PRE-PROOF EXCERPTS AND CHAPTER ABSTRACTS —

Writing Support for International Graduate Students: Enhancing Academic Transition and Success

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Abstract: This introductory chapter describes the context of a research study, its methodology, and the theoretical perspectives that emerged from (and are adopted to explain) the findings of a research study. After describing a constructivist Grounded Theory method used for the research, alongside an ecological orientation to it, the chapter then briefly describes the scholarly context of the issues covered by the book. The chapter's scholarly contextualization, done after completion of data collection and most of analysis, establishes the need for greater focus on issues pertinent to international graduate students, including by borrowing perspectives from other disciplines.

> Since our class entered college, the faculty has introduced . . . Arnold's Latin and Greek prose composition. . . . Now you know probably the many disadvantages in which I labor aside from these additional studies. . . . I therefore request you to send me up the keys to those [texts]. (Yung Wing, a Chinese student at Yale College, 1851; Yale University library archive)

> The Chinese students fail out of the program. We have never graduated the Chinese students. . . . . I think that the challenge is that few people in the program understand that these students are shell shocked, and [instructors] don't understand the [educational backgrounds] that these students came from. (An instructor at a California university)

The first quotation above is from a letter sent from Yale University in 1851 by the first Chinese student to graduate from a US college, Yung Wing, to a former classmate named Albert Booth, who had moved to New York City. Brought to Connecticut four years earlier by a Christian missionary, Yung Wing had completed high school in Hartford before joining Yale College. At the end of the first year in college, he wrote to seemingly the only person he could turn to for help with purchasing the "keys" to two new Composition textbooks that he had just found out were extensively used by other students. The contents of the letter powerfully illustrate the multiple layers of challenges that students face, even today, when they pursue education in a new country and culture away from home, challenges that often extend far beyond their studies but affect their academic experience and success more than they would at home.

The second quotation is from an interview with an instructor at a business school in a public university in California who was responding to my question about what kinds of writing-related academic support were provided to international graduate students at her institution. The instructor's response reminded me of how international students still face some of the same challenges that Yung Wing did in the 1850s. While today's international students in most American cities can find more company, are better treated by peers and professors, and can find more resources, they still encounter additional "disadvantages" that aggravate the challenges of reading, writing, and other aspects of pursuing higher education in a foreign country. Besides "additional studies" for improving and adapting their linguistic and communicative skills, they must tackle challenges related to immigration laws and political climate that both give and restrict opportunities for pursuing higher education; deal with often overt prejudice outside campus and subtle stereotypes that obscure realities about them even within; and overcome financial, emotional, cultural, and social challenges that affect them in ways that are often not visible to those who haven't gone through similar experiences of international education. The challenges that international students face at the graduate level are most obscured by assumptions and ideologies among instructors and academic administrators alike.

Yung Wing's process of learning to write involved acquiring significant proficiency in the English language, one aspect of learning to communicate in a new society that happens to be most visible to others. He had started learning English since before he came to Hartford in 1847 from Macao, with a missionary named Samuel Brown, continuing it at a preparatory school named Monson Academy and through the mentorship of Brown's friend, Charles Hammond. When he joined college, learning to write further demanded significant command of rhetorical conventions and communicative practices in a new culture and society. He evidently did all of that well. Unfortunately, as historical accounts of this international student indicate,[1] even after he had become proficient enough to win much-coveted composition contests,

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[1] There is rich information about this famous international student in a variety of sources, including Yale library and archive, websites of local historical and social organizations, and local papers that published stories about him around the 150th anniversary his graduation in 2004—in addition to mentions in books and journal articles.

he was never accorded the same treatment and understanding as his fellow domestic students. Perceptions about his language and communication shaped by his identity as a foreigner and how others perceived him. In a book on the history of international students in the United States, Bevis and Lucas (2007)[2] note that Yung Wing was considered a "loner who had little social interaction although he was a common sight around campus" (44) even though he was engaged in student clubs and the debate team. Generally speaking, Yung Wing's experiences reflect a critical but often overlooked dimension of foreign students'[3] educational journey: how their status as outsiders affects almost every aspect of their education, including learning and performance of academic writing. As we can see better from a distance today, Yung Wing wrote the letter during a period when even after his graduation in 1854, fluctuating political relations between China and the United States (involving such events as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) frequently and seriously undermined his frequently unsuccessful, 58-year attempt to be an academic and social ambassador between the two nations.

In my field notes from visiting twenty universities across the United States between spring 2014 and spring 2017, and in analysis of interviews I conducted with 44 international graduate students, there are striking patterns of challenges about the process of learning to write and communicate that are unique to international students in general and also distinct from those of their undergraduate counterparts. Interviews with four times as many scholars and academic professionals who worked closely with these students also strongly reinforced the same patterns. In individual interviews and focus group conversations, students also shared powerful stories about how "learning to write" was shaped and affected by a variety of challenges and realities, both in kind and degree, beyond what domestic graduate students encountered. For example, a doctoral student in pharmacology at the University of Louisiana, Monroe, whom I call "Vijay,"[4] said that he was "completely lost" during class discussions when he first arrived because he couldn't make sense of the rhetorical moves made by the professor and his classmates. He struggled to remain motivated due to social isolation and continued culture shock and almost had to discontinue his degree when his grant-based funding discontinued (given his visa status). He did not know about writing support before he tried and then found it inadequate. Eventually, he learned to create and use his own ad hoc networks of support toward eventual success. As with other students I interviewed, faculty and staff members who paid attention to what Vijay was facing as an international student better understood political and ideological forces/realities against which their students learned to academically succeed (the theme of chapter two). The attention helped faculty advisors and academic support professionals alike to develop better perspectives for supporting international graduate students (theme of chapter three).

Generally put, fostering international students' *agency* to explore the ecology of resources helps them more quickly and effectively learn and use writing skills for navigating a new academic culture and negotiating their intellectual positions (chapter four). This agency was best fostered when support was driven by *advocacy* for these students (chapter five). While the experiences of individual students I interviewed were unique, and the issues discussed by the academic professionals were contingent on their distinct institutional contexts, my research identified significant interactions between seemingly extraneous forces and students' process of learning to write, interactions that deserve exploration in the context of graduate-level writing support for these students *as* international students. In this sense, I view "writing support" as a means for helping students learn and use writing skills in the broader context of academic and professional "communication"—in the same sense as that the emerging professional community uses the term "graduate level communication." Furthermore, in the case of international graduate students, learning to write involves a complex puzzle requiring a number of linguistic, rhetorical, cultural, and social skills that they must gather from a variety of places and processes, formal and informal, and visible or invisible to writing support professionals.

The demographic that this book focuses on is the more than half a million *foreign* students at the graduate level in the United States (ICE, 2017),[5] roughly a third of whom are new to American academic

[2] *International students in American colleges and universities*
[3] I use this phrase for foregrounding the students' citizenship, education, or experience in other countries.
[4] All names in the book are pseudonyms. Vijay's story is elaborated later.
[5] The June 2017 update of "SEVIS by the Numbers" report from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency shows that among the 1,184,735 foreign students on the student visas, 31 and 12 percent of the total number were enrolled at the masters and doctoral levels respectively.

culture when they first arrive from around the world every year.[6] By immigration status, whether permanent residents, refugees on any status, or undocumented students, students with prior education in other countries are typically excluded from the term "international"; however, the thematic scope of this book includes all students, in any visa/immigration status, who received all or most of their prior education outside the US.[7] The academic professionals[8] I interviewed for this book included writing scholars and researchers, instructors of writing and of language who taught writing skills, faculty advisors and graduate program directors in other departments, administrators and staff members in various academic support units, graduate deans and deans of specific schools, and a few institutional leaders above the level of deans.

The goal of this book is not to present a full and objective picture of graduate writing support for international students in the United States. Instead, it is to describe and draw theoretical insights from the findings of a research project that studied what made a number of selected programs[9] most useful for foreign students, further exploring how these students use additional support and resources available in the larger ecology of their institutions. My objective was also not to present program profiles.[10] I did not study the programs long term or extensively; instead, my focus was to analyze data from across institutions in order to identify important issues about programs and pedagogies. While I revisited some institutions, conducted follow-up interviews remotely about others, and gathered additional information about all programs from secondary sources, I used the data to explore emerging themes. Similarly, the narratives that I have picked for discussing student experiences are only meant to be illustrative of salient themes that I identified from analyzing the data, rather than case studies of students. I also use themes emerging from experiences described by students and perspectives shared by academic scholars and professionals working with them as the basis for discussing broader geopolitical issues that shape and influence international education. So, I encourage readers to pay attention to the *situatedness* of the programs, themes in students' experiences stories, and perspectives shared by academic professionals who worked with the students. I hope this book will add to and foreground topics and themes about international students in conversations about graduate-level writing support.

a. **Study Design and Data Collection**

Between the spring of 2014 and summer of 2017, I conducted 168 interviews, of which 12 were follow-ups. Among them, I transcribed 157 interviews for coding and analysis, excluding 11 interviews that turned out to lack considerable focus on writing and also not provide significant context for it. Among the interviews included, 4 were with groups of students with an average of 6 participants, 4 more involved faculty and staff members with an average of 6 participants, and 5 were with two academic professionals each. The total number of individuals involved was 191. Most of the interviews were conducted at 20 university campuses,[11] and 22 of them were conducted at 6 academic conferences (mainly earlier in the process); 7 of the initial interviews were by phone/videoconferencing; 2 were by email, with participants who requested this to be the medium. Including the institutions of participants whom I interviewed at

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[6] Estimate from Institute of International Education's "Open Doors" data from the last few years; no clear numbers about students moving up from undergraduate degrees were available.

[7] The graduate students I interviewed incidentally included all the above groups; however, while I tried to diversify participants as much as possible, I didn't design the research for statistical representation of the diversity. Instead I designed it to theorize from stories told by students, whose backgrounds were highly varied.

[8] A phrase I have used to encompass all interviewees other than students, unless otherwise specified.

[9] Given that international graduate students receive writing support from "language" focused programs in many universities, including many institutions I visited and programs I learned about, I included both types of programs in my study and specify both terms whenever relevant, generalizing them as *academic* writing and/or *communication* support in some cases. Furthermore, I refer to related academic services such as ITA training offices, graduate schools, academic liaison offices at the international students office, and so on, as *academic support* in general.

[10] For an excellent collection of program profiles, alongside important perspectives on graduate writing support for all graduate students, see Simpson et al. (2016), *Supporting graduate student writers*.

[11] **Universities visited:** Cornell University, California State University at Northridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michigan State University, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Ohio University, Portland State University, Pennsylvania State University, Stony Brook University, State University of New York at Albany, University of California at Berkeley, University of Connecticut, University of Florida, University of Houston, University of Louisiana at Monroe, University of Massachusetts at Boston, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Louisville, Yale University. **Interviewees from other institutions:** City University of New York, Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Maryland Department of Education, Elsevier's Cell Biology unit, Fordham University, Morgan State University, North Carolina State University, Purdue University, Syracuse University, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, University of California at Santa Barbara, University of California at Los Angeles, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Utah, University of Southern California, York College of the City University of New York.

conferences or virtually would increase the number of institutions to 37 universities. Most of the follow-ups were conducted by phone, and new participants were interviewed when revisiting 4 of the 20 visited institutions. Research consent was acquired by asking interviewees to sign them before interviews done in person; they were secured by email in other cases.

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b. Coding and Theming of Data

Preliminary codes were created from summary transcripts after each round of university visits and after individual interviews in the case of phone interviews. Full transcription of interviews was done after completing most of the data collection and after each set of interviews gathered thereafter. In vivo, process, and initial coding of complete transcripts was done during that process. Field notes were reviewed alongside close reading and annotation of interview transcripts in order to mark and give preliminary names to major issues and perspectives shared by the interviewees and included in the field notes. Transcripts were printed out with large margins in order to circle key terms, in a process Saldaña (2009) calls "pre-coding" (16), also using those words as in-vivo codes (or actual words of the interviewees); working on paper at first gave me "more control over and [a sense of] ownership of the work" (22). While preparing for initial coding, sentences were underlined or marked with large marginal brackets for identifying significant segments of the conversation, using summary or comments on the margin about "what is going on" in the data. Subsequent rounds of coding were done to generate focused, axial, and theoretical coding (42), as broader categories and themes for the chapters and the entire book gradually emerged.

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c. An Ecological Framework

In the iterative process of gathering and analyzing data from different universities—including interviews, field notes, and information about academic programs and institutional contexts derived from conversations with experienced scholars and through secondary sources—the people and programs and institutions that I was learning from and about became increasingly diverse. The constructivist grounded theory approach to gathering and analyzing data provided flexible strategies for understanding and discussing writing support at different institutions by learning from the "experiences [of participants] within embedded, [often] hidden networks, situations, and relationships" (Cresswell, 2007; 65)[12]. Yet, I increasingly felt that I needed a methodological theory to even better account for contextual complexities of programs and practices and the variety of experiences and perspectives shared by participants. Therefore, as I completed analyzing the data that I had gathered, I found it useful to adopt an "ecological orientation," a philosophical view of the contexts, participants, and process of research that acknowledges their complexity and fluidity. Considering that the ecological view of research is consistent with Grounded Theory methodology's focus on the use of data analysis for theory-building, I used it to develop thematic outlines for chapters and sections within them.

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d. The Scholarly Context

International students are a *hot topic* not just in the news but have been for at least a few decades in academic scholarship, so there is abundant literature that scholars, program leaders, and instructors of writing can draw on. By way of briefly describing the scholarly context of this book, let me highlight a few of the threads in the research and discourse from which insights can be drawn on for addressing one kind of issue or another for supporting international graduate students with writing education. Because an extensive review is outside the scope and objective of this book, I will include a few reviews already done by other scholars during the last two decades on the more than four decades of relevant scholarship. I must note here that most of the current scholarship does not focus on international students as *international*. Visually put (Fig. 1), **[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]** while most international students are "second language"[13] users of

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[12] *Qualitative inquiry and research design…* (2nd ed.)

[13] This diverse group of students have been described with a variety of terms, including users, speakers, or writers of English as second language or ESL (as in "ESL writers" or "second language writers"), EFL/English as a foreign language, EAL/English as additional language, and of world Englishes. They are also described as NNES/nonnative English speaking, bilingual, multilingual, and plurilingual, or as engaging translingual communication. Some of the terms are more limited to specific disciplinary or curricular contexts like courses in ESP/English for specific purpose, EAP/English for academic purpose, ESOL/English for speakers of other languages. Others like EIL/English as an international language, ELF/English lingua franca,

English (e), and while there are other overlaps that this simple visual doesn't represent, viewing international students only in terms of their language identities and proficiencies (nn) leaves out many other issues about them as *international* or foreign students (i), especially the fact that most of them came from academic cultures and systems that were different from what they encounter here. For example, native English speaking students from Australia or India face challenges of academic transition and social/cultural adjustments that a focus on their language identity or proficiency may obscure. In fact, that focus seems to further obscure the distinction between graduate and undergraduate international students. So, to put it visually again, the intersection into which I seek to borrow insights from existing scholarship in order to discuss specific issues could be represented by the area marked "A" in Figure 2. **[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]** For instance, all graduate students in a given American university may face shared challenges as they develop skills and knowledge required for graduate level writing (x) and in a shared context and process of academic socialization into their discipline (y). In addition, international students must also learn about and adjust to the general culture and system of US higher education and the social/cultural and professional contexts in which the academic discipline is situated (z). Writing scholars tend to focus on the intersection and find similarities in the abstract or justify a "universal design" for pragmatic reasons, but when the objective is to understand international students and their experiences and needs, looking at the intersection "A" does not have to entail overlooking the rest of the entire circle "z." However large we deem the intersection to be, international graduate students' experiences of learning to write is shaped by a large number of issues within that shaded circle on the right. Thus, my objective in this section is to foreground certain issues in the scholarship toward more explicitly and substantively focusing on the context and process of *academic transition* in which international students (begin to) learn graduate-level writing skills, both generally and within their specific disciplines. Given the significant influence of international student "market" on these students, the rest of this book will continue to draw insights from Writing Studies and beyond for asking and exploring new questions and issues that extend from a transition-focused inquiry.

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LEP/limited English proficiency, and CLD/culturally and linguistically diverse students are seldom used at the tertiary and/or graduate levels. Pluralization of acronyms (ESLs or internationals) is considered problematic.

Chapter 2: Understanding Politics: Affecting Policy

Abstract: Chapter 2 describes the themes of the book in the form of perspectives developed from an exploration of political and policy issues as raised by the analysis of the research data. It argues that writing professionals and other academic support experts must pay greater attention to political and policy issues in order to make writing and communication (or any academic) support effective for international graduate students. While the first half focuses on geopolitical and economic forces of international education, the second explores how beliefs and ideologies manifest in academic programs and practices, essentially serving as policies about the students. It concludes by discussing the need to take a reflexive approach and ask critical questions, including about domestic counterparts in relation to international students.

Chapter 3: Shifting Focus: An Ecological Approach

Abstract: Chapters 3 presents four major theoretical *perspectives* emerging from the analysis of data—building on the insights of the second chapter. It begins by showing that international graduate students are extremely *diverse* in their linguistic, educational, national/cultural, and other social backgrounds. Then it shows that writing support is most useful to them when it is adaptive to the process of their academic *transition* into the new academe. Third, it illustrates writing support programs as one of the nodes in a broad *ecology* of support that the students explore. It finally discusses the need to go beyond the question of whether academic should seek a "universal design" for supporting all graduate students into asking *what* support should be differentiated for international graduate students and (until) *when* and *how*.

Chapter 4: Fostering Agency through Effective Support Practices

Abstract: Chapters 4 shifts focus from problems and perspectives of previous chapters into findings and discussions about solution. It illustrates how international graduate students develop agency as writers and scholars, showing what kinds of support practices best facilitated that process. These students' process of learning to write involves exploring sociocultural, institutional, and disciplinary communities; writing and communication support practices were effective when they empowered the students to explore and use available resources, helping them to find a voice and grow professionally. The chapter concludes by describing a few of the most impactful pedagogical practices from the study.

Chapter 5: Advancing Advocacy through Programs and Leadership

Abstract: Chapters 5 focuses on the notion of advocacy as an essential means for supporting international graduate students with their development as writers and scholars. After discussing graduate-level writing and communication support as being inherently educational and promotional, it shows that the most effective programs were part of distributed networks of advocates and experts helping these students. It then describes cases where international graduate students themselves were actively involved by academic professionals to be their own advocates. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how writing professionals could use their professional expertise as a catalyst for institutional change and problem-solving in graduate education.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Reflections on an Emerging Field

Abstract: Chapter 6, the book's conclusion, brings together major findings and themes drawn from the research study, summarizing and reviewing those findings in the larger context of challenges and changes in higher education at large. It highlights how writing scholars could help spread awareness about the kinds of issues and problems described in the second chapter, advance perspectives like those developed in the third, and adopt and promote effective practices and successful programs such as those discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters. Limitations and objectives of the research project are noted, connecting the themes and perspectives presented by the book to relevant scholarly conversation and pointing out trajectories for future research.

Conclusion: Reflections on an Emerging Field

> I will make them good to you, when I go down to New York in the coming summer vacation . . . *
> [PS] . . . You are the only individual I can now depend. . . . (Excerpt from a letter by Yung Wing, a
> Chinese student at Yale College, 1851, also cited at the beginning of the first chapter; Yale
> University library archive)
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> Indeed, we need to reconceive the idea of "the discipline," just as we have reconceived the idea of
> "writing," as evolving within an ever-richer global mix of languages, technologies, ways of
> thinking, and desires for expression. (Thaiss, 2014; 475).[14]

An essay titled "How writing teachers can help revolutionize higher education" was recently shared somewhat virally by writing teachers across the US. Its writer, Denise Wydra (2017),[15] who wrote that she was "acquainted with the values and practices of a wide variety of disciplines" while working in the publishing industry and educational technology for many years, included the following reasons to support her argument that universities should turn to writing teachers to learn about the most advanced pedagogical practices writing teachers use and promote: active learning (critical reading, skills practice), formative assessment (feedback on drafts), twenty-first century skills (communication, collaboration), interdisciplinarity (helping students prepare for and navigate disciplines), and priority of student learning (through decades of scholarship about improving education). While the text being shared was just a blog post, its argument drew much attention because it captured the essence of our profession. The essay resonated with me because it also captured the spirit with which I had observed fellow writing scholars developing graduate-level writing support programs and initiatives across the country. The conversation was about undergraduate education and higher education in general, but I could imagine the same being said about the emerging professional community of graduate-level writing support within the next decade. Scholars who focus on graduate-level writing support have, in fact, pointed out that "communication support—and, more specifically, writing support—has emerged as one way to improve graduate student success" in response to broader challenges of graduate education in the United States and beyond (Simpson, 2016a; 5).[16] Being conceived more broadly (and necessarily) as *communication* support, the new field of research and scholarship, academic programs and pedagogies is now represented by a professional community called the Consortium of Graduate Communication. In addition, interest in this area is also increasing in the profession at large, as reflected by publications and professional conversations at other organizations such as the TESOL and at conferences such as the CCCC and RSA.

Based on my three-year long study of how our universities are providing the essential academic support of writing skills to the now half a million international students at the graduate level, however, I wondered if American universities similarly turn to Writing Studies for "revolutionizing" higher education vis-à-vis its internationalization and the impact of global political and economic shifts on graduate education? To borrow the words of Thaiss (2014) from his afterword for Zawacki and Cox's (2014)[17] book, international students continue to add to the "ever-richer global mix of languages, technologies, ways of thinking, and desires for expression" (475), making the rapidly growing (and exciting) field of graduate writing support even more promising. To situate writing support for international graduate students in the broader context of continuing to *write* the story of American university, as Thaiss suggests, we need broader and bolder visions. We must ask new questions. What writing cultures do international students bring with them? How do they build on prior knowledge and why do they discard or repurpose their past skills as they transition and adapt to the new academe and its disciplines and the professions?

It is important to remember that the scholarship on writing support for *all* graduate students is an emerging field; it is rich and vibrant, and it is just starting to address many of the issues about graduate education. However, in the case of international students, the scholarship needs to shift its generally traditional focus on them as non-native English speaking (or second language) students toward paying more attention to other aspects of their needs and abilities, thereby more directly and substantively addressing issues of politics and power, policy and ideology, local and global political economies, diversity and intersectionality of the

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[14] Afterword…. In Zawacki & Cox, *WAC and second language writers*
[15] How writing teachers could help revolutionize higher education. *Getting Smart*. (June 12). Weblog.
[16] Introduction…. In Simpson et al., *Supporting graduate student writers*
[17] *WAC and Second language writers*

student identities, and so on. It doesn't mean that a language-based framing necessarily limits the breadth or depth of scholarship or the effectiveness of support (in fact, the opposite seems to be true if we look at language-focused support programs in particular). But while conventional language-focused approaches to writing support may be necessary because they are familiar, established, and practical, the approaches may also be ineffective in conveying the progress made in research and pedagogical innovations to the larger community of professionals and to other stakeholders across institutions. Similarly, while research in graduate writing support has in some ways had a disproportionate focus on international students, that focus has also been limited to certain issues such as language proficiency and cultural difference.

In addition, there are other (often emerging) issues that need greater attention and more critical perspectives, issues such as increasing proportions of international students at the graduate level and shifting concentrations across disciplines, fluctuations in student numbers by country of origin and therefore educational backgrounds and support needed, spikes in enrollments at the master's levels (Okahana & Allum, 2015[18]; Caplan & Cox, 2016[19]) where writing support is yet to considerably develop, increasingly uneven distribution of international students by types of institution and regions of the country, and so on. Likewise, more than 25% of the tenure-track faculty is now foreign born (alongside the dramatic rise in the proportion of foreign-born entrepreneurs as news media regularly cite); nearly 60% of the post-doctoral population are international, along with more than 43% of the doctoral degrees awarded in science and engineering (Stephan, 2010; 84).[20] In a *Forbes* article, Anderson (2017)[21] cited a study by the National Foundation for American Policy which concluded that "21 of the 87 privately-held U.S. companies valued at $1 billion or more had a founder who first came to America as an international student." Forty-four of the 87 billion-dollar startups had at least one founder who was an immigrant, typically a former international student. These numbers and trends have important implications, which deserve the attention of at least a few researchers of graduate writing support. I believe that given the number and complexity of topics and corresponding professional opportunities, we can expect (and work to develop) a necessary and impactful sub-specialization in international graduate students within graduate writing support.

In order to understand international students and international education in relation to the internationalization of American higher education, scholars must also advance the view of university as a "pluriversity," a term used for arguing in favor of "universal knowledge as pluriversal knowledge . . . through horizontal dialogues among different traditions of thought" (Boidin, Cohen & Grosfogel, 2012; 2).[22] More broadly, as these authors argue, a broader notion of the university could actually help European and American universities revitalize their disciplines of knowledge especially in the humanities and social sciences by "opening the university resolutely to inter-epistemic dialogues" among the "ecology of knowledges" from across the world (2). Because "globalization, transformation from the industrial into the global knowledge economy, and international student mobility are mutually reinforcing one another and changing the higher education landscape worldwide" (Gürüz, 2011; 19),[23] understanding the interactions between these dynamics can help us better understand both challenges and opportunities we encounter. This view helps us to recognize that international students bring many traditions of knowledge, including many skills and experiences of writing and communicating with which they are pluralizing *writing* as already implied in the quotation from Thaiss above. Some scholars of graduate writing support—as well as the broader community of writing scholars—have started focusing on this subject. Habib, Haan, and Mallett (2015),[24] for instance, have suggested that in the "dynamic context of internationalization," we should develop models of "transformative internationalization," which the authors argue cannot be achieved by simply "recruiting students from other countries": it should instead be "about changing the nature, perspective and culture of all the functions of the university" (web). The *internationalization* we must seek to give life and meaning to should reach "to the heart of the very meaning of 'university' and into every facet of its operation. . ." (Foskett, cited in Habib, Haan & Mallett, 2015). Our programs and pedagogy should be driven by thoughtful and long-term visions like this because our profession tends to be on the frontline of change.

While the specialization in graduate writing support is emerging, I have suggested that it is timely and

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[18] *International graduate applications and enrollment: Fall 2015*

[19] The state of graduate communication support…. In Simpson et al., *Supporting graduate student writers*

[20] The I's have it…. *Innovation Policy and the Economy, 10, 1*

[21] Kicking out international students will mean fewer entrepreneurs. *Forbes*. (Dec. 15)

[22] Introduction…. *Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge, 10, 1*

[23] *Higher education and international student mobility in the global knowledge economy*

[24] The development of disciplinary expertise…. *Composition Forum*, 31

productive to encounter broader and complex questions that international graduate students often prompt us to ask. Based on the study, I believe that we must broaden the scope of our research and conversation, starting with global and local geopolitical and economic forces within the nationalistic regime of international education and extending to more local challenges and complexities. Writing scholars in the broader discipline have already raised some of the critically important issues that we must address in our scholarship. For example, writing for an edited collection on "transnational writing program administration," Dingo, Riedner, and Wingard (2015)[25] used the case of outsourcing of writing support to tutors in Bangladesh, India, and Malaysia by a professor in Texas, discussing how "rhetoric and composition scholars [can] foreground the many contexts—globalized and institutional, material and ideological—under which twenty-first century WAC/WID labor practices may take place" (266). Scott (2016)[26] used the case of outsourcing to make a larger point about the political economy of internationalization. Scott stated: "Under neoliberal political economic reorganization, global economies have seen a forty-year trend toward the privatization of everything from local mail delivery to national security and intelligence to public education" (13). I observed that at many public universities, international students are increasingly enrolled in essentially private enterprises within public institutions; increasing their numbers do have other benefits to different stakeholders, but doing so can also undermine the mission of education as a social cause. Therefore, we cannot advocate for international students without serious regard for how that advocacy may affect domestic students and the future of public education; for instance, we must be mindful not to let political leaders and policy makers *off the hook* by continually tolerating the replacement of public support with "international dollars." To quote Scott again: "To accept that neoliberalization is inevitable and that we can't do post-secondary writing education in a way that is research-informed, ethically conscientious, and engaged with the realities of global communication and labor is to miss signs that . . . the neoliberal paradigm is rapidly losing its cultural authority" (26). To do so would be to assume that academic institutions and their leaders and scholars are powerless against political and economic forces, giving any actors behind them free rein. As scholars, we are responsible to "explore alternatives to perpetual crisis" in education, showing how the crises are "a function of political economy" (26). So, on the one hand, we can and should support institutional leaders to counter the politics of austerity coming at them from state and federal governments by reframing academic scholarship and also programs and pedagogies in politically informed manner. On the other hand, given that writing scholars and teachers hold an important key to international students' academic success, we must use this leverage to reject the lowly *service* position in which we are too often put or seen. We may accept this as an inherent nature of our work and position in the university, but we could also see it as a unique position for influencing graduate education.

At the graduate level, the lack of curricular integration of literacy skills on the one hand and the wide-ranging applications of writing support on the other offer us many opportunities to use writing support as a means of helping our institutions address broader challenges faced by graduate education (whether writing programs focus more strictly on written communication alone or also include other modes of communication, such as when there are no other programs to address the latter need). More ambitious applications of our support will require us to understand economic and political changes at the state and national levels, as well as global/geopolitical forces affecting higher education—countering the crisis narrative and pursuing ambitious educational goals. As Scott put it, "[w]hen compositionists identify crises within our own scholarly discourse and leave unaddressed the broader political economic terms of our professional work and potential spheres of influence, we diminish our own relevance" (26). One of the strategies for breaking away from restrictive and marginalizing discourses about our discipline is to tap into the interest among universities to pursue global competition for talented students and the quality and ranking of the institution. Institutional leaders recognize that international students "add to the diversity of culture and ideas on our campus, broadening the experience of every student (Stanley, 2017; web).[27] Writing scholars can build on that interest and use research and support programs to practically show them how international graduate students can be catalytic for improvement of higher education and beneficial to society.

Our profession is positioned well to educate and lead our institutions in advancing an essential set of academic and professional skills in graduate education, but in order to do so, we must begin by paying attention to global contexts and geopolitical forces; be interested in how our programs can shape institutional policies and priorities; acknowledge difference in beliefs and ideologies about writing in the disciplines; account for internal

[25] Disposable drudgery…. In Martins, *Transnational writing program administration*
[26] Subverting crisis in the political economy of composition. *CCC, 68, 1*
[27] Anti-immigration rhetoric is a threat to American leadership. *Scientific American*. (Mar. 20)

diversity and intersectionality of international graduate students' identities, proficiencies, and experiences; situate writing support for international graduate students in the process of their academic transition into US academe; and reject the false opposition between mainstreaming or universal design and separating international graduate students in writing support. We must create inclusive, accessible, and engagement-driven support programs; shift writing support away from program silos toward facilitating students' exploration of the broad ecology of support and resources that especially international graduate students tend to exploit; and foster their intellectual and social agency by using an advocacy approach that provides us the opportunity to provide leadership for problem-solving and innovation in graduate education in our institutions.[28] Such inclusive support programs and accessible pedagogies can be created not by trying to find metaphorical and feel-good common grounds that gloss over varying needs of different student groups but by asking critical questions about what is common and what is not. Our support can and should also be designed with a view to helping our domestic graduate students learn about and be prepared to work in increasingly globalized professions, as well as beyond the borders of their home country. International students begin to provide that learning opportunity, if we design curricula and academic support programs with a focus on what students from different national and cultural backgrounds bring to our universities and our disciplines and professions.

Studying the history of international education in the US makes it abundantly clear—whether it is related to immigration policy, change in presidential and economic politics, or international relationship or ideologies on the domestic front—that that is a truly volatile historical/political landscape. That landscape is full of major shifts—from the establishment of such powerful national programs as Fulbright and Peace Corps to policies like those reflected in visas for foreign students and exchange visitors, and from the tectonic shifts created by presidents such as John F. Kennedy on the one hand and Donald J. Trump on the other—that were capable of remaking the world of scientific advancements, international relationships, and the view of education and citizenship. To add a specific example, in the 1980s, the discourse about international education shifted from politics (and peace) to economics: even though the Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis prompted the US government to enact strict visa regulations, corporations and other financial forces started putting pressure against such restrictions. The lobbying for relaxing visa restrictions (including the extension of STEM OPT visa from 12 to 29 months in recent years) in response to lobbying by corporations in Silicon Valley and beyond today continues a thirty-year trend now. As Trilokekar (2015)[29] notes, "Reagan's aggressive anti communist foreign policy provided the ideological basis to support international educational exchanges, with the 'era of sending and receiving young scholars to build mutual understanding … now a quaint artifact of a bygone era'" (6). The administration of George H.W. Bush, helped to reinstate the national security agenda as a predominant policy rationale for international education (7). Clinton administration had mostly disappointed the international education community by pursuing a unilateral approach of global expansion in every field. In the post- 9/11 era, the fact that international student visas are handled by the Department of Home Securities, for instance, shows the intersection of national policies (and often politics) with educational policies. As Trilokekar suggests, scholars, teachers, and university administrators should try to understand "government policy-making structures and processes, what motivates governments, the political pressures that influence their decisions . . . if we are to constructively and convincingly influence government policy to more closely align with the goals and purposes of higher education" (13). But beyond seeking to resist or correct course when policy makers or institutional leaders take approaches we consider problematic, it is important to recognize the dynamic nature of international education, given how it directly interacts with global and local economic and political forces. For example, in 2006, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a new initiative to increase international enrollments by 100,000 over the following five years: "We will not win back the market simply by adjusting visa procedures, and we will not win it back with a public relations campaign" (NAFSA, 2007).[30] Within ten years, his country was not just causing major disruptions in the internationalization of higher education but also pulling out of the European Union altogether, causing major shifts in the way of life of its citizens. We must pay attention to the history and issues, developing perspectives in favor of our profession and of the society and world. We cannot afford to be passive receivers of whichever national and educational backgrounds international students come from and seek our support, nor afford to passively receive positive or negative impacts of changes upon our

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[28] Simpson (2012), in *WPA*, *36*, *1*, has suggested that writing program administrators recognize the need but may be reluctant to allocate resources for graduate-level writing support in general; doing so, however, Simpson states, would mean "missing out on opportunities to develop cross-campus partnerships and build respect for writing program work" (95).

[29] From soft power to economic diplomacy?... *Research & Occasional Paper Series*

[30] An international education policy for U.S. leadership, competitiveness, and security. Statement

profession and our institutions. As scholars of rhetoric, we are especially well-equipped to participate in the larger conversation, whether because we need to or because we want to and benefit from it.

Some issues about international students seem difficult because they challenge deeply held beliefs or established academic programs and practices, as well as being subtly shaped by what I have described as an ambivalence created by the nationalistic regime within which educators usually view international students. First, institutions and academic disciplines cannot simply escape the nationalistic regime and/or capitalistic logic of the market (Marginson, 2013)[31]; the politically ambiguous and marginal position of foreign students shape and influence institutional policy and priority regarding those who support these students, as well as obscuring complexity and change about globally mobile students. Furthermore, language and writing support programs designated to support these students are typically positioned as "service" units, deprived of professional status and respect, lacking in financial support or fair wages and secure employment for their faculty and staff. Even worse, because the landscape of international education is highly uncertain and impacted by economic and geopolitical forces, it is not easy for scholarship on writing support for these students to be up to date on issues of macro- and micro-politics about them and how they affect the students and support for them. International students "offer both benefits and threats" and that "national governments flip between the benefits and the dangers" that they seem to pose the host society. Academic institutions and professionals cannot easily escape the regime because, like nations, they "have no ready method of imagining and managing mobile persons except to treat them as outsiders" (16). Most scholars tend to see international students within the framework of institutional mission statements that consider "international education [as] a global market . . . the student is . . . welcomed . . . and [for the host nation] might become a future citizen. . . . [contribute] revenues, research labour, international goodwill and cross-border cultural and economic integration" (17). We are yet to develop effective responses to "border anxiety. . . . anti-migration sensitivities" among the larger public, or for that matter, "worry about the absorption of scarce national resources in education . . . dangers to . . . national character" (17). As Szelényi and Rhoads (2007)[32] have pointed out, anxieties about international students have quickly soared in the United States, perhaps more than in other major destinations. Citing McMurtrie, Borjas, and Zakaria, they reminded: "International students [in the US] have been depicted as [variously] threats to national security (even as potential 'terrorists'), ambassadors of international understanding, contributors to U.S. economic and scientific development, and excessive financial burdens on the economy" (42). The conflicting narratives and arguments make it difficult for academic institutions and programs to rely on established strategies for maintaining and promoting support programs or advocating for the students. These are probably some of the reasons why many support professionals simply skip the *other* issues (not related to language or writing per se) about international students.

However, academic scholarship can and should tackle the complex issues, developing and implementing educational visions in the interest of both nations and the world at large. It is not enough to simply hope that treating international students as one of us will help them overcome challenges; in fact, it is also not enough to support them with one aspect of academic transition and success—writing support—without helping them fit that piece into the larger puzzle of the academic socialization. Improved writing skills are essential but far from sufficient in order to overcome or deal with the sense of otherness; power dynamics and attitudes (both toward them and among them) affect motivation and success with communication and writing, and students must learn how to deal with those challenges *as* international students. One the one hand, I found many writing professionals whose perspectives and program designs, pedagogies and support practices were ahead of the times. In the introduction chapter of the book for which Thaiss wrote the afterword, Zawacki and Cox (2014) also express confidence in the discipline as "courageous enough to be transformed by the multilingualism and multiculturalism of our students" (34). Conversations with many writing scholars made me similarly hopeful that the field of graduate writing support could continue to better respond to needs and challenges of these students, paying attention to the languages and cultures that they bring from around the world, their diversity and experiences, and the contribution they make to the advancement of knowledge through many disciplines. That attention could help raise broader questions about higher education as well.

Conversations with academic professionals in related fields were similarly inspiring; they showed how working with international graduate students can provide us occasion for asking new questions about our work. Paying attention to their encounter with an educational system and society and culture that is often radically different can also help us generate new perspectives about our work. "Every appointment is an excursion to

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[31] Equals or others? In Sovic & Blythman, *International students negotiating higher education*
[32] Citizenship in a global context…. *Comparative Education Review, 51, 1*

another culture for graduate career counselors," observed James (2016),[33] in an article in *Inside HigherEd*. A career center advisor at my university who specializes in graduate students and pays close attention to issues of international students, James added: "We crisscross national boundaries from our desks and run smack into different visions of the purpose and intent of higher education. Graduate career counselors navigate cultural dissonance between the institution's mission and the expectations of its students" (n. p). Writing professionals may be far from focusing on the latter transition, and the return of most international students to their home countries is an even less explored territory in writing scholarship. But there were quite a few writing programs that paid significant attention to the students' initial transition into the American university, in spite of the fact that mainstream conversation and practice seem to be filled with assumptions and complacencies, requiring one to look for the few who have paid attention to the less visible, more complex issues. At the summer institute of the Consortium of Graduate Communication at Yale University, one of the keynote speakers Feak (2016)[34] reminded the audience how much graduate-level writing support has changed over the past three decades when "we taught vocabulary, grammar, and syntax because we believed that that's what second language writers needed. . . . rather than what they needed." The question of "what students need" is not an easy one, especially with a group that comes from every country in the world, and it also evolves with our understanding of changing issues over time. Writing skills that graduate students are expected to learn also keep changing. So, I did find that many writing support programs are still "locked in the idea of proficiency" (as Feak put it). Many of them simply responded to incentives that tended to maintain status quo. But I also encountered many scholars, program leaders, and other practitioners (whose voices are not often heard) who were leading larger conversations in their institutions. Inspired by them, I concluded that there is a need for self-reflection, for asking bolder questions, and for advancing more visionary ideas.

One of the issues on which my research jolted my own prior understanding and received wisdom was how international graduate students don't simply *want* to quickly *adjust* to the institution, disciplines, society, or culture here. Instead, as Tran (2013)[35] reported, international students *perform* adjustment, in both the sense of playing roles to cope with the process and taking action to be successful. The authors identified different kinds of performances and negotiation strategies, including surface adaptation (or making superficial adjustments while disguising personal beliefs and motivations in order to fulfil required demands and getting along), committed adaptation (or adjustments when it feels positive and valuable to learning), and hybrid adaptation (combining different strategies). Having observed how international students adapted to new academic systems and practices of writing, Tran suggested that educators consider adopting what they call "reciprocal adaptation," or adjusting programs and pedagogies based on continual understanding of international students and how they are responding and learning to education in a new place. The theory of performance and adaptation could be highly useful for explaining whether and how international students use available support, among other issues.

There were certainly areas of limitation and difficulties in my research. One such limitation has to do with generalizing the current state of support for international graduate students. Programs and policies of support are shaped by unique institutional contexts and cultures, different visions of program leaders, the personnel and expertise available to them, and so on. So, I have not tried to paint an objective or representative picture of writing support for international graduate students nationally. Instead, I decided to identify *themes and questions*, challenges and *perspectives*, and *effective programs and practices* that other writing support professionals could emulate or adapt. While I triangulated data by gathering interviews with students and a variety of academic professionals, field notes, and primary and secondary data input about writing support programs/practices and related support across institutions, I rely on how writing and other academic professionals described their programs and practices and how student interviewees commented on them. That is, observational data behind the discussion of support practices at specific institutions are relatively thin, with that limitation only being offset by the scope and richness of the overall data set. The programs and support practices that I describe as effective or successful were effective and successful in their particular contexts. They were promising and therefore worth emulating elsewhere, but the point of the discussion is to identify the understanding or approaches behind the programs and practices insofar as they seem promising for other contexts as well. I have, therefore, avoided the phrase "best practices," and instead describe productive policies, successful programs, or effective pedagogies while underscoring their contingency in their particular institutional and programmatic contexts. As Thompson (forthcoming) argues, the concept of best practices

[33] Confusion at the border…. *Inside HigherEd*. (Oct. 26)
[34] The future of graduate writing support. Keynote. *Consortium on Graduate Communication,* Yale University
[35] *International student adaptation to academic writing in higher education*

"undermines the very foundations of writing as a discipline" by stripping practices of their complex contexts, limiting professional agency, and adversely affecting curricular or programmatic autonomy. So, I encourage readers to view stories as reflecting unique experiences and support practices as shaped by complex relations and realities on the ground. My intention is to prompt "a set of questions" and offer a "framework for [readers' own] inquiry" (Thompson). Deliberately reaching those who are most actively supporting a particular student body across the nation has probably produced rosy pictures in many instances, but it was the objective of the project to identify what is working well and to discuss them in their own contexts.

The recommendations I have made are based on themes about programs and practices that seemed most likely to translate for different contexts. One major recommendation, based on several specific themes drawn from data analysis, would be to broaden the definition of graduate-level writing as academic and professional communication, especially considering the needs of a very diverse and complex body of students. That means writing support programs should be viewed more broadly, as if formal support structures were the umbra of a shadow, its penumbra being a variety of initiatives around programs, such as promotional and community engagement activities, networking and advocacy, leadership and contribution to policy. Writing studies needs to embrace and foster the broad ecology, making writing support the central/key node in the network. My focus on programs and practices—in spite of limitations against conducting direct and sustained observation—was driven by the desire to learn from experiences and perspectives of those who designed and ran the programs and those who delivered or received the support. While writing professionals used language and described practices that I was familiar with, other academic professionals and students provided new perspectives that helped to add nuance to the theorization of the complex dynamics of discourse and practices, power and relationships. The multiple perspectives helped me understand the contexts and underlying issues, including how implicit policies, interests, and ambivalences shape practices; how national policy and political climate are reflected in how people and program approach a student body; how cultural shifts and new or missed opportunities are seen when we focus on what the advocates are doing/pursuing; and how new alliances and collaborations become more productive if we start from the ground up with a focus on practices. Focusing on effective programs and practices, as generally reflected in recent scholarship in the field, can help to build new theories and frameworks by shifting attention from gaps and problems to what is actually being done.

I have used stories shared by students as lynchpins for reporting and theorizing major findings of my research. While I have tried to pick narratives, anecdotes, and examples that best reflect broader themes, I have also used stories for their thematic value and for highlighting the general importance of learning from students' experiences, rather than because the stories/ anecdotes are representative. I hope to convey that given that writing skills can serve as virtual gateways into new academic systems and cultures for foreign students, paying attention to how they learn these skills can help produce deeper understanding of students' challenges that may seem to have "nothing to do with" writing. Similarly, I have often prominently featured the voices of professionals from writing support programs, including language support programs that provided include writing support. While I started by gathering interviews with them in order to find my own way to the most effective writing- and communication-related support for international students around campus, the research quickly showed their value as an important source of perspectives about graduate writing education for international students. So, I included them whenever the issue at hand demanded during data analysis and theorizing. This inclusion is meant to highlight that we have much to learn from many other programs and professionals who support these students. That understanding could not only help us better collaborate with others but also create opportunities to address broader challenges that we are best equipped to tackle, including challenges about graduate education where we can contribute expertise and provide leadership.

The data set behind this study was large. The project involved half a million words in transcribed interviews alone, alongside scores of relevant documents and extensive notes from university visits, rich information from program and institutional websites, and a few hundred scholarly sources. Yet the research is also not meant to be exhaustive in terms of sampling (for instance, among at least three dozen universities that now have graduate-level writing support, I only visited five). Discussing how qualitative researchers transform often massive amounts of data into the coherent "story" of the final product, in their book *Composing qualitative research*, Golden-Biddle and Locke (1997)[36] dedicate a chapter to the question, "How do we, then, make contextually grounded theoretical points that are viewed as a contribution by the relevant professional community of readers?" In their discussion, they observe that "in writing up field work, we develop two stories:

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[36] *Composing qualitative research*

those based in extant theoretical conversation and those based in the fieldwork" (21). I have focused heavily on the latter type of stories.

Analyzing interviews of students in relation to interviews with others foregrounded a number of tensions, which gave rise to a number of themes that I used for framing chapters and chapter sections. The most significant tension was between students' need for variety and flexibility of support and support programs' need for structure and the limited resource they had. But from students' perspectives, full-fledged courses, for instance, were not always useful because the students couldn't find or invest the time, didn't want to risk low grades, couldn't pay if the course incurred a fee, and didn't get their mentors' approval. Not many support programs were able to address this tension, but some that did used, for instance, a sequence of modules that students could choose from a large menu and combine as they needed. A second tension had to do with writing support being outsourced to our discipline by graduate programs in others: many writing support programs were not yet prepared to help with discipline-specific challenges of writing, especially when they were aggravated by international students who also brought a confusing mix of experiences and skills in writing, which most writing professionals are yet to find practical ways to recognize. Third, related to the tensions above, there was a serious problem of perspective at many institutions. Writing support programs were impressed by the greater ratio of international graduate students using the support than their domestic counterparts, but that was usually a single digit percentage of all of the students, most of whom discovered and created networks of writing-related support that went far beyond formal writing programs. This also means that it was difficult to decide where to where to draw the line and how to define "writing support." I was keenly aware that while it is easy to *theorize* the diffusiveness of relevant support that students sought and suggest fostering the broader ecology of support is good for the students, such a suggestion could also seem disrespectful of those who primarily formally focus on writing support. However, with all the tensions above, I followed the paths shown by the data—especially using students' stories and perspectives for developing or complicating perspectives that may be useful for writing support professionals.

The more institutions I visited to observe graduate-level writing support, the more I was convinced that we need theoretical approaches that can help us extend our scope of inquiry beyond established programs—especially in order to account for the dispersal and diffusion of writing and communication support across institutions—such as the ecological approach that I have used to make sense of how international graduate students explored and navigated the university as they learned writing skills. Such approaches could help future research study about how our programs and pedagogies can be dynamically interacting and evolving organisms, including what they can do "outside the box" of conventional conceptions of academic units. An ecological view of writing support in particular could help us discover mutual benefits of interaction and collaboration with other (related) entities while enabling us to adapt and change successfully, tackling crises, and making the best of new opportunities. As Fleckenstein et al. (2008) have suggested, in the context of research, "scholars guided by ecological thinking conceive of [research paradigm, methodology, methods, techniques, and strategies] as *symbiotic clusters:* knots of nonhierarchical, locally enacted, semiotic-material practices that inform each other in multiple ways" (394). To adopt an ecological approach is not only to view the program and the institution at large as wholes and dynamically interactive parts, to understand students and those who support them as complex organisms that shaped and are shaped by the environment, to consider both visible and invisible connections. In fact, an ecological view of writing support could also help us better appreciate and promote the profession as founded on ancient rhetoric, centuries of philosophy, concern for ethics and justice, interest in human diversity, characterized by interdisciplinarity, by nature collaborative and border-crossing, often concerned about invasiveness/adaptation in relation to other disciplines that host or reject writing studies, and constantly growing and changing. With program building and pedagogical innovation, the perspective can help us recognize the diversity of students and better understand where and how we can offer specialized support, as well as discuss where it is not necessary. It would also help us strategize and plan, identify hidden aspects of students' strengths and challenges, work across disciplinary borders, be resilient in the face of challenges, help students transfer knowledge, and work with an awareness of macro- and macro-level dynamics and forces that will further shape our profession and our institutions.

One important starting point, on the pragmatic level, is figuring out what to do about the other issues that international students face while learning writing skills, especially during the broader transition process. Whether it was the first Chinese undergraduate student to graduate from an American college in 1851 or it is the graduate students we work with today, foreign students have to navigate complex social and cultural territories within which they must not only learn new kinds of academic skills but also to deal with ideological and power

dynamics that affect their learning. The story of a South Asian student best captures some of the invisible struggles that even enormous social change and technological advancements since the time of Yung Wing haven't alleviated for foreign students. When I recently interviewed Chandra, ten years after I had lent some help with finding an apartment after his first arrival at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, he remembered an incident involving trying to buy salt, one that seemed symbolic of larger challenges during academic and sociocultural *adjustment* that is necessary for academic success for international students. After "locals" at nearby stores had failed to understand his pronunciation of "salt," Chandra had asked me how to find it in the stores. I had shared some "literacy" that I had acquired, having come to the US the previous year: I told him that items in stores are usually organized in *labeled* isles for customers to shop and pick what they need by themselves, and that salt is typically sold in *visually* distinct cylindrical containers in the US (rather than sealed in transparent plastic bags). When I asked Chandra why communicative failures like that "outside" the university bothered him, as he was laying much emphasis on them, he said that he could only gain confidence as a student when he was able to "communicate to make life normal." In fact, he said that being able to interact fluently at Walmart was his measure of success: "the more I can communicate in general, the more I feel confident as a scholar and teacher. That 'other' confidence is extremely important for international students," especially for engaging in "natural communication" in the classroom as a teaching assistant, at professional conferences, and among his peers and professors on campus. As a scholar of math who had just moved from the West coast to a university in Texas, Chandra said that he hadn't paid much attention to written communication during the first few semesters, until it started causing problems; when he realized it, he wasn't able to do much about it, given how busy he had become. He said he wished that he had some guidance to help him explore resources and learn to ask many questions he ought to ask. When asked what the writing support programs at his first university could have done to help him develop communicative confidence, he said: "Combine both the academic and community-based approach to teaching writing and academic communication." He had a noteworthy justification for such an approach: "Graduate students need to deal with the society . . . they are mature and many of them have family. They need to understand the profession. They need to teach."

As we explore the intersections between academic challenges and broader issues that may aggravate those challenges, we should listen to students' stories and learn from their perspectives. As it happened with Chandra, whenever my student interviewees shared their experiences with candor and depth, their stories illustrated how sociocultural contexts and political forces shaped their education and careers, reminding me of Yung Wing's story beyond his undergraduate degree in his pursuit for further education and social impact as an intellectual ambassador between his host and home countries, when his challenges became direr. Because of deteriorating China-US relations and rising anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States, Yung Wing lost citizenship (which he had acquired in 1852) after the 1870 Naturalization (Chinese Exclusion) Act, a fact that he learned in 1902 when he was fleeing persecution in China (Railton, 2016[37]; Bevis & Lucas, 2007[38]). Even though he had received his honorary doctorate from Yale in 1876, served in the Union Army, and spent many years trying to establish educational exchange programs between China and the United States, he was denied an entry to the United States. He later managed to be smuggled in by his friends, just in time to attend one of his sons' graduation ceremony at Yale, then lived in poverty until he died in Connecticut in 1912. Politics and policy, ideology and power continue to affect international students in often eerily similar ways today. But except in times of severe impact, academic leaders and scholars seem to be resigned about restrictions and challenges posed by the nationalistic regime. For some, these larger issues don't seem to be within professional concerns, and for others the issues may be too contentious or complicated to address. Regardless, for scholars who study or work with international students, to ignore the entanglements of the students' education with the political economy of international education is akin to seeking fishing opportunities in seasonal waters. Hence the need for different kinds of attention in our scholarship, rather than just the amount of it, as well as the need to identify and promote effective programs and pedagogies that are able to address those issues, through design and attention. Paying attention to students' experiences can help to fill the gap.

Combining intellectually and politically savvy approaches to research and scholarship that is guided by ecological views of academe and our profession will best help us advance our profession and contribute to graduate education. That is, on the one hand, we cannot afford to ignore "the movement and broader influence of globalized power—economic, political, cultural, governmental, sovereign, disciplinary, biopolitical, all forms

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[37] Yung Wing, the Chinese educational mission, and transnational Connecticut. *ConnecticutHistory.Org*
[38] *International students in American colleges and universities*

and mixes of forms at work" (Dingo, Riedner, Wingard, 2013; 519).[39] On the other hand, we must build programs and pedagogies upon the deep awareness created by our discipline at large about cultural, linguistic, economic, and political forces and dynamics affecting both the diverse student bodies we educate and our own work. To achieve that balance, we must be willing to rethink convention and introduce our diverse students' stories and the perspectives of other professionals who work with them into the agenda of graduate writing. That balance will liberate us from the limited role of academic service in the margins of institutional organization and conversation, helping us provide more significant intellectual and educational leadership to our institutions and more significant contributions to society.

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[39] Toward a cogent analysis of power: Transnational rhetorical studies. *JAC, 33,* 3-4