviews with US WAC experts and 28 interviews conducted in China with faculty members, higher education administrators, and employers was combined with activity theory to explore the embedded contradictions within and among the activity systems of university courses, university administration, and workplace. A total of 4 primary themes and 29 secondary themes were uncovered within the interviews, leading to a clear conclusion that there is an urgent need to include WAC researchers into the community of the activity systems of Chinese university courses to facilitate greater teaching and learning objectives. Even though challenges persist, such as the lack of technological resources and the issue of academic dishonesty, faculty interest is strong and there is a near-unanimous sense of a
need for WAC insights. This study advances the application of activity theory in WAC research by focusing on the function of the community of the activity systems. It also suggests an approach for studying the feasibility of adapting WAC pedagogies and programs into the unique and dynamic local contexts, cultures and educational systems.
DEDICATION

To my mom, Xian Shengzhen, who has always supported me in seeking knowledge and exploring life with her love, care, wisdom, and perseverance.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“The future of WAC, like its past, is about forging alliances, expanding with new connections, even as we wrestle with the inevitable contradictions of education and civic life.”

David Russell (2002)

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), influenced by the language-and-learning-across-the-curriculum research and practice by such British scholars as James Britton (1975), is an educational movement initiated in the 1970s in the United States. Its evolution, development, and longevity suggest that it has met the need in higher education for “better learning and writing for students, better teaching for faculty” (Russell, 2002, p.331). However, this need is neither unique to American higher education nor English. As a result, some WAC programs in the United States have expanded, becoming bilingual (Hirsch & DeLuca, 2003) to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. Moreover, WAC has made connections with other higher education systems outside the US. For example, writing centers and programs have been established in Europe (Björk, Bräuer, Rienecker & Jörgensen, 2003), and conferences on writing research such as the one sponsored by the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW) have been held since 2001. Focusing on writing in English, WAC has also been adopted by Asian universities such as the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Braine, 2004); Hanyang University in Seoul, Korea; and several colleges and universities in Taiwan (Hsu, 2007). The extent of WAC
presence across the globe is the focus of the International WAC/WID Mapping Project, a research project ongoing since 2006 conducted by Chris Thaiss in conjunction with researchers in other countries (Thaiss, 2008).

In China the focus of higher education has been moved to the quality of teaching and learning, which is a part of a larger conversation on the current state of higher education as a result of the rapid increase in higher education enrollment since the late 1990’s (Li, Morgan, & Ding, 2008). According to the Ministry of Education (2009), the undergraduate enrollment in the regular higher education institutions increased six-fold in 10 years; however, the number of full-time faculty in higher education did not see a corresponding increase, resulting in a doubling of the student-faculty ratio. Although Chinese young people now have more educational opportunities, the speed and the scale of this expansion have posed problems for the Chinese higher education system, and university professors in various disciplines have begun to investigate the effects of this enrollment increase, including initiating discussions on the lack of effectiveness in math education (Tang, 2007), reforms in the national curriculum of English (Chang, 2006), and the increasing requests for improved teacher training (Jiang, 2005).

One area of concern in this transition from “elite” to “mass education” is the quality of student writing, both in English (Yang, 2005; Yu, 2007) and Chinese (Lin, Wang, & Gao, 2008; Zhang, 2008). Because WAC pedagogies have been found to improve teaching and learning through enhanced engagement with course content and increased interaction among students and teachers, this approach may address the current concerns of Chinese researchers and educators. To explore the feasibility of
introducing WAC into Chinese higher education, the research reported here presents the results of a qualitative analysis of data gathered through interviews with leading American WAC scholars and Chinese higher education faculty members, administrators, and potential employers.

Research Problem, Questions, and Significance

The Expansion in Chinese Higher Education

There are two types of higher education institutions in China: regular higher education institutions that recruit students based on their scores on the annual National Matriculation Test (NMT) and institutions that provide various types of extended education. The former are comparable to the higher education institutions in other parts of the world that award associate and bachelor’s degrees, while the latter, also with a significant enrollment, award only academic credentials to their graduates. The research presented here focuses on regular undergraduate education and does not include those institutions for extended education.

Similar to other aspects of society, the Chinese higher education system of the pre-reform era (before 1979) was funded solely by the government (Min & Ding, 2005). After economic reform was initiated, the subsequent double-digit growth in the GDP spurred the growth of the middle class, who then asked for better access to higher education (Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004), hoping to move into the leading class. In addition, the Chinese government was beginning to feel increased pressure to provide a more highly educated workforce. In an effort to strengthen its economic competitiveness (Yang, 2005), China initiated reforms in higher education by merging
universities, expanding enrollment, charging tuition and other fees, and abolishing job assignments. Before the reforms, all college graduates had jobs assigned to them and had no freedom in choosing jobs according to personal preference, but they also did not have to worry about getting jobs as everyone was assigned one upon graduation.

Although most of this strategy, similar to other aspects of the economic reform, was introduced gradually rather than as a comprehensive package (Shirk, 1993), its primary component, enrollment expansion, was carried out quickly and on a large scale. According to the Ministry of Education, these enrollments increased from 3.2 million to 18.8 million from 1997 to 2007, the corresponding number of faculty only increasing from 0.4 million to 1.17 million, resulting in the student-faculty ratio increasing from 8:1 to 16:1. Although this ratio may not appear too discouraging, most of these faculty members also teach in the higher education institutions for extended education, many of which are affiliated with the regular institutions (Yi & Li, 2004).

One result of this disparity between the growth in the number of students and the number of faculty is the concern about the overall quality of higher education (Cheng, 2004) among Chinese higher education professionals and other stakeholders in the society. While university professors and administrators focus on the impact of the student/faculty ratio and the increasing workload (Postiglione, 2005), society at large expresses concerns about the quality of higher education, the primary issues being the market for college graduates after job assignment system was abolished (Bai, 2006; Li, Morgan & Ding, 2008), higher education enrollment and quality (Cheng, 2004), the merging of universities (Hayhoe, 1995; Mok, 2005), the quality of the higher education
teacher base (Jiang, 2005), and funding sources and institutional efficiency and
effectiveness (Min & Ding, 2005).

The quality of the student writing in particular has caught the attention of both
Chinese and English professors of writing instruction. Zhang (2008), for example,
criticizes the lack of adequate faculty to serve the increasing needs for Chinese writing
instruction on the college level, pointing to the urgent need in the workplace for
employees with writing competence. As a result of the increased instructional workload
for professors, coupled with the fact that grading writing assignments is time-intensive,
Lin, Wang, and Gao (2008) suggest that Chinese writing instruction has become
marginalized as faculty tend to use other forms of assignments more easily assessed,
calling for increased research in this area to reclaim its position in the curriculum. Even
with the emphasis put on English education from primary school to college, English
writing instruction has not received as much research and pedagogical attention as have
other areas such as reading comprehension and listening, both of which can be easily
assessed using standardized tests. In his comparison of the development of writing
research in the West with that in China, Yang (2005) concludes that it is time for English
writing instruction to be reexamined by “borrowing” theories and practices from other
countries to enhance its instruction in China. However, as Li (2007) determined, little has
been done concerning writing instruction reform, affecting the quality of both the
required college-level thesis and that of higher education in general.

Several approaches have been implemented at different levels in Chinese higher
education to address these issues. The Ministry of Education launched the Evaluation of
University Baccalaureate Programs Project in 2002, and the Higher Education Evaluation Center of the Ministry of Education was established in 2004 as part of the Five-Year Circle Evaluation Program to assess the quality of higher education institutions as the result of the increasing enrollment (Higher Education Evaluation Center [HEEC], 2009). Mandatory for every regular higher education institution in China, this evaluation program designed to assess the overall quality of undergraduate education has become one of the top priorities for many Chinese higher institutions because they lose state funding if its standards are not met.

To ensure they pass, the institutions have approached this evaluation by focusing on compiling archives (Zhang, 2006; Feng, 2007; Zhang, 2007) to meet the requirements, not by focusing directly on the quality of teaching and learning as is its intent. Zhu Qingshi (Sciencenet, 2008), the President of the University of Science and Technology of China, a top science and engineering university, criticized this evaluation openly in 2006 at the Symposium on Building First Class Chinese Universities, pointing out that in order to obtain good evaluation results, many universities have forged files or even bribed the evaluation specialists. In an interview in the Southern Weekly, described as "China's most influential liberal newspaper" by The New York Times in 2002, Zhu said “I know that many universities asked their faculty members to forge documents for evaluation and even let students participate in it. This is the most serious problem. How could you teach or ask these students, faculty, and other young people not to cheat in future? It is a very slow process to educate and shape the moral quality of a person, but it is very easy to destroy it. It will take one or two generations to rebuild this moral
quality if it is destroyed. And it is quite difficult to tell the truth.” He advocates that
Chinese higher education would be better served by putting an end to this pointless
administration-directed evaluation of academia and letting the professors return to their
primary missions of research and instruction.

Society has also been impacted by this enrollment expansion, in particular the job
market which cannot accommodate this sudden influx of college-educated potential
employees. Consequently, graduates have a difficult time finding employment in spite
of the efforts of the government and higher institutions in helping them find jobs.
According to He Zhaowu (Beijing Evening News, 2009), a prestigious Chinese culture
and philosophy scholar, this policy on enrollment expansion has turned the job market
into what it was like before the Communist liberation, a situation the Minister of
Education should be “spanked” for. Although the employment rate for college
graduates is fairly respectable, some universities enhance this information by requiring
employment contracts before issuing diplomas to students as this rate is one of the
criteria of the Evaluation Program.

Significance of a Feasibility Study on Introducing WAC into China

In light of this pressure from society, students and parents and the dramatically
increasing teaching load, university professors, administrators, and researchers in China
are attempting to find solutions to help promote student learning and improve the
overall quality of higher education. However, viable answers are possible only if the
historical context of the current Chinese higher education system is considered. The
People’s Republic of China has a relatively short history of modern higher education
since the nation, which was established only 60 years ago, inherited a weak educational
system, which declined even further during the 10 years of Cultural Revolution from
1966 to 1976. Its initial modern higher education system was modeled after the former
Soviet Union’s. After the break with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, the universities
became structured similar to those in Western countries, especially the United States,
until the Cultural Revolution (Du, 1992). As part of the economic and political reforms
beginning in the late 1970s, China implemented the Open-Door Policy, welcoming
foreign scholars and expatriates, seeing them as a strong intellectual work force with the
knowledge, skills, and management obtained through training in the Western
universities (Du, 1992). In addition, Chinese academics, given the historical constraints
in obtaining access to the international intellectual community, also established their
own academic journals, publishing systems, and databases (Altbach, 1998).

Currently, with the increasing interaction and exchange among higher education
professionals made possible by globalization and developing communication
technologies, Chinese higher education has been seeking solutions to its current issues
and problems by studying the pedagogical theories and practices developed in the
United States, Europe, and other parts of the world (Zweig, Chen & Rosen, 2004;
Postiglione, 2005). However, no previous research on or practices in WAC can be found
in the Chinese research databases. Even in this era of enhanced intellectual exchange
between the US and China, only limited previous research, Townsend’s (2002) report
being an example, can be found on US WAC scholarship. Writing researchers in China,
however, have established their own historical, cultural, and linguistic focuses and
domains in Chinese “writingology” (Chen, 2009, p.3), a disciplinary study similar to rhetoric and composition in the U.S., with the overwhelming majority of the scholarship being published in Chinese, and as Chen’s recently published review of writing research in China indicates, influences of theories such as those about the writing process, for example, can be found in China, but only limited American composition works are directly cited and there is almost no mention of WAC research. This lack of research in WAC, however, should not be taken as a complete absence of research or practice in the disciplines of using writing or other communication modalities to promote student learning, nor should it be taken as a refusal to initiate or integrate WAC pedagogies in Chinese higher education, especially in light of the historical development of higher education from an international perspective.

The increase in higher education enrollment is not a phenomenon unique to China. The first wave of large-scale modern higher education enrollment expansion began in the US after World War II, followed by a similar increase in Europe. Now this expansion has spread to the Third World and other newly industrialized countries and areas (Altbach, 1998). As China is not the first nation to deal with this kind of higher education growth, we need not and should not “reinvent the wheel” since we can refer to the research and practice of other countries and areas to cope with similar issues brought on by the expansion.

The United States higher education system experienced a college enrollment expansion in the 1970s that resulted in issues and concerns similar to what China is experiencing now (Li, Morgan & Ding, 2007). Based on the connection between writing
and learning, early researchers such as Janet Emig (1977) and James Britton (1975) pointed out that this change in higher education spurred university professors and other grassroots agents (Walvoord, 1996) to initiate Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs to promote student learning and improve student writing. A parallel movement in Speaking Across the Curriculum also developed during the same time period (Dannels & Gaffney, 2009). Later, with the development of digital technology and interdisciplinary research, some of these programs merged, creating CXC (Communication Across the Curriculum) or ECAC (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum) (Reiss & Young, 2001). The term chosen to be used throughout this dissertation is WAC, which represents the different acronyms with the same basic concepts.

The increase in college enrollment and the dissemination of WAC share a similar route, albeit with a time lag of approximately 20 years, both moving from the US to Europe and then to the Third World and the newly industrialized countries and areas. In Europe, WAC--often under the title of “academic writing”-- began at the end of the 1990s with the first annual EATAW (European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing) Conference being held in 2001 (Russell, 2003), meaning that European WAC research and practice was initiated approximately 20 years after the beginning of WAC programs in the US. The newly established WAC programs in Asia mirror that WAC dissemination, following college expansion into the developing and newly industrialized areas. The WAC program in The Chinese University of Hong Kong was founded in 2003 (Braine, 2004), and the research on WAC in Taiwan began to appear at
English conferences in 2007 (Hsu, 2007). Although these two areas are always included in the region of greater China, residual colonial influences, different political and higher education systems, and the pervasive influence of English, especially in Hong Kong (Altbach, 1998), all contributed to this earlier dissemination of WAC into these areas. As this analysis suggests, the fact that no WAC research or practice can be found in China does not mean a refusal to engage in these important discussions but rather merely indicates a time lag between the recognition of the problem and the formalization of WAC-based steps to alleviate it.

The Chinese higher education system is quite different from that in the US and Europe, and even from Hong Kong and Taiwan where WAC has been initiated, transplanted, transformed, embraced, or just experimented with. Higher education in China has experienced tremendous changes within a complex and dynamic political context (Du, 1992) over the past several decades. Although the focus of the Chinese government in higher education has been on science and technology, the emphasis in humanities and social sciences research is increasing as evidenced by the number of grants and the issuing of the Grants Application and Management Guidelines in 2001 (National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science, 2010). Given the increased efforts of Chinese higher education to better meet the needs of student learning and faculty instruction, the time is appropriate for introducing WAC into China.

This study investigates the feasibility of introducing and adapting the US-originated WAC movement into Chinese higher education. The pressing need to improve the teaching of its 1.2 million faculty members and the writing and learning of
its 18.8 million college students calls for an initial feasibility study to see if WAC could be one of the solutions to some of the issues Chinese higher education faces and, further, to investigate how it could be adapted to this country’s higher education system. If it is feasible to introduce WAC, Chinese professors familiar with WAC pedagogies have the potential to equip students with writing, speaking, and other communication modalities to improve their learning, and students could improve their communication abilities while understanding, practicing, applying, and expanding their knowledge, thus enhancing their contributions to society and the world. This study also includes determining the possible opportunities and potential “enemies” (Young & Fulwiler, 1990) that WAC may have in China.

Specifically this project attempts to answer the following research questions:

- RQ 1: What factors in Chinese higher education would contribute to the feasibility of introducing the US-originated WAC into China?
- RQ 2: What factors in Chinese higher education could be potential challenges for introducing the US-originated WAC into China?
- RQ 3: What aspects of US-based WAC programs could be pragmatically implemented to Chinese higher education?
- RQ 4: What aspects of US-based WAC programs represent significant challenges for Chinese higher education?

Methods

These research questions were addressed through the qualitative descriptive analysis of data collected through 28 face-to-face interviews conducted in China and
eight telephone/Internet interviews in the US. The research protocols for the interviews in the US and those in China were approved by the Clemson University Institution Review Board. The interview questions for the US interviews can be found in Appendix A, and the interview questions for the China interviews in Appendix B.

The interviews conducted in China were classified into categories based on the type participant: university professors, university administrators, and potential employers. The U.S. interviewees consisted of WAC experts, such as WAC program administrators, leading researchers, and theorists. The interviews were subsequently transcribed and analyzed using an inductive analytical framework (Miles & Huberman, 1984) to generate the themes found in them, and activity theory (Engeström, 1987; Russell, 1997a; Russell & Yañez, 2003) was the applied to analyze the subjects, tools, objects, division of labor, community and rules/norms in the activity systems of university courses, university administration, and potential workplaces to determine the participants’ perspectives on writing, oral communication, and the use of digital technology.

Organization of the Study

The organization of this project is outlined below. Brief summaries of the seven chapters are also provided.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The first chapter introduces the current problem in the quality of Chinese higher education after the enrollment expansion and proposes WAC as one possible solution because of its history and functions in American higher education and also its rapid
dissemination into other parts of the world. The significance of the research and the four research questions are presented. The overall methodology is summarized, and the organization of the study is provided at the end of this chapter with summaries of all the chapters.

Chapter 2 A Review of WAC

In this chapter, a review of the evolvement of WAC and CAC programs in the US is provided. An introduction to activity theory and its applications in WAC research are also included. This chapter also discusses the international dissemination of WAC and points out that the current lack of WAC research or program in China is not due to a refusal but a time lag caused by the late adoption of higher education expansion.

Chapter 3 Chinese Higher Education

Chinese higher education is analyzed in this chapter to find why there has not been WAC research or a similar program in China. The higher education reform and enrollment expansion in China, which have already raised questions for higher education professionals, emphasize the need to conduct research in order to address the changes and challenges of improving student writing and learning. Discussions of the unique Chinese higher education structure and the influences from Chinese political culture will be included to provide a foundation for possible “translation” of WAC programs into China. Faculty, administrators, and potential employers are identified as the three major stakeholders to be studied in this project. An analysis of potential opportunities and challenges is also included at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 4 Methods
The methodology employed in this project is a qualitative descriptive analysis of data obtained from 28 interviews conducted in China and 8 interviews in the US with WAC experts. This chapter describes the universe of investigation, the materials, the interview questions, and the administration of this study. An inductive analytical framework is used to help to reduce the data, compare the categories, and draw conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Chapter 5 China Interviews Qualitative Results

In this chapter, the results of the 28 interviews conducted with 10 faculty members, 8 administrators, and 10 employers are reported in 4 primary themes and 17 secondary themes to answer the first two research questions. These results, analyzed in activity systems of university classroom, administration, and workplace, reveal the embedded contradictions in these systems: the contradiction in the motive, and the contradictions among the tools, rules/norms, and the motives. This leads to a proposal of adding WAC researchers into the community of the activity system of the university classroom to ease these contradictions and promote better teaching and learning.

Chapter 6 US WAC Interviews Qualitative Results

This chapter reports the results from the eight interviews with the US WAC experts in 12 themes, which answer the last two research questions of this study. These results confirm a healthy and promising future for WAC in the US and point out the directions of WAC in its international dissemination. A comparison/contrast of these results and those from the China interviews is included to analyze the current needs and opportunities for introducing WAC into China. Faculty interest, one of the two
indispensable components, has been found in China. The lack of technological resources and the problem of academic dishonesty pose particular challenges to Chinese WAC researchers and practitioners.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The results of this study strongly support the feasibility of introducing WAC into China. This chapter summarizes the critical findings and the theoretical and empirical contributions, discusses the limitations of this study, and makes suggestions for future research in internationalizing WAC research and practice by conducting local research into the context, culture, and other social conditions.
CHAPTER TWO
A REVIEW OF WAC

Writing Across the Curriculum is alive and well in the US, as Thaiss and Porter (2010) report in their 2005-2008 survey of WAC programs. This fact is not only reflected by the longevity of these programs but also by the growing and varied research in this area (Thaiss & Porter, 2010). This survey, coupled with an earlier one conducted by McLeod and Shirley in 1987, once again shows that WAC is one of the most successful educational movements in the US (Russell, 2002).

This chapter reviews the evolution of WAC practice and research, including its integration with other communication modalities and digital technologies, leading to programs and research in CAC (Communication Across the Curriculum) and ECAC (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum). The four premises of WAC, (a) writing to learn, (b) writing to communicate, (c) writing as social process, and (d) writing as social action, are introduced as interrelated components of WAC. Activity theory, a major theoretical foundation in WAC research, is also reviewed to provide a theoretical foundation for this study’s analysis of the subjects, tools, objects, division of labor, community and rules/norms in the activity systems of Chinese university courses and university administration, and of workplaces as reflected by the interviews with professors, administrators, and employers. The introduction and adaptation of WAC outside of North America is also included to show the process of the international dissemination of WAC and to clarify its relationship with the enrollment expansion in
higher education that has affected China since the end of the 1990s, a topic more specifically discussed in Chapter Three.

WAC Evolution

WAC, initiated in the US in the 1970s by English faculty in higher education institutions to address the literacy crisis (Russell, 1990), is defined by its “intended outcomes—helping students become critical thinkers and problem solvers, as well as developing their communication skills” (McLeod & Miraglia, 2001, p.5). The emphasis on WAC, which is what makes it unique from general education or other educational reform movements, is on transforming pedagogy from the lecture mode to “a model of active student engagement with the material and with the genres of the discipline through writing, not just in English classes but in all classes across the university” (McLeod & Miraglia, p.5).

This educational movement has evolved to incorporate other modalities of communication such as speaking, listening, and educational technologies, resulting in a series of acronyms coined and used for different formats or different stages of the programs: SAC (Speaking Across the Curriculum), CAC (Communication Across the Curriculum) or CXC, WID (Writing in the Disciplines), and ECAC (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum) (Reiss, Selfe & Young, 1998). This evolution of WAC pedagogies not only provides various modalities for students to learn to write and to write to learn but also has blurred the lines “between writing and other forms of communication and between classrooms and other spaces” (Walvoord, 1996); more importantly, this growth reemphasize the possibilities that WAC has brought and
continues to bring into classrooms, curriculum, and institutions at all levels of education in different parts of the world.

WAC was initiated as a grassroots movement (Walvoord, 1996) in the mid-1970s when U.S. higher education experienced a significant increase in the number of institutions and in college enrollment. By the end of the 1960s, the number of US higher education institutions had increased by more than one-fourth, and the number of students doubled from 3.6 million in 1960 to 8 million during that decade (Bureau of the Census, 1975). Although this increase improved the access to higher education among groups of Americans previously excluded, its impact was broader than that. This expansion made selective institutions even more selective and research-oriented while forcing others to address the needs of those students who had previously been excluded (Smith, 1974). This increase of students required reliance on graduate students and adjunct teachers for composition classes and other general education courses (Jenks & Riesman, 1968). Faculty began to believe that the enrollment standards had dropped and the students were not prepared for college-level writing, while the students felt intimidated by the specialized discourses introduced by the college training required for new jobs or those that traditionally had not required post-secondary training (Russell, 1994).

Writing instruction in this period was primarily focused on elementary and mechanical skills, such as grammar, usage, and spelling. Therefore, writing instruction appeared to be transient remediation (Russell, 2002), teaching skills that could be learned once and for all. However, as the professionalization of academic study evolved,
literacy was no longer conceived of as a singular form but rather one that should be
developed within the different disciplines. Writing professionals such as Ken Macrorie
and Peter Elbow, influenced by the child-centered progressive tradition, worked to
reconfigure the skills model of composition by shifting the focus from the text or the
readers to the writer. Although they did not develop a systematic reform for writing
pedagogy and discipline-specific discourse communities (Russell, 1994), this focus
eventually contributed to the process theory. At the same time, federal funds began to be
appropriated for curricular reform, encouraging disciplines including English to focus
on pedagogy. However, as Russell chronicles, the traditional pedagogy and disciplinary
focus were not changed until 1966 when American English professors met with their
British colleagues for the month-long Dartmouth Seminars. This exchange introduced
the American English profession to the move in British pedagogy from basic skills and
grammar to experience-centered awareness, a change encouraging the personal
development of students. This paradigm shift from writing products to writing
processes, initially described by Richard Young (1978) and later articulated more fully
by Maxine Hairston (1982), was realized through the efforts of process theorists such as

Changes in higher education and in US society set up the social and institutional
foundation for WAC: racial integration, together with the growth in higher education
matriculated previously excluded students who were not necessarily as well-prepared
for college, meaning that higher education now faced teaching academic discourse to
these students. In addition, academic administrators became business-like, adopting
industrial management styles to focus on accountability in higher education institutions; they saw WAC as a tool for reforming the curriculum and for faculty development (Russell, 2002). Theoretical development in writing and composition studies also contributed to the birth and growth of WAC (Russell, 1994). As these changes, referred to as the “fundamental institutional, social, and theoretical shifts” (Russell, 1995), began to take effect, WAC made its appearance in different institutions under different formats and emphases but with the same fundamental belief that writing can help students engage in learning in ways that will also improve their writing ability. The first programs appeared at Beaver College under the direction of Elaine Maimon and at Michigan Technological University led by Toby Fulwiler and Art Young. According to a survey conducted by the Modern Language Association in 1985, 46% of all Ph.D.-granting institutions, 48% of all B.A./M.A.-granting institutions, and 28% of all two-year colleges had a WAC program of some sort at this time (Kinneavy, 1987). Essentially, WAC had moved from a grassroots movement (Walvoord, 1996) to a combination of bottom-up and top-down programs (Holdstein, 2001).

This movement, initiated as a response within higher education institutions to the tension between the increased enrollment and the decrease in student preparedness, especially as reflected in reading and writing (Russell, 1994), was as also a response to the complaints about the lack of writing skills of students from other stakeholders such as industry and government (Kinneavy, 1987). Its far-reaching influences in both secondary and higher education, its contribution to the development of theories in
composition studies, and its longevity compared to other reforms or movements have made WAC one of the most successful education movements in the US (Russell, 2002).

WAC-related research also developed and diversified due to the growth of the movement (Thaiss & Porter, 2010). According to Farrell-Childers, Gere, & Young (1994), the four premises in WAC development in both theory and practice are (a) writing to learn, (b) writing to communicate, (c) writing as social process, and (d) writing as social action. The first two emphasize cognitive development, while the last two indicate the movement from cognitive to social development, which later led to Writing In the Disciplines (WID), a very important component of WAC research and of the adoption of socially-oriented activity theory as a tool for rhetorical and empirical analysis. However, these premises are not as separate as they appear; rather they interrelated, informing and responding to one another.

Writing to learn focuses on helping students to use writing to explore and discover new knowledge, usually by using low stakes writing assignments or exercises (Elbow, 1997). It is categorized by James Britton (1975) as informal/expressive writing in contrast to formal/transactional writing, which is associated with writing to communicate.

The research studies conducted by James Britton (1975) and his colleague Nancy Martin (1976) on the writing of British secondary school students found a connection between language and thinking, one that suggested the dominant writing assignments in transactional/formal writing limited the chances for children to develop their writing abilities in moving from expressive writing, the personal writing that the writer does for
him/herself in the form of a written-down inner speech, to transactional writing, the
public writing that the writer does for others.

Their research was in conjunction with that conducted by Janet Emig (1977) initiated the cognitive studies in composition, and Emig’s research provided
composition researchers a new methodology and a new research agenda that allowed them to enter the mainstream of education research in the 1980’s. A similar marginalization in Chinese writing instruction and research has been suggested in recent research by Chinese composition researchers (Lin, Wang, & Gao, 2008), although there has been no noticeable trend to introduce new research methods or set up a research agenda to address this issue. The study of writing and composition appears to be in a very early stage, showing possible directions of research (Chen, 2010) but no development of a systematic approach.

This cognitive approach is one of the three views found in process theories, with the other two being the expressive and the social (Faigley, 1986). The expressive view focuses on personal experience in education and in writing, emphasizing freewriting, originality, and spontaneity (Macrorie, 1970; Elbow, 1973), while the social nature of language, de-emphasized by the expressive view, was subsequently integrated into the social view of process theory. According to Faigley (1986), it includes four lines of research. The first line, represented by David Bartholomae and Patricia Bizzell, developed from the poststructuralist theories of language. The second line studies the social processes of writing in academic discourses, with the major researchers being Charles Bazerman from the US and Greg Myers from Britain, both of whom focus on the
sociology of science. This second line has produced a significant body of scholarship that has made a substantial contribution to WID research. Based on their research, Bazerman and Myers assert that texts are not reflections of facts but rather "active social tools in the complex interactions of a research community" (Bazerman, 1985, p.3); this line of research, therefore, has found a heuristic in activity theory that provides a way to understand communication by the tools of language in different modalities in and among activity systems. The other two lines of research originated from ethnography as exemplified by Shirley Brice Heath and the Marxist studies of literacy of Henry Giroux.

Writing to communicate focuses on student use of writing to demonstrate what and how much they have learned, an approach best summarized by Kenneth Bruffee (1984) in his article “Collaborative Learning and the ‘Conversation of Mankind.’” The distinction between writing to learn and writing to communication was well-articulated in 1995 in Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae’s public debate in *College Composition and Communication*. Elbow believes that writers have authorship at the beginning of writing and that they should explore different ways of writing without teachers and outside of the classroom. Bartholomae disagrees with Elbow, arguing that students need to prove themselves first to gain authorship and that academic writing can be achieved only through formal, academic training. Their discussion made composition teachers rethink authorship, audience, and power in writing and writing instruction. Even though some researchers such as Knoblauch and Brannon (1983) and Mahala (1991) emphasize the differences between writing to learn and writing to communicate, for most WAC
practitioners these two have always been indispensible components and are complementary (McLeod & Maimon, 2000).

First-generation WAC programs based their practice on the research in these two premises of writing to learn and writing to communicate, focusing on the “lack of value our society and our educational system seemed to place on written communication” (Farrell-Childers, Gere & Young, 1994, p.2). However, by the 1980’s and early 1990’s, WAC programs became institutionalized (McLeod, 1989), its research shifting to focus on program descriptions and developments (Maimon et al., 1981; Fulwiler & Young, 1982, 1986, 1990; McLeod & Soven, 1992). This top-down approach to WAC was seen as a potential threat to the grassroots efforts of faculty, one that could intensify resistance among them if “administrators try to decree it by decreeing WAC programs, rather than by assisting the growth of grassroots efforts” (Thaiss, 1988, p.94).

At about this same time, WAC research expanded to explore the social dimensions of writing and the social construction of knowledge (Myers, 1985; Herrington, 1985; McCarthy, 1987) reflected in the third and fourth premises of WAC, writing as social process and writing as social action (Farrell-Childers, Gere & Young, 1994), both influenced by the social view of process theory that writing takes place in a social context and has an impact on the society. Writing as social process, which refers to the social context in which writing takes place, emphasizes collaboration, audience, and communities of learners. As Maimon (2006) points out, the concept of a learning community originated in WAC practice.
Writing as social action means that writers try to “change their perceptions of the world and to change others’ perceptions of the world” (Farrell-Childers, Gere & Young, p. 3). Students are, thus, encouraged to write to their professors, classmates, peers, family, friends, people they know, or people they do not know using different means such as essays, emails, reports, letters, Facebook posts, cyber poems, and digital videos to demonstrate what they understand and how they want to be understood. Michael Wesch, a professor of anthropology at Kansas State University, for example, guided his students in their study of the effects of social media and digital technology on global literacy, creating digital videos such as *A Vision of Students Today* (2007) and *An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube* (2009). These videos are good examples of the integration of the social dimensions of writing and technology into course content.

Writing to communicate later evolved into WID (Writing-in-the-Disciplines) research (Bazerman, 1988; Herrington, 1985; McCarthy, 1987; Myers, 1990), a development in WAC that provides discipline-specific writing instructions influenced by Bazerman’s study of the sociology of science that investigated the writing of scientists and social scientists. With this new direction in WAC research, researchers began to look at writing not just as a single process but rather as several processes that mediate professional and disciplinary activities. They turned to activity theory (Engeström, 1987; Russell, 1997a; Russell & Yañez, 2003), primarily developed in psychology by Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986), and appropriated it as a theoretical tool for writing research (Russell, 1997a). (Activity theory will be discussed in the third part of this section.)
Although some researchers tend to make the distinctions between WAC and WID clear and obvious so that these different approaches can be understood better (Bazerman et al., 2005), others do not think there is such a dichotomy between the WAC/WID split that has been discussed by researchers since the 1990s, which is a reflection of the conflict between professional and general education in the study and teaching of writing (Russell, 2002). The institutional split between the two suggests writing is a set of skills acquired in composition courses. However, students need to engage in both expressive/personal and transactional/public writing as they advance in writing and learning (Russell, 2002), and the classroom should not be considered a place for only either expressive or transactional writing but as a “middle ground” (Reiss & Young, 2001), with possible space for poetic writing. This middle ground allows students to practice both expressive and transactional writing with a real audience and prompt feedback so that a dialectic relationship with self, as represented in inner speech, and society, as represented in public speech, can be established to transform both self and society. As this middle ground approach suggests, WAC and WID should not be seen as in conflict with each other but rather as two components that promote student learning and writing (McLeod & Miraglia, 2001).

WAC pedagogy has been centered on writing to learn and writing to communicate by incorporating suitable writing practices and activities to engage student in learning. Program models vary in their emphases on workshops (Young & Fulwiler, 1986; McLeod, 1989), linked courses (Mullin, 2001), freshman seminars (Monroe, 2003), and writing fellows or peer tutors (Soven, 2001). However, the primary
pedagogy in WAC programs has been the Writing-Intensive (WI) courses centered on regular and intensive writing practice of both “low-stakes” and “high-stakes” assignments (Elbow, 1997, p.5).

WI courses usually are small (capped at 15-25 students) and incorporate frequent informal (low-stakes) writing-to-learn activities. A significant percentage of the final grade in these courses is based on the writing components. In some WAC programs, WI courses are required to be taught by faculty rather than teaching assistants. However, the most important characteristic is that WI courses, like WAC programs themselves, are highly local, focusing on and addressing the specific needs of the institution. The page or word count, while important, serves more as basic common sense guidelines for students and faculty than as a requirement. The important and meaningful attributes of writing assignments in a WI course are (a) the emphasis on revisions, usefulness, and efficiency of faculty feedback, (b) the frequency of the writing, and (c) the design of the writing activities that can contribute to the learning outcomes for specific courses (Townsend, 2001).

WI courses are different from courses with traditional pedagogies in that the importance of writing in learning is recognized by the instructors. WI course instructors use writing to engage students in the learning process to understand, express, reflect, synthesize, and make contributions to the knowledge system they are entering (Farris & Smith, 1992). WI courses incorporate various writing activities that better assist students as learners than traditional pedagogies. While WI courses cannot solve all the problems in teaching and learning, they contribute to curricular reform and improvement in
student learning. Although WI courses are often classified as writing to communicate in
disciplinary discourse communities, writing to learn assignments and activities are not
excluded from these courses (McLeod, 2000).

CAC Evolution

At approximately the same time as WAC was being introduced, a similar
educational movement in American higher education was begun in communication
studies. Speaking-Across-the-Curriculum (SAC, later renamed CAC or CXC) programs
with an emphasis on oral communication appeared in the US in the 1970s (Russell,
2002). Although CAC is the acronym that often appears in the literature as the “umbrella
term” (Dannels & Gaffney, 2009) for activities that incorporate speaking and other
communication skills into courses, communication researchers tend to use the acronym
CXC to refer to this movement. Although connections between CAC and WAC were
seen in the 1990s, full collaboration did not begin until the 21st century (Dannels &
Gaffney, 2009).

WAC and CAC developed in parallel, but WAC initiatives, unlike CAC, were
soon institutionalized as they were based on the extensive research in English
composition and pedagogy; as CAC researchers such as Steinfatt (1989) have long
pointed out, “unless we begin to work in ways parallel to our colleagues in writing
across the curriculum programs, we may soon find our mission in academia relegated to
others, or simply dismissed as redundant or irrelevant” (p.469). While a survey
conducted by Deanna Dannels in 2001 supported the health of CAC programs at
different universities in the US, it also indicated some resistance to them and problems
with program sustainability. Based on the results, she argued that CAC programs
needed discipline-specific research, something desired by the faculty in those fields. In a
second article in the same year, she called for a CID (Communication-In-the-Disciplines)
framework to enhance the future of CAC programs and for research in this area,
paralleling WAC research in WID. This CAC research, according to Dannels and
Gaffney (2009), began in 1983 and has experienced three distinct eras marked by major

Although the first SAC program was initiated in 1974 in the US (Tomlinson,
1999), the beginning of the first era was marked by the publication of two frequently
Communication Skills for Community College Students Seeking Immediate Entry into
the Work Force” by Muchmore and Galvin (1983) and “Speaking and Listening
Education Across the Curriculum” by Roberts (1983). This era, 1972-83, is characterized
as a period of “establishment and justification” (Dannels & Gaffney, p.133), in which
publications centered on the importance of CAC programs, program descriptions, and
instructional guides for CAC pedagogies.

The first era formed a foundation for CAC research, leading the movement into
the next, cross-currucular skepticism, which focused on the “expansion and critical
reflection” (Dannels & Gaffney, p.135) of CAC programs. This skepticism, at first, was
not as explicitly and openly discussed in research publications as it was in the NCA
(National Communication Association) Platform Statement on CAC (Morreale, 1997). This
statement clearly emphasized that CAC programs should consult closely with communication faculty and should be a useful supplement to existing communication courses. This emphasis on the role of the communication discipline reflected its potential, foreshadowing the 1999 NCA Annual Convention town hall debate on “Communication Across the Curriculum: Friend or Foe?” This debate was later moved to an online forum and was subsequently published as scholarship questioning and arguing for the mission, value, and the role of communication departments in the movement (Morreale, 1997, 1999; Olsen, 1996; Sheckels, Roberts & Morreale, 1997).

During this time, CAC and WAC researchers saw for the first time the possibility for collaboration between these two movements (George & Trimbur, 1999; Reiss, 1996). And it was this interdisciplinary realization that moved CAC research enter the third era of “reinvention and empiricism” (Dannels & Gaffney, p.137).

This third era, cross-curricular curiosity, led to a discipline-specific communication theoretical framework, coined CID (Communication in the Disciplines) by Dannels (2001b), a name reflecting the influence of WID. Empirical studies on communication in the disciplines increased rapidly, including those in collaboration with disciplines such as engineering (Dannels, 2002; Darling, 2005), design (Morton, 2006; Morton & O’Brien, 2005; Dannels, Gaffney, & Martin, 2008), and the teaching of communication within professional settings (Dannels, Anson, Bullard, & Peretti, 2003; Smith, 2005). In addition, an increase in the research in theory was also seen at this time, exploring CAC’s role in developing theory and calling for a discipline-specific (CID) direction (Dannels, 2001b; Garside, 2002). CAC researchers also began to explore
rhetorical theory, feminist theory, and genre theory (Fleury, 2005; Garside, 2002; Palmerton, 2005).

Many WAC programs today have incorporated both WAC and CAC, responding to changes in technology by moving in the direction of ECAC (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum) supported by scholars and practitioners interested in computer-supported communication (Reiss, Selfe & Young, 1998). The acronyms reflecting this development such as WAC, WID, CAC/CXC, CID, and ECAC are not about distinctions, boundaries, or limits, but rather about evolution, collaboration, site-specific culture, and progress. A review of the history shows that educational initiatives, such as CAC and WAC, although developed from the same educational roots and with similar emphasis on curricular reforms, might have taken quite different routes of development, largely affected by theoretical foundations, the exchange and collaboration among the programs, and the leadership and concerted efforts within the fields. CAC researchers such as Dannels, realizing the weakness of CAC programs, have focused on these areas, and CAC programs such as the Campus Writing and Speaking Program at North Carolina State University have incorporated both writing and speaking across the curriculum (Anson, Carter, Dannels, & Rust, 2003). However, if similar initiatives are to be realized in other countries and cultures, this review of the history of the evolution of CAC and WAC suggests incorporating multiple communication modalities at the very beginning, building on a solid theoretical foundation, incorporating elements from the home disciplines to contribute their development, and collaborating with other initiatives and programs.
Activity Theory and WAC Research

The research trend in both WAC and CAC is increasingly emphasizing an empirical approach, specifically naturalistic research, based on David Russell’s (2001) contention that quantitative research often yields confusing results. He lists four factors of writing and learning in secondary and higher education: 1) student motives, 2) the identities that students (re)construct, 3) pedagogical tools, 4) the processes used by students in learning to write and writing to learn. These factors can be analyzed using activity theory, based on Lev Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) cultural-historical psychology theory, to see how writing functions as a tool in mediating human activities, especially educational activities (Bazerman & Russell, 2003). In fact, from the very beginning of WAC research, James Britton’s study (1975) was based on Vygotsky’s theory, meaning that activity theory has influenced WAC from its inception. There have been many extensions and applications of activity theory in North America, Britain, France, and Scandinavia, with their commonality being that human-produced artifacts should not be viewed only as objects in themselves but within the activities in which they are created, utilized, and explored and that these artifacts should be studied to determine their mediating functions in these activities.

Activity theory is a heuristic that cannot predict outcomes but only offer tentative explanations (Russell & Yañez, 2003). Developed from Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) work in psychology and Leont’ev’s (1978, 1981) contributions, the key concept forming its basis is the idea of mediation. In Vygotsky’s view of mediation, human beings do not simply follow the transmission model of stimulus-response; rather their responses are
made through indirect connections, referred to as mediation that they build through
different links. The tools they use in building these links can be material or technical
tools, such as a saw or a knife, or psychological tools or signs, such as language
(Vygotsky, 1978). By using the technical tools, human beings are able to adjust and
control their behavior from the outside; and by using the psychological tools, they can
regulate their minds from the inside and then communicate their ideas with others.
Thus, human beings can regulate both their inside and outside worlds using the tools
available to them in the society and the culture in which they live. This mediation then
provides them with a dialectical relationship with the society and culture, suggesting the
inside world and the outside world are not isolated but rather interact (Cole &
Engeström, 1993; Engeström, 1999). Human beings are the mediators who use the tools
to accomplish the objects. For example, human beings can use material tools such as
shovels and hammers to build homes for themselves, but they also use languages to
think and organize their ideas and then to convey them to others in order to collaborate
on building projects.

This mediation explains why WID is an organic component of WAC and why
writing to communicate and writing to learn can work together in WAC programs to
promote student learning. Elbow’s (1973) research and pedagogy is primarily centered
on the inner speech of writers and is associated with writing to learn, while Bazerman’s
(1988) research has focused on the outer world, the social environment of the writers,
and on writing to communicate and WID. This dialectical relationship between the inner
and outer world explains the connection between writing to learn and writing to communicate.

Engeström and Cole (1993) extended Vygotsky’s concept of mediation by situating human mediation within collective activities and adding three other mediators: the social norms/rules, the community, and the division of labor/roles. With their extension, an activity system becomes a three level triangle as seen in Figure 2.1. This activity system, based on Engeström, begins with the subjects on the left and moves clockwise, with people using culturally constructed tools/signs to accomplish objects and tasks being assigned to them by the division of labor in the community under certain rules and norms. This expanded triangle provides a theoretical tool for analyzing dynamic human social interactions, focusing on their essential aspects (Russell & Yañez, 2003), while at the same time indicating that all the mediators and their mediations are related and should be viewed holistically rather than individually.

Figure 2.1 Engeström’s Activity System.

Writing, one of the tools that human beings use in mediation, has been studied through this lens of activity theory for approximately 20 years. Many qualitative studies
have explored the struggles students have within the activity systems in higher education settings (Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Fishman & McCarthy, 2000; Greene, 1993; Mulvaney, 1997; Prior, 1998; Russell, 1997b; Russell & Yañez, 2003; Velez, 1995).

Specifically, this approach explores writing by situating it in an activity system or systems, studying it not as simple skills or simple processes as was done in the 1970s and 1980s; rather learners are viewed as participants involved in the activity systems, learning to practice the norms of the community by using the culturally constructed tools (including but not limited to writing) to gain access to the community, to become recognized by it so that they are admitted into it, and to accomplish the objectives of their assigned roles.

Using the line of writing research on activity theory that Bazerman and Russell (2003) have outlined, activity theory has been applied in the study of writing, the culturally constructed mediating tool in many fields, disciplines, and especially interdisciplinary studies. Some examples of the disciplines and research areas studied include science (Bazerman, 1988), business and professional workplaces (Bazerman & Paradis, 1991), philosophy (Geisler, 1994), higher education and the workplace (Russell, 1997b; Dias, Freedman, Medway & Paré, 1999), economic policy (Freedman & Smart, 1997), engineering (Winsor, 1996, 2003), banking and finance (Smart, 1993, 2000, 2003), technology (Geilser, 2003), and computer engineering and software development (Spinuzzi, 2003). Naturalistic empirical studies interpreted through the lens of activity theory have become widely accepted and practiced by WAC researchers and programs since this movement began, studying faculty using writing (Walvoord et al., 1997),
student writing at different levels (Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990; Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991), and workplace writing (Anson & Forsberg, 1990).

To writing researchers, an activity system can be a course/classroom, a workplace in an organization, or an academic discipline, and the tools in it include writing in the various venues to mediate the activity. These tools can be extended from writing to other communication modalities, including oral and digital formats. Using this theoretical lens, WAC researchers can explore how these tools are used by human beings to mediate activities and interact with the other mediators. Studying the dialectical relationship between human beings and the society and culture provides information on how these mediating tools function to further the development of the disciplines, business, society, culture, and the acquisition (knowing), practice (doing), and advancement (making) of knowledge.

However, human beings are involved in not one but several social activity systems (Russell & Yañez, 2003) that are synchronically or chronologically associated. For example, students are involved in the activity systems of the different courses they are taking at the same time, in the different courses they take during their years of schooling, and in the activity systems they are about to or already have encountered in the workplace or in their specific academic disciplines. These dynamic activity systems are the places to study the functions of communication tools and how they help students accomplish their objects because they represent where mediators and mediations are situated.
The newly developed digital social media such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, instant messaging, and digital video, all of which are playing an increasingly important role in student learning, have made researchers rethink and redefine familiar terms such as literacy (Hawisher & Selfe, 1997, 2000; Brandt, 1995), community (Howard, 1997), copyright (Lessig, 2004), and composition (Selfe, 2007). Situated in activity systems, these tools, including writing, are not studied as separate and individual tools for conveying content and meaning, but as mediators that contribute to the construction of content and meaning. As a result, the introduction and application of activity theory in WAC research provides not only a theoretical tool to apply but also the possibility for looking from the micro-level of one activity system into the macro-level of the connections within the network of activity systems.

According to Russell (2002), WAC has been one of the most successful educational movements in American education, and its longevity can be attributed not only to its practices that have addressed the need for improved student learning and faculty teaching but also for the research that has been conducted. The evolution and success of WAC in the US is the motivation for this project investigating the feasibility and adaptation of WAC theory and practice in China. Some of the historical factors that catalyzed the WAC movement should appear recognizable to those familiar with the current issues in Chinese higher education. The critical situation of Chinese higher education with its increasing student population and its fast development and dissemination of technology, both of which will be discussed in the following section,
makes WAC an attractive innovation, one that Chinese higher education may have been unknowingly looking for during the past several years.

The International Dissemination of WAC

In the US since the 1970s, WAC scholars have been transforming traditional pedagogies to engage students in course content and to enhance their learning through writing. While the goal of enhancing learning through writing is not unique to the US, WAC, as a major component of US composition studies, has been in the forefront of these exchanges. WAC programs have flourished and are still developing in the US, while its international dissemination has reached Europe, Australia, and various Asian countries and areas such as Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

In retrospect, the initiation of WAC in the US began from the international research exchange between British and American writing researchers at the 1966 Dartmouth seminars. However, from that time until approximately 2000, WAC scholars in the US had not shared much of their study and practice with those who teach and study writing either in English or their native languages in other parts of the world (Thaiss, 2009). The possibilities provided by the Internet and other electronic technologies have significantly influenced not only writing and writing research the US (Reiss, Selfe, & Young, 1998) but also the availability and accessibility of WAC theories, practice, and scholarship. The WAC Clearing House (http://wac.colostate.edu) is not just a host site for program information, electronic journals such as Across the Disciplines and The WAC Journal, or electronic versions of some of the volumes of essays published by the International Network of WAC Programs (INWAC). It has become a hub for such
research exchange as in-progress project reports with a membership directory of approximately 136 researchers or teachers from the US, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Colombia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Britain, Malaysia, and India, among others (as of February 2010). Without Internet technology, it would have been unimaginable to have such a community of researchers from this wide-range of countries and areas.

Another noticeable change can be observed in the academic conferences. The Conference of College Composition and Communication, although remaining a US national organization, has attracted more and more international participants. The biennial US National Conference on Writing Across the Curriculum, which held its initial conference in 1993, was renamed the International WAC Conference in 2004, with an increasing number of representatives from other parts of the world coming to the US to share their research. This conference has not yet been held outside of the US, but with conferences like EATAW, the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing being initiated in 2001, quite a few US WAC researchers have participated in overseas conferences on writing research or conducted WAC workshops. For example, Art Young and Donna Reiss (Clemson University, US) have collaborated with Magnus Gustafsson (Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden), providing course discussions among their students via the Internet since 2003. These three professors have presented their projects in the US at the 2004 WAC Conference and the 2004 Computers and Writing Conference and in Europe at both EATAW and EARLI (European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction). David Russell presented at the first EATAW
Conference in 2001 and has continued collaborating with researchers from different countries. For example, he and David Foster co-edited the 2002 edition of *Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective*, which included studies from China, England, France, Germany, Kenya, and South Africa. The Writing Research Conference sponsored by the University of California, Santa Barbara, began in 2002 but was later expanded from a regional one to a national and then an international conference. In 2008, it was renamed Writing Research Across Borders (WRAB) with participants from 33 countries, and in 2010 the conference volume was published under the title of *Traditions of Writing Research*. Recent articles in the journals in composition studies in the US have also reflected this trend of collaborating with international scholars and teachers.

Donahue points out in her 2009 lead article in *College Composition and Communication* that “the fundamental problem of imagining internationalizing composition as export is that this is precisely its source as colonialist activity” (p.215). She also asserts in the same article that teachers from different countries have different attitudes towards US writing research: some may want to try the US model and practice in their own contexts, while others might not want to seek help from the US as they have already established their own systems of conducting research and teaching writing. However, it cannot be concluded that this international dissemination is a process of colonization of other cultures by speakers of English, as WAC research in other countries has been multilingual from the beginning of its internationalizing process. The best evidence of this are the two books, *Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspectives* (Foster & Rusell, 2002) and *Traditions of Writing Research* (Bazerman et al. 2010),
considered the most representative of the scholarship made possible by international collaboration. Other journal volumes and papers, such as the February 2002 special issue of *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* on *WAC in International Contexts*, indicate it was not the intent of US scholars to impose their WAC model onto other countries or set their approach as the standard for WAC practice or research. On the contrary, they have carefully studied the contexts and discourses in other countries in their native languages and in English, which in most cases is the required foreign language. For example, Townsend’s (2002) field report, “Writing in/across the Curriculum at a Comprehensive Chinese University,” clearly states the perspectives about writing held by the professors. The design of her interviews was not meant to “sell” the WAC concept but to understand writing in China.

The 2010 IWAC Conference also exemplified this conversational style of research exchange. One of the two keynote speakers, Terry Zawacki, gave a talk entitled “Researching the Local/Writing the International: Developing Culturally Inclusive WAC Programs and Practices.” This awareness and emphasis on “the local” has long been emphasized by WAC researchers in the US as they know very well that writing and writing programs are very local. Although some researchers fear that this international dissemination process may resemble missionaries spreading their religions, it has been done very carefully. It is a new venue for both sides to get a chance to know what has been done and what could be done with the final benefits focusing on improved student learning, not to support any one dominant research school or theory as feared by some researchers.
Regardless of the success of its international dissemination, very limited WAC research can be found in Chinese academic databases, and no such program has been initiated in mainland China. The only WAC programs that can be found in China are in Taiwan (Hsu, 2007) and Hong Kong (Braine, 2004), two areas in China governed under different political systems, with residues of colonialism including a more pervasive influence of the English language, especially in Hong Kong. Mainland China was isolated for several decades especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), meaning it will take quite some time for it to catch up with the rest of the world in many aspects, including higher education. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the lack of WAC practices and research in Mainland China should not be regarded as a refusal but rather a time lag. With reforms, internationalization, and especially the impact of the large-scale enrollment growth, the quality of education has recently become a concern, one raised by many domestic and international scholars in Chinese higher education (Hayhoe, 2000; Jiang, 2005; Li, Morgan & Ding, 2008; Lin, 2006; Min, 2004; Mok, 2005; Postiglione, 2005), pushing the need for better teaching and learning to the forefront of higher education reform.

The evolution of WAC in the US and the interest and experimentation in it in other countries in recent years suggest that higher education development, especially its enrollment expansion, has played a very important role. As discussed in Chapter 1, WAC programs were first initiated in the US to deal with the problems resulting from the expansion of higher education; other developed countries began their own WAC initiatives as a result of their increase in higher education enrollments, and now WAC
has been introduced to some comparatively industrialized developing areas in Asia such as Hong Kong (Braine, 2004) and Taiwan (Hsu, 2007). This spread of WAC is a response from within these higher education systems in countries seeking solutions for similar problems found in the US in the 1960s. The third wave of higher education expansion is being experienced by some of the developing countries, including China. Will WAC work for China, a country with a polity very different from those that have already adopted WAC? Chapter 3 is an in-depth analysis of the Chinese higher education system through the lens of political culture to explore why WAC has not been introduced to China and what might be the opportunities or challenges for doing so.
CHAPTER THREE
CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Even though China experienced much turmoil during the past century, it has made extraordinary progress in the last three decades. The Chinese higher education system has experienced the same turbulence and progress as other aspects of the country. However, modern Chinese higher education, with its relatively short history, still finds itself lagging behind the US and other countries as can be seen by comparing the development of WAC in the US with the concurrent time period in China.

When the US began experimenting with progressive education based on John Dewey’s philosophy in the 1920s and 1930s (Russell, 2002), the first Chinese higher education institutions modeled after Western universities had barely been established (Altbach, 1998). When composition, the foundation of WAC, was struggling to achieve a disciplinary identity in the 1960s (Goggin, 2000), professors in Chinese higher education institutions were engaged in the class struggle of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Du, 1992), only able to hope that they would eventually realize a level of respect and an opportunity to conduct research. When WAC accomplished its initial success in American universities after the increase of college enrollments in the 1970s, enrollment in Chinese higher education institutions was interrupted due to the Cultural Revolution (Twitchett, Fairbank, & Feuerwerker, 1987). As WAC was being institutionalized in the US in the 1980s and CAC was beginning to emerge (Dannels & Gaffney, 2009) in the 1990s, reforms to the Chinese higher education system were being realized and a large-scale increase in enrollment was initiated. As other countries and areas, including Hong
Kong (Braine, 2004) and Taiwan (Hsu, 2007), integrated WAC into their local educational and institutional cultures, Chinese scholars were beginning to question the current state of teaching and learning, reaching out for possible solutions (Jiang, 2005; Yang, R. 2005). Given this history, the question becomes if WAC can be successfully adapted in China as it has been in other countries and cultures and if it can address the need for higher education reforms and their consequences.

This chapter provides a historical review and an analysis of Chinese higher education system by exploring the unique Chinese political culture behind the reform policies and strategies, focusing on the recent growth in student enrollment. There are four sections in this chapter: the Chinese higher education system, the reforms and current issues, the Chinese political culture and its impact on higher education, and the opportunities and challenges for introducing WAC into China.

The introduction to Chinese higher education provides a review of the system, including the reforms and the issues that followed. These higher education reforms cannot be studied in isolation, as they are deeply rooted in the changes in the traditional cultural heritage as well as the Chinese political culture and economic reforms. The political culture that contributed to the decentralization of power after the series of economic reforms beginning in the late 1970s and led to the changes in Chinese higher education system is then analyzed using an interpretative-hermeneutics method (Hua, 2001). This analysis reveals that the major stakeholders in university-level reforms, such as WAC, are faculty members, administrators, and potential employers, the three groups interviewed for this project. The last section includes the potential opportunities and
challenges for introducing WAC into Chinese higher education for readers who are not familiar with its current state.

The Chinese Higher Education System

The modern Chinese higher education system is a combination of an indigenous tradition that can be traced to 135 BCE and an imported Western model. Currently, it is the largest higher education system in the world, surpassing the US in 2003 (Knight, 2006) as a result of its six-fold increase in enrollment between 1997 and 2007.

Its heritage consists of two thousand years of Chinese traditional education and more than a hundred years of Western higher education (Min, 2004). Traditional Chinese higher education institutions were officially established in the Han Dynasty (135 BCE). These institutions served the elite class, preparing them to work as government officials. An imperial exam system was later introduced to recruit students from the lower classes to address the lack of a qualified workforce for the government (Lee, 2000). These exams, the only avenue available for lower class Chinese to gain access to the upper class (Kirby, 2008), were based on the Four Books and Five Classics in the School of Confucius, with the only evaluation tool being writing. This worship for Confucianism, the emphasis on education, and the appreciation for good writing not only influenced China but also the neighboring countries and cultures (Altbach, 1998), and it also forms the underpinning needs among Chinese people for better access to higher education in hope for better jobs and higher social status. These needs helped in the decision-making process of the recent large scale enrollment expansion that not only increased the access to higher education but also posed issues for this education system.
that’s designed for “elite education” to deal with issues when facing “mass education.” Therefore, this indigenous tradition, even though it was interrupted several times, has functioned as one of the forces for enrollment expansion, and the appreciation for good writing still has its influences among Chinese people, which set up a solid but less obvious foundation for introducing WAC pedagogies into China.

As a result of the defeat in the wars with Western countries during the second half of the 19th century, Chinese intellectuals, especially those who returned home having been educated in such Western countries as France, Germany, Britain, and the US, began to promote science and technology, blaming the unscientific study of the world found in Confucianism for the backwardness of China (Kwok, 1965). Because the traditional exams involved writing “eight-legged” essays on Confucian classic texts using the ancient written Chinese, which requires interpretation, the traditional education system and exams were regarded as obstacles that “greatly affected the spread of knowledge and information” (Chen, 2010, p. 4) and did not provide any training in modern science and technologies. The fact that China was defeated in the wars was also attributed to this lack of education in modern science and technology, and the traditional exam system was abandoned in 1905 (Kirby, 2008). This interest in science, which was named “scientism,” developed among the intellectuals, then spread to students, government officials, and the common people because of the Western technologies they witnessed and experienced (Kwok, 1965). Universities modeled after Western ones were established by the government and missionaries and through other efforts. These new Western-style universities, together with the indigenous Confucian
traditions, laid the foundation for modern Chinese higher education, forming an indispensable part of its tradition. Although they were replaced by the Soviet model in the 1950s under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party, these “traditions and memories of excellence remained, and they have helped to fuel more recent efforts” (Kirby, 2008, p.140).

In the Soviet model, higher education faculty and students were assigned to specialized institutions, each focusing on one area, creating a planned workforce to serve the planned economy (Mok, 2005). As the universities in this period served the needs of their respective ministries, the Ministry of Education was not the only one administering higher education. Other ministries, such as the Ministry of the Coal Industry or the Ministry of the Machine Building Industry, had their affiliated universities, setting their own enrollment and assigning jobs to their graduates. Not only the enrollment but also the curriculum, including course syllabi and textbooks, were set by the respective government units or agencies in charge throughout the country (Mok, 2005). This structure made it difficult for different disciplines to exchange pedagogical insights or share concerns, a necessary condition for WAC to be initiated because of its cross-curricular nature. The Soviet model represented not only a separation of the disciplines but also a centralization of knowledge and a uniformity of thought (Hayhoe, 1989), its far-reaching impact including departmentalization, segmentation, overspecialization, and the separation of teaching and research between the teaching institutions and research units (Min, 2004). As a result, there was no exchange between domestic and international researchers (other than the Soviet scholars) or between
teachers and researchers; this lack of research and communication made it impossible for WAC ideas or concepts to be brought up in China at this time.

In retrospect, this Soviet model, nevertheless, resulted in a significant improvement in Chinese higher education (Hayhoe, 1995), specifically the increased access to higher education for peasants and workers, sometimes without entrance exams, as the Communist Party believed that all people should have the opportunity to pursue higher education, a combination of Confucian and Marxism beliefs. Although this situation raised the issue of under-preparedness among students, professors in that time period did not question the quality of education for fear of being labeled as “anti-revolutionists” (Du, 1992). Limited research or corresponding practices were implemented to cope with the changes and challenges resulting from these new groups of students in higher education.

However, even this Soviet model was not able to survive the Cultural Revolution (1969-1979). Higher education was interrupted as students and teachers became involved in the class struggle. The resulting impact on intellectuals included a lack of research, especially in humanities and social sciences, and the seemingly endless re-education and self-criticism that made them long for a basic dignity and the opportunity to engage in academic pursuits (Du, 1992). The reform era begun in 1979 marked the beginning of improved, although still limited, freedom (Zarrow, 2008). The Chinese higher education system attempted to recover; however, resources and attention were primarily focused on economic reform in the industrial sector (Shirk, 1993) until after the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis. This crisis spurred the government to increase domestic
consumption, and family educational expenses were added to the agenda (Xi, 1999). At the same time, the government had to address market pressures for a highly educated workforce as the economy was being transformed from labor-intensive to knowledge-based (State Department, 1999). This change resulted in the expansion reform, a strategy employed by the government to address the needs of the labor market and the need to stimulate domestic consumption for the “soft landing” of the economy needed to maintain the double digit growth in the GDP (Bai, 2006). Therefore, higher education, especially enrollment, attracted much attention.

As this analysis suggests, the Chinese higher education system incorporates traditions from both indigenous Confucianism and Western modern education. However, given its turbulent history, Chinese higher education first had to recover in the 1980s after the Cultural Revolution. Then in the 1990s, the system was put in the position of having to meet the economic needs of producing a well-educated workforce. Thus, the focus of attention in Chinese higher education has been on survival until the tension between access and quality was drastically intensified by the recent fast, large-scale growth (Hayhoe, 2000; Jiang, 2005; Li, Morgan & Ding, 2008; Lin, 2006; Min, 2004; Mok, 2005; Postiglione, 2005). This focus on survival and recovery has meant that the Chinese higher education system has centered on rebuilding the institutions and restoring the social status of teaching and learning that were destroyed during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, institutions have not paid much attention to research on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The remnants from the Soviet model, including the separation among disciplines and between teaching and research,
and the limited exchange with other countries emphasizing the hard sciences and technology also contributed to the lack of communication among the disciplines and internationally. Without this collaboration, China did not develop its own version of WAC or “import” a WAC model from other countries. However, recent reforms and their resulting impact on Chinese higher education have redirected focus to the quality of teaching and learning.

Reforms and Current Issues

In 1995, the State Education Commission, a central administrative organization responsible for higher education policy and management, issued a policy document, “Suggestions on Deepening Higher Education Structural Reform,” a response to the change in the economy as a result of the overall reform policy. As the economy moved from a planned to a market one, higher education began serving the needs of the market. As a result, some of the non-educational ministries were abolished, necessitating the transfer of the administration of 91 universities to the local governments. In addition to merging institutions (Mok, 2005), other reforms in Chinese higher education were implemented to restructure the financial streams (Min & Ding, 2005) and to change the hiring and promotion systems (Jing, 2005).

According to the introduction to Chinese higher education on the website of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China (Ministry of Education, n.d.),

The reforms of higher education consist of five parts: reforms of education provision, management, investment, recruitment and job-placement, and the inner-institute management, among which management reform is of most
importance and difficulty. The overall objectives of higher education reform are to
smooth the relationship among government, society and HEIs [Higher Education
Institutions], setting up and perfecting a new system in which the state is
responsible for the overall planning and macro management while the HEIs follow
the laws and enjoy the autonomy to provide education according to needs of the
society. (¶ 3)

The primary change involved moving the administration of higher education
institutions previously managed by non-educational ministries to local governments.
And the local governments, in turn, then streamlined the administration to give the
institutions increased autonomy. The trends in this round of reforms actually echoed the
economic reform in “decentralization, deregulation, privatization, marketization and
administrative reforms” (Mok, 2005, p.78). However, for the institutions and local
governments, this autonomy did not come without a price: They were now responsible
for finding a certain portion of the financial resources to fund university education.

The funding for the universities now comes primarily from local governments and
the universities themselves rather than from the central government as it did during the
planned economy period. This change means that universities face financial concerns
that were not issues for them before the reform. They need to find funding to make up
for the reduction in support from the government, but they cannot decide to raise tuition
because it is still regulated by the central government. However, the enrollment
expansion helps as it brings with it a corresponding increase in the amount of tuition.
This enrollment expansion started in 1995 and has been going on with a rapid increase
of enrollment numbers in all types of higher education institutions, which is shown in Figure 3.1.

As this figure indicates, the total number of students increased from 3.2 million to 18.8 million from 1997 to 2007 (not including the institutions of higher education for adults) while the number of faculty increased only from 0.4 million to 1.17 million. This difference resulted in a change in the student-faculty ratio from 8:1 to 16:1. Although this 16:1 student-faculty ratio may not seem problematic, this number does not reflect the reality. First, because of the separation of research and teaching units (Hayhoe, 1989),
researchers also take faculty positions in the institutions but do not teach, so the faculty data do not reflect the actual number of teaching faculty. In addition, as more Chinese higher educational institutions strive to become research institutions, more faculty members prefer not to teach undergraduate courses. Secondly, many full-time faculty members in regular higher education institutions teach courses in institutions for adults as the two are frequently affiliated (Yi & Li, 2004), meaning these faculty member have an extra teaching load on top of what the official statistics show. Third, the lack of qualified faculty remains a problem. For example, a 2005 survey of 23 Shanghai higher education institutions conducted by the Shanghai Institute of Educational Evaluation (Postiglione, 2005) found that only 17% and 39% of all professors teaching undergraduate courses held doctoral and master’s degrees, respectively. Therefore, this 16:1 student-faculty ratio poses more challenges than the number indicates on the surface.

This current expansion marks the second transition of Chinese higher education from “elite” to “mass education,” the first being the decision during the Cultural Revolution to admit peasants and workers into higher education institutions. Although Chinese young people are now given more opportunities to receive a higher education, the speed and the scale of this expansion have posed problems for the Chinese higher education system, and university professors in various disciplines have begun to look into the effects of this enrollment increase, finding, for example, that the increased enrollment and the slow reform of higher education concepts have made the mathematics education in colleges less effective than before (Tang, 2007). In addition,
English professors have begun changing the training models, revising the national curriculum, and updating textbooks to address the consequences of the “increased numbers of students, a shortage of language teachers, the lack of teaching resources and inadequate language training in larger classes” (Chang, 2006, p.519). Various researchers have also focused on the quality of teacher training (Jiang, 2005).

This enrollment increase also poses problems for the job market because of the increasing supply of college graduates, a situation referred to as “over-education” by Li, Morgan, and Ding (2008). Although the researchers assert these issues are temporary, they also suggest that the Ministry of Education monitor the expansion rate and implement structural educational reform to address the current problems. The Ministry of Education continued to increase the enrollment until 2008 when voices both within higher education and in the society as a whole began to complain that this increase was realized at the expense of quality. This higher education expansion is being compared to the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961), the movement led by Mao Zedong, the leader who tried to transform the Chinese agrarian economy into an industrialized communist economy within a short period of time. However, no systematic strategy has been implemented to deal with the tension between access and quality.

In 2008, for the first time, the Ministry of Education admitted that the rapidity of the expansion had created many concerns and problems, its spokesperson saying at a press conference that the rate would be capped at 4% for 2009 and 3% for 2010 (Netease 163, 2008). This decision indicated that the Ministry of Education still occupied a centralized function in policy making in Chinese higher education, controlling most of
the funding resources directly by distributing state funding to those universities under
its administration and indirectly by controlling the enrollment number which generates
tuition for all universities, from which they keep a portion before turning the rest of it
over to the local government. According to Zhao Lu (Sina News, 2008), Director of the
Department of Education, Science, and Culture in the Ministry of Finance, in addition to
these two funding streams, resources for higher education institutions also include loans
from commercial banks, which average up to one third of the total financial sources.

Although the increased enrollment opened universities to criticism on such issues
as the lack of quality, faculty complaints, limited resources, campus construction and
expansion, it also provided them with tuition as one of the funding avenues. Therefore,
most Chinese higher education institutions prefer that the enrollment continue to
increase so that this source of revenue increases as well. However, as the quality of
higher education came under increased scrutiny, the Ministry of Education launched the
Five-Year-Circle Higher Education Evaluation in 2001, stipulating that all public higher
education institutions to be evaluated every five years by a group of appointed experts.
If any institution is unable to pass, the enrollment increase will be suspended until
overall quality is improved.

This Five-Year-Circle Higher Education Evaluation, however, puts an additional
burden on the institutions, which had to enlarge their campuses, build dorms and
classrooms, and recruit new faculty members and staff to serve the needs of the
increasing number of students. To accomplish these, they relied on bank loans. With the
evaluation program in place, these institutions are currently under great pressure
because they face financial problems if they fail their evaluation, which leads to the enrollment increase being suspended. The evaluation then becomes very important to higher education institutions because although they have more autonomy than before the 1995 reform, they remain under the management of the Ministry of Education, which controls the resources by setting the enrollment number, and the local governments, which are in charge of a large portion of the state funding to the institutions.

The evaluation of the quality of the education is based on outcomes and their realizations (Lin, 2006). However, since the quality of the overall education is difficult to evaluate with a few visits to a campus, in actuality the process focuses on examining course archives and administration records kept by the institutions (Zhang, 2006; Feng, 2007; Zhang, 2007). As a result, professors are required to keep records of student work to meet this requirement (Hou, 2007). This process is similar to the accreditation evaluation in the U.S. higher education system.

The need for improved student learning and faculty instruction that WAC has addressed in the US and in other parts of the world is or has been present in China, too. The tension between access and quality has affected Chinese higher education administrators for several years. One solution may be WAC or some other educational reform. The indigenous appreciation for good writing has laid the foundation, and the enrollment increase has intensified the need for enhancing student writing and learning, all areas addressed by WAC. Therefore, WAC appears be one of the options that China may implement to ease this tension.
However, in this very different country with its unique political culture, is it feasible to introduce WAC or WAC-like education reforms, or will the dissemination of WAC follow the growth of higher education in China, similar to the way it was initiated in the US and adapted in other countries after their college expansion? On which level of the centralized administration with characteristics of decentralization can this curricular reform be realized? Borrowing the basic questions of political science, it should be asked who gets what, when and how? Who are the major stakeholders affected by this introduction? What are their perceptions of the current conditions and their expectations?

Chinese Political Culture and Its Impact on Higher Education

China is a society undergoing significant changes in many aspects. Some of the reasons and motives for these changes have been clearly delineated in state-issued documents, while others, such as the increase in student enrollment in higher education institutions, have received little explanation. Many researchers, especially those in the West, have provided their own interpretations and predictions about potential outcomes such as the job market crisis (Cheng, 2004). However, as the transformation of political culture is the key to the transformation of society (Hua, 2001), a more thorough understanding of the current changes may be achieved by analyzing the unique Chinese political culture. Although some parts of the discussion in the previous chapter have touched on this aspect as the political culture is tied closely to the decisions in the Chinese higher education system, a more focused analysis is provided here.
Different approaches offer different definitions for political culture. For example, Lucian Pye’s (1998) definition is quite broad, including all the attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments that give order and meaning to political processes and provide the underlying assumptions of the political system. Based on Pye’s definition, Hua (2001) divides political culture vertically into three levels: the subconscious level at which people do not realize that they hold political attitudes, the conscious-unsystematic level at which people realize they have political attitudes which are not organized or consistent, and the conscious-systematic level at which people have a very systematic understanding of the political system. The political culture analyzed here is the conscious-systematic level, the official ideology (Hua, 2001), which is not separated from the political system in China as it is in the West. Political culture on this level should be studied by using Hua’s interpretative-hermeneutics method because of the unique situation of the close relationship between Chinese political culture and its political system. According to Hua (2001), there are two factors for this choice of method before the reform era: the first is that because of the control of the Chinese government, it was impossible to conduct large-scale surveys; and the second was the lack of the resources and technology, also making it impossible to conduct such public opinion surveys. Although the reforms have reduced the control and helped to improve the resources and technology, interpretive-hermeneutics is still the primary research method, coupled with positivist methods adopted in recent years. However, for the level of the conscious-systematic official ideology, surveys cannot effectively reach these political elite, so the interpretive-hermeneutics method is employed in understanding the influence of the
political culture on Chinese politics. The following analysis discusses the recent decisions on higher education reforms under the impact of Chinese political culture.

As discussed in the previous section, Chinese higher education implemented reforms focusing on science and technology instruction, areas that gained more emphasis with the Soviet model, which focused on heavy industry research. Therefore, this system has been centered on science and technology, like its counterparts in other Asian countries (Altbach, 1998; Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004), especially after the country entered the reform era. During the pre-reform era, the political elite was primarily composed of those who contributed to the revolution, but after the reform began, increasing numbers of newly elected political leaders came from industrial backgrounds with training in technology and science, thus changing the power of the interest groups in the political decision process (Shirk, 1993). The agenda to build a technocratic government introduced at the beginning of the 20th century (Kirby, 2008) was realized by the Communist government, which established its dominant position in Chinese ideology through its focus on science and technology (Kwok, 1965). In the planned economy, the groups that benefited the most were heavy industry and state-owned enterprises, with the central government holding absolute decision-making control. As a result, when the limited resources were distributed, priority was given to research in these fields.

However, the economic reforms changed this situation, putting more emphasis on light industry and business and leading to decentralization so that more power was distributed to the local governments (Shirk, 1993). As the GDP experienced double-digit
growth, tensions developed in other areas, and the technocratic government began to address them while at the same time maintaining the economic development. The distribution of wealth was far from balanced among geographical regions, industries, and people. However, the increase in personal wealth spurred the growth of the middle class, who then asked for better access to higher education (Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004), hoping to move into the upper, ruling class. The economic growth also increased the demand for a more highly educated work force. It became apparent that higher education couldn’t continue producing a labor force based on a planned economy with the government as its only financial resource.

To strengthen national economic competitiveness (Yang, 2005), the Chinese political elite initiated higher education reforms, merging universities, increasing enrollments, charging fees and abolishing job assignments. This strategy, as with the economic reform, was introduced gradually rather than as a comprehensive package (Shirk, 1993). It not only increased domestic consumption by charging tuition from an increasing student population but also eased the central government’s burden of financing higher education (Min & Ding, 2005). Many universities are now under the auspices of local governments, and their financial streams include state funding, local government funding, tuition, research or consulting services, and fund-raising. Local governments and the administrators of the institutions gained power and autonomy as part of the reforms. As a result, they support enrollment increases as they generate more tuition to support financial decisions. However, they have also realized that a decrease in the quality and reputation of an institution (Cheng, 2004; Hayhoe, 1995; Jiang, 2005;
Kirby, 2008) reduces interest among the students and, in turn, tuition (Min & Ding, 2005) and increases the difficulties for their graduates on the job market (Li, Morgan & Ding, 2008).

As this discussion indicates, the Chinese political culture continues to emphasize the development of science and technology, a situation that is further reinforced when the rapid economic growth increasingly demands a labor force equipped with training in science and technology. This political culture, which has determined the view concerning research in these areas in Chinese higher education, has resulted in the following characteristics: 1) a reward system for faculty members based on research rather than teaching (Jing, 2005), 2) a lack of appreciation for research in the humanities and social sciences, 3) an economic basis for higher education reform, and 4) a financial motivation behind the enrollment growth for different levels of management. As these suggest, there is a lack of research in humanities and social sciences, and the emphasis on the sciences developed in the early years in the 19th century is still pervasive. This political ideology de-emphasizes Confucianism, representative of the former feudalist society, which places the humanities at the core of education, although its value is still appreciated in Chinese culture and society. All of these have contributed to the absence of any systematic study and research on teaching and learning that could lead to any “home-grown” WAC theory or practice.

The question then becomes if WAC fits the needs of Chinese higher education and how it could be adapted for this unique culture. As explained in Chapter Two, WAC initiatives began from grassroots efforts, and it appears that this is the way it is
experienced with in other countries and areas. However, in China, grassroots movements could cause unnecessary resistance from the administration who may fear that the initiative or the subsequent research and collaboration may be subversive. Of course, it cannot be said that absolutely no WAC research or practice can be done at the grassroots level as basic research freedom is guaranteed and the improvement of teaching is always encouraged; however, timely reports on the development and requests for approval from the administration are required. Therefore, faculty may not want to risk trying to determine where the administration would draw the line between collaboration that is allowed and that which is considered unwelcome.

This policy of the government to give and then retract approval is characterized by Lucian Pye in his book *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China’s Political Cultures* (1988) as “the remarkable capacity of the Chinese political culture, more than other political cultures, to be flexible and adaptable, to allow leaders to proclaim policy reversals without apologies, and to insure the equanimity of the public in accepting such reversals and new departures.” A good example is the enrollment expansion, which was, according to the administration, originally initiated to strengthen the reforms and facilitate the opening-up of China; however, a new policy was issued, slowing this growth significantly. Although the financial implications of this decision affected various issues in higher education institutions and in other parts of the society, the policy makers did not apologize nor explain. New policies are announced, replacing those enacted not long ago, showing that the Chinese government is still quite centralized. Although some researchers argue that it is moving towards a “deregulated state model” or even an
“accelerationist model,” they caution not to “overstate the degree of autonomy of the university sector” (Mok, 2005, p.79) as China cautiously tries to avoid falling into the same patterns as other socialist states (Hawkins, 2006). Therefore, any attempt to make educational changes should be done with approval from the administration. Although this might be the same in the US or other countries, this characteristic of centralized decision-making makes it difficult to make changes directly to the curriculum.

However, the central government does not have direct control over educational decisions such as initiating a WAC program on a campus. With the improved autonomy resulting from the reforms, universities can now make certain changes to the curriculum or even initiate educational reforms with support from local or central governments. Therefore, whether to introduce WAC pedagogies or start a WAC program in Chinese universities is a decision that can be made on the university level. The administrators on this level include the secretary and vice secretaries to the Chinese Communist Party Committee, the president and vice presidents of the university, and the deans of the colleges. Therefore, they are one group of stakeholders affected by a decision to initiate WAC. As the previous sections of this chapter suggest, it is not difficult to see what these administrators want to “get,” especially given their support of the enrollment expansion: funding resources through increased tuition. They are very aware that any drop or lack of improvement in education quality will eventually result in not passing the Evaluation Program, which leads to a suspension of enrollment expansion. The fact that there are no WAC programs in China should be viewed as an opportunity to introduce these pedagogies, with appropriate adaptations to local writing situations and
institutions. Once the benefits of WAC are explained to these administrators, it is hoped that they would be among the first to advocate for such a program on their own campuses, even if their motives are mixed; the institutionalization of WAC programs in the US faced a similar situation, some seeing it as “a public relations guise, a short-term Band-Aid to temporarily seal open political wounds regarding the poverty of students’ writing abilities and to veneer such public relations annoyances as appropriate forms of assessment” (Holdstein, 2001, p.44).

Another group of stakeholders in Chinese universities are faculty members. As explained in the first section of this chapter, faculty members in the pre-reform era did not have much power, especially during and after the Cultural Revolution. However, with the reforms, university professors, especially those in the science and engineering disciplines, have experienced great changes in both social status and financial support because Deng Xiaoping, former leader of the Chinese government, declared that “science and technology are the primary productive forces.” All faculty members now have much more academic freedom and have gained much higher social recognition for their contributions to economic development. However, some regard higher education as the last stronghold of the planned economy in the country that should be dealt with, while others see reforms in higher education, such as the 2003 Beijing University Debate, as an attempt by the university to try to break the professors’ “golden rice bowl,” referring to the institutional guarantee of positions for professors once they are hired or promoted, much like the tenure system in the US. This debate, as well as others, reveals the intensity of the tensions in Chinese higher education resulting from the challenges of
globalization: the tension between the new system in making and the old system, the tension between equity and prestige, and most important, the tension between quality and equality (Jing, 2005). University professors have expressed much concern about this tension between quality and equality. In addition, the current lack of research on WAC in China does not mean that professors are not involved in a similar practice; curriculum reform in certain universities or certain disciplines not directly connected to the theory of writing to learn may already be taking place.

The third group of stakeholders is potential employers. While the job market has long been a reflection of the market economy (Li, Morgan, & Ding, 2007), a case study conducted by Venter (2003) in China found that the formal educational system was failing to provide the types of skills, especially soft skills, considered important by educational system. This failure did not translate into dissatisfaction with the system but rather into lowered expectations of the employers. These lowered expectations coupled with the increased supply of college graduates has led to decreased starting salaries for both college graduates and those with graduate degrees (Liu, Zhang, & Wang, 2008). In addition, the job assignment system guaranteeing positions for graduates is no longer in place (Bai, 2006). According to the results of a nation-wide survey on university graduates (Yue, Wen & Ding, 2004), employment probability is no longer based on the planned economy but is now closely associated with the level of education; the reputation of the institution awarding the degree; the depth of the education including, for example, professional certifications or English proficiency certificates; and the breadth of knowledge including internships, volunteer experience, or part-time job
experience. This change in higher education “producing for the needs of the market,” although definitely arguable as an aim for higher education, is a reality, affecting changes in majors, enrollment numbers, and curriculum design (Bai, 2006; Chang, 2006). Potential employers, though not always visible except when hiring, are playing an increasing more important role in the higher education institutions.

Other stakeholders in higher education reform—the Ministry of Education, the local government, students, and parents—do not have a significant impact on certain educational reforms such as starting a student support center or a WAC program, decisions that occur at the university level. These decisions on curriculum initiatives are made by the university administration rather than by the Ministry of Education or the local government, and students and parents have yet not gained enough power to have an impact on these issues. Although their choice of which university to attend is surely based on the quality and reputation of the institution, regular universities, not private or adult universities, do not lack for applicants because the admission rate is still low, as compared to the US or other developed countries. In other words, Chinese higher education is still a strong seller’s market. Because administrators, faculty members, and potential employers are the primary stakeholders affecting the introduction or initiation of curricular reforms such as WAC, these three groups serve as the interviewees for the feasibility study conducted for the research reported here.

Opportunities and Challenges for Introducing WAC

In *Programs That Work* (1990), a review of the initiation of WAC in the US, Toby Fulwiler and Art Young listed and discussed the “enemies” of WAC during that period.
Although it might appear premature to identify potential “enemies” of WAC in China at this stage of a feasibility study, it is beneficial to have an estimate of its supporters and its detractors. These lists of opportunities and challenges for implementing WAC in China discussed here are based on Fulwiler and Young’s work as well the analysis of the current situation and issues in Chinese higher education; they serve as the starting point for the research design, especially the interview questions.

It is possible that these two lists are not exhaustive, and the analysis of the interviews in this study has provided a further developed version. However, these pre-study estimates formed the basis for designing and implementing the interviews in both China and the US, which will be further elaborated in Chapter Four Methods. During the interviews, most of the items on these two lists were mentioned without further explanation, since the understanding, especially between the researcher and the Chinese interviewees, was a mutual awareness of the basic situation. These two lists are included in this chapter for those readers with limited knowledge of or experience with Chinese higher education and those who may want to base their studies on the current issues in Chinese higher education institutes.

Opportunities for Implementing WAC in China

- Faculty support

Faculty members in Chinese universities, just like their counterparts in the US and Europe, are responsible for educating the future leaders of the nation. As Fullan (1993, 1999) pointed out, faculty members are the “changing agents” in any educational reform or movement. Chinese university professors, as a whole, are in the position of shaping
the future of the country; therefore, they are the one of the strongest forces to be considered in implementing WAC in China. However, as the theory of dissemination of innovation (Holder & McLeod, 2006; Rogers, 1962; Walvoord, 1996) suggests, in any innovation dissemination, such as WAC, there are always “innovators” who first adopt the new idea, and then “early adopters,” “early majority,” and “later majority” who follow, but there is always a group of “laggards” who either wait and adopt only when the change is no longer an innovation or never adopt. Thus, faculty members in the first four groups can be considered “friends” of WAC, but those who share “entrenched attitudes” (Fulwiler & Young, 1990) fall into the category of enemies of WAC implementation in China.

- Enrollment increase calling for improvement in learning and teaching

The higher education reforms in recent years in China are characterized by the growth in the enrollment. With the increased decentralization of administration power and the resulting increase in financial responsibility, the institutions have had to depend on the enrollment as one of their major revenue streams both to maintain and to improve their facilities and human resources. Although the quality of learning and teaching has been sacrificed in the past for the increase in the number of students, the Ministry of Education, the institutions themselves, and researchers have realized that it is now time to renew the focus on learning and teaching, and it is quite possible that WAC may be accepted, if not welcomed, as one option to serve this need. This favorable environment may create opportunities supporting faculty in the development and implementation of WAC programs.
• Grants

The availability of grants is one of the primary reasons for the successful initiation of the American WAC movement in the 1970s (Russell, 2002). Even in the face of the recent financial crisis, China maintained an 8-10% GDP growth in 2009. As a result, increased state funding is available not only for scientific and technological research but also for the humanities and social sciences. The Social Science Foundation of China has awarded grants since it published its guidelines for application and management in 2001. There are also grants available from certain ministries, provincial governments, and universities. This change would surely spur the research and practice of WAC if it is introduced into China.

• Technology

Technology currently plays an important role in China, as it does in other parts of the world. According to the Ministry of Education (2009), from 2003 to 2007, the number of computers used for instruction increased from 2,771,466 to 4,371,147; the number of seats in multimedia classrooms doubled from 6,264,023 to 12,567,542; the number of web-based courses jumped from 26,001 to 64,446. Although far from being comparable to the technology resources available in US institutions, especially the well-funded ones, this is a significant improvement for China. In addition, Chinese academics use digital social media to interact with their colleagues around the world, not to mention the use of them in the workplace, and students now have better access to technology, making it possible to incorporate it into the classrooms. The opportunities made available because of technology and the communities enhanced or made possible by it can help Chinese
academia access the international knowledge system to research and practice WAC. As a result, Chinese researchers are encouraged to study the use of digital media in higher education settings, an area for which WAC can provide both theory and leadership (Day, et al., 2000).

- **Appreciation for writing in the traditional higher education system**

Higher education in China has a long history of appreciation for writing that can be traced to the Han Dynasty (135 BCE). In the higher education system established at that time with Confucianism as the foundation, a student’s writing ability, especially his (only men were allowed to take exams or participate in politics) transactional writing or sometimes both transactional and poetic as in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 BCE), determined his future position in the government as well as the social class of the entire family. Although this system was discontinued in the Qing Dynasty, more than 2000 years after its inception, in it learned men were represented by their writing and then selected to serve their country “not because they were trained in statecraft or tax collection, but because they had deeply studied what we would today call the ‘humanities’” (Kirby, 2008). Although appreciation for writing and humanities studies was not present during those years of turmoil in the 19th century, the traditional appreciation for writing in Chinese culture still exists.

- **Universities modeled as US institutions**

Chinese modern higher educational institutions were established at the beginning of the 19th century, based on the European and American universities. After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, higher education was modeled after the
Soviet Union in the 1950s, and then returned to the American in the reform era. This model, especially with the recent increase in enrollment, makes the issues in Chinese higher education similar to those in the US in the 1970s. These similarities in structure and history might encourage Chinese higher education researchers to seek solutions from the US higher education; therefore, WAC, one of the most successful educational reform programs, could play a similar role in Chinese educational reform.

- **English, the foreign language required in the educational system**

   English is the dominant language in international organizations, trade, and business. In the Chinese educational system, English is required for almost all Chinese students from their third year in primary school or first year in middle school, equivalent to the seventh grade in the US, through college. Students going on to graduate schools in China have to take English exams for both master’s and Ph.D. programs. If they want to study abroad, most need to take the TOEFL, EILTS, and/or GRE in order to study in English-speaking countries. The emphasis put on English in the Chinese education system is further supported by the fact that students have to pass a test of their English skills to move to the next educational level. Starting a WAC program in China with English as the entry point compliments this emphasis on English in China.

- **Established English departments and faculty**

   Since all students enrolled in college are required to take English courses, there is a body of English faculty in higher education. These faculty members are English majors educated in English departments, meaning their language abilities put them in a good position to study and contribute to WAC scholarship. However, similar to some
universities in the US, these English departments are also in the danger of being seen as service departments (Zhang, 2008); WAC has the potential to help them become the centers of universities, providing instructional training and consultation for other departments, similar to their positions in American universities. Furthermore, writing centers have become new additions to English departments, the Writing Center located in the School of English Studies at Xi’an International Studies University being the first in Mainland China. This change not only reflects the need for better writing but also serves as an example of how English departments in Chinese universities learn and adapt from the US model and its initiatives in educational reforms. While this suggests English departments can serve as the base in creating faculty alliances for WAC, on the other hand, they can also be seen as potential enemies to WAC in China, a topic more fully developed in the next list, Challenges for Implementing WAC in China.

- Increased needs for English in the disciplines to communicate with the international community

Even though English dominates international scholarly publishing, its use in China is neither as wide-spread, nor the speakers of it as proficient as found in India, the other scientific superpower of the Third World (Altbach, 1998). Professors and researchers in the disciplines need to be able to read and study their disciplinary knowledge in English to remain current in their fields. The education of students and the future of the disciplines and the workplaces, then, require an acquisition of English, one of the reasons why English is part of graduate school entrance examinations. Although not all college graduates may need to have as high a level of English competency as those who
work in or collaborate with international firms or organizations, those who work in the
government, state-owned enterprises, and private enterprises may also expect to use
English.

- **University autonomy**

  After the reforms, universities in China can make decisions concerning the
curriculum and, therefore, can add writing requirements to classes, develop writing-intensive courses, and implement WAC programs without asking for permission from the government. This autonomy indicates that WAC programs, with the support of the university, are unlikely to be affected much by government policy changes but are subject to university policy changes. WAC also has the potential to be a good compliment to the faculty training programs in Chinese higher education institutions.

- **Bilingual (Chinese and English) courses promoted by the Ministry of Education under the Higher Education Quality Project**

  One component of the Higher Education Quality Project, the umbrella for a series of projects focused on the quality of education that was implemented in 2008, is the bilingual project, which showcases an institution’s efforts in promoting student learning with an international perspective. Professors who teach these bilingual courses are expected to publish in English/international journals, have overseas academic or working experiences and adopt English textbooks and online resources. In these courses, students are expected to read, write, and speak English while learning the course content. Given this initiative to incorporate English into non-English courses, it should
not be difficult to find faculty interested in participating in WAC workshops to learn pedagogies that can be used in their bilingual courses.

- **Overseas experts and returnees**

  China has invited professors and researchers from other countries to teach or conduct research in Chinese higher education institutions since the Open-Door Policy was initiated. Many of the Chinese students and scholars who studied or conducted research in other countries returned with their newly acquired knowledge and skills (Du, 1992) to lead research in China, some of them pursuing administrative positions after establishing themselves in their fields. These two groups in Chinese higher education are the most connected to the international intellectual community, and society and the government expect them to contribute to the country’s economic development and to certain administrative functions (Zweig, Chen, & Rosen, 2004).

  Moreover, they may have been involved in WAC programs during their study or through interactions with their colleagues in other countries, and they also may be able to build on their international connections to exchange ideas on teaching and learning. Therefore, they might be the most feasible alliances for WAC programs.

- **The current trend of liberal education**

  Liberal education, once the core of Chinese traditional higher education, has recently seen a resurgence of interest by higher education professionals (Kirby, 2008) at conferences, and in journals and edited volumes in China, rivaling the more recent emphasis in science and technology which has been a characteristic in Chinese higher education and in other countries such as India. This conflict between professional and
general education, similar to that seen in the US universities, can now be found in China. This trend in liberal education is an example showing that China has started seeking solutions in US higher education because Chinese universities are mainly based on the US model. WAC, a solution originated in the US, could then be warmly welcomed.

**Challenges for Implementing WAC in China**

- **Entrenched attitudes (Young & Fulwiler, 1990)**

  Young and Fulwiler labeled entrenched attitudes as the most significant in their list of WAC enemies. And this may also be true in China, also, especially because of the Confucian tradition of obedience. Chinese intellectuals, after experiencing the Cultural Revolution, would be content to conduct research and teach without being disturbed by political movements. Similar to their American colleagues, they tend to teach the way they are used to or were taught as students. A change in pedagogy might be seen as a challenge to their academic freedom. In addition, the administration, as it pays more attention to financing the university, is becoming increasingly business-like. The students think their parents pay the tuition for them to earn a degree, and rarely do they question what and how they learn until they find themselves ill-prepared for their future study or work. These entrenched attitudes will be the most difficult to deal with by WAC initiators because they require change from the faculty, the administration, and the students.

- **English discipline**

  The English discipline in China focuses on literature and linguistic studies. Considering the struggle for its disciplinary identity that rhetoric and composition faced
in the US (Russell, 2002), it would not be difficult to imagine a similar, if not worse, struggle in China. Writing instruction is conducted by both literature and linguistics professors, many with research interests in English as a Second Language (ESL). It will take time, perhaps even a generation, for rhetoric and composition to become a legitimate focus in English departments. However, with scholars who majored in rhetoric and composition returning to China, more international writing experts visiting or teaching in China, and more interactions with the international community at conferences, it is not a mission impossible.

- **Traditional reward system**

The problems with this reward system are almost identical to its US model in that it does not encourage faculty input in teaching, especially undergraduate teaching; as a result, WAC is not appealing to faculty members. What makes it even worse in China is that all faculty members are included in the tenure-track promotion system, meaning that there are no instructors in the American sense who focus primarily on teaching. Research is required and serves as the most important measure for promotion in all kinds of higher education institutions. With the standards being raised, faculty have felt the increasing pressure and initiated discussions on promotion criteria and standards such as the 2003 Beijing University Debate (Jing, 2005). Although powered by research, WAC focuses on teaching and learning, and if not introduced appropriately, faculty may be resistant as teaching is not valued much in the traditional reward system. And with the new issues related to how digital scholarship is evaluated in the faculty promotion
process (Howard, 2010), still a problem in the US, it will take a longer time for the Chinese reward system to adjust to these changes.

- **Standardized testing**

  Although the traditional higher education primarily uses writing as the evaluation method of student learning, other testing systems in China, from primary school to college, have followed the American model. This move from the appreciation of writing to the imitation of the more “scientific” methods of the “quantification paradigm” (Young & Fulwiler, 1990) makes it difficult to persuade score-oriented faculty and students to integrate writing into the classroom or to engage in it.

- **Teaching load**

  The 2007 student-faculty ratio was 16:1, not including the students in the affiliated institutions for adults whom the faculty members usually teach. Although integrating WAC pedagogies into courses does not have to result in an increased workload, professors may believe that there is enough pressure dealing with their current courses using their familiar methods so that any change could mean extra time and energy devoted to preparation and grading. Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is that in Chinese higher education institutions, graduate students do not serve as teaching assistants, while TAs in the US can provide help for WAC programs in writing-intensive courses, writing fellow assistance, joint courses, and writing centers. Now more and more advocates for liberal education in China have begun calling for hiring graduate students as TAs so that the pressure on the professors can be relieved and graduate students can obtain teaching experience (Gan, 2007).
• Supporting resources

Most Chinese universities, except for the top-ranked ones, do not subscribe to international databases, such as EBESCO, because the cost is more than they would or could afford. Therefore, access to research is limited, and WAC research is not available, except for resources such as the WAC Clearinghouse, which contains only limited journals and books. Even if research scholarship is available through certain channels, the language is another concern. English is the dominant language in international scholarly publishing, which, to a certain extent, builds the international knowledge system. Not only is English the working language in scholarly publishing, at conferences, and in other intellectual exchanges, but also English-speaking editors, reviewers, and organizational administrators are the “gatekeepers” of these publishing and exchange venues. This language hurdle is two-edged. On one side, it encourages researchers in different disciplines to incorporate English writing, reading, and oral practices in their courses. On the other hand, language competency may be a problem for the professors themselves, making it even more difficult if they have to learn it first. However, this hurdle has to be overcome by Chinese researchers if they want to have a presence and voice in the international intellectual community.

These two lists of the opportunities and challenges may not have exhausted all the conditions that need to be considered for introducing WAC into China. However, as long as the focus is centered on the conditions and the context rather than the reform itself, as suggested by Fullan (1999), the teaching of 1.2 million faculty members and the writing and learning of 18.8 million Chinese college students can be improved with the
help of WAC or other educational reforms. Before moving onto the implementation stage, a feasibility study based on interviews with the three groups of stakeholders and several US WAC experts was conducted to test the waters. The next chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methods employed in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS

The four research questions forming the basis of this study were addressed through a qualitative descriptive analysis of data collected through face-to-face interviews conducted in China and telephone interviews in the US. This chapter introduces the participants, the materials, the interview questions, and the administration of this study.

Participants

Subsets of the Participants

This study was designed to be conducted in both China and the US. The interviews in China were designed and conducted to determine the perspectives of Chinese higher education faculty and administrators about the feasibility of introducing WAC into the unique higher education culture and system in that country. The US interviews explored the development of WAC in the US and its international dissemination in order to provide previous and on-going practice and feedback on how WAC has been adapted for different cultures and institutions around the world.

There were, thus, two subsets of participants in this study: the China interviewees were composed of participants based on the three groups of stakeholders identified in Chapter Three: higher education faculty, higher education administrators, and potential employers. Their identities were not revealed in this study, as designed in the protocol and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The US participants were selected from US WAC researchers based on their expertise in WAC-related
research in the US and their involvement in its international dissemination. The study was designed to reveal the identities of these eight US WAC experts with their permission, and this protocol was also validated by the IRB.

Selection of the Participants

The participants were selected through stratified convenience sampling, allowing for their selection based on the goals of this research and their accessibility.

Chinese Interviewee Selection and Rationale

The Chinese interviewees were selected from university faculty; university administrators; and recruiters from state-owned, foreign or joint, and private companies. The professors and administrators were selected from different disciplines and from different types of public universities in China, representing those under the Ministry of Education and those under provincial governments. Their disciplines included English, Communication Studies, Computer Science, Chemistry, Business and Management, Law, and Medicine. As it is difficult for decisions on educational changes in China to occur at the department level, the initial administrators selected were at least on or above the level of the department chair. However, two administrators from lower ranks were added after the interviews began to broaden the perspective of the study. One was a political advisor, a unique position in China, with direct contact with students and involvement in student activities. The second was the director of a laboratory center dedicated to student experiments with a focus on the communication modalities involved in such research, an integration of disciplines rarely found in China.
The number of Chinese interviewees totaled 28: 10 faculty members, 8 administrators, and 10 potential employers. All these interviews were conducted in China, 3 in Beijing and 25 in Xi’an; these two locations were chosen for convenience. The Beijing interviews took place in one of the top two universities in China, and the Xi’an interviews were completed at different universities, companies, and government units.

The 10 faculty interviewees in China ranged in age from 26 to 58, with the average being 37. These participants were comparatively young because they were primarily junior faculty members, chosen to add this perspective to the study to balance the more advanced professors who formed the administrative group. Five of these faculty members were female and five male, four having doctorates and six Master’s degrees. Similar to the US, there is a faculty track in Chinese higher education, but the difference is that the Chinese faculty track includes lecturers, and there is no assistant professor rank. Therefore, this track includes the ranks of lecturer, associate professor, and full professor. All of those interviewed were on the faculty track, with seven of them being lecturers, two associate professors, and one full professor. Their average teaching experience in higher education ranged from 1 to 18 years, with the average being seven. Six had overseas higher education experiences: one completed his MBA at a British university in Malaysia, one had a Master’s Degree from Australia, and the other four had conducted research at overseas universities.

Eight administrators were interviewed, their ages ranging from 37 to 63 with the average being 46. Four of them were female, and four male. Seven were professors: four
full and three associate professors. The one not on the faculty track was a political
advisor in charge of supervising students and student activities.

The ten potential employers were selected from different types of companies and
government units. Nine of these ten were Human Resources managers, and one was the
Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a small company. Their average age was 34, with most
of them in the range of 27-34 except for the CEO who was 66. Although this CEO was
much older than the rest of the interviewees, he had also worked as a university
professor, meaning he brought a unique point of view to this study. Two were from
government units or state-owned enterprises, three from private companies, and the
remaining five from foreign or joint-owned companies. This composition reflects the
four major employer types of college graduates in China according to the Mycos 2008
College Graduate Survey (MyCOS Corporation, 2008).

US Interviewee Selection and Rationale

The US interviewees were selected from among the most frequently cited WAC
researchers in addition to being based on the US and international WAC projects that
they were or had been involved in recently. Based on a review of the literature on the US
WAC movement and after discussions with Dr. Arthur Young, an influential WAC
expert, this group of interviewees was finalized to the following eight WAC experts:

Christopher Anson, Ph.D.

University Distinguished Professor, Director of the Campus Writing and
Speaking Program, North Carolina State University

Charles Bazerman, Ph.D.
Professor, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara

Christiane Donahue, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Director of the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, Dartmouth College; Researcher, The Research Lab-Theodile, University of Lille III in France

Donna Reiss, M.A.
Professor Emeritus, Tidewater Community College

David Russell, Ph.D.
Professor, Iowa State University

Christopher Thaiss, Ph.D.
Professor, Clark Kerr Presidential Chair, Director of the University Writing Program, University of California, Davis

Martha Townsend, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, University of Missouri

Terry Zawacki, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Director of WAC, George Mason University

All of these researchers had published extensively on WAC-related research, and all had worked with higher education professionals in other countries on WAC initiatives and WAC-related collaborations. These researchers had attended international WAC conferences, conducted WAC workshops in both the US and other countries, and composed or edited volumes with researchers from other countries. As a
result, they represented individual perspectives based on their own expertise and provided insights into the international dissemination of WAC. Although this study cannot include all WAC experts in the US, it was not designed to exhaust all the perspectives in the field but to provide an in-depth understanding of the internationalization of WAC from the points of view of major researchers in the area to see how WAC has been and can be adapted to other higher educational cultures.

The eight US interviewees were all tenured professors either currently working in or retired from US higher education institutions. All had significant teaching experience, ranging from 20 to 40 years, with the average being approximately 32 years. Four of them were female, and four male. The earliest began working with WAC in the 1970s and the latest in 1995. Although one of these eight had retired, all were still actively engaged in WAC scholarship and programs. In addition, all had collaborated with scholars in other countries on research in writing and learning. Specifically, five had been involved in WAC initiatives in other countries, and the remaining three had conducted WAC-related research in other countries.

Materials

The 28 interviews in China were scheduled through a telephone call and then conducted face-to-face. The entire interview was recorded using a digital recorder after obtaining permission from the interviewee.

The eight US interviews were conducted over the telephone because the participants worked at different universities in various states, including California, Iowa, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. An
Internet-based recording service, Cogi (http://www.cogi.com), was used to record the telephone interviews. Permissions from the interviewees were requested, obtained, and recorded.

All 36 interviews were subsequently transcribed into Microsoft Word 2007 and printed for analysis. The demographics and the answers to the Yes/No questions were entered into Microsoft Excel 2007 for aggregating the results.

Interview Questions

The questions for both the China and the US interviews were based on the research questions for this project:

- RQ 1 What factors in Chinese higher education would contribute to the feasibility of introducing US-originated WAC into China?
- RQ 2 What factors in Chinese higher education could be potential challenges for introducing US-originated WAC into China?
- RQ 3 What aspects of US-based WAC programs could be pragmatically implemented in Chinese higher education?
- RQ 4 What aspects of US-based WAC programs represent significant challenges for Chinese higher education?

The three lists of questions for the Chinese interviews can be found in Appendix A, and the question list for the US interviews is in Appendix B.

*Chinese Interview Questions*

A pilot study of the China interviews was conducted and subsequently presented at the 2008 International Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Conference in
Austin, Texas (Wu, 2008). In addition to testing the content and intent of the proposed questions, the pilot study also checked the quality of the translation since the questions were initially designed in English and then translated into Chinese. The results from this pilot study indicated that all interviewees were able to understand the translated questions. However, several major changes were made to them to solicit more concreteness in the answers. For example, the questions on student writing were expanded from two focusing on whether the participants have read student writing and their expectations about and comments on it to six questions by dividing writing into Chinese and English and adding two questions on the motivation and deterrents for having students engage in writing. New questions on course goals, higher education goals, and the importance of international and intercultural communication were also added.

The revised questions used in this study primarily focused on the participants’ perspectives on the goals for higher education, the learning outcomes for college students, the students’ written and oral communication abilities, the students’ use of technology, and the respondents’ expectations on these aspects of communication modalities. During the interviews, WAC was also introduced to the participants, and they were asked whether similar programs were feasible in Chinese higher education, including their perspectives on the possible obstacles and their own concerns.

All questions were designed in English but were subsequently translated into Chinese so that the interviews could be conducted in Chinese. The results were analyzed in Chinese but reported in English. Chinese was chosen as the interview language to
avoid any misunderstanding because English is still a foreign language to them, although many of the participants read and speak English very well. Translating the questions into Chinese ensured that all participants could answer without any language problems. Since I have worked as a translator and interpreter for institutions and companies in China and the US since 2000, my English proficiency and experience as a translator helped ensure the reliability and accuracy of the translation of the questions. In addition, the pilot study supported their quality.

The question lists for all three groups began by asking for basic demographic information: age; institution/company; administration, faculty, or management position; highest degree earned and overseas experience. In addition, the administrators were asked to identify their administration position and as well as their faculty rank as most were also professors, and potential employers were asked to identify the total number of employees in their companies as well as their positions.

After the demographic section, the remaining interview questions for the three groups of participants included both common and unique ones to solicit perspectives specific to a particular group. The common questions focused on overall satisfaction with student competency in writing (in both Chinese and English), speaking, presentations and the use of digital technologies. These questions made it possible to cross-reference the interview groups to obtain a broad picture of student communication competency both in college and after graduation. The rest of the common questions for these groups asked for their opinions on adopting WAC initiatives in Chinese universities, their willingness to participate in these initiatives, and their suggestions of
alternatives to WAC. As these three groups have been identified as the three major stakeholders in the Chinese higher education system, these answers can be used to examine the feasibility of introducing WAC programs in China.

Specific Questions for the Faculty Group

The first question asked the faculty members to identify their primary course objective. This question and their answers made it possible to ascertain the communication elements, if any, serving as course goals in certain disciplines. These responses also indicated the WAC or WAC-like components recognized in these disciplines, aspects that could contribute to the determination of the feasibility of introducing WAC in China. More specifically, Questions 2, 3, and 6 to 8 focused on the perspectives of the participants on specific areas of communication competencies. For example, Question 2 was “Have you recently read any students’ writings in Chinese? If yes, how would you assess the quality of your students’ Chinese writing?” Question 8 was “Comment on your students’ competencies on using digital technologies. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they?” Questions 4 and 5 asked their major motivations and disincentives for having their students engage in writing assignments.

The next four questions focused on higher education, with Question 9 soliciting the interviewees’ overall educational objectives and Question 10 asking them to determine if strengthening student communication competency should be a critical focus for higher education. Questions 11 and 12 asked if the participants were willing to integrate communication components into their courses and if they saw this integration as contributing to their students’ learning of the subject.
Question 13 focused on the importance of international and intercultural communication knowledge to college students and how it could be integrated into the participants’ courses. This question was intended to determine how international and intercultural communication was regarded in specific disciplines and courses. The participants’ answers to this question also implied their awareness and willingness to learn and use educational concepts and pedagogies from other countries.

Question 14 completed this section of the interview for the faculty group by asking about the Five-Year-Circle Higher Education Evaluations and the possible functions of communication-intensive assignments; the intent of this question was to see if the evaluation program provided an opportunity for introducing AC into higher education.

Questions 15 to 18 were common questions on the feasibility of introducing WAC into Chinese higher education institutions for all three groups:

15. To what extent would a campus-wide writing and communication initiative contribute to the overall objectives for higher education?

16. Is a campus-wide, holistic, writing and/or communication initiative the best way to enhance student communication skills?

17. What other ways would you suggest?

18. What is your level of desire to participate in such an initiative to integrate writing, communication, and digital technologies for learning into your courses?

Specific Questions for the Administrator Group

In addition to the questions common to all three groups on student communication competencies, Question 6 asked “How important do you think writing
and communication are for students’ learning and future career?” Expanding on this topic further, Question 7 asked whether communication should be a critical focus area in higher education and the reason for the answer. The purpose of this question was to see if the participants think it was the responsibility of higher education to improve student writing and other communication competencies.

Questions 8 through 10 were similar to questions asked of the faculty group. Question 8, much like Question 13 for the faculty, was “Is it important for college students to have some knowledge and skill in international/intercultural communication in today’s global economy? If yes, how could it be integrated into the curriculum?” This question covered international and intercultural communication to determine the administrators’ perceptions and openness to international exchanges. Question 9 was “How important is the Five-Year-Circle-Evaluation program for your institute? Do you think integrating writing and other communication components into the curriculum could contribute to meeting the requirement of the evaluation as well as enhancing students’ learning? Why or why not?” Question 10 asked about overall higher education objectives. Questions 11 to 14 concluded the section of interview questions specific to this participant group by focusing on administrators support for possible WAC initiatives on their campuses, the most explicit questions for determining their opinions on the feasibility and adaptation for introducing WAC into China.

Specific Questions for the Employer Group

Although the list of questions for the employer group looked different from the other two, it was essentially similar, the basic change being the replacement of “college”
and “students” with “company” and “employees.” The content of the questions, however, remained similar to allow for cross-referencing.

The first two questions focused on the emphasis placed on writing and other communication skills as qualifications in job advertisements and how these skills were evaluated in the recruiting process.

1. Do you stress the importance of writing or other communication skills such as listening, speaking, presenting, and using digital technologies in your job advertisements? If yes, what are they? If not, why not?

2. Do you inquire or test for these skills in the recruiting process? If yes, how is this implemented? If not, why not?

Question 3 asked if and how these skills were assessed during annual employee evaluations, and Questions 4 to 8 asked the participants to comment on employee writing, speaking, and presenting skills and the use of digital technologies in both Chinese and English, if applicable. Question 9 was “What is the relationship between communication skills and overall job performance?” While it was to some extent a follow-up to Question 1, it solicited more direct answers from the interviewees. Question 10 asked to what extent the college graduates they recruited met their expectations for communication skills.

The remaining questions were all similar to those asked in the previous two groups. Questions 11 asked if it was critical to include communication into higher education curriculum, and Question 12 asked about international and intercultural communication, the same two questions asked of the faculty and administrators. They
were not only for cross-referencing the three groups but also to determine if different types of companies had different expectations. Questions 13 to 15 asked about the employers’ perceptions of WAC initiatives and their willingness to participate or their suggestions for alternatives. These questions were designed to provide direct answers about the feasibility of introducing WAC into China.

US Interview Questions

The list of US interview questions also began with demographic information. In this section, information on the institution affiliations of the interviewees, the department/center/program names, their academic ranks, their administrative roles, their total years of teaching in higher education, and their overseas higher education experience were asked.

The second section contained 17 questions. Question 1 asking for the participants’ personal experience with WAC served as the foundation for the questions that followed and as a gauge of any overall positive and negative feelings that may affect other responses. Questions 2 to 8 focused on their perspectives of the US WAC movement including its definition, its major characteristics, its most significant contribution to US higher education, its critical components, the major obstacles to the initiation of WAC programs in the US, their ideal WAC programs, and the sustainability and the future of WAC:

2. How would you define WAC? What are the major characteristics?

3. What is the most important contribution of WAC to American higher education?
4. What are the indispensible components for the initiation of a WAC program in the US? Why?

5. What are the major obstacles for the initiation of a WAC program in the US? What do you think are the reasons for these obstacles?

6. What threatens the sustainability of WAC programs in the US?

7. How should the ideal WAC program function?

8. What do you think the future of WAC will be?

These questions were designed to solicit their perspectives on US WAC, allowing for a comparison with WAC initiatives in other countries. This analysis tracing the adaptation of WAC in other countries provided helpful information and guidance that can be applied to its introduction into China.

Questions 9 to 15 related to the WAC initiatives these experts had been involved with in other countries. Question 9 asked if they had been involved in initiating WAC programs, conducting WAC-related research, or teaching about WAC in other countries, including their roles in these activities. Question 10 was “According to your experience, what are the major differences of WAC programs in the US and those in other countries?” Question 11 asked the language(s) these programs chose to work with and on and the reasons for these choices. Questions 12 and 13 covered the major components of these programs and their common obstacles. As all the interviewees selected for this study had overseas WAC experience, Question 14 asked for their suggestions for US WAC researchers involved with WAC development outside of the US, and Question 15
asked for their suggestions for those in other countries who might want to initiate WAC programs of their own.

Question 16 solicited the interviewees’ opinions and perspectives by asking them “How do you see the connections between international dissemination of WAC and the future of WAC in the US?” Question 17 concluded by asking them for any other suggestions or comments to make sure that the interviewees had a chance to provide all the information they wanted to share.

Administration

Pre-interview Preparation

The preparation before the interviews included designing the questions and filing the Institution Review Board (IRB) applications in the Office of Research Compliances at Clemson University. The questions for the China interviews were translated into Chinese and printed out, the Chinese translation following the English so that the interviewees could refer to the English version if they wished.

The China interviews were conducted during two personal visits to China in June and December 2009. These 28 interviews in China were conducted face-to-face. All interviewees were contacted as a result of a personal relationship network, the form of sampling being a combination of cluster and snowball sampling. The majority of the interviewees reflected the former as they were contacted because of a personal relationship with them or through mutual friends. Two of the interviewees in the faculty group, two in the administrators group, and three in the employers group were suggested by early participants, reflecting snowball sampling.
It was difficult finding this number of participants because Guanxi (relationship) in the Chinese culture is expected to be established and maintained for a long time before such favors as participating in a study like this one are asked. One of the faculty interviewee alluded to this issue when talking about why Chinese faculty do not conduct empirical research, saying it “costs” too much to ask for favors like this. The faculty and administrator participants would have been difficult to contact if they had not been known personally or introduced through mutual friends. Martha Townsend, who has been to China twice, echoes this problem, saying it is very complex to get in touch with and maintain communication with Chinese scholars and administrators.

The employer group involved another issue. Many companies do not allow their employees to be interviewed on issues related to the operation of their companies. Therefore, all who agreed to participate had to have a level of personal trust in the researcher and the IRB approvals and guidelines before being interviewed. In fact, two HR managers contacted found it uncomfortable to be recorded and declined to be interviewed although they fully understood the interview questions were not directly related to their companies. It is very complex and difficult for a researcher who has no established relationships in China to conduct the kind of in-depth interviews used here.

Inviting the participants and scheduling the interviews were completed through telephone calls. Because of the limited time allowed for both visits to China, some potential interviewees, especially those in the administrator group, were not able to participate due to either business trips or overseas study/research plans. As a result, this group includes only eight participants, while the other two have 10.
The eight potential US interviewees were contacted through email on the same day in February, with all agreeing to participate in the study. Because of their schedules, the first interview was conducted on February 23, 2010, the last on April 2, 2010. These were all conducted by telephone and recorded using the online recording service. Although this service was quite reliable most of the time, one interview had to be rescheduled twice because it was not available on the first scheduled date and it was involved in significant maintenance on the rescheduled date. The questions were emailed to the participants one day before the scheduled interview, both as a reminder and to provide them with something to refer to during the interviews. This method proved quite useful as most read them and prepared their answers, and the list also provided a reference point during the interviews.

*Implementation of Interviews*

All the interviews were completed, and no interviewee chose to discontinue his/her participation. The China interviews varied in length from 22 to 48 minutes, with the average being 35; the US interviews varied in length from 59 to 98 minutes, with the average being 75.

At the beginning of each interview, information on the IRB validation and participant rights were provided, and permission to record the interview was obtained. Their identities were not revealed in the results, as it was designed this way so that they can express their perspectives more openly and freely, a situation verified by those participants in the pilot study.
Most of the Chinese interviews took place in the participants’ offices or in meeting rooms in their organizations for their convenience and sense of comfort and familiarity even though doing so required much time and travel on the part of the researcher, especially if two or more interviews were scheduled on the same day. Even though the participants were called one day before the interviews to confirm their availability, occasionally they were interrupted by telephone calls or by students or colleagues, and an unexpected issue required the attention of one immediately before the interview began.

Most of the questions for the China interviews were asked in the original order. Sometimes if the answers were brief, the interviewees were asked to elaborate. Although quite concise, the answers for the shortest interview, which lasted for approximately 22 minutes, were quite complete and clear, so no further information was asked for. When the interviewees gave unrelated or more information than requested, they were politely turned back to focus on the interview questions. When the participants answered a question before it was asked, the researcher still asked it, then repeated their answer, asking them to verify the response. Of the 28 interviews, only two participants digressed to inquire about the research being conducted, two faculty members, one from English and another from Communication Studies.

The US interviews took much longer than the Chinese ones, probably because these involved WAC experts have many stories, studies, experiences, and data to cognitively mine and share. These participants were very involved and interested in this research, resulting in many digressions, meaning none of the US interviews proceeded
according to the order of the questions. The participants either answered questions before being asked or skipped some. They all referred to published literature in their answers or in their discussion of various projects. All of them asked about this research, and all showed a great interest in writing research and teaching and learning in Chinese higher education institutions. In fact, I was “interviewed” by at least three of them regarding these areas.

Although the US interviews did not proceed in order, every question was answered by every interviewee, and most of the digressions were related to this study as they focused on the international dissemination of WAC. The fullness of the information provided by these participants based on their experiences and research enhanced the intent of the original interview questions. They offered different perspectives as well as agreement on certain issues. In addition, all offered further support beyond their participation in the interview process through mail exchanges before and after the interviews, providing first-hand data collected on related projects and emailing the notes they took when preparing for the interviews.

Post-Interview Analysis

After the interviews were completed, the Chinese ones were transcribed by a college student in China. To ensure their accuracy, a second Chinese college student reviewed the transcriptions. These students highlighted any unfamiliar words and phrases, most of which were English terms used by the Chinese participants, marking the recording time to allow me to verify the words and spelling.
The transcription of the 10 interviews in the faculty group totaled 64,705 Chinese characters (47 single-spaced pages, 11 point font size), the transcription of the eight interviews in the administrator group, 35,026 Chinese characters (29 pages), and the 10 interviews in the employer group, 55,469 Chinese characters (43 pages). In total, the transcribed interviews contained 155,200 Chinese characters (119 pages). The standard conversion ratio for Chinese characters to English words is 1.5 to 1, meaning the transcriptions of the Chinese interviews result in approximately 100,000 English words.

The US interviews were transcribed by me and the recordings subsequently listened to again to ensure accuracy. These eight interviews were transcribed into 61,134 words, totaling 119 pages of single-spaced 12 point font.

Chinese interviews were first coded for themes, which were subsequently categorized based on the first two research questions focusing on the opportunities and obstacles for introducing WAC into China. During this analysis, each opinion in an interview question had to be supported by at least half (50%) of the interviewees of the group to be considered as a theme. The minimum number for each group was then five for the faculty group, four for the administrator group, and five for the employer group. The resulting analysis found four primary themes in the interviews. For example, 96% of the participants (27 out of 28) in China answered that they were interested in participating or supporting WAC-like programs or initiatives on campus, a primary theme supporting both initiating WAC programs in China and indicating the opportunity for doing so.
All themes were then put into the activity systems of classroom education, higher education administration system, and workplace to identify the hidden contradictions in these systems. This analysis was conducted in Chinese, but the resulting themes and representative quotations from the interviews were later translated into English for reporting the results in the next two chapters.

This coding process was done by me. The answers to every question were input into a Microsoft Excel file. As soon as the answers to the Yes/No questions were coded, the themes for these questions immediately emerged. For example, five of the ten faculty members said they were not satisfied with their students’ English writing, indicating a theme of “not satisfied.” For questions requiring elaboration, the coding process became more complicated. For example, for the faculty answers to the question on the motivation for engaging students in writing in the course they taught, five of the ten participants mentioned two motivations and the other five mentioned only one. Therefore, the coding resulted in 15 entries; and after grouping, two themes became apparent: “evaluation of learning outcomes” mentioned by seven of the participants and “needs in the discipline and workplace” mentioned by five. One of the responses among these 15 entries, “final product of their learning in my course,” was not clear when viewed alone. However, the response to the follow-up question asking if this final product was required and used as the basis for grading was yes, so this entry was grouped with more explicit answers such as “course assessment tool” or “to assess their learning.” These two themes, “evaluation of learning outcomes” and “needs in the discipline and workplace” were then placed in the activity system of classroom
education as Rules/Norms for the analysis of how writing is used as a tool in Chinese higher education courses.

Although themes are important in providing a holistic view of these three activity systems, the details in the responses also contribute valuable information. For example, in their responses supporting the primary theme of the opportunity for initiating WAC in China, almost all participants added a “but” after the “yes.” The comments that followed varied in content from their concerns and experiences to their wishes. The concerns were grouped with the other challenges they mentioned in answering other questions, but their experiences or wishes could not be coded. However, some of these non-theme entries are also reported in the results as they reflect issues worth noting.

The answers to the US interview questions were also grouped into themes if certain answers were agreed upon by more than 50% (four out of eight) of the participants. However, as each country, each institution, each discipline, and even each major in the same discipline has a unique culture, and every one of these eight researchers has her/his unique experience and perspective, their individual perspectives on different projects in different countries and areas are of no less value than the themes. For example, Charles Bazerman mentioned the political complexity involved in a WAC initiative in Columbia, a subject no one else mentioned. While this did not become a theme, it is still reported in the results because Bazerman’s scholarly work has focused on understanding writing in its socio-historic context. When the experiences of these
experts are combined, a bigger picture with fuller colors or even three-dimensional effects is then revealed.

Detailed discussions of the results of the China interviews are presented in Chapter Five, with the analysis done in activity systems. The results of the US interviews are reported in Chapter Six, with a comparison of the two sets of interviews to see the connections between them. A feasibility assessment is included in Chapter Seven, with critical findings, theoretical implications, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE

CHINA INTERVIEWS QUALITATIVE RESULTS

“We should not just feed the students apples; we should teach them how to pick apples.”

--A faculty participant in this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the feasibility of introducing WAC pedagogies into Chinese higher education and their possible adaptation using the qualitative descriptive analysis of 28 interviews of Chinese faculty, higher education administrators, and potential employers, and eight interviews with US WAC experts. This chapter analyzes the results of the 28 Chinese interviews in relation to Research Questions (RQ) 1 and 2 introduced in Chapter 1:

• RQ 1: What factors in Chinese higher education would contribute to the feasibility of introducing US-originated WAC into China?

• RQ 2: What factors in Chinese higher education could be potential challenges for introducing the US-originated WAC into China?

Although the results of this part of the qualitative descriptive analysis provide an indication of the current perceptions concerning writing, speaking, and other communication modalities in the Chinese higher education system, they should not be considered as representative of all institutions, disciplines, and majors or of the unique cultures of the Chinese higher education system. However, even though limited generalization is warranted, the four primary themes and 17 secondary
themes reported below can offer insight, to a certain extent, into the disciplines, institutions, or companies represented by the participants of this study.

This thematic analysis of the data collected in the 28 interviews confirms that it is feasible to initiate WAC programs in China. It also shows that the current quality of student writing in both Chinese and English is not satisfactory according to faculty, administrators, and potential employers from certain types of companies. Communication competencies are regarded as very important by the Chinese faculty and administrators interviewed in this study, and according to the potential employers, these skills are closely related to the overall job performance of college graduates. Although WAC has not been formally introduced into the Chinese higher education system, this study revealed that WAC practices could address some of the needs and concerns expressed by the participants. And these needs, concerns, and practices contribute to answering RQ 1 because they represent the factors contributing to the feasibility of introducing WAC into China. Some potential challenges addressing RQ 2 were also identified in the themes.

This chapter is divided into two parts: a thematic analysis of the results of the Chinese interviews and these results reflected in activity systems. The first part discusses the four primary themes and 17 secondary themes, grouped into three secondary themes, listed below:

**Primary Themes**

1. Communication practices and skills are important for student learning and job performance.
2. Strengthening communication skills should be a critical focus of Chinese higher education.

3. International and intercultural communication is important for college students.

4. Faculty, administrators, and employers are willing to participate in WAC programs.

**Secondary Themes**

Themes 1-5: College student/graduate communication competencies

Themes 6-9: Higher education goals and workplace expectations

Themes 10-17: Challenges and opportunities for introducing WAC into China

The second part of this chapter focuses on applying activity theory, specifically activity systems, to the results. This application identifies two underlying contradictions: 1) the contradiction in motive on use value vs. exchange value in Chinese higher education activity system; 2) the contradiction in the rules and motives in the university and in the workplace activity systems that affect the tools. The solution proposed at the end of this chapter is to include WAC researchers in the community of the activity systems of higher education so that their expertise can contribute to addressing these contradictions, resulting in more effective teaching and learning that would benefit students in both their disciplinary study and their future careers.

**A Thematic Analysis of Chinese Interview Results**

There are two levels of themes: primary themes and secondary themes. The primary themes were agreed by all or almost all of the participants, and the
secondary themes were determined by applying the 50% rule specified in Chapter 4: a topic becomes a theme when 50% or more participants agree.

Four Primary Themes

The data analysis of the three sets of Chinese interviews resulted in four primary themes. These emerged from the answers given by the three groups of participants on the same or closely related questions, their responses being in full or almost full agreement. These four primary themes are developed beginning with general communication competence and moving to increasingly more specific issues before concluding with the willingness to participate in WAC programs. These primary themes strongly support the feasibility of introducing WAC into China, partially answering RQ 1. In addition, the challenges expressed in them partially answer RQ 2.

Primary Theme 1: Communication practices and skills are important for student learning and job performance

This primary theme emerged from the responses to three closely related questions on the relationship between student communication competencies and their learning and job performance after graduation. The two questions asked to the faulty group were “Do you have a desire to integrate communication components into your course?” and “To what degree do you think integrating communication into your courses will enhance your students’ learning of the subject?” One hundred percent of these participants answered that they had already integrated
communication components into their courses, agreeing that this integration enhanced the learning of their students.

The related question given to the administrator group was “How important do you think writing and communication are for student learning and future careers?” Similar to the faculty group, 100% of the administrator participants said that both were at least “very important,” with one participant answering that they were the “most important” for students in the university and in their future workplaces.

The question asked of the employers group was “What is the relationship between communication skills and overall job performance?” One hundred percent of the employer participants answered that communication skills were “related to” their employees’ overall job performance, with two responding that communication skills were “important and closely related to” overall job performance and five answering that communication skills were “very important” to employee overall job performance. Eighty percent of the participants said that employees with strong communication skills had a better chance of getting promoted than those with similar job performance that did not.

These responses, 100% from each group, indicate that the faculty, administrators, and perspective employers agree on the importance of teaching communication skills in universities and on their importance in the workplace. This support is especially important to this research because it represents various stakeholder perceptions.
Primary Theme 2: Strengthening communication skills should be a critical focus in Chinese higher education

The faculty group and the administrators group were both asked, “Do you think that strengthening writing, other communication skills such as speaking and presenting, and the use of technologies should be a critical focus area for educators in higher education?” For the employer group, the question was abbreviated to “Do you think that strengthening writing and communication should be a critical focus area in higher education?” Ninety-six percent of the participants from all three groups answered “yes” to this question. An employer, the only participant who disagreed, explained that she did not feel this was an urgent need in higher education, but she did find that communication skills got more attention and were regarded as more important in the state-owned company where her husband worked than they received in the joint-venture she worked for.

The responses generating this primary theme suggest that strengthening communication skills in college students should be a critical focus for Chinese higher education, a topic related to first primary theme reflecting the impact of communication on student learning and job performance. The participants were asked a follow-up question “Why or why not?” The reasons given by the participants are listed below.

• Communication skills are basic competencies. One faculty pointed out that these competencies “will benefit students for their whole life and would never expire.” An HR manager said that “because universities do not have this sense of training
students for their communication competencies, students graduate with limited knowledge or practice, but actually these soft skills are what we regard as very important, especially in foreign or joint companies, so we do have a gap here.”

- Knowledge and skills are represented through communication competencies in all disciplines. A mass media professor said that the lack of these skills is like “a short board” or even a “bottle neck” for students, affecting both the “input” and “output” of knowledge and training. An administrator believed that teachers should not consider themselves as “coaches” but as “trial horses” because students can learn much better through practice than by merely listening to lectures. An HR manager used an example to illustrate her response. In her company, Chinese engineers can do as well as their European counterparts, but the European engineers present their work more effectively, The reason, she believes, was not the quality of the knowledge or skills of the Chinese engineers but their lack of communication practice in the universities.

- Communication skills determine students’ chances at key intersections in their lives. One faculty said that every key intersection students experience in their lives after college including job hunting, promotions, and personal relationships requires some type of “presentation.” One HR manager commented that these skills were not just important for careers but also in personal lives, such as blogging to express themselves, meeting with people, or just writing a card to someone, all of which contribute to the overall quality of life.
Primary Theme 3: International and intercultural communication is important for college students

All three groups were asked the same question “Is it important for college students to have some knowledge and skills in international/intercultural communication in today’s global economy?” Eighty-two percent of the participants responded yes to this question. The remaining five, one faculty member and four employers said that it depended on the discipline the students were in or the kinds of jobs they wanted in the future.

The follow-up questions to this one for the faculty was “How could it be integrated into your course?”; for administrators, “How could it be integrated into the curriculum?”; and for employers, “Do you think this should be integrated into the curriculum?” One hundred percent of the participants in the employer group thought international and intercultural communication should be integrated into the curriculum despite the fact that 40% of them did not answer “yes” to the previous questions. Eighty percent of the faculty group and 50% of the administrator group said that international and intercultural communication had already been integrated into their courses or curriculum. The primary major approaches used included bilingual courses, exchange study programs, invited speakers, and specialized courses for English and Communication majors.

However, the respondents indicated that these approaches were not effective. Bilingual courses, the most frequently mentioned method, had not been as effective as expected because 1) they involved no actual communication situations and tasks,
and 2) many faculty members were not prepared to teach in English. One faculty member said that the academic exchanges students could be exposed to were far more “tolerant” than workplace communication tasks. In the academic exchanges, there was no punishment for making mistakes, and sometime, errors were not even pointed out to the students by faculty or foreign experts. This situation is quite different from workplace intercultural and international communication expectations, especially in the discipline of business management. Therefore, these simulated tasks and visiting international scholars cannot give students a real “sense” of what is required. This concept of “sense” was mentioned by four participants (40%) in the employer group. They said that while they did not expect college graduates to be adept in dealing with international/intercultural communication tasks, they should have this “sense,” which functions as an “antenna” allowing them to extend into and feel the business world.

These employers and higher education professionals agree on the need for international and intercultural communication skills; however, their responses to the follow-up question suggest that the colleges and universities are not effectively meeting this need. The next primary theme might provide a possible solution to this problem.

Primary Theme 4: Faculty, administrators, and employers are willing to participate in WAC programs.

“What is your level of desire to participate in such an initiative to integrate writing, communication, and digital technologies for learning into your courses?”
was the last question asked of all 28 participants, and 96% of the participants answered “yes,” the only exception being one employer participant who also said that strengthening writing and communication skills was not an urgent need in higher education. She stated that she would hire an engineer who lacked communication competency but had strong technical skills because her company focused on technology development.

However, the rest of the employers interviewed expressed great interest in participating in WAC and providing resources. Two of them said that they were already collaborating with other universities, providing instruction in certain disciplines and conducting campus workshops on job application skills; they expressed interest in wanting to extend this cooperation to “soft skills” training. Three regretfully admitted that they had offered their help and even resources to universities but did not get a positive response.

These answers reflect, to a certain degree, the comments made by the administrators. Three administrators said that they would support a WAC initiative but added that their support would not be very effective as they were not in a position to make decisions at this level. Another administrator pointed out that this type of decision largely depends on the president of the university, warning any change in leadership would affect the continuity of a program like this. This administrator is the director of the center for basic medical experiments, which offers one of the first courses in China incorporating both Chinese and English writing, presentations, and digital technologies. He certainly has experience in
working with administrations. In fact, he said that the center depended on the “interest” of the president of the university; if this interest disappeared or was replaced by something else, his center might not get as much support. His response reflects the Chinese university structure explained in Chapter 3, a centralized administration in local higher education institutions with some decentralized power given after the reforms.

All faculty members expressed an interest in participating WAC; however, almost everyone added a “but” after stating this interest. The conditions that the faculty members added are listed below.

- **Rewards from both a sense of accomplishment and compensation.** One faculty member was very straightforward, saying that the reward system had to recognize the faculty effort involved in participating in the workshops and incorporating WAC pedagogies; in addition, it was also a prerequisite that the pedagogies had to be worth the effort and time commitment, and as a result, student learning had to be enhanced.

- **Attending workshops cannot become an added obligation.** Regular meetings appear to be a burden. As a result, some suggested online webinars or podcasts so that faculty can participate whenever and wherever they want to.

- **The quality of the workshops has to be guaranteed.** One professor pointed out that the workshop facilitators had to have a good understanding of the disciplines and be able to provide concrete suggestions for courses.
All four primary themes address RQ1 and support the feasibility of introducing WAC into China, but they also hint at potential challenges which can be used to partially answer RQ2. Overall, the responses to the feasibility of introducing WAC appear promising as writing, speaking, and other communication modalities are recognized as important and as a critical focus in Chinese higher education. The willingness to participate in such an initiative, as expressed by all three groups, indicates the need for WAC pedagogies and programs is recognized. This need is further supported by the integration in some institutions of what can be regarded as “budding” WAC initiatives influenced by the overseas experiences of the interviewees.

Secondary Themes

These secondary themes emerged from the analysis of the three groups of interviews, each responding based on its unique perspective. These in-depth interviews included 18 questions for the faculty group, 14 for the administrator group, and 15 for the employer group. The transcription totaled 155,200 Chinese characters, or 119 pages. This amount of data and the resulting themes cannot be presented in clean, easy-to-read figures. However, it is this messy characteristic of qualitative research that can provide meaningful insights. These secondary themes were grouped into three clusters, each focusing on a major area: student communication competencies, higher education goals and workplace expectations, and challenges and opportunities for introducing WAC into Chinese higher education.
Theme 1: The quality of Chinese writing is not satisfactory.

Among the 10 faculty, 80% said that they read students’ Chinese writing, and only one, a journalism professor, said that she was satisfied with its quality. Forty percent said the writing they read was not good, and 30% indicated that it varied according to students’ attitudes, their disciplines, or their experiences as student leaders. Student organization leaders, according to one faculty member, write better than the rest, and students in the humanities write better than those in science and engineering. According to a computer science professor, the quality of an individual student’s work may vary from writing task to writing task depending on his/her attitude.

In the administrator group, 88% said that they read students’ Chinese writing, 71% of these seven clearly stating that they were not satisfied. Two commented that students could write composition essays pretty well but could not handle practical writing tasks. The two who said students’ Chinese writing was adequate, were professors in communication studies at a top two university; the quality of the students at that university coupled with the writing strengths of students in this discipline may have contributed to their perception.

Employers seem to evaluate college graduates’ Chinese writing the highest among these three groups; 80% read student writing, and 88% of them were satisfied with the quality. Only one said that it was very unsatisfactory, while two said that their companies used professional writers, whose writing was very good;
however, they do not represent the overall writing quality of the college graduates they recruited. One employer pointed out that it might take six months to a year for newly hired college graduates to learn to meet the requirements of the company’s workplace communication. Another said that the quality varied over a large range, some being really good writers, some being quite poor.

*Theme 2: The quality of the English writing is not satisfactory.*

Seventy percent of the faculty members, 63% of the administrators, and 80% of the employers said that they read English writing from students or employees. Among them, 71%, 100% and 50%, respectively, did not think the quality was satisfactory. The one professor and the one administrator who said that students’ English writing was adequate were both English professors teaching English majors, the faculty member adding that her students were able to produce grammatically correct essays but had problems such as using Chinese styles in English writing or choosing inappropriate words to express the meaning. This comment supports Li’s (2003) research on the influence of Chinese writing styles on students’ English writing.

The opinions of the employer group varied on this question, although four of the eight who read employee English writing found the quality unsatisfactory. The remaining four had different experiences. The one whose company hired professional writers for the Chinese documents said English documents were also written by professionals, thereby ensuring the quality. Another participant pointed out that the company gave English proficiency exams during the recruiting process
and since only those who passed were hired, they did not have obvious problems with English writing. One said that the quality varied from very good to very poor, but for the positions that required good English writing skills, the company focused on the candidate’s writing skills during the recruiting process; therefore, this range in ability had not been found to affect the communication.

**Theme 3: The overall speaking competency is satisfactory.**

The faculty group was the most positive when asked to comment on students’ speaking competency, with 100% of them indicating that it was satisfactory, although some provided additional comments. One faculty member said that the students’ speaking abilities were generally better than their writing. Two faculty members said that students had the potential to do a better job if they received proper training in both speaking skills and critical thinking so that they could “make a breakthrough on both personal and social limitations.” Two other participants criticized their students for being self-centered and for their lack of proper etiquette when communicating with their professors. The two professors who said that their students speaking competency was excellent taught communication studies. The follow-up question asked about their expectations concerning student speaking ability. Fifty percent of the faculty pointed out that they wanted their students to be articulate when speaking, and 40% said that students should be proactive, taking advantage of every opportunity in class to practice so that they could get immediate feedback from the professor and their peers.
The administrator group appeared to be more critical, only 50% saying students’ speaking abilities were satisfactory, one saying they were “just so so,” and three others saying that student ability varied widely with only a limited number doing well. One administrator provided a possible reason for this variation, saying that students’ previous exposure to different communication situations and environments contributed to their performance in college. He pointed out that some students, although from poor rural areas, were exposed to very open and positive environments so that they spoke better than those from more affluent families who put excessive pressure on their sons and daughters to succeed. The major expectation of this group was similar to that of the faculty group: 50% of these eight participants want the students to be articulate.

Eighty percent of the ten employers were satisfied with the speaking competency of the college graduates they recruited, with only 20% saying that some employees’ speaking abilities cannot be rated as being satisfactory. However, contrary to the professor who said students spoke better than they wrote, one employer said that the writing was more satisfactory than the speaking, indicating that approximately 80% of the college graduates recruited by the company needed transitional instruction to be able to perform professional speaking tasks well. For their expectations for speaking, 60% of this group echoed the previous two groups, expecting students to be articulate. Thirty percent also mentioned that they expected employees to be considerate of the people they talk to. One used the example of the engineers in the company who were so “spoiled” they demanded
help and support from other colleagues; they used the same attitude with local
government clerks who later complained to the Human Resources Department,
demanding that the company designate an HR person with “proper manners” to
work with them. This behavior is a representation of the self-centeredness and the
lack of proper etiquette mentioned by the faculty group in the workplace.

Theme 4: Presentation competencies are satisfactory in universities but not in
workplace.

Sixty percent of the participants in the faculty group and 88% in the
administrator group were satisfied with students’ presentation competencies. Two
of the faculty even commented that students were sometimes better than the faculty
themselves and could offer technical help. The two communication studies
professors from one of the top two universities in China said that their students’
performances when giving presentations sometimes exceeded their expectations
and predictions. However, this was not mentioned by faculty from other
universities or disciplines. When asked their expectations, 50% of the faculty
participants commented that presentations should be clear, to the point and within
the time allowed. Thirty percent mentioned that the tools used for presentations
should “serve the purpose of the presentation well.” Fifty percent of the
administrators said that they expected student presentations to be clear and concise,
and 20% stated that presentations should be used to “promote the interactions in
class to enhance student learning” rather than just using the class time to show that
communication components were added.
However, in the workplace, college graduate presentation competency was rated as unsatisfactory by 80%. One the two who said they were satisfied indicated that the company trained their employees to use the required presentation models, and the other said that the majority of their employers were salesmen and were recruited based on very high standards for speaking and presentation skills. One emphasized that he/she expected students in this information age to be better at using technology in presentations but found he/she had to train them after they were recruited. However, 30% of them said that in their companies team leaders gave much better presentations than team members, supporting the importance of communication skills in Primary Theme 1, for which 80% of the employers said that employees with good communication skills had a better chance of being promoted.

This difference in the evaluation of students’ presentations in the universities and in the workplace should attract the attention of higher education. When commenting on integrating intercultural and international communication in courses, as discussed in Primary Theme 3, one faculty pointed out that academic exchanges were too “tolerant” to represent workplace scenarios. One of the reasons for this difference might be the “tolerant” quality of academic tasks because students are treated as learners rather than practitioners. Another reason might be the lack of workplace experience among faculty and administrators. The latter can be addressed by bringing in companies as clients or consultants in courses. However, according to the resistance the HR managers talked about under Primary Theme 4, it will require time and effort to make higher education institutions aware
of this difference and to do something about it. WAC researchers within institutions may be able to conduct research and share their findings about appropriate pedagogical applications with faculty and administrators to address this situation.

*Theme 5: Students’ digital technology competency is satisfactory.*

Ninety percent of the faculty group, 88% of the administrator group, and 70% of the employer group responded that students’ digital technology competency met their expectations. The only one in that faculty group and the only one in the administrator group who disagreed with this were both computer science professors. The remaining three in the employer group said that college graduates’ digital technology competency was not as good as they expected but it improved after company training. The primary expectation of the three groups was the same: to meet the needs of the tasks (either of the courses or of the workplace). This was agreed upon by 50% of the faculty, 100% of the administrators, and 90% of the employers.

These five themes indicate that college students or graduates can complete speaking tasks and use digital technologies quite well; however, their Chinese and English writing still needs to be improved. The difference between presentations in the classroom and the requirements in the workplace can be addressed by enhancing communication and collaboration between higher education institutions and the workplace. A possible solution is to initiate WAC programs so that research and pedagogical support can be provided. These themes reflect factors in Chinese
higher education that contribute to the feasibility of introducing WAC into China and, therefore, help to answer RQ 1.

Higher Education Goals and Workplace Expectations (Themes 6-9)

Theme 6: Higher education goals: holistic persons and abilities.

The participants in the faculty and administrator groups were asked to describe the goals of higher education in their own words. Some of them focused on only one, while others mentioned several different goals in their answers. The one mentioned the most, in fact by 60% of the participants in the faculty group, was to "cultivate characters in the students" or to "cultivate holistic persons." Fifty percent also mentioned educating them to improve their ability for further study and for their future professions. One faculty used an analogy, saying "we should not just feed the students apples; we should teach them how to pick apples."

Eighty-eight percent of the administrator group said that the goal for higher education was to enhance their students’ abilities so that they will be successful in college and in their future careers, in particular their creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. One administrator illustrated this point by borrowing from one of the former presidents of her university (one of the top two universities). "When our students graduate and step out of our university, we should not just equip them with some bread but also a shot gun." This "bread' refers to the knowledge, and this "shot gun' refers to the students’ abilities to learn and work. Three of them also mentioned "educating the persons" or "helping them establish their life philosophy." It’s also worth noting that two faculty members and one administrator
mentioned “preparing them for obtaining a job” as a goal of higher education, a
comment which reflects the job placement pressure felt by higher education. Two
faculty members, one communications professor and one business management
professor, mentioned “liberal education” in English and criticized the
“commercialized society and marketized higher education” that hindered the
devotion to teaching and learning. The influence of American higher education was
reflected in this idea of a “liberal education,” which was also an educational goal in
ancient China.

Theme 7: Higher education evaluation is regarded as being only a formality that
increases faculty workload and produces excessive paperwork, but it is taken as quite
important by most of the administrators. WAC programs could contribute to dealing with
this evaluation program.

In the faculty group, 70% said that they participated in the evaluation
program, with 71% of these indicating that the evaluation program had become a
formality, which increased their workload by requiring documents and paperwork.
Forty-three percent expressed their resentment of this evaluation program because
it seemed to represent distrust of the professors. One faculty said,

“The evaluation program uses an external standard to assess the quality of
higher education, and this external standard was set up with great emphasis
on the political, administrative, and ideological aspects, rather than with a
focus on cultivating a learning atmosphere with academic freedom.”

However, as introduced in Chapter 3, this evaluation program is critical for
universities in securing funding because they are not be allowed to increase their
enrollment if they cannot pass it. Therefore, 88% of the administrator group said that this evaluation was important, with only one of them disagreeing, claiming that there was no significance in conducting this five-year evaluation and it would surely be changed in the future.

The follow-up question asked whether WAC programs or initiatives could help to prepare the archives for courses to deal with the evaluation. Fifty-seven percent of the seven faculty members who had participated in the evaluation process agreed that writing and other communication exercises or assignments could be used as archives of their courses, becoming a major portion of the evaluation documents. Fifty percent of the eight administrators endorsed this ideal, but two argued that it would be too narrow or limiting to use only communication components as course archives. One administrator pointed out that it depends on if communication components were included in the university criteria; if there were no clear requirements for communication components, they would not be useful for the evaluation program. The potential connection between the evaluation program and WAC initiatives can be used to promote WAC in China, another factor speaking to RQ 1.

**Theme 8: Students’ communication competencies do not meet the expectations of potential employers.**

The potential employer group was not asked the question about the goals of higher education; rather, they were asked if the college students they interviewed had sufficient communication competencies to meet their expectations. Only 10%
said “yes,” and another 20% said that “some good ones can, but the majority cannot.” The remaining 70% did not think students met their expectations. These responses echo Themes 1 to 4 that students’ Chinese writing, English writing, and presentation skills were not seen by employers as being adequate, although their speaking skills and their use of digital technologies were. One employer said,

“Although students and universities pay more attention to their disciplinary knowledge building, our company (a foreign company) puts more emphasis on the soft skills. We also agree that disciplinary knowledge and training are important, but we think more of the overall comprehensive competence, which include your abilities to learn and study, your communication skills, and your capacity to understand and work with Chinese and Western cultures.”

One employer was quite honest, saying that college graduates were not even “semi-manufactured goods” and that they had to be trained in everything. Another attributed this lack of competence to “the failure of higher education institutions on not teaching students communication skills and applicable abilities in the real world.” The 20% who answered that good students met their expectations said that students with good academic records were always good communicators because they paid attention to different aspects of learning and always turned out to be excellent employees. This unsatisfactory evaluation from the employers also contributes a reason for initiating WAC in China, helping to answer RQ 1.
**Theme 9: Communication competencies are stressed in recruiting advertisements, tested in recruiting processes, and assessed in employee evaluations.**

Ninety percent of the participants in the employer group confirmed that they stressed communication skills in their job advertisements, and 60% said that they had specific requirements for various positions. The only participant who said that his/her company did not stress communication skills in job advertisements added that special attention was focused on communication skills during the interview process.

One hundred percent of this group said that they tested these communication skills during the recruiting process, the common procedures for new college graduates being face-to-face interviews and/or group interviews including discussions of scenarios provided for speaking and interpersonal communication. Some also requested writing samples such as reports or proposals, and 90% mentioned that they conducted on-site tests on writing involving writing tasks in Chinese and/or English. One of the foreign company HR managers said that the results of English writing tests were closely related to the starting salaries of the new college graduates they recruited. As for digital technologies, recruiters asked the interviewees to perform certain tasks during the on-site interviews. For certain positions, such as a salesman position in one of the foreign companies, the interviewees were asked to develop and give a presentation using PPT during the on-site interview. One employer mentioned that she asked to see certificates on computer proficiency.
Sixty percent of the employers said that communication skills were an aspect of their annual employee evaluations, indicating that these skills were listed on the evaluation form. Some required employees to complete self-evaluations, providing evidence to support them. Some said that the evaluation of communication skills was done by the employee’s immediate supervisor. The employer from the government unit said that it had both internal and external evaluation forms, the internal one completed by the immediate supervisor and the external one by the companies that this government unit served. Among the remaining 40% who said that communication skills were not part of the annual evaluation process, two said that section/department administrators were required to give reports, supporting the relationship between good communication skills and promotion opportunities mentioned in Primary Themes 1 and 2; another said that evaluations were done on newly recruited employees before they completed their probation periods. This evaluation was conducted by both peers and immediate supervisors. The last of these four employers said that the company used only KPI (Key Performance Indicators) that could be calculated and presented in numbers.

These four themes provide a basic understanding of the perceptions of higher educational goals among faculty members and administrators. Although administrators and faculty members might have different priorities in their work in higher education, they agreed on two major goals: to educate the entire person and to equip their students with the abilities they needed to contribute to the society. However, their opinions on the evaluation program were quite different.
Administrators thought it was very important, while faculty saw it as becoming a formality and causing excessive work for them. Although expressing different motives, both groups saw WAC programs or initiatives contributing to this evaluation process to a certain extent. However, even though all institutions passed their evaluation, employers did not think college graduates met their expectations for communication competencies, suggesting that the quality of higher education indeed needs improvement. The employers verified that they stress communication skills in job advertisements, tested them in interviews, and included them in the employee evaluations. These should be considered by higher education professionals as they determine requirements and goals for undergraduate education, which can be enhanced by WAC programs.

Challenges and Opportunities for Introducing WAC into China (Themes 10-17)

Theme 10: Communication modalities have been integrated into university courses.

All of the faculty members interviewed assigned writing in the courses they taught, with 20% of them assigning only English writing assignments, 30% only Chinese, and 50% of the faculty members in different disciplines (management, computer science, law, and medicine) indicated they had integrated multiple communication modalities into their courses, asking students to complete tasks by writing, speaking, presenting, and using digital educational technologies. These responses indicate a faculty buy-in and a realization of the importance of integrating these components supporting the introduction of WAC into China. However, as indicated in Primary Theme 3, the integration of communication tasks
into courses did not always lead to satisfactory results, suggesting it is time to review the how and why of this integration process. The quantity of integrated courses does not guarantee the quality of this integration. Professional research and support should be provided so that this faculty buy-in does not lose momentum and become an obstacle for introducing WAC programs. Thus, this integration supports the introduction of WAC into China, answering RQ 1; however, it can become a challenge if no action is taken.

Theme 11: The two major motivations for engaging students in writing are assessment and preparation for study in the disciplines or work in related fields.

Seventy percent of the faculty members clearly stated that one of the motivations, often the first one, for assigning writing tasks was assessment; 50% of them also mentioned these tasks related to the writing tasks of their students’ future study in their disciplines or the workplace. The computer science professor said that all the documents she required students to write in the course, such as PRD (Product Requirements Documents), DD (Design Documents), and TD (Test Documents), were similar to the types of documents her students would be required to write in the workplace as computer science engineers. Two business professors gave similar reasons for assigning writing, saying that in their field of study, there often was no right or wrong answers, so the writing the students did can reveal their entire thinking process on a topic, something that could never be seen in standardized tests. These responses are reflective of the foundation of WAC, the
connection between writing and learning and thinking, supporting initiating WAC in China.

Theme 12: Workload is the biggest disincentive for faculty assigning students writing tasks.

While thirty percent of the faculty denied there was any disincentive for assigning writing tasks, 57% of the remaining 70% stated the workload was one. They mentioned the already heavy workload explained in Chapter 3, finding through experience that it took much more time to grade writing assignments than standardized tests. This workload issue should be considered as a challenge for initiating WAC in China. However, some professors did not think this was a good enough reason for not assigning writing. A law professor said, “It is much easier for me if I do not assign writing assignments to my students, but our goal should not be to make things easy for ourselves but to make sure students can learn things in our courses.” Student complaints, their failure to realize learning outcomes through writing, and peer pressure from other professors who do not use much writing in their courses were other disincentives mentioned by the participants. This is a challenge to WAC in China, one that addresses RQ 2.

Theme 13: A campus-wide, holistic writing and communication initiative is the best way to enhance student communication skills.

When asked to what extent a campus-wide holistic writing and communication initiative would contribute to the overall objectives of higher education, 100% of the participants in both the faculty and the administrator groups confirmed that this would make “a lot” or at least “some” contribution to realizing
the overall objectives of higher education. This question was not asked of the employer group.

All three groups were subsequently asked if such an initiative is the best way to enhance student communication skills. Fifty percent of the faculty group, 50% of the administrator group, and 100% of the employers group responded that it was the best way. The reason mentioned by 50% of all participants was that students would pay more attention to understanding, learning, and practicing the communication tasks if they were integrated effectively into courses so that they could use the skills learned in their future study and work. This theme tells us that the general concept of WAC programs is supported by faculty, administrators, and employers; therefore, it also answers RQ 1.

The participants also mentioned some challenges for potential WAC programs. One faculty member, who worked in the US for one year, said that he used writing-intensive pedagogies in his course but got many complaints from the students and felt the burden of the increased workload. He said that WAC was not the best way and he would not recommend it to other professors because “not everything from the US can be imported and used in China,” but he also said, “I will not give up and will keep using this method.” This is a good example, showing that the faculty buy-in and even practice are already present, but without the proper resources, support or effective exchanges among faculty members offered by WAC programs, this faculty buy-in might easily become faculty resistance. This analysis can be cross-referenced with that for Theme 10.
Theme 14: Adding related extra-curricular activities is another option for enhancing students’ communication skills.

Extra-curricular activities were the top-rated option when the participants were asked to offer suggestions of other ways to enhance students’ communication skills, with 54% mentioning it. Ninety percent of the employer group thought this was a good option since they found those students who had experience as student leaders in extra-curricular activities often had more communication experiences and better communication skills.

Other options included courses on communication skills. The reason this option was mentioned by only four of the 28 participants is that there is no General Education in the Chinese higher education curriculum; as a result, the participants tend to think from a discipline-specific perspective rather than considering a general course offered to all students, such as freshman composition or public speaking in the General Education programs in many American universities.

The connection between WAC and faculty development was also made by one faculty member and two administrators, who said that a prerequisite to WAC should be that faculty should know how to communicate before they teach their students.

Theme 15: Challenges for WAC programs reflect different concerns.

There was not one dominant concern resulting in a theme among the challenges mentioned by these three groups. However, 93% of all participants expressed their concerns as they answered different questions, perceiving
challenges for WAC programs being introduced into Chinese universities from their own perspectives. Although none of these concerns formed a theme, the list below includes the 12 most frequently mentioned challenges, most of which echoed the list of challenges at the end of Chapter 3. By identifying these perceived potential challenges, this list also answers RQ 2.

- **Workload for faculty.** Professors may perceive WAC pedagogies as extra work they have to do, especially if they are not aware there are certain writing tasks that do not necessarily increase the grading required of professors.

- **Reward system.** Professors and administrators were both concerned about how the WAC components could be translated into rewards for faculty in terms of both compensation and promotion.

- **The conflict between teaching and research.** WAC is aimed at better teaching for faculty and better learning for students, but the “fundamental problem of Chinese higher education now is that too many universities are aiming at becoming research universities”, so teaching has lost the emphasis it deserves in higher education, resulting in “many fewer pedagogical research proposals than scientific research proposals getting funded”.

- **Lack of teaching standards for integrating communication skills.** “Most of the professors who are doing this are just doing it for their own interests in students’ learning. If it is not included in teaching evaluations or peer evaluations, this will continue to be based on personal interest preference. And those who are doing it now might feel it is unfair that these are not even mentioned in their evaluations.”
This remark was made by a dean and professor of chemistry at a medical university.

- Insufficient digital technologies in the universities. This refers to the accessibility of technologies by students and professors. “If classrooms are equipped with better technologies, then there is no excuse for not learning them or using them in teaching,” one professor commented.

- Students’ complaints about workload. This was mentioned by two professors and one administrator who have added communication components to their courses. The students’ complaints could be reflected in course evaluations, subsequently affecting the compensation of individual faculty members.

- Unpredictable administrative support. The most representative comments were given by the director of a center for basic medical experiments, which offers a course to all undergraduate medical students that is very communication intensive. While this course is good example of a program involving communication in the disciplines, this director clearly stated his concerns about a change in the administration’s interests or priorities that could result in a subsequent loss of support.

- Lack of proof of effectiveness. This is closely connected to WAC assessment in the US or other countries. Some prefer to see the numbers proving the effectiveness of WAC being verified in other universities or educational systems before implementing a similar program. A synthesis of WAC scholarship and previous studies, preferably in Chinese, might help to solve this problem.
• Academic dishonesty. Similar to how their professors or administrators handled the paperwork for evaluation, some Chinese students downloaded materials from the Internet for their writing assignments in their courses or enjoyed “free rides” in group projects. These were reported by two professors as a disincentive for assigning writing assignments. One employer also commented that WAC would be a challenge for professors as they would need to work to make sure that no academic dishonesty was involved in their students’ writing.

• High level decision-making in Chinese universities. Although four of the administrators interviewed in this study were at the dean or associate dean level of administration and all eight administrators said that they would support WAC, three said that their support would not count. This comment reflects the centralized administration of the Chinese political culture in which only the top leaders make decisions for the entire institution, making grassroots movements impractical. However, this also means that if the top administrator can be persuaded, decisions can turn into reality without having to be discussed by committees for a certain period of time.

• The disconnection between universities and workplaces. This disconnection was shown in Theme 4 and Theme 8, with employers indicating students’ presentation skills and their overall communication abilities did not meet the expectations of the workplace. This is further verified by the analysis of Primary Theme 4, when three employers said that they offered their input to help students learn to be better communicators but were turned down or simply ignored by the universities.
Although professors said that they tried to prepare students for their future careers in their disciplines or fields of studies, it would be a significant disadvantage if this connection between the universities and workplace is not encouraged, even worse if it is impeded by the administration.

• **Entrenched attitudes.** These attitudes can be found in faculty, administrators, and students. It was mentioned by one junior faculty member that he felt that his use of writing and other communication modalities in his courses might make other professors, especially senior professors who use conventional pedagogies and standardized tests, uncomfortable.

Two other faculty members said that students complained they were given extra work in these professors’ courses because of the pedagogies they employed, which were more writing-intensive. These students’ complaints would place significant pressure on junior faculty members to try WAC pedagogies because their promotions can be affected. Two administrators said that as long as there were no written standards for integrating communication components into the curriculum, it would be difficult to attract more interest in WAC pedagogies, although these administrators all recognized the benefits of increasing students’ disciplinary knowledge and enhancing overall communication skills. This comment supports the view that administrations have become more business-like, tending to act according to policies and standards, especially exemplified by their emphasis on the importance of the evaluation program, a perspective not found among faculty members. This difference in attitudes and priorities could make it difficult to
promote WAC unless the connections between it and official programs such as the evaluation can be made clear to the administration.

Theme 16: WAC, or to be more specific WID, is already in the Chinese higher education system.

Although as explained at the beginning of this chapter, the results of this qualitative study cannot be generalized to all disciplines or all universities in China, the seven disciplines and four different types of universities represented by the 10 faculty members interviewed for this study unanimously (100%) indicated that they had integrated writing, speaking, presentations, and educational technologies into their courses. Their sources for implementing these were primarily the spontaneous feelings that these could help their students; even though the results, as they mentioned, might not be completely satisfying, these practices show that writing across the curriculum, or to be more specific writing in the disciplines, is already being practiced in Chinese universities. These practices, with all the good and not-so-good outcomes, are the soil in which WAC programs can grow, a place for faculty to exchange their experiences and stories from their classrooms, listen to those with the knowledge and theories behind the pedagogies, get help from different resources, and be rewarded for what they have done for their students. This existence of WID, which is an opportunity and potentially an entry point for introducing WAC into China, answers RQ 1.

Theme 17: There are needs for WAC programs to be initiated in China in the disciplines, in the higher education administration, and in the workplaces.
Primary Themes 1 to 4 show that the three groups interviewed for this research recognize the importance of student communication, the focus of WAC programs. Therefore, the feasibility of introducing WAC programs into China is quite promising. Ninety-six percent of the participants mentioned needs that can be linked to WAC; in addition to the four primary themes, there are other opportunities mentioned in the 28 interviews that although did not form themes by themselves are worth being included in this report. The following are the topics mentioned most frequently by the participants, helping to provide a fuller answer to RQ 1.

- Increased international exchanges in the academia and business world have resulted in communication competency receiving increased attention. Seven in the faculty group, five in the administrator group, and three in the potential employer group had overseas experience. Many of them used examples they observed either in the universities they attended or visited or in the workplaces where they encountered professionals from other countries to illustrate the importance of addressing the lack of emphasis given to communication in Chinese higher education. Professors compared Chinese students with those they encountered in other countries; administrators compared their academic programs with those abroad; employers compared their Chinese employees with these international interns sent from other countries. The conclusion they all arrived at was epitomized this statement given by an employer, “Our [Chinese] engineers can do as well or even better, but they just
cannot give fabulous presentations like that, which is really a shame. I wish they had the training that those engineers had in college in their countries.”

• The connection between WAC and the evaluation program. Although this should not become the focus of WAC programs, as my question was rated as “narrow-minded” by two administrators, it should be taken into consideration that WAC can provide archives from the courses with communication-intensive components in many venues. If the administrators consider the evaluation program important, then WAC should speak the same language to obtain their support.

• Lack of a pedagogical support system. One senior medical professor said that only those professors with certain teaching experiences and over a certain age could handle specialized courses incorporating various communication models. A junior professor of management also mentioned that she would prefer if WAC were a team-based program so that she could have the chance to learn from other professors. Although two participants mentioned the possible connection between WAC and faculty development, this lack of a pedagogical support system can be found in answers such as “the professors themselves don’t know how to communicate effectively especially with digital technologies, how could you expect them to teach their students?” WAC can begin as a support center in China as it did in the US to meet the needs of the universities.

• Coverage of WAC. Interestingly enough, the extent of WAC was not pointed out by any professor or administrator but by an employer. She said that she would like to see this “great idea” implemented from the first to the fourth year in college
so that it would be repeatedly reemphasized in the curriculum. The isolation between disciplines in China might mean professors do not think about the curriculum holistically, but individual disciplinary course plans were mentioned by some of them when talking about disincentives for using writing in the classroom. WAC, with WID being a significant branch of it, can serve needs all over the curriculum from public required courses, which are different from general education in the U S, especially in attention the latter has received, to disciplinary courses.

- *Needs in the disciplines.* Professors pointed out the disciplinary differences in communication modalities and the norms, which is exactly what WID research and practice has been focusing on. And indeed, some WAC programs in the US, as reported in the next chapter on US and international WAC, have been transformed into WID practices to meet the needs of the disciplines.

Chinese Interview Results Reflected in Activity Systems

These themes reported revealed the current status of the use of writing and other communication modalities in Chinese higher education institutions and workplaces. To better understand and illustrate how these perspectives from faculty, administrators, and potential employers have functioned in student learning and future career performance, the following analysis investigates three activity systems: classroom, institution, and workplace. The contradictions in each activity system and among all three systems are also included in this analysis: the contradictions in the motives in the activity systems of the university course, and
those in the tools, motives, and rules among the activity systems of courses, administration, and workplace.

Geisler (1994) studied the contradictions in American higher education with a focus on general education and its relationship with professionalization and the liberal culture. She argues that the contradiction has been deepened by the entrenched attitudes towards writing because writing has been viewed as a means of transmission that can be fixed with training in technical skills and also as one that can only be obtained, but not explicitly taught, through immersion in a discipline. These attitudes, if reflected in an activity system (*Figure 5.1*), are the factors that build the motives in it.

*Figure 5.1. An activity system.*

According to Geisler, the only way to overcome this contradiction is to let professional specialists “reconnect expertise to the arena of civic action” (p. 253). Russell and Yañez (2003) claim that this contradiction can be solved when the students see the textual pathways in the general education courses that can be used in their future specialized careers or in their civic lives. However, in the Chinese
higher education system, there is no general education. Although students are required to take several general public courses, there is not a portion of higher education devoted to general education, and for most institutions, there are no Chinese composition courses. English writing courses are included in the foreign languages departments and are required of all students.

Therefore, the major contradictions in Chinese higher education with regard to student learning and communication competency do not exist in general education courses. The following analysis shows that the major contradictions are reflected in the motives of the activity systems, between the tools and motives in the activity systems, and among the rules, tools, and motives of these activity systems. This research argues that including writing researchers and specialists in the community of the activity systems of the academic courses and administration can help overcome these contradictions.

*Motive Contradiction: Use Value or Exchange Value*

Russell and Yañez (2003) base their argument on Engerstrom (1987) that the fundamental contradiction of the educational activity system is on the motives that students bring in and those set by the instructor, using a history general education class as an example. How students perceive their motives for learning determines how they interact with the tools (including writing) their teacher uses in this activity system. If they believe that their working with the tools is merely for the exchange value that they can later use to get credit for this course and a college diploma, they feel alienation toward the tools and, thus, do not fully engage with the content
because they may want only to please the professor so that they can get good
grades. However, if they find use value in the content that has potential meaning
meanings for their futures and their own lives, this alienation can be reduced and
interacting with the tools can produce better results for the official motive, which
are the course objectives stated by the professor.

The activity system of an academic course in a Chinese university is illustrated
in Figure 5.2. In this activity system the contradiction also lies in the motive. Primary
Themes 1 and 2 have shown that faculty members, administrators, and potential
employers all think that communication is important in student learning and future
careers. However, Themes 1 and 2 indicate clearly that all students’ Chinese and
English writing is not satisfactory. This contradiction is compounded by Theme 10,
which shows that communication modalities have been integrated into university
courses. Theme 11 can help find the answer: assessment and preparation for study
in the disciplines or work in related fields are the two major motivations for faculty
members for engaging students in writing. When students take writing assignments
as something that they can exchange for a grade, the alienation effect then appears.

As shown by the black-bordered white arrows in Figure 5.2, the motive in this
course, as understood by the students, is to earn a diploma from the activity system
of the university and then may apply what they learn in the course to their future
career, but most stop at the university level without trying to relate course contents
to the future career because that’s something they, as novices, have very limited
knowledge about. The assessment function of the writing and other communication
assignments might quite possibly not be stated clearly in the course syllabus, but students immediately understand their role if their writing is only a final paper with a grade but no comments or revisions are required. The integration of communication modalities, then, is in name only but does not engage students in writing that enhances their learning. Although professors in this study stated that writing assignments were used to prepare students for disciplinary study and work, the heavy workload evidenced in Theme 11 prevented most of them from assigning multiple drafts or providing comments.

![Figure 5.2. Activity System: Contradiction in Motive.](image)

The dashed line with an arrow shows the use value that students can apply to their future careers or lives, but this connection is not commonly seen and understood by students as the alienation effect of the assessment/exchange value blocks them from seeing from other perspectives. Coupled with limited or no experience in future careers, this use value is less likely to be discovered by the
students, especially when the employers were denied access to the universities to offer insights from the workplace.

Moreover, the overall goal for higher education agreed by the participants of this study is to educate the students holistically, including professional abilities. With the absence of general education, Chinese higher education professionals still hold some of the values and goals of Confucianism and the appreciation for liberal education. This goal of “holistic education” adds another level of contradiction in motives. While the professors want to “cultivate the character of the students” and teach them disciplinary knowledge, the students concentrate more on the grade or merely passing order to earn the diploma, while the employers are more interested in their communication competency. Thus, even if employers gain access to share their perspectives with faculty and students, this contradiction in motives might be further intensified rather than diminished.

Tools/Motive/Rules Contradiction: Rules in the University or Rules in the Workplace

Below is a table showing the satisfaction rating of the three groups of participants on students’ Chinese and English writing, speaking, presentation skills, and use of digital technology. A “Yes” means the quality is satisfactory, and a “No,” the quality is unsatisfactory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Writing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Writing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. Quality of Student Communication Competencies.
As this table suggests, for three of the competencies, English writing, speaking, and technology, the three groups had the same answer. For the remaining two shadowed rows, Chinese writing and presentation, the employer group did not agree with the faculty and the administrator groups. Students’ Chinese writing was not satisfactory in the university but was considered as satisfactory in the workplace, while their good presentation skills in the university were rated as unsatisfactory in the workplace.

Does this mean that the students change that much on their Chinese writing and presentation skills when they enter the workplace? The answer is no. It seems that the mediating tools in these three activity system are the same, but they differ in a very important component, the rules and norms. Figure 5.3 shows that students can apply the rules and norms they learn about certain tools in the courses they take to the university administration activity system because they might not differ too much. However, if they apply the rules and norms they learned in the university to their workplace, they may not complete the tasks successfully. The seemingly different expectations between the activity systems in the university and those outside the university are actually the different rules and norms for using the mediating tools. In this study, the quality of student presentations was rated good by the faculty and administrators but unsatisfactory by most of the employers.
This difference in rules and norms is rooted in the differences in the objects and motives of these activity systems. "The object and motive of the different activity systems have historically led people in each activity system to expect different things of the genre—thus there are different genre rules or norms (Russell & Yañez, 2003, p.348)." This contradiction explains why students, although trained in different genres courses, found themselves still "a stranger in strange lands" (1987, p.233) according to Lucille McCarthy’s study. Similar to what the faculty in this study said about why the integration of communication tasks was not effective, simulated scenarios can help but only to a certain extent. Each genre requires explicit training, and even if the genres seem to be the same, a different context requires different reading, thinking, and reacting to it. It is not enough to teach students how to deal with various genres in a specific course but to teach them how to adapt to new genres.

However, the objects and motives of different activity systems cannot be condensed into a universal one because these exist in separate systems with their own functions. As a result, Beaufort (2007) suggests composition courses should not
teach general academic discourses but rather strategies that students can transfer from one context to another. However, there is no general composition course in Chinese higher education, not necessarily a bad thing as its absence has saved dealing with the tension between general education and disciplinary studies. Therefore, changes have to take place in the individual courses in the disciplines, which is indeed “across the curriculum.”

A Solution To Ease the Contradictions

The analysis applying the heuristic of activity theory emphasizes the contradictions hindering student learning through writing. The unique system and culture of Chinese higher education requires a solution that can resolve or at least mitigate these contradictions so that teaching and learning are enhanced. This research proposes a change in the activity system of university courses as a solution to address these contradictions. This suggested change, which should occur in the community on the lower/third level of the activity systems of a university course, is to include WAC researchers in the community of the classroom activity system. By studying the writing that occurs in the classroom, in the related workplace, and in civic life, writing researchers can offer suggestions on designing assignments or activities that can promote student recognition of the use value of engaging with the course content by using the mediating tools (including writing, speaking, presentations, and the use of digital technologies). Doing so can reduce the alienation effect of students’ perceptions of the course content and bring students’ motive closer to the course objectives set by the professor. It can also help to narrow
the gap between academic writing and workplace communication by providing resources and information on the rules/norms of the tools/genres used in different activity systems. The aim is not to teach students everything possible about communication but to equip them with the ability to understand, learn, and respond to different contexts. As one faculty participant mentioned in the interview, “We should not just feed the students apples; we should teach them how to pick apples.” Most importantly, using WAC pedagogies, faculty can help their students to use writing and other communication modalities to develop critical thinking, enhance their social responsibilities, and cultivate their self-knowledge, all of which contribute to realizing the higher education goal of holistically educating persons with professional abilities.

Although the results of this study show that faculty, administrators, and employers are aware of the importance of student communication, they might not recognize that the function of writing is not only for assessment but also for enhancing student learning. Bringing WAC researchers into the activity systems in the university can open the communication with faculty members by listening to their needs and working with them to find solutions to improve both teaching and learning. This change in the activity system makes students’ motive move closer to the course objectives, extends the functions of the tools from assessment to expanded learning, alters the rules and norms to better reflect future use and connections with other activity systems, and most important of all, this change could also make changes in the linked activity systems students encounter in and
outside of college so that writing becomes an integral component of their professional and civic lives.

This change in the activity systems in the classroom to include WAC researchers should be accompanied by a similar change in the university administration activity system. Although WAC research can be done without a physical program, WAC initiatives in China have to obtain permission and acceptance from the higher level administration in the institution because grassroots initiatives are not encouraged in the centralized management system within the institutions. With the introduction of WAC pedagogies, WAC programs can be established to serve the needs across the curriculum so that faculty members, administrators, and potential employers can have a place to discuss issues related to students’ writing and learning. Although the changes happen in the classrooms, in order to make the connection between writing and learning, WAC programs must be in place to initiate the topics for discussions, supply WAC-related scholarship to enrich the discussions, and encourage and support those who want to try them after the discussions.

This chapter has provided the four primary themes and 17 secondary themes extracted from the 28 interviews conducted with faculty, administrators, and potential employers in China. These themes, together, have addressed RQ 1 and RQ 2 by identifying the factors in Chinese higher education that contribute to the feasibility of introducing WAC into China and those that might become potential challenges. Although, as explained in Chapter 3, challenges do exist, the results of
this study confirm the need for WAC programs and the feasibility for introducing them into China. The analysis in activity theory supports this conclusion, proposing to include WAC researchers to mitigate the contradictions within and among the activity systems.

The next chapter reports the results from the US WAC expert interviews and compares them with the Chinese interview results in order to answer RQ 3 and RQ 4 to investigate how this US-originated WAC concept can be adapted to the unique Chinese higher education culture and system.
CHAPTER SIX
US WAC INTERVIEWS QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter reports the results from the second set of interviews conducted for this study with US WAC experts. Similar to the Chinese interviews, these eight in-depth interviews resulted in common themes. These themes are numbered, beginning with the next number after the final secondary theme (Theme 17) in Chapter Five to eliminate confusion when referring them in the analysis. Twelve themes emerged from these interviews, numbered from Theme 18 to Theme 29 and answering RQ 3 and RQ 4:

• RQ 3 What aspects of US-based WAC programs could be pragmatically implemented in Chinese higher education?

• RQ 4 What aspects of US-based WAC programs represent significant challenges for Chinese higher education?

These themes were generated through US WAC interviews of eight WAC experts on the current status of WAC programs in the US and the international dissemination of WAC; however, the results presented here should not be considered as a comprehensive understanding of the topics discussed, such as the institutions, the programs, the international projects and the WAC initiatives in other parts of the world. With limited generalization being warranted, these 12 secondary themes reported in this chapter present, to a certain extent, the status of WAC and its internationalization.
There are two sections in this chapter: 1) US interviews results; 2) a comparison/contrast of US and China interviews. The 12 themes listed below are divided into two groups.

**US WAC Programs (Themes 18-24)**

- Theme 18: WAC is an umbrella acronym with many versions and meaning various things depending, in part, on the local situations.
- Theme 19: The most important contribution of WAC to US higher education is an awareness of the centrality of writing in teaching and learning.
- Theme 20: The indispensible components for initiating WAC programs in the US are faculty interest and high-level administrative support.
- Theme 21: The major obstacles for US WAC programs are the research focus of higher education institutions, institutional resistance, and the lack of continuing leadership and commitment of the resources.
- Theme 22: Funding issues and changes in leadership are the two major threats to the sustainability of US WAC programs.
- Theme 23: There is no ideal model for WAC programs; an ideal program is one that fits the local culture and meets the local needs.
- Theme 24: The future of WAC, which is promising, should emphasize technology.

**International Dissemination of WAC (Themes 25-29)**

- Theme 25: The major differences between US WAC programs and WAC initiatives in other countries are the different local cultures and higher education
structures, unfamiliarity with the WAC concept and program in other countries, and language issues.

- Theme 26: The major components in WAC initiatives in other countries are not as obvious as they are in the US WAC programs, but the student support center model is quite commonly seen.
- Theme 27: The major obstacle for these WAC initiatives in other countries is the nature of the educational model and system.
- Theme 28: The suggestion to US WAC researchers who are to be involved with WAC research and practice overseas is to listen to and understand the system before providing advice; the suggestion to those in other countries who want to start working on WAC is to think about their goals, needs, and the role of writing in their educational systems before implementing any initiatives or programs.
- Theme 29: The future of WAC will be enriched by its connection with the international dissemination of WAC.

The second section of this chapter compares and contrasts the Chinese and the US interview results, focusing on answering RQ 3 and RQ 4 to determine which components and obstacles mentioned in the US interviews should be considered when adapting WAC in China and which Chinese opportunities and challenges are unique but worth studying by international WAC researchers. This analysis found out that one of the two indispensable components in WAC programs in the US, faculty interest, is already present in Chinese higher education; the other indispensable component, the high-level administration support, can be obtained by
relating WAC programs to the current tension between access and quality in Chinese higher education. The student support center model mentioned by US WAC experts can be an entry point for WAC in Chinese higher education institutions as this type of center or program has been implemented in some institutions.

This comparison and contrast also shows that most of the challenges predicted by Chinese participants are the common obstacles found in the US and in WAC initiatives in other countries, but it is interesting that the two of the challenges, insufficient educational technologies and academic dishonesty, were not mentioned by the eight US WAC researcher interviewees. It should be understood that these researchers were asked to point out major obstacles but not a full list of challenges for WAC programs and that all of them are from relatively well-funded institutions, meaning they may have better technology resources and better-prepared students. The academic integrity issue should be studied by focusing on the profound influence of Confucian educational culture and practice on the current teaching of writing in the Chinese education system and the conflict between Confucian values and standards for writing and those imported from the West. These two challenges, although not exclusively found in China, pose particular challenges for WAC researchers and practitioners in that country.
US WAC Interviews Results

US WAC Programs (Themes 18-24)

Theme 18: WAC is an umbrella acronym with many versions and meaning various things depending, in part, on the local situations.

When asked about definition for WAC, the participants’ answers all include “writing,” “learning,” and “teaching.” However, as Charles Bazerman said, “it’s many things at many campuses.” Therefore, the participants’ definitions included common concepts but also emphasized the different components under this umbrella acronym ranging from faculty development to educational reform with research, teaching, operational, and administrative aspects. In addition, WAC is not just about “writing” as it has evolved to include other modalities to become CAC or ECAC, so “it’s pretty much anything; it might be visual, might be multi-modal; it might be digital; those are all versions of the same thing any way,” and “anything involves writing or other semiotic modes in order to learn is WAC” (Christiane Donahue).

Depending on the emphasis and needs of the institution, WAC programs may include local characteristics, such as faculty development workshops, writing-intensive courses, or writing in the disciplines studies, but WAC in the US, according to Chris Thaiss, “is very familiar to people and has been around for quite a long time.” Therefore, WAC in US institutions has been recognized as an acronym embracing many different but related components with the central concept being to
“improve teaching, and through that, learning, by focusing on student communication” (David Russell). The central pedagogy is to “engage teachers in a variety of disciplines in assigning and responding to writing in their courses… and provide them support” (Charles Bazerman).

Theme 19: The most important contribution of WAC to US higher education is an awareness of the centrality of writing in teaching and learning.

All eight participants (100%) stated the awareness of writing among faculty and in higher education was the most important contribution of WAC in the US, although it has had other related contributions, such as faculty development, collaboration, and process. “WAC shifted higher education from viewing writing as performance to a focus on student learning” (Martha Townsend), so it helped spread the idea that “writing is the fundamental activity of the society, and the fundamental activity of the university” (Charles Bazerman). This awareness has made the US higher education think about how to “build them into curriculum” (Chris Thaiss), meaning that “WAC was already doing faculty development for faculty way before there were teaching and learning centers, … so even though it was focused on writing, it was actually just better teaching and was faculty development from the start” (Christiane Donahue). WAC has called attention to “the principles of teaching” (Chris Anson), so that communication has been included “across the curriculum as well as in general skills courses; that’s a huge shift” (David Russell). This “awareness of the centrality of writing” (Terry Zawacki) has also brought faculty across the curriculum to communicate and collaborate “so
that students have increased opportunities to interact using writing and media within and beyond their classrooms as a result of new technologies” (Donna Reiss).

**Theme 20:** The indispensible components for initiating WAC programs in the US are faculty interest and high-level administrative support.

Eighty-eight percent of the participants mentioned these two as the most important components for initiating WAC programs in the US. David Russell stated clearly that the indispensible components were “top-down support and bottom-up support, and it cannot be entirely one or the other; both are necessary.” This faculty interest was also referred to as “faculty buy-in” by some participants, for example Terry Zawacki. This faculty interest is even more important than administrative support as WAC has to happen “at the level of the individual professor or teacher making changes in the way she/he teaches.” Faculty buy-in was considered to be very important as the absence of this would make it impossible to build a WAC program even if there is administrative support. And this reason explains why five participants said that top-down programs would not work if there was no faculty interest in learning about and applying WAC pedagogies in their courses. This faculty interest is accompanied by “access to faculty across the disciplines.” As mentioned by Christiane Donahue, “if you are in a place where the disciplines are so siloed, so structured and never speak to each other, it can be harder for somebody to come into that department and talk to them because they are not used to working across the lines, or they are not used to working with somebody from writing either.”
The administrative support is not just funding but also “verbal support, statements from the administration about the importance of writing” (Terry Zawacki). And the level of this support has to be from “some high level like a dean or a provost, or someone in the higher administration who is willing to go to bat for the program, or sort of stick their neck out for it, or certainly not someone who would impose things from above,… somebody supports the concept, understands the concept, supports the person who is doing the WAC work, and goes to bat for that person” (Christiane Donahue).

The only participant who did not mention these specific components of the faculty interest or administrative support was Charles Bazerman, who had not actually been involved in any administrative work with WAC programs in any of the universities where he worked in the US. Therefore, he did not answer this question from an operational angle. He pointed that “to align the purposes of writing with the disciplinary purposes that are happening in various courses,” which is also “the key” to “a self-sustaining program.” Chris Thaiss echoed this idea, citing David Russell, “the most important principle here is that WAC, as David Russell explained, occurs horizontally in the institution from department to department, so there has to be some mechanism by which the central administration of the institution says we need to put some resources into this effort, or otherwise, it won’t happen.”

Other components mentioned by the participants were strong WAC workshops, external and internal consultants, and rewards for faculty ranging from
food to course releases. However, the two indispensible components are faculty interest and administrative support.

Theme 21: The major obstacles for US WAC programs are the research focus of higher education institutions, institutional resistance, and the lack of continuing leadership and commitment of the resources.

The participants all pointed out that the lack of the indispensible components (Theme 20) would be obstacles for US WAC programs, with 75% mentioning the research focus of higher education institutions making it difficult to devote time to teaching, especially undergraduate teaching. Terry Zawacki used George Mason University as an example to illustrate this point. She said that George Mason was very close to Research I status, meaning the faculty members were more willing to teach graduate students than undergraduates. As a result, many undergraduate courses, including writing-intensive courses, were taught by adjuncts, who may be very good teachers but hard to retain as they are not paid much and are highly mobile. Martha Townsend echoed this, saying “the research mission of higher education makes the focus to be shifted to research, and then teaching suffers.” In addition, since this research is limited to disciplinary study with no room for classroom research, faculty “are not rewarded for working outside of the disciplines and co-operating with people in other fields” (Chris Thaiss).

Some mentioned the isolated departmental structure, which makes it very difficult to have dialogues with faculty members from different disciplines. This isolation is compounded by the attitude that “ignores the dialogic nature of
education, dialectical nature of learning and constructed nature of teaching and learning” (David Russell)—the very attitude that WAC has been working against for the past 30 years.

The lack of continuing leadership, mentioned by 75% of the participants, was also rated as one of the two threats to the sustainability of US WAC programs in Theme 22. Commitment to resources has been another major obstacle for WAC programs in the US, and the importance of resources, including funding, staff, and other kinds of support, is referred to in Theme 20 as high-level administrative support.

Theme 22: Funding issues and changes in leadership are the two major threats to the sustainability of US WAC programs.

The sustainability of WAC programs is currently receiving much attention from WAC researchers and program directors. According to Christiane Donahue, this was one of the issues discussed by the WAC Special Interest Group at the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC); her comments reported here reflect both her own perspectives and those she learned at the SIG meeting.

Funding is the biggest problem and impacts all types of programs and at all stages of their development, especially when given the current economic crisis and its effect on higher educational institutions. One hundred percent of the participants indicated that the lack of continuous funding definitely impacts the sustainability of WAC programs. The issues related to funding can range from internal and large
external grants that pay for faculty retreats, workshops and continuing research over a certain number years to small amounts of money for providing food and drinks for faculty to get together to talk about teaching and learning. Donna Reiss explained that these funding concerns are “budget issues throughout higher education and individual institutions,” emphasizing that they are not just about the funding priorities of the institutions because are influenced by the overall higher education financial situation. Chris Thaiss’s WAC/WID Mapping Project research found that some of the programs replying to the survey had programs three years ago but have since lost them because of the budget cuts. Christiane Donahue expressed that the biggest funding issue was the start-up costs. Although it is possible to start a WAC program with limited or no funding, people would probably burn out quickly. She also said that another issue with start-up funding is that some programs relied too much on it so that they did not know what to do after it was depleted; as a result, the WAC programs may always have some faculty members or departments as examples but it does not necessarily reach across the curriculum.

Although David Russell agreed that funding could be a problem, he qualified its importance, saying “if money is the problem, then there is no problem because money would come to things that are really worth doing.” According to him, if WAC appeared appealing and proved its value to the higher education administration, then funding would not be an issue. He criticized WAC, as a movement, saying it hasn’t attempted to organize with associations of
administrators such as the AAHE (American Association for Higher Education), pointing out “for long term sustainability for WAC programs in the US, there need to be organization from the top down nationally through affiliation or work with associations of administrators of higher education, and bottom-up work with professional organizations by discipline, so that it becomes an expectation if the organization takes on writing for learning as a goal; then that would be central to the long term sustainability.”

Changes in leadership pose another threat to the sustainability of WAC programs, a concern expressed by 75% of the participants. Although Thaiss and Porter (2010) in their report of the WAC/WID Mapping Project have found that many programs have had at least one change in leadership, it is still not clear how the successful transitions were made. Chris Thaiss pointed out that most WAC program directors tended “not to look for the long term,” the extent of their investment in their programs making it easy for them to avoid thinking about leaving. He suggested more research investigating leaders and the transfer process is needed to provide successful models that others can refer to.

Other threats mentioned by the participants are listed below:

- Lack of higher level administration support
- Faculty opt-out
- Lack of demonstration of program success
- Not keeping up with new developments, such as new media and technologies
Theme 23: There is no ideal model for WAC programs; an ideal program is one that fits the local culture and meets the local needs.

When asked how an ideal WAC program functioned, 75% of the participants answered that there was no ideal program because every one is different and there are many ways to approach WAC. In addition, there is no ideal WAC program because they are not satisfied with what has been accomplished and they constantly seek to do more; therefore, their ideal is “beyond their reach now,” as Chris Thaiss reported in research conducted by his colleague Tara Porter on how WAC program leaders defined the success of their programs. However, the participants all mentioned characteristics and components they think a successful WAC program should have:

- A WAC program should contribute to validating students as writers and makers of knowledge.
- It should have good assessment and is able to demonstrate its success.
- It needs a WAC leader who is enabling rather than doing, who is making connections with other programs to build program development.
- It should have continuous funding and should keep seeking possible grants.
- It should function organically, taking root among the faculty and growing from grassroots until it becomes second nature with a good structure and support from the top.

Theme 24: The future of WAC, which is promising, should emphasize technology.
Although these participants all suggested in different places in the interviews that WAC in the US could be improved, 100% of them emphasized it is healthy, and its future, according to them, is promising. As Chris Anson pointed out, “it’s more strongly developed now in academic than ever; there are universities that don’t have WAC programs, and they actually feel left out.” “The fact that seven years ago US News and World Report decided to rank programs in terms of writing in the disciplines was a really strong signal that people consider this important (Chris Thaiss).” According to Terry Zawacki, who has been invited to speak at a number of different institutions, WAC has been initiated in those universities as their QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) which focuses on enhancing students’ educational experiences.

However, these experts also saw the future of WAC filled with various challenges and potentialities. Fifty percent of them said that WAC should reach out to integrate technologies and take the lead in incorporating digital technology in university teaching and learning so that “the new generation of faculty and students who are ‘digital natives’ will recognize that writing and speaking in person and online are integral to their way of life; as a result, more ways to innovate in teaching will be encouraged” (Donna Reiss). Christiane Donahue emphasized that WAC should enhance its research and the future should be research-driven. She suggested the future directions of WAC research should be empirical such as action/classroom research, ethnographic research, discourse analysis, or other ways of “systematic gathering of data.” She criticized the current WAC research because
“people are not looking hard enough at how it works, how it does what it does in a way that actually gathers data on that, and interprets it, and explores it, and distributes it to other people.”

International Dissemination of WAC (Themes 25-29)

Theme 25: The major differences between US WAC programs and WAC initiatives in other countries are the different local cultures and higher education structures, unfamiliarity with the WAC concept and program in other countries, and language issues.

Seventy-five percent of the participants said that the major difference between US WAC programs and WAC initiatives in other countries was that people outside of the US were not familiar with the US concepts of composition, general writing courses, or WAC/WID terms or programs. This difference, according to the participants, resulted from the different local cultures and higher education structures. Therefore, established WAC programs are rarely found, according to the interviewees who all have extensive experience collaborating with researchers in other countries. WAC initiatives were not made through building programs but by collaborating with student support units such as writing centers or specialized writing courses. In some countries, WAC initiatives began from helping faculty with their writing, especially English writing. Although the US might be the only country that has first-year composition as an “industry” in higher education, according to Christiane Donahue, a similar concept and requirement was experimented with in France but was abandoned after it failed to be helpful. There are several other places that still have first-year composition courses, but the US seems to be the only country with a nation-wide consistent system of first-year
writing courses requirement, making the US researchers’ idea of composition different from their colleagues in other countries. This composition course, in addition to other general education courses, according to Charles Bazerman, created the room and space for “writing across the curriculum” on US campuses. In countries where students enter the universities directly into their fields of study, writing is already in the disciplines and can be described as “across the curriculum” with limited chances for faculty from different disciplines to talk about writing among themselves. The different structures of higher education institutions impact the adoption and adaptation of the WAC concept and pedagogies.

In addition, language issues in the US and in other countries are totally different. In the US, English writing, mostly for native-speaking students, is the primary language issue that WAC deals with, although an increasing percentage of non-native English speaking students can be found at both undergraduate and graduate levels in US institutions. However, in other countries, especially those which do not have English as the official or primary language, language issues are far more complicated than in the US. Terry Zawacki found that most of the overseas institutions she worked with are pressured to teach writing in English; as a result, their WAC initiatives seemed to focus on writing in English as a second language. According to her, the Bologna Agreement requires the institutions in the European Union to make English the common language in certain programs so that students can transfer across country lines. WAC initiatives in many European countries help these faculty members teach and grade in English, for example in Sweden and Italy,
focusing on how to teach and create English writing assignments. However, France, according to Christiane Donahue, has bilingual programs in the traditional universities, and most of the disciplines she worked with, such as psychology, education, and sociology, have their own literature in French, so students and faculty in these disciplines concentrate on French rather than English writing.

Some universities develop bilingual WAC initiatives. For example, Chris Thaiss consulted with a university in Dubai, which had an English writing-across-the-curriculum program and an Arabic one. The Arabic program taught the students a new business Arabic that is different from classical Arabic. This example illustrates the complex local conditions and cultures that impact which language or languages overseas WAC initiatives choose to work with, making it easy to understand the participants’ answer to the next question on the language choices of these programs. There was no theme formed in these answers because the programs or initiatives were so diverse and so different from one another and from US programs. Language choices were made according to the needs of the culture and the institution. Even in the same country or in the same region, different institutions may choose their WAC to be monolingual focusing on the local language or English, or they may be bilingual. Some programs, like those in Hong Kong, Korea, and Sweden that Terry Zawacki worked with, have English-only WAC programs or initiatives. Chris Anson agreed, sharing his recent consulting experience in Hong Kong, where he felt pressure to focus on English on the college level but a bilingual interest for implementing WAC in the public school affiliated with the university he
visited. In other places, such as in some Spanish speaking countries where Charles Bazerman has worked, attention was given to Spanish writing, but second language components were included because of the pressure on faculty to publish in English in international journals. Most of these WAC researchers expressed the belief that WAC should not be limited to English as the focus should be on writing and its function in enhancing student learning. WAC initiatives should choose the most appropriate language(s) to meet the local needs, as Martha Townsend said, “WAC should not become ESL with a sole focus on English.”

Theme 26: The major components in WAC initiatives in other countries are not obvious as they are in the US WAC programs, but the student support center model is quite commonly seen.

In their answers about the major components in overseas WAC initiatives, most of the participants said that these initiatives were like the beginning impulses, few of them being established programs; therefore, the structure of the models or their components still cannot be clearly specified. Fifty percent of them indicated that student support centers, such as writing centers, were commonly used as the initial step in WAC initiatives.

In all the countries mentioned by the participants, Jamaica was the only one that adopted the US WAC model, tying it to faculty development; in all the other countries, WAC initiatives were not found to be connected with faculty development. These WAC initiatives are still in the initial stages, some merely involving individual professors interested in promoting student learning through writing rather than being full programs. In France, according to Christiane
Donahue, professors are grouped in different laboratories, where they talk about student writing. Some of the initiatives that Terry Zawacki worked with had writing-intensive courses, and some that Charles Bazerman worked with involved workshops or paired faculty from both the content disciplines and the writing discipline working together on student writing.

According to Chris Thaiss, the International WAC/WID Mapping project chose to use terms that researchers in other countries were familiar with because even if there was something called WAC on their campuses, it quite possibly was not the same WAC program that Thaiss and Porter (2010) defined based on the results of their US WAC survey: a working program in place with a director, faculty workshops, and faculty development. However, this difference does not prevent these initiatives in other countries from being WAC because “the idea is to raise awareness of writing and communication as a learning tool, and that can happen in infinite number of ways” (David Russell).

Theme 27: The major obstacle for these WAC initiatives in other countries is the nature of the educational model and system.

Although the interviewees mentioned other obstacles such as a lack of understanding of WAC, funding issues, and a lack of communication among faculty, the major obstacle agreed by 100% of them was the nature of the educational model and system. Some educational models do not value class discussion and dialogue, meaning students are supposed to listen and absorb whatever their professors teach in class. Some educational systems have a limited
focus on teaching, making it difficult to find a need for WAC or writing instruction. Some have very separated faculties that do not talk to one another, so the “across the curriculum” quality of WAC would be difficult to promote. Some educational systems are built on the lecture model with large class sizes, making it difficult to convince the faculty members to incorporate writing in their courses.

Although WAC, by definition, works against the system it is in (Russell, 2002), it is even more difficult to integrate its components into the curriculum of very different educational systems, perhaps explaining why comparatively more separate and independent student support centers have become the primary model. Therefore, finding the appropriate entry points is a challenge for those wanting to start WAC initiatives in other countries.

**Theme 28:** The suggestion to US WAC researchers who are to be involved with WAC research and practice overseas is to listen to and understand the system before providing advice; the suggestion to those in other countries who want to start working on WAC is to think about their goals, needs, and the role of writing in their educational systems before implementing any initiatives or programs.

These expert interviewees were asked to offer suggestions for both the US and international researchers as they collaborate on WAC. One hundred percent of the participants said that the US WAC researchers should be cautious and should “do your homework before you go” because the local educational culture and system might be quite different from what they have previously experienced, even in countries or institutions that speak English. Terry Zawacki provided an example from her experience in Ireland at the University of Limerick. The terminology used
in Ireland is different from that in the US. For example, “course” refers to the course of study and is equivalent to “major” in the US. Without previous knowledge or sufficient communication prior to collaboration, the differences in terminology could result in confusion and miscommunication even among English native speakers. Martha Townsend found Chinese students look to the professor as the supreme authority that they listen to and learn from, quite different from the US classroom in which the professor might give up some authority and empower the students so that they can engage more fully with the content. She commented that it would be “extremely difficult” to get the Chinese students and faculty to change. She was the only interviewee with experience in Mainland China. Even though she has been to China twice, her experience could be limited because of her identity as a foreign expert, meaning that the students and faculty might have appeared quite obedient, especially if they felt linguistically challenged when interacting with a native speaker. Another example she gave was that a professor in China was not permitted by the administration to start a linked course with her in 1999, but she also said that this situation could have changed since then. Since the Chinese faculty interviews indicate that faculty members invite foreign experts to lecture to their students, perhaps the reason was that there were not enough Internet resources and support available for an English course in the Chinese university to be linked with a similar course in the US at that time.

The US participants also gave the suggestions listed below:
• It would be beneficial for US WAC researchers to be fluent in the language that’s used in the country they are going to work in, such as Christiane Donahue, for example, who conducts research in French.

• US WAC researchers should never bring a US centric point of view with them.

• US WAC researchers should take every opportunity to conduct international WAC research (this explains why I was interviewed while I conducted these interviews).

• US WAC researchers should bring the research home so that the US WAC can benefit from it.

• It should also be recognized that US WAC does have much to offer.

They also offered suggestions to those in other countries who want to initiate WAC. The primary suggestion given by 63% of the participants was to think about the goals, needs, and the role of writing in their educational systems before implementing any initiatives or programs. As Charles Bazerman said, “People need to find their own paths, to search around and learn from other people, but also to craft solutions locally.” David Russell suggested that from his experience working with institutions in other countries, assessment was a way to get people think about writing, although it was often looked upon with suspicion and dread in the US. According to Terry Zawacki, other countries should not just “import a US WAC model,” because even in the US, WAC is many things. Other suggestions are listed below:
• Read the WAC literature and adapt it to local cultures
• Relate to their own literature, such as the didactic research available in France or the linguistics research tradition in other countries
• Trust themselves and their instincts in finding what is best for their students
• Attend conferences and establish connections with other WAC researchers
• Connect with higher level administrators who can provide support to WAC
• Don’t be afraid to tell the rest of the world about their practice and research

Theme 29: The future of WAC will be enriched by its connection with the international dissemination of WAC.

The specific question asked of the participants was “how do you see the connections between international dissemination of WAC and the future of WAC in the US?” Eighty-eight percent of the participants said that US WAC would benefit by learning from WAC initiatives and practices in other countries because this international dissemination would help it “get out of the paradigm (Chris Anson)” in which it was initiated.

WAC programs were first initiated and developed in the US within its specific structure of higher education, curriculum, and language issues; learning about its adaptations in other countries dealing with different conditions, models, and constraints will give the US WAC researchers inspiration and new approaches to apply in their institutions, which are becoming increasingly internationalized. For example, in the US, WAC research has been conducted using the methods in rhetoric and composition. As Charles Bazerman pointed out, linguistics, which is a
Another practical benefit mentioned by 50% of the participants dealt with language issues. The writing of the increasing international or immigrant students in US universities has caught the attention of not only ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers but also WAC researchers. Chris Thaiss said that the parents of approximately 50% of the students at University of California Davis came from other countries. Therefore, these students’ language issues are different from the previous student population. Terry Zawacki said George Mason University conducted research on international students and published a video, Writing Accents, to share with the faculty. She pointed out that research in and from other countries would provide an even better understanding of where these students came from in terms of writing so that the support provided for them can be better designed and implemented. International students in US institutions can also become “agents of change in their institutions” (Chris Thaiss) if they choose to go back to their countries of origin. “Anything that happens in the US and anything that happens outside of the US is actually tightly conjoined,” Chris Thaiss said.

Donna Reiss used her own experience working with Art Young and Magnus Gustafsson on an online collaboration projects with US and Swedish students to illustrate how the international dissemination of WAC can also benefit students by broadening their world through interactions with peers from distant countries using tools made possible by the development of technologies. In addition, David Russell
is chairing a CCCC committee on the internationalization and globalization of writing studies, which is aimed at creating specific articulations and affiliations between the CCCC and related organizations in other countries.

However, one participant, Christiane Donahue, said, “I hope international dissemination of WAC isn’t what happens.” She criticized American WAC researching for paying limited attention to what exists locally in other countries. Since the dissemination has been too one-sided, she suggested that future exchanges should become “an equal exchange” of “sending and receiving and that WAC folks should be open to the fact that they are not the only ones who would be initiating the exchange.” She added that US WAC researchers should be aware that “other things that have been going on in other places are much stronger than what we have been doing,” so “it’s really time for people to start figuring out how to bring together all these different perspectives and start to understand the rich diversity of ways that people institutionally, contextually have to work and have to understand how other people’s work is complementary to or not based on the institution and the context that they are doing on their own.”

A Comparison/Contrast of the Results from the US and Chinese Interviews

RQ 3 and RQ 4 ask how the US-originated WAC can be adapted in Chinese higher education system. This section compares and contrasts the results from both the US and Chinese interviews to see what aspects of US-based WAC programs can or cannot be pragmatically implemented in Chinese higher education. Specifically,
it focuses on two aspects of the implementation of WAC programs: the components and the challenges.

**WAC Program Components**

While Theme 23 indicates there is no ideal WAC program, the success of such programs in the US indicate they can offer suggestions to other countries for implementing WAC concepts. The two indispensible components mentioned in Theme 20 by the US WAC experts interviewed in this study are faculty interest and high-level administration support. Although these applied to US-based WAC programs, the further explanations provided by the experts emphasize the importance of these two. Faculty interest is the “bottom-up” support for WAC programs, and the high-level administration support is the “top-down.” WAC programs established with only one of these two probably would not survive for long. The historical review of WAC and its development in the US in Chapter Two has shown that WAC was initiated as a grassroots movement, the “bottom-up” model. However, this would not be possible in China with the highly centralized administration in higher education institutions. Chinese faculty members, because of their experience in the Cultural Revolution, would not risk initiating programs because only limited academic freedom is afforded to them (Du, 1992). This does not mean that there is no faculty interest. On the contrary, Primary Theme 4 indicates that faculty members, together with administrators and employers, are interested in participating in WAC programs. Theme 13 suggests that WAC is considered the best way to enhance student communication skills, and Theme 16
shows that WID already exists in the Chinese higher education system. As these themes extracted from the Chinese interviews suggest, this faculty interest exists.

However, this faculty interest in WAC could easily be turned into faculty resistance if no theoretical and pedagogical support is provided to the faculty members who have been or want to integrate communication components into their courses. The examples in Primary Theme 3 explain the unsatisfactory results of integrating intercultural and international communication into the course. If these faculty, who could become changing agents for potential WAC programs, keep trying and failing, they could become strong resistors to WAC programs, much like the faculty member who, after failing to realize his goals in using writing to promote learning, said that he would not recommend WAC pedagogies to other professors although he would continue to use them himself. This possibility of faculty moving from one extreme to the other should be taken as a warning that writing research in China has not met the needs of higher education and should be improved promptly.

High-level administration support is the other indispensible component for US WAC programs. Although 100% of the administrator group said that they would support WAC programs, they also pointed out that their level of administration, which is on or above the department chair, cannot make decisions like this one. Among these administrators, the director of one of the first centers for medical experiments that offered a course on integrating writing, speaking, presentations, and educational technologies into the upper-level undergraduate
medical curriculum, has the closest experience with a WAC program. His comments, thus, should be quite realistic. He mentioned that the sustainability of his program largely depends on the interest of the high-level administrator who might find something else more appealing and replace his program with it. His concern resonates with this second indispensible component of US WAC programs. Although no other Chinese participant mentioned this, seeking and maintaining high-level administration support should also apply to WAC initiatives in China.

The connection between student communication competencies and the evaluation program initiated by the administrator group is a good example showing how WAC researchers in China should talk to administrators for support, however, as David Russell said in the interview, they should talk to administrators in their language. Chinese faculty said that the evaluation was just a formality, but the administrators said that the evaluation was very important. WAC researchers in China, although very possibly coming from academic backgrounds as professors, should learn to make connections that get the attention of the administrators, focusing on how WAC can contribute to solving the problems that administrators, especially high-level ones have to deal with. Thus, WAC does not benefit only professors and students by promoting teaching and learning but also administrators by helping them address the tension between access and quality that has been discussed in Chinese higher education since the beginning of the enrollment expansion. Another possibility for addressing administrators of the benefits of WAC concerns faculty development. Two administrators mentioned this topic during the
interviews, but the introduction of Chinese higher education in Chapter Three has shown the quality of the faculty is still weak and requires improvement, another connection that WAC programs can use to get attention from high-level administration.

After attaining these two indispensible components, the next issue is how pragmatically WAC can be adapted into Chinese higher education institutions. Although it is not clear how WAC functions in other countries, the researchers interviewed in this study agreed that the most used model was the student support center one. A major reason for this might be that the entry point of WAC programs in the US institutions, the general education of the undergraduate curriculum, does not exist in other higher education systems, and this is also true in China. In recent years, writing centers have appeared in Chinese universities, especially in those with strong international connections. Xi’an International Studies University established the first English writing center in China using the American writing center model introduced by its partner university, Bowling Green State University. As this project is being conducted, one of the top five universities, Zhejiang University, opened its undergraduate writing center in June 2010. These centers could become the entry points for WAC programs in China, and the student support center model might also work well for China, as it does for other countries.

This discussion on possible WAC components in China addresses RQ 3. Chinese institutions now have faculty interest, and high-level administration support can be obtained if the connection between WAC and administrative goals
can be made. The possible entry point for WAC initiatives might be from the writing centers or similar student support centers that have started to appear on Chinese campuses. And two other strong supporting components, faculty development and archiving for evaluation programs also exist.

WAC programs in China should also reach potential employers to narrow the gap between education and workplace expectations through research and writing instruction. Although this issue was not mentioned by the US WAC interviewees, the willingness among employers and the contradictions in the motives in the activity systems analyzed in Chapter 5 all point in this direction. One of the reasons why WAC was initiated in the 1970s in the US was the complaints from the employers about students’ lack of communication skills. However, as technical and business communication courses and writing-intensive courses have been integrated into the curriculum and as WAC programs have been established and developing, this gap is less apparent in the US, and this is probably why the US interviewees did not mention it. However, WAC programs in China should not overlook this issue.

WAC Program Challenges

The obstacles mentioned by the US WAC experts in Theme 21 are the research focus of higher education institutions, institutional resistance, the lack of continuing leadership, and the commitment of resources. The last two are present only in existing WAC programs, so they are not applicable to this discussion of potential WAC programs in China.
Challenges do exist for Chinese WAC programs as mentioned in Theme 15. Among the challenges pointed out by the participants in this study, workload was the only one with enough responses to merit a theme (Theme 12), but this workload issue and all the other challenges are also listed under Theme 15:

- Workload for faculty.
- Reward system.
- The conflict between teaching and research.
- Lack of teaching standards for integrating communication skills.
- Insufficient digital technology in the universities.
- Student complaints about the workload.
- Unpredictable administrative support.
- Lack of proof of effectiveness.
- Academic dishonesty.
- The high level decision making in Chinese universities.
- The disconnection between universities and workplaces.
- Entrenched attitudes.

Chinese higher education, as explained in Chapter Three, is a combination of both indigenous traditions and imported Western university systems. Since the establishment of the Western style universities, China has been seeking new ideas and concepts from the West to strengthen its higher education system. This research focus of higher education institutions has already begun in China and was pointed out by faculty members in the analysis of Theme 15 in Chapter Five.
Similar to this research focus, ten on this list of 12 challenges have counterparts in US WAC programs, with some of them being mentioned by the US interviewees and some in previous research. However, there are two challenges not mentioned by the US WAC researchers, the insufficient educational technologies in classrooms and academic dishonesty. Although this does not mean these two issues do not exist in the US, at least they were not considered as the major obstacles by these researchers who are from relatively well-funded universities. It should be taken into consideration that while having made much economic progress in recent four decades, China remains a developing country. The use of computers, projectors, software, and other technologies in educational institutions is still behind such developed countries as the US. The WAC researchers interviewed predicted in Theme 24 that the future of WAC should be technology-loaded; however, the initiation of WAC programs in China might not be able to afford this, especially as advanced educational technologies require significant start-up funding, making it even more difficult to provide and support. Some of the top universities that are well-funded may be able to make this connection with technology better than the others that are still in great need of financial resources.

Although many Chinese institutions are not technologically well-equipped, the spread of the Internet has been rapid, especially among young people. The 2009 Report on the Behavior of China’s Young Internet Users (China Internet Network Information Center, 2010) found that China’s Internet penetration rate has reached 54.5% among young people, much higher than the national average of 28.9% among
the country’s total population, but a majority of these interactions with the Internet happen at home or in the Internet cafes rather than in the classroom. Therefore, this divide between the poorly equipped classrooms and the increasing use of the Internet among students has heightened the issue of academic integrity, another challenge pointed out by the Chinese interviewees in this study.

Academic dishonesty was mentioned by faculty members as one of the disincentives for assigning writing to their students, as they found some students submit documents downloaded from the Internet for these assignments. There are rules and regulations on academic dishonesty, but rarely do professors punish their students for violating them, and without proper tools, such as the software that many US universities purchase for detecting plagiarism in student papers or projects, it is difficult and time-consuming for professors to determine how much their students have plagiarized, especially with their already heavy workloads. Academic dishonesty is, thus, another challenge that WAC faces in China.

Academic dishonesty, to a certain extent, is a result of the deeply rooted Confucian educational culture and system, in which “borrowing” and “sharing” words or sentences said by Confucius or other major Confucian scholars without citing is not considered plagiarism but as a mastery of the teaching or even “laudable strategy” (Sowden, 2005, p.227). Although the Confucian educational system was abandoned long ago, its pervasive influence in Chinese culture and education are still quite evident, especially in writing, which can be found in Chinese writing instruction and practice in primary and middle schools (Li, 2003).
Chinese students are still taught to write in genres based on Confucian writing styles and patterns as valuable practices; therefore, when they take these strategies taught and learned in their previous education to college, they find academic writing, which is composed of very westernized genres, quite challenging and intimidating, and many of them revert to their familiar strategies (Li, 2003), although with confusion and frustration. Academic dishonesty is not simply an ethical or a cultural issue but one that is so closely related to writing that should be studied through writing research and practice. However, this kind of research on academic integrity and writing has rarely been shared with faculty members other than writing teachers. For this reason, this challenge can also be taken as another call for WAC research and practice in China that supports inviting WAC researchers into the community in Chinese universities to enhance teaching and learning.

This comparison between the challenges mentioned by these two groups of participants in this study shows that it might be too ambitious to envision one of the most important components of WAC programs in the US, the integration of educational technology, to become a focus for WAC programs in China in the initial stages. With the increasing interests educational technologies, opportunities might appear for WAC programs to collaborate with other initiatives to increase the use of technology in classroom instruction. This issue is an inevitable hurdle that can and must be addressed. However, the issue of academic dishonesty in the US deserves immediate attention from WAC researchers in China when providing support to faculty on designing assignments. This academic dishonesty issue might become
less serious if writing is not only used as a tool for assessment (Theme 11) but also as a way to enhance learning, especially through low-stakes writing-to-learn assignments or exercises.

The above analysis addresses RQ 4 by pointing out the two unique challenges mentioned by Chinese interviewees that are more significant to China than to the US. This further supports the suggestion given by the US WAC experts in Theme 28 to those who want to start programs of their own: to think about their goals, needs, and the role of writing in their educational system before implementing any initiatives or programs.

This chapter reports the 12 themes extracted from the eight interviews with US WAC experts. The results provide a synthesis of the development, the programs, and the future of WAC in the US including its internationalization. The comparison/contrast of these results with those reported in Chapter Five responds to RQ 3 and RQ 4. The components in the US WAC programs that can be found and utilized in Chinese higher education are faculty interest and high-level administration support, and the two pragmatic aspects are faculty development and the student support center mode. Most of the challenges can be found in both sets of results, but the technology-loaded future for US WAC programs might pose a significant challenge for the initiation of WAC programs in China, especially for those institutions with limited funding resources. Academic dishonesty merits WAC researchers’ attention in China in both research and practice so that faculty interest is not lost. Chapters Five and Six have reported the results of this research;
Chapter Seven will conclude this study by presenting the critical findings, theoretical implications, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the feasibility of introducing and adapting US-originated WAC programs in China by analyzing the results from 28 interviews with Chinese faculty, higher education administrators, and employers and eight interviews with US WAC experts. All four research questions introduced have been explored using the results in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The four primary themes and 29 secondary themes extracted from these 36 interviews strongly support the feasibility of introducing WAC into China and demonstrate the existing opportunities and potential challenges. Moreover, this study yields theoretical contributions and empirical implications for international higher educational professionals and reveals certain limitations and suggestions for future research.

Critical Findings

In Chapters Five and Six, the four primary themes and 29 secondary themes were reported and discussed. This study yields many findings that can be applied to future research and practice; the three critical ones that should be emphasized are 1) writing and other communication competencies are recognized to be very important among Chinese higher education professionals and potential employers; 2) writing, especial WID, is already practiced in Chinese higher education institutions but without proper guidance and support; 3) major obstacles for WAC initiatives outside of the US come from the nature of local educational models and systems.
Recognized Importance of Communication Competencies

This critical finding is clearly shown by the four primary themes reported in Chapter Five:

5. Communication practices and skills are important for student learning and job performance.

6. Strengthening communication skills should be a critical focus in Chinese higher education.

7. International and intercultural communication is important for college students.

8. Faculty, administrators, and employers are willing to participate in WAC programs.

These primary themes demonstrate that writing and other communication competencies are recognized as very important for student learning in college and their future job performance. All three groups of Chinese participants showed their support of potential WAC programs by expressing their interests and willingness to participate. They also agreed that strengthening communication skills should become a critical focus in Chinese higher education. This unanimous agreement on the importance of communication competencies establishes a concrete foundation for WAC programs as it fulfills one of the two indispensible components the US WAC experts discuss in Theme 20, faculty interest and high-level administrative support.

This importance of communication competencies recognized by both higher education and workplace in China has not been reported in previous empirical research,
and therefore, this study is one of the first investigations into the perceptions of communication competency among Chinese undergraduate students. This critical finding lays the groundwork for WAC research and practices in China.

**Writing Practices and Current Needs**

The results of this study have shown that writing, especially WID, is practiced in China, but the writing assignments are regarded as “by-products” of the courses rather than a method that could enhance both faculty teaching and student learning. This further supports the first critical finding in that the importance of writing and communication is not only recognized but also addressed by faculty members through different approaches. However, reinventing the wheel does not seem to be a wise choice if WAC pedagogies have been used and proven in other higher educational systems. This faculty interest could be turned into faculty resistance if no support or guidance in both theory and practice is provided. Enthusiastic but unsupported attempts and failure in using writing in their courses will definitely cost not only learning opportunities for the current students but also future faculty willingness in learning WAC pedagogies introduced to them too late to meet their needs.

Writing instruction is not only supported by faculty but also in the administration. The Center for Undergraduate Experimental Medicine in the military medical university (name omitted as requested) and the first English writing center established in Xi’an International Studies University introduced by two administrators are good examples demonstrating that this type of practice has gained support from high-level administrators. These two learning centers, although different in their administration
and practice, suggest a promising future for Chinese higher education institutions and their attention on promoting the quality of teaching and learning. If connections between WAC’s function in promoting student learning and the requirements of the evaluation program, considered important by the administrators interviewed, this high-level administration support can then be obtained and maintained.

Support for writing practice in Chinese higher education institutions may vary according to the local conditions and needs, but the university support should be primarily composed of both financial and administrative support including the following:

1. **Administrative independence of writing/study centers from any department or college.**

   The writing center or study support center model has been found to be the primary model used by other countries when adapting WAC. This study found these centers are beginning to be adopted by Chinese universities. The administrative independence of these centers from any department or college could prevent any conflicts resulting from sharing resources among departments or colleges. In a typical Chinese university, this center should be placed directly under the Dean of the Academic Affairs Division to ensure it represents the central position of learning and teaching in the university. As this administrative independence can only be obtained with permission from the top administrators, the president and the secretary of the Party Committee of the Chinese university, it, if obtained, ensures continuous financial support and access to other resources.
on campus and encourages faculty from different disciplines to participate so
that this WAC program is indeed across the curriculum.

2. Funding. The start-up funding should be provided by the university. It should
include money for the operation of the programs such as the compensation for
the program directors and staff, workshops and meetings, trips to domestic and
international conferences, and publications by participating faculty on related
projects (the majority of academic journals and scholarly publishing companies
require publishing fees from the authors). However, as an increasing number of
grants become available for social science and humanities research in China,
WAC programs should seek funding from other agencies and government units,
which can be used to maintain continuous and possible matching funding from
the university.

3. Faculty development and connections with the evaluation program. The importance of
the evaluation program was mentioned by most of the administrators
interviewed in this study. As WAC is tied to faculty development, which is also a
major part of the evaluation program, this connection should be made so that the
WAC program director can be included on the university evaluation committee
or other quality assessment committees for setting up curricular standards and
guidelines on integrating communication components. It is also through this
connection that administrators on different levels would realize the importance
of the WAC programs and encourage their faculty to participate.
4. *Faculty rewards such as a reduced workload.* University administration should reward faculty members who participate in WAC by reducing their workload, reimbursing their conference trips, and increasing the emphasis placed on teaching in faculty evaluations, and promotion and pay raise decisions. This support helps to promote WAC programs among faculty and increase the focus put on teaching, both of which will certainly help ease the tension between access and quality in higher education.

*Major Obstacles for WAC Initiatives*

Another critical finding of this study is result of the US WAC interviews. In Theme 27, the local higher education system was identified as an obstacle for WAC initiatives in other countries. As a result, when initiating it in other educational systems, it is of vital importance first to study the local system and culture. For example, David Russell (2002) points out that in Britain where writing has traditionally been taught in the disciplines, the professors applied WAC pedagogies to modify their writing assignments and instruction. Even in the US, as revealed in Theme 18, the meaning of WAC depends on the local situation.

Therefore, this finding provides direction for studies to detect potential based on the local conditions and needs. From a comparatively macro-view of the internationalization of WAC, the higher education traditions of the specific country, the organization of the system, the administration, and the curriculum including consideration of the political forces and culture behind the system should be investigated. On the micro-level of the institutions, in the major disciplines, the funding
sources, the research orientation, and even the location of the institution should all be taken into consideration when setting up a WAC program.

Theoretical Implications

This study uses activity theory as a heuristic in analyzing the components within and among different activity systems in order to find a solution to mitigate the contradictions in the motives of the activity systems and those across the connected activity systems in rules/norms, tools, and motives. It proposes to include WAC researchers in the community in the classroom activity system so that WAC pedagogies can be adopted and adapted and the contradictions among the motives can be eased. Adding WAC researchers into the community can have a direct effect on the rules/norms of this classroom activity system in helping both the professor and the students rethink about the functions of the tools—writing and other communication modalities—not only in their teaching and learning but also in the discipline and the connected workplaces. Thus, both the professor and the students may no longer treat writing as a by-product but as a means to learn and communicate. It also brings the connections with other activity systems, such as the university and the workplace. Ultimately, this change can contribute to easing the contradictions and solving the transfer of communication competencies among related and connected activities systems.

Most of previous writing research that uses activity theory pays much attention to the tools—the specific genres used in the activity systems. This study advances activity theory by studying the unique function of the community and the sequential effects that
an addition to the community might have on the other components of the particular activity system and on other related activity systems.

Furthermore, this study treats the classroom, the university, and the workplace by condensing them into three connected activity systems and then applies the results from empirical data into these three activity systems. Although this treatment takes the risk of oversimplifying these dynamic systems, it has been proved to be effective in grasping the major functioning components within them so that the hidden contradictions can be revealed. This study shows that activity systems can not only be used in analyzing specific classrooms by taking them as individual activity systems but also be applied to condense bigger, messier, and more complicated systems like these three analyzed in this study.

Empirical Implications

This study is one of the first attempts to assess the feasibility of introducing a US-originated educational reform into the unique culture and system in China using empirical research conducted in both countries. The first part of this section is focused on the empirical implications for WAC researchers in China, and the second discusses its implications for various constituencies such as higher education professionals in China, US, and other countries; and its pragmatic implications for WAC and other writing researchers.

Implications for the Envisioned WAC Researchers in China

Although there are currently no WAC researchers in China, writing research has been conducted by Chinese writing researchers, linguists, and English writing
researchers. These three groups of researchers can contribute to WAC research and practice in their own ways, but English writing researchers, especially those with training in rhetoric and composition, will be the pioneers in WAC research and practice in China.

Professors of Chinese conduct research related to Chinese writing. Although Chen’s (2010) review of the modern research and teaching of Chinese writing only implies the influences of US composition and rhetoric studies, Chinese writing research has actually developed with similar theoretical paradigm shifts in the US, focusing on the shifts to writer-centered studies, practical writing studies including administrative and business writing, and digital literacy. Although Chinese is the official language and the primary language of instruction, Chinese writing courses can rarely be found in the college curriculum as most believe writing instruction should be completed in secondary education. The few required Chinese courses are big lecture courses on literature. Therefore, there are far more literature researchers than writing ones in departments of Chinese studies. This group of researchers can contribute to WAC research with their specialty in Chinese writing research; however, their input might be limited due to their lack of communication and exchange with writing researchers of different languages as a result of the language barrier. Collaborating with English writing researchers can help this group have access to the literature and development of writing research that can be applied to Chinese writing studies.

Unlike Chinese writing courses, English writing is either combined with other elements into required English courses or is an independent, required course. English
writing studies in China now are primarily conducted by using linguistic methods and theories. However, as Charles Bazerman mentioned in the interview, “linguist approaches only get you so far, either on student motivation, or in terms to be getting students to be able to communicate well.” Further research into the audience, the community, and the society that students respond and contribute to cannot be conducted using linguistic approaches. Linguistic studies of student writing can provide empirical data and resources for writing research, but they cannot become the leading force in WAC research and practice.

With increasing international scholarly exchanges, more and more English majors and professors come to the US to pursue their study or research, and many of them have been “converted” to rhetoric and composition from their literature or linguistic backgrounds. Although some of them may choose to stay in the US, there are still a group of researchers who choose to go back to China, primarily government-sponsored exchange scholars and very limited number of PhD graduates. This group of returnees are envisioned to be pioneers in WAC studies because they have been trained in writing research; most of them might also have US teaching experience, or some of them might have had the opportunity to work with WAC researchers in their overseas study. Their knowledge of both the US and Chinese educational systems will help them to better adapt the US-originated WAC into China, and they will function as a bridge linking the international writing research with that in China. Therefore, like many other initiatives mentioned in the interviews in this study, WAC programs in China quite possibly will
be initiated by this group of researchers with an initial focus on English writing but will be eventually expanded to Chinese writing.

In practice, these WAC researchers should be teaching courses in their own departments to keep up with the needs of the ever-changing student body. For their WAC program responsibilities, ideally, they should report directly to the Dean for Academic Affairs. Their work in the WAC programs should include but is not restricted to the following responsibilities:

• Working with faculty in the disciplines in designing assignments and courses that use writing and other communication modalities to enhance teaching and learning
• Securing continuing internal funding and applying for outside grants
• Collaborating with faculty in publishing classroom-based research on how WAC pedagogies can be adapted into different disciplines in China using case studies, experiments, ethnographies, or a combination of various methods
• Conducting workshops/meetings and inviting facilitators or speakers and collaborating with faculty training programs
• Conducting program assessment, which can be used both for securing funding, publication, and assisting the universities in the evaluation program
• Managing or collaborating with student support centers such as writing centers, which include training faculty or peer tutors, providing related resources, conducting learning related assessment and providing support for programs such as bilingual courses
• Collaborating with education technology centers in helping faculty obtain technological resources and integrate them into their courses

• Establishing and maintaining exchanges with the international WAC community

These WAC researchers can make changes to this list of responsibilities to suit their local conditions and needs to facilitate existing faculty interest in integrating communication modalities into their courses and to increase the general awareness of the centrality of writing and communication in teaching and learning in Chinese higher education.

Implications for WAC Researchers in the US and Other Countries

This study provides two major implications for WAC research: 1) insights from US WAC experts looking at US WAC and its internationalization; 2) sample questions to ask in adapting WAC into different educational systems.

Previous interviews with WAC experts, such as those published in *The WAC Journal*, have been limited to individuals. This research attempts to draw a fuller portrait of US WAC programs and the development of WAC initiatives in other countries. Although it is not as comprehensive as the International WAC Mapping Project (Thaiss & Porter, 2010), this study offers perspectives from these experts that help to extend the previous research and asks questions about the internationalization of WAC programs that have not been systematically studied before. The answers from these experts cannot represent every US or international WAC project, but these answers are based not only on their personal work but also on their exchanges in international conferences and their consultation visits. Therefore, this expert interview protocol can offer valuable
perspectives for studies designed to provide a comparatively overall understanding with limited resources.

With the internationalization of higher education institutions around the world, the results of the China interviews give WAC researchers, who are often writing teachers and program leaders in their institutions, an introduction to their Chinese students in terms of previous writing practices, including writing to learn. As a result these writing teachers and writing programs/centers will be better prepared to help Chinese students adapt to different educational settings and cultures. Specifically, some of the challenges for professors in China such as the insufficient educational technologies and academic dishonesty might, in turn, be reflected in Chinese students. For example, some of them might use their previously successful strategies for high school Chinese writing, ones they also may have used in college; however, they may result in plagiarism in these new academic settings, and the students may be faced with the punishment associated with this charge. Or some Chinese students might not be as familiar with certain software used in the disciplines as they are expected to be, simply because they did not have access to it in their previous study in China. If these are known and understood by the WAC researchers, then they could better prepare other faculty in helping their students on related issues.

The questions asked in both sets of interviews can also be adapted by other WAC researchers to use in similar projects. As Chirstiane Donahue emphasized in my interview with her, a healthy future for WAC requires more research, especially empirical research, to deepen the understanding of writing and the functions of writing.
Concrete empirical results, such as those from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), can also help promote WAC programs. Hopefully, this study could also contribute to the future of WAC. Specific suggestions for future research are included in the “Directions for Future Research” section of this chapter.

Implications for Chinese Higher Education Professionals

This study strongly supports the introduction of WAC in Chinese higher education, pointing out the opportunities of faculty interest and timing. With increasing attention being called for and paid to the tension between access and quality in undergraduate education, WAC can easily be adopted to enhance teaching and learning and, therefore, improve the overall quality of higher education. It can also contribute to meeting the requirements of the evaluation program that plays a vital role in the survival and development of the institutions.

For faculty members, this research reveals that professors from different disciplines and institutions all consider communication should become a critical focus in Chinese higher education. It also tells them that they are not alone in trying to incorporate writing and other communication modalities into their courses; neither are they alone in struggling to find a better way of doing so. This study also shows that the boundaries between isolated disciplines should not continue to be hurdles for faculty members who are willing to communicate with their colleagues on incorporating writing into their teaching.

The results also emphasize the workload issue that affects the motivation and enthusiasm of professors in transforming their pedagogies. The willingness of faculty to
participate in educational reforms like WAC can be best catalyzed with adjustments to the workload and consequently to the reward system to achieve the educational goals. And the willingness from potential employers to contribute to undergraduate education should be made good use of in making adjustments in the curriculum. Insufficient technological resources and academic dishonesty are the two unique challenges posed to Chinese higher educational professionals. Therefore, the adaptation of WAC should be reconsidered with these challenges, and research needs to be conducted on how to deal with them.

However, these challenges do not overweigh the opportunities; WAC pedagogies and programs should be introduced into China so that the teaching of 1.2 million faculty members and the writing and learning of 18.8 million Chinese college students can be enhanced.

*Implications for Higher Education Professionals in the US and Other Countries*

With the two sets of interviews conducted in both China and the US, the research design of this study initiates a new approach for higher education professionals in searching for solutions to existing and new issues in their higher education systems. Based on a thorough study of the historical development of an educational reform, a careful reading of the indigenous traditions and the analysis of another educational system, this research compares and contrasts the timely empirical research results from the two sets of interviews. This type of research can provide a feasibility assessment with practical suggestions for high-level administrators in making decisions such as adopting educational reforms like WAC. Fullan (1999) asserts that it is much more
important to focus on the context and conditions than the reform itself. The findings of this empirical research support this assertion and remind higher educational professionals to consider their local culture and system before making any decisions on adopting or adapting WAC in their own institutions.

The results of this study can also be used by higher education professionals in the US and other countries to understand the current perceptions of the relationship between communication and the quality of teaching and learning in China by Chinese faculty, administrators, and employers. This understanding could help them to work with students from China, to communicate with their Chinese colleagues, and to collaborate with Chinese universities. The issues affecting China after its large scale enrollment expansion and the feasibility of introducing WAC to ease the tension between access and quality could also help those countries that are experiencing or plan to implement college enrollment expansions.

Limitations

The contributions and implications of this study should be interpreted with its limitations in mind. First, although this study is on WAC and its internationalization, it is specifically about China, meaning other countries might have their own opportunities and challenges that are different from the findings of this study. Several other obvious limitations resulted from the methodology. The user of an interview methodology means only limited generalizations can be given to the results. The China interviews include only 28 participants, which does not represent all professionals in the same occupations. And the US interviews cannot be generalized to all WAC researchers.
However, this choice of methodology fits the initial stage of this type of research since this study is the first, to the best the researcher’s knowledge, to study the feasibility of introducing WAC into China. Therefore, this interview methodology helps to find out and verify what questions to ask and how to ask them. Other methodologies such as large-scale surveys, focus groups, or case studies could offer different insights on this issue.

Another limitation of this interview methodology is on the time and “guanxi” (relationship) consumed by this study. This concept, discussed in Chapter Four, was echoed by one Chinese participant and one US participant who discussed the difficulty of contacting and securing participants in China. However, this difficulty was not found when contacting US WAC experts.

Moreover, there is also one limitation on the implementation process of this methodology. Although the Chinese questions were tested in the pilot study, a large scale implementation makes the design of some of the questions problematic. The major issue concerned the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with student communication competencies. The answers in the pilot study were either “satisfied” or “not satisfied.” However, the answers in this study were “satisfied,” “very satisfied,” “quite satisfied,” or “OK.” It would help grouping the answers to show the level of agreement if a Likert scale were provided or the participants were asked to answer in percentages.

One more limitation is on the use of activity systems, which condensed the dynamic systems into six components. This condensed model may overlook some aspects in these dynamic systems. Although previous discussion on the Chinese higher
education system and culture could provide a basic understanding, this study might have failed to notice other issues, especially the forces at play in specific institutions or companies.

Directions for Future Research

Although WAC has been in US higher and K-12 education for more than thirty years, it has only begun to be adopted by other countries, and many of them are still initiatives rather than programs. This study is one of the first attempts to explore the feasibility of WAC in a different educational setting; therefore, similar studies should be done on other countries to see if these opportunities and challenges are unique to China.

Future in-depth interview studies in China should include more disciplines and other types of universities with a bigger group of participants to provide a fuller picture of how communication is perceived in China. Based on the results of this study, future studies should also employ focus groups, large-scale surveys, or case studies to deal with this issue. For example, individual institutions should conduct surveys of their faculty and administrators to ascertain the needs for enhancing student communication competencies, and the results of these surveys should better help the institutions develop the major components of their WAC programs. Large-scale surveys should also be implemented to see if the themes, especially the primary themes of this study, have become trends in Chinese higher education. Focus group studies should be conducted with faculty from specific disciplines and practitioners in the same fields to discuss the current teaching of writing in the classroom and the practice in the workplace so that the differences between the two can be determined and reduced. Longitudinal research such
as case studies or ethnographies on how Chinese students learn to write in college, in the disciplines and even in the workplaces they enter after graduation could provide insights into their pre-college communication training, their college communication experiences in different course and social settings, and how they handle workplace communication tasks; these insights may also reveal the transfer processes among all the connected activity systems.

This study specifically proposes adding WAC researchers to the community of the activity system of the classroom to mitigate the contradictions. Future research could investigate this proposal using case studies of particular courses to test what effects WAC researchers have on choosing the writing tools to use, how to use them, and the motives of the subjects. Courses from different disciplines should be chosen for this study to see if there are disciplinary differences. Discipline specific research in China on how Chinese and English writing, speaking, and other communication modalities are used should also be conducted and shared with the international research community. As most writing research in China is done by linguists, linguistic studies should also add their expertise in this area of research.

International WAC researchers with access to educational systems in various countries should also compare the effects of WAC programs or initiatives and the differences in their operation in various systems to see if the more common model of student support center is widespread in these systems and how the major source of obstacles, and the nature of the educational model and system affect the introduction and adaptation of WAC.
Conclusion

WAC programs were initiated in the US for better teaching and learning after the increased access to higher education in 1960-70s. It has been internationalized from the very beginning since the Dartmouth seminars, in which the US participants learned how their British colleagues were using writing to promote learning with the introduction of James Britton’s (1975) study of writing in British education system. It grew from a grassroots movement to an increasingly important component in US educational institutions, and in recent years it has begun to be introduced in and adapted to other countries. It was misunderstood and predicted to be a fad, but its growth and longevity (McLeod, 1989; Thaiss & Porter, 2010) have proven otherwise.

With the increasing access to higher education in other countries, WAC initiatives began to appear in European countries, Australia, South America, and Asia. China started its higher education enrollment expansion approximately 10 years ago, resulting in issues and tensions, in particular, the tension between access and quality. This study explores the feasibility of introducing WAC into the Chinese higher education system by analyzing data from two sets of interviews. The results strongly support the feasibility and further point out the opportunities and potential challenges. Chinese higher education system has one of the two indispensible components for starting WAC programs, the faculty interest. And with proper connection, it is reasonable to believe the support of the high-level administrators can be obtained.

Although the results are optimistic, challenges should also be taken into careful consideration, especially the two challenges of insufficient educational technology
resources and academic dishonesty. At the same time, research and practice needs to be initiated as faculty interest could be turned into resistance if faculty members keep trying and failing using writing and other communication modalities in their courses without proper support and guidance.

This research is an attempt to study the feasibility by applying the empirical results to activity systems. This application leads to the realization of previously hidden contradictions in the motive of the activity system of classroom instruction and those among the tools, norms, and motives of different activity systems. This study proposes to add WAC researchers to the community of classroom instruction to help mitigate the contradictions by choosing proper tools for writing, speaking, and other communication modalities to enhance student learning, critical thinking, and transferring of knowledge into different activity systems. This change would help the professors teach the students “how to pick the apples” while they “feed the students apples.” Hopefully this change will become practices in China by introducing WAC pedagogies through the developing student support centers such as those mentioned by the participants in this study.

With WAC becoming increasingly diversified to include SAC, WID, CAC, and CID, it is clear that WAC is many things for many constituencies. WAC will continue to contribute to the development of educational technologies and the internationalization of higher education, increasing the mobility of both teachers and students and opening up the world for them in the process. However, the essence of WAC will still be better faculty teaching and student learning. As WAC blends ideas and pedagogical aims with these other “across-the-curriculum” brands, it is essential for the movement to be both
inclusive of these efforts while maintaining a firm “brand” to advance WAC aims internationally. The core spirit of WAC is in the improvement of teaching and learning through writing, and these educational needs will remain regardless of the differences in local cultures, conditions, systems, and context. This study shows that people in both industry and academia, both in China and the United States, see the clear need that could be fulfilled through the internationalization of WAC. The near unanimity in responses in this regard shows that there is a strong motivation to advance WAC in a number of ways that involve the People’s Republic of China. With China now being the home of the most English-language speakers in the world and its rapidly increased access to higher education, the timing has never been more optimal for bridging the Chinese needs and the US-based WAC initiative. Without question, this study shows the desire is there; now, one must ask about whether education can provide the necessary resources and flexibility to turn a great American idea into a great Chinese one.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

China Interview Questions

Interview Questions
(For University Professors)

Demographic Section:
Institution 学校名称
Age 年龄
Gender 性别
Highest Degree Earned 最高学历
Rank of Professorship 职称
Administrative Role 行政职务
Years of Teaching in Higher Education 高校执教时间____年
Major Teaching Areas and Courses 主要教学专业及课程
Overseas Study or Working Experiences (time, type of study/work, purpose, countries)
海外学习或工作经验（时间，学习工作类型，目的，哪些国家）

Information Section
1. What are your primary course goals for teaching the subject (science, engineering, economics, business management...)?
   请谈谈您在本专业教授课程的目标

2. Have you recently read any students’ writings in Chinese? If yes, how would you assess the quality of your students’ Chinese writing?
   您近来是否读过学生写的中文的东西？如果读过，您认为学生中文写作质量如何？

3. Have you recently read any students’ writings in English? If yes, how would you assess the quality of your students’ English writing?
   您近来是否读过学生写的英文的东西？如果读过，您认为学生英文写作质量如何？

4. What are your major motivations for having your students engage in writing assignments?
   您给学生布置写作作业的主要动机是什么？

5. What are your major disincentives for having your students engage in writing assignments?
   有哪些因素会妨碍您给学生布置写作形式的作业？

6. Comment on your students’ communication competencies in speaking. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they?
   评价学生的口头沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？
7. Comment on your students’ communication competencies on presenting. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they? 请评价学生做演示的沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

8. Comment on your students’ competencies on using digital technologies. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they? 请评价学生使用数码技术的能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

9. What do you see as the major overall objectives for higher education? 在您看来，高等教育的主要目标是什么？

10. Do you think that strengthening writing, other communication skills such as speaking and presenting, and the use of technologies should be a critical focus area for educators in higher education? Why or why not? 您认为加强学生的写作及其它沟通能力，例如口头表达，做演示及使用数码技术，是否应当引起高等教育工作者的重视和相当的关注？为什么？为什么不？

11. Do you have a desire to integrate communication components into your course? 您觉得您想在所教授的课程中加入加强学生沟通能力的内容么？

12. To what degree do you think integrating communication into your courses will enhance your students’ learning of the subject? 您认为在课程中加入沟通能力的培养是否能够提高学生对该科目的学习？能够起到多大的作用？

13. Is it important for college students to have some knowledge and skill in international/intercultural communication in today’s global economy? If yes, how could it be integrated into your course? 在当今全球经济条件下，国际交流和跨文化交流的知识和能力对于高校学生来讲重要吗？如果重要的话，您认为在您所教授的课程中能够如何融入这些知识和能力？

14. Please talk about the effects of the Five-Year-Circle Evaluation on your teaching. To what degree do you think integrating communication into your courses may help you on preparations for the evaluation? 请谈谈高校评估对您教学工作的作用和影响。您认为在您的课程中加入沟通能力的成分对您准备评估检查会有帮助么？有什么样的帮助？

15. To what extent would a campus-wide writing and communication initiative contribute to the overall objectives for higher education? 如果在全校范围内开展写作和沟通交流的项目帮助老师在课程中融入写作和其它沟通能力的培养，这是否有助于实现高等教育的主要目标？会有何种程度的贡献？
16. Is a campus-wide, holistic, writing and/or communication initiative the best way to enhance student communication skills? 您觉得一个全校范围的写作和沟通交流的倡议项目是不是提高学生沟通交流能力的最好的办法？

17. What other ways would you suggest? 您有其他的建议吗？

18. What is your level of desire to participate in such an initiative to integrate writing, communication, and digital technologies for learning into your courses? 如果有机会的话，在您所在的学校开展一个项目帮助老师把写作，沟通交流能力的培养和数码技术的应用融入各个课程，您有多大的兴趣参加？
Interview Questions
(For University Administrators)

Demographic Section:
Institution 学校名称 Job Title 行政职务
Age 年龄 Gender 性别
Highest Degree Earned 最高学历
Rank of Administration 行政级别
Overseas Study or Working Experiences (time, type of study/work, purpose, countries)
海外学习或工作经验（时间，学习工作类型，目的，哪些国家）
(If the administrator is also a professor)
Rank of Professorship 职称
Years of Teaching in Higher Education 高校执教时间____年
Major Teaching Areas and Courses 主要教学专业及课程

Information Section
1. Have you recently read any students’ writings in Chinese? If yes, how would you assess the quality of your students’ Chinese writing? 您近来是否读过学生写的中文的东西？如果读过，您认为学生中文写作质量如何？

2. Have you recently read any students’ writings in English? If yes, how would you assess the quality of your students’ English writing? 您近来是否读过学生写的英文的东西？如果读过，您认为学生英文写作质量如何？

3. Comment on your students’ communication competencies in speaking. Does the university have certain objectives for these? If yes, what are they? If no, why not? 请评价学生的口头沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

4. Comment on your students’ communication competencies on presenting. Does the university have certain objectives for these? If yes, what are they? If no, why not? 请评价学生做演示的沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

5. Comment on your students’ competencies on using digital technologies. Does the university have certain objectives for these? If yes, what are they? If no, why not? 请评价学生使用数码技术的能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

6. How important do you think writing and communication are for students’ learning and future career? 您认为写作和沟通交流能力对于学生的学习和日后的工作的程度怎样？
7. Do you think that strengthening writing, other communication skills such as speaking and presenting, and the use of technologies should be a critical focus area for educators in higher education? Why or why not? 您认为加强学生的写作及其它沟通能力，例如口头表达，做演示及使用数码技术，是否应当引起高等教育工作者的重视和相当的关注？为什么？为什么不？

8. Is it important for college students to have some knowledge and skill in international/intercultural communication in today’s global economy? If yes, how could it be integrated into the curriculum? 在当今全球经济条件下，国际交流和跨文化交流的知识和能力对于高校学生来讲重要吗？如果重要的话，您认为如何能够将这些知识和能力融入高校总课程？

9. How important is the Five-Year-Circle-Evaluation program for your institute? Do you think integrating writing and other communication components into the curriculum could contribute to meeting the requirement of the evaluation as well as enhancing students’ learning? 请谈谈高校评估对您所在学校的作用和影响。您认为在总课程中加入写作及沟通能力的培养对学校达到评估标准要求以及提高学生学习质量会有帮助么？为什么有？为什么没有？

10. What do you see as the major overall objectives for higher education? 在您看来，高等教育的主要目标是什么？

11. To what extent would a campus-wide writing and communication initiative contribute to the overall objectives for higher education? 如果在全校范围内开展写作和沟通交流的项目帮助老师在课程中融入写作和其他沟通能力的培养，这是否有助于实现高等教育的主要目标？会有何种程度的贡献？

12. Is a campus-wide, holistic, writing and/or communication initiative the best way to enhance student communication skills? What are the benefits and major challenges you can think of for implementing such a program in your institute? 您觉得一个全校范围的写作和沟通交流的倡议项目是不是提高学生沟通交流能力的最好的办法？在您看来，在您所在的学校实行这样一个项目的益处和主要困难会有哪些？

13. What other ways would you suggest? 您有其他的建议吗？

14. What is your level of desire to support such an initiative to integrate writing, communication, and digital technologies for learning into the curriculum? 如果有机会的话，在您所在的学校开展一个项目帮助老师把写作，沟通交流能力的培养和数码技术的应用融入各个课程，您会给予多大支持？
Interview Questions
(For Recruiters/Potential Employers)

Demographic Section:
Company 公司名称
Total Number of Employees 公司雇员数量
Job Title 职务
Age 年龄
Gender 性别
Highest Degree Earned 最高学位
Rank of Management 职务级别
Overseas Study or Working Experiences (time, type of study/work, purpose, countries)
海外学习或工作经验（时间，学习工作类型，目的，哪些国家）

(If the employer is or was a professor)
Rank of Professorship 职称
Years of Teaching in Higher Education 高校执教时间 年
Major Teaching Areas and Courses 主要教学专业及课程

Information Section
1. Do you stress the importance of writing or other communication skills such as listening, speaking, presenting, and using digital technologies in your job advertisements? If yes, what are they? If not, why not? 在您公司发布的招聘广告中是否强调写作或者其他沟通交流的技能，例如倾听，口头表达，演示以及使用数码技术？如果有所强调，那么都是什么？

2. Do you inquire or test for these skills in the recruiting process? If yes, how is this implemented? If not, why not? 在招聘过程中您是否测试这些技能？如果是，测试是如何实施的？如果不测试，请问为什么？

3. In what manner do you assess communication skills in the annual employee evaluations? 您所在的公司在年度员工评估中是如何测评沟通交流能力的？

4. Have you recently read any employees’ writings in Chinese? Please comment on the quality of their Chinese writing? 您近来是否读过员工写的中文的东西？如果读过，您认为他们中文写作质量如何？

5. Have you recently read any employees’ writings in English? Please comment on the quality of their English writing? 您近来是否读过员工写的英文的东西？如果读过，您认为他们英文写作质量如何？
6. Comment on your employees’ communication competencies in speaking. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they? 请评价员工的口头沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

7. Comment on your employees’ communication competencies on presenting. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they? 请评价员工做演示的沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，那么有哪些期望？

8. Comment on your employees’ competencies on using digital technologies. Do you have expectations for these? If yes, what are they? 请评价员工使用数码技术的沟通交流能力。您对此能力有一定的期望吗？如果是，有哪些期望？

9. What is the relationship between communication skills and overall job performance? 沟通交流技巧和总体的在职表现有什么样的关系？

10. To what extent do you think college graduates that you recruited or interviewed are well prepared to meet your expectations on communication skills? 您认为您招聘或者面试过的高校本科毕业生是否有充足的准备来达到您对他们沟通交流技巧的期望和要求？

11. Do you think that strengthening writing and communication should be a critical focus area in higher education? Why or why not? 您是否认同写作和其他沟通交流技巧应当是引起高等教育重视的一个方面？为什么？为什么不？

12. Is it important for your employees to have some knowledge and skill in international/intercultural communication in today’s global economy? If yes, do you think this should be integrated into the curriculum? 在当今全球经济的环境下，您是否认为您的员工有国际交流和跨文化交流的知识和能力是重要的？如果重要的话，您是否认为这些应当融入高校总课程？

13. Is a campus-wide, holistic, writing and/or communication initiative the best way to enhance student communication skills? 您觉得一个全校范围的写作和沟通交流的项目是不是提高学生沟通交流能力的最好的办法？

14. What other ways would you suggest? 您有其他的建议吗？

15. What is your level of desire to participate in such an initiative in colleges and universities to provide an employer’s perspectives on integrating writing, communication and technology into the curriculum? 如果有机会的话，在本地一些大学开展此类项目帮助老师把写作，沟通交流能力的培养和数码技术的应用融入课程，您有多大兴趣来参与并为高校提供雇主方的观点和想法？
Appendix B

US WAC Interview Questions

Demographic Section:
Institution(s)
Department, Center, or Program
Academic Rank
Administrative Role
Years of Teaching in Higher Education
Overseas Higher Education Experience

Information Section
1. When did you first get involved in WAC programs? How much involvement have you had with WAC since then?
2. How would you define WAC? What are the major characteristics?
3. What is the most important contribution of WAC to American higher education?
4. What are the indispensible components for the initiation of a WAC program in the US? Why?
5. What are the major obstacles for the initiation of a WAC program in the US? What do you think are the reasons for these obstacles?
6. What threatens the sustainability of WAC programs in the US?
7. How should the ideal WAC program function?
8. What do you think the future of WAC will be?
9. Have you ever been involved in initiating WAC programs, or conducting WAC related research or teaching outside the US? What is your role in these activities?
10. According to your experience, what are the major differences of WAC programs in the US and those in other countries?
11. Are these WAC programs in English, in the local language, or bilingual? What are the reasons for the choice of language(s)?
12. What are the major components of these WAC programs?
13. What are the common obstacles for the initiation of these programs?
14. What are your suggestions to US WAC researchers if they are to be involved with WAC development outside of the US?
15. What are your suggestions to those in other countries that want to initiate programs of their own?
16. How do you see the connections between international dissemination of WAC and the future of WAC in the US?
17. Is there anything else you want to share or suggestions you want to give?
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