WORKS IN PROGRESS:

ESTABLISHING BEST PRACTICES FOR GRADUATE PEDAGOGY

By

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Abstract: Education for graduate laborers in the United State has been based on an outdated model of pedagogical inheritance which compounds the inequalities making academic labor difficult and precarious. Currently, members of the MA and PhD programs spend up to a decade in training to teach the profitable undergraduate courses, but almost no curricula exists to prepare faculty (at any level) to teach a class of graduates. This study seeks to assess the values, habits, and beliefs of those working with GTAs to paint a picture of their work and learning conditions. Specifically, it aims to understand the efforts being made to fix these conditions, to identify the discrepancies in pedagogical strategies, and to call for the establishment of a set of best practices for graduate education. In this context, I argue for the substitution of "graduate student" for "graduate laborer" to highlight the work this group performs for the university as academics with plural roles, with only the abridged rights of either students or faculty. I also name the current framework for graduate education the "model-method of inherited pedagogy", call for the investigation of its practices, and challenge its standing as the ideal approach for preparing individuals to teach and advise the next generation of academics.

This study relied on Institutional Ethnography for its methodological framework. To test the hypothesis that perceptions of graduate labor impact the structure and quality of their education, virtual interviews were conducted with graduate students and faculty and then each participant was invited to partake in an anonymous survey. The findings showed that an absence of graduate pedagogical training is consistent across departments, programs, universities, and time spent in academia. These findings also indicate that teaching and mentorship practices rely almost exclusively on the model-method of inherited pedagogy, which can be linked to the troubling lack of advisement on alt-ac careers. I conclude with a call for a community-designed set of best practices for graduate pedagogy and suggest some graduate-specific teaching strategies, distilled from the experiences shared by the participants in my study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In his 2015 book, "The Graduate School Mess", Leonard Cassuto writes that "Graduate teaching is our purest humanistic pursuit for the simple reason that it involves caring for humans" (13). Facing widespread unemployment, displacement, entrenched inequalities, mental and financial exhaustion, only a reason this simple could justify the continued pursuit of a career in higher education; neither the passion for research nor the ambition of tenure could rationalize it. However, "caring for humans" will never be a simple goal: not in the face of carefully maintained systems of injustice; not in an institution that demands care without reciprocation; not without boundaries; and not while our understanding of the needs of others stops at the recognition of our own. Care has obstacles and a shelf life in the corporate academy. It also undergirds the ethic Cassuto proposes for the construction of "an agenda of recommitment" (16) to graduate education, with implications for every step of the degree process, from admission to matriculation, and calls for interdisciplinary collaboration to address the issues. When considering the crisis in higher education, speaking both to the nature of our work and the problems produced by it, care *matters*. For the purpose of this study, I am not questioning the fact that any educator in the English department at Oklahoma State University cares about their

students, only arguing that the system of graduate education needs to be reconstructed so that this care is more sustainable and effective.

I refer to this work as "construction" because it involves from-the-ground-up change. The problems of graduate education are inherent; they are not mistakes in the wiring or the natural decay of an old system breaking down. In the foundational text, "How the University Works", Marc Bousquet argues that academics need to unionize, to protect both the uses of the knowledge they produce and their voices in a nation that has only encouraged speech while it serves Capitalism's interests (2008). Bousquet's work contributes both to Cassuto's theories and to mine, but he sees limits in the revolutionary potential of the classroom whereas I am concerned about the limits (but not the necessity) of revolution in an anti-union state. Additionally, when Bousquet critiques the field of Composition and Rhetoric for its "...enormous usefulness to academic capitalism--in the delivering of cheap teaching, training of a supervisory class for the cheap teachers, and producing a group of intellectuals theorizing and legitimating this scene of managed labor" (166) he identifies the complicity of our discipline without its insurgency. I do not think that we can compensate for our writing program's service to the corporate academy without also crafting solutions to a problem that predates it: the absence of an explicit graduate-level pedagogy education which prepares instructors to teach, mentor, and advise members of the MA and PhD programs.

According to Marc Bousquet, new degree holders, with nearly a decade of teaching experience under their belts, will be overqualified for the jobs they've been doing once they graduate (2008). Careers paths for my colleagues and I are rarely mentioned without the word "crisis" and though there is more than adequate evidence to show that my department is concerned about these issues, it is not always evident that we are making progress in solving

them. Over the past year, I have explored the available literature on graduate pedagogy education and conducted interviews with graduate laborers and faculty who work within and on behalf of my department, examining how perspectives (those of both faculty and graduates) of the labor performed by GTAs shapes the education we receive. This training is critical to the development of our professional identities but there are still flaws in the ways we prepare degree-holders to leave their programs: not just in terms of the "job market" but beyond it: the advisement and teaching of graduate students, and transference of these skills to alt-ac careers. As this thesis will show, the severe limitations of how we have theorized and practiced graduate professionalization has created, in its place, a model of implicit training which serves elite interests and few others. It has left academics who share labor concerns stratified, imposed gatekeeping methods for teaching upper-level courses, taught GTAs to huff at the difficulties of their coursework without investigating their histories, preserved fundamentally biased habits of instruction and advisement, constricted disciplinary growth, and concentrated counter-measures to the deliberate overproduction of PhDs on workshops geared to the preparation of job market materials rather than investment in alt-ac career development or creation of graduate curriculums.

Background

There is a growing body of scholarship on support for graduate writing, especially in the field Rhetoric and Writing Studies. This research often looks at the contexts in which MA and PhD students create and facilitate the creation of knowledge, examining the burdens and inequalities that complicate and are created by this same work. There is, also, an older field of literature on the exploitation of contingent faculty. However, my thesis approaches graduate labor and pedagogy in a way that has seldom been done before. Using the lived experiences of

academics within my local community as an entry point to understanding the context by which graduate laborers are taught and advised reflects on the kind of writers, researchers, educators, and activists we are producing in our writing programs. A better understanding of their material realities and available means of support for these individuals would have deep ramifications within and beyond our department.

Purpose of Study

I intend for this project to establish a set of best practices for graduate pedagogy, having discovered startling discrepancies in what my peers expect to learn and the education they receive. With our pedagogical training centered on undergraduate curricula, who is teaching the teachers? What guides the practices of those who have made it to the other side of an increasingly sick system of credentialing and are now responsible for communities of scholars facing an ever-bleaker career path? How do new faculty approach graduate advisement when their primary experience comes, for better or worse, from the models set by their own committee members? How do we ethically guide graduate employees into or out of a job in academia when our resumes are grounded in one type of work? To make a start at answering these questions, this thesis investigates the values, habits, and beliefs of those who work with and as graduate laborers in the English department of Oklahoma State University as the foundation for understanding pedagogical discrepancies and the efforts being made to address these problems in our work and learning environments.

Conceptual Framework

This study relies on Institutional Ethnography for it's methodology, an approach developed by sociologist Dorothy Smith. Described in depth in Chapter Three, Institutional Ethnography offers us a chance to examine our universities from the perspectives of those who work and learn there. To meet this goal, I collected data through a mixture of interviews (conducted virtually, with respect for Covid-19 risks) and an anonymous questionnaire. These methods are valued by feminist researchers, privileging the testimonies of oppressed persons over institutional narratives, expressed through mission statements, through newsletters, through brochures and all of the other technical documents by which the institution attempts to explain, regulate, and justify the experiences of degree seekers. For this reason, I do not consider these texts, either as an official feature of this study or in my discussion of its findings. In fact, I would argue that formal narratives of resources-provided and budgets-cut obscure as many stories as they tell: if academics do not encounter the information, they need to understand their circumstances and meet their goals in the routine of their daily work, then every Canvas file, email link, and subsection in the graduate handbook which might contain this guidance may as well be an invisible and locked room.

This project is further dependent on the theoretical groundwork done by Marc Bousquet and Lenonard Cassuto. The former identifies many of the exploitative practices of the university, including the rise of the managerial class, the overproduction of PhDs and the underproduction of tenured positions, as the result of a deliberate model of casualization in which the university prefers the cheapest teachers, not the best or most experienced (Bousquet, 204). Meanwhile, Cassuto--offering no contention that the redistribution of employee salaries would relieve many

of the material inequalities experienced by subfaculty[1]--offers holistic solutions for how we might ensure that our universities support the best, most experienced teachers--at every level. These authors are of value to this emerging field of study for the accessible, engaging delivery of their arguments to a diverse community of academic readers: degree-seekers, graduate faculty, advisors, and administration alike. "The Graduate School Mess", especially, serves as an exception to the gaps in the available literature on graduate-level pedagogy education, bridging the divide between analysis of our labor and learning conditions, and I take many cues from Cassuto's work. However, a problem as far-reaching as this deserves as many eyes and methodological approaches as we can offer. I believe that my position as a graduate laborer and the application of Institutional Ethnography offers a unique and valuable contribution to our discipline.

Limitations and Assumptions

When this study began, I hypothesized that the absence of a standardized graduate pedagogy education was due to the following interwoven factors: an imperfect mentorship system for graduate advisees, a gatekeeping mechanism imposing experience caps on those aspiring to work in higher education, and the highly politicized uncertainty about the mission and future of the Humanities. I have since collected enough qualitative data to confirm and complicate the first two hypotheses and disprove the third--the discrepancy between undergraduate and graduate pedagogical training is not limited to the English department, although more research is needed to address the consequences of this for STEM majors.

[1] In accordance with Marc Bousquet, I employ the term "subfaculty" to refer to graduate laborers and former graduate laborers who are serving as contingent employees under unequal working conditions.

As noted, I feel strongly that my role as a teacher-researcher-student in the MA program is a good place to view the problems and possibilities of our graduate curriculum. However, I am always encountering new questions about our work and cannot dismiss the probability that my understanding of the answers will change. I do hope that further exposure to the theory and practice of teaching will make me more, and not less, committed to protecting precarious communities within our academic institutions.

A second, more regrettable limitation of this study (worth mentioning here, though its significance will be discussed in depth in a later section of this thesis) is the unequal representation of academic participants. I had, initially, aimed to conduct interviews with thirty Oklahoma State University employees: ten graduate laborers, ten members of the faculty, and ten administrators. I readily met my recruitment goal for the graduate volunteers but recruited only six members of the faculty and no members of the administration. Time constraints, the burdens of the pandemic, and the overwhelmed schedules of university staff were under-considered factors in the design of this project. While the data I have obtained is, I believe, sufficient to support my current claims, we would have a clearer view of this problem with further research.

Definition of Terms

For this thesis, I avoid using the term "graduate student" whenever possible--it is not an offensive label, just an inaccurate one, and too often used to this groups' disadvantage in the negotiations of their legal rights. For example, members of our MA and PhD programs are taxed for the compensation of their work with the W2s allotted to employees but excluded from the federal legislation that would protect them as such. In accordance with their role as students*,* GTAs return up to a month's worth of taxable income back to their employer in the form of student fees. Denied their right to collective bargaining, this is a sharecropping system against

which academics have little control and little respite. The unions established following the 2016 *Columbia* decision have faced more or less insidious opposition from their respective universities, opposed to the recognition of degree-seekers as employees as they profit from their labor, on the basis that this recognition would interfere with academic freedom and sour the relationships between faculty and the graduates they teach. This is not true. Among others, the researchers Sean Rogers, Adrienne Eaton, and Paula Voos found no empirical evidence to suggest that fair labor practices have a negative impact on student-teacher relationships--in fact, their data points toward the opposite (2013). It is, however, telling that the arguments against granting GTAs the right to collective bargaining have been tied to graduate pedagogy education when this field is sparse of the scholarship that would prove or disprove these legal claims. If the opposition to granting a degree-seeker the status of "employee" is based on ensuring the best learning practices, this would indicate that we have agreed on the best pedagogical practices for this group. We have not.

A common act of linguistic resistance is to refer to members of the MA and PhD programs as "graduate employees". This does not redact the policies which treat them otherwise and is still an inexact representation of their professional identities. The members of our graduate programs are academics with plural roles, teacher-researcher-students, categories that are not mutually exclusive or static, but complicated in a way that should excite a field ostensibly proud of diversity, as these constellational identities serve as sites of productive inquiry. However, many of our alternatives are equally flawed. "Graduate Teaching Assistant" is reductive for those who design and facilitate their own curricula, while "Teaching Apprentice" implies that we are training for careers like those we study under. Therefore, I argue for the use of the title

“graduate laborer”, as this describes the demands of all three roles and suits our economic status--with all its resistant potential--in the university.

I also name the current habits of preparing academics to teach and advise graduate laborers the “Model-Method of Inherited Pedagogy”, or MMIP. Recognizing that most of the work performed with and on behalf of degree seekers at every level is poorly compensated and seldom celebrated, I do not consider the absence of a graduate pedagogical praxis a true void. Rather, the system that has come to fill it is built out of implicit rules, emergency measures, and mirrored behaviors that reproduce practices (and academics) not suitable for every learner, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized within the institution. In the same article that discusses the link between collective bargaining and pedagogy, “Effects of Unionization on Graduate Student Employees: Faculty-Student Relationships, Academic Freedom, and Pay”, the authors note that, “Little (if any) classroom instruction is provided with regard to teaching in higher education although one could argue that by having been a student, most PhD students have observed a range of more or less successful instructional techniques” (Rogers, et. all, 2013). Observation has been the primary model upon which our graduate pedagogies have been built; it is past time we investigated its ethical basis.

In the chapters that follow, I survey thirty years of scholarship regarding the concerns of graduate and contingent faculty. I explain the framework and methods by which I have assessed these concerns in my department and discuss my findings in terms of labor, teaching, and advisement. I will suggest some best practices that might be distilled from the experiences of my peers and upper faculty and indicate where I see this research going from here.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The selection of texts I have chosen to present here span a length of nearly three decades. Although it is distressing to contemplate how old, pervasive, and damaging the academic crisis has been--with its tendency to weed or burn out the scholars who challenge the status quo, I believe there is hope. This hope is not the product of my professional status as a yet-to-be-disillusioned MA student, but the careful consideration of these issues and the existing scholarship. Gains noted in the following articles, essays, and books are the proof and result of the work being done by faculty, by adjuncts, and by graduate laborers who are challenging institutional narratives, building coalitions between departments and universities, and working to construct an educational system that won't cannibalize its members.

Apprenticeship

In the 1993 article, "Dual Apprenticeships: Subverting and Supporting Critical Teaching", authors Joy Ritchie and David E. Wilson discuss their own surprised realization that academic experiences are not uniform. They note that teacher-training,

"often involves an 'accidental apprenticeship' that plays a much more significant role in determining [...] preservice teachers' understanding of writing, reading... themselves as teachers and their visions of education" (1993, 68). The authors' study (like mine) involved interviews with graduate laborers conducted over the course of multiple semesters and, through these, Ritchie and Wilson assessed the transfer of pedagogical concepts from the Composition Theory and Practice course to other classes taken and taught at their university. The authors compared what they had hoped graduate laborers would adopt from their teaching methods (specifically, the replacement of a behaviorist model of learning with a constructivist) to what they actually drew from the class (Ritchie, Wilson, 1993, 70). This failed because the researchers were not taking into account other learning experiences new instructors were modeling their practices on, from prior or concurrent coursework, learning experiences which included but were not limited to the use of lecture-delivered content, sentence-level grammar remediation and the restriction of personal voice.

I would like to suggest that we look at another factor: the labor and learning experiences of those teaching graduate courses as well as those who take them. The consequence of ignoring post-hire faculty training indicates that our methods for teaching and advising graduate laborers are not synthesized but derived from the traditions of their alma maters. At stake here is not a loss of academic freedom, but a loss of academic collaboration, between departments and between tenured, new, and aspiring educators. For the study conducted at the University of Nebraska, it meant that GTAs might be able to construct scaffolded assignments for their undergraduate courses but not recognize when this is missing from their own classes (Ritchie, Wilson 1993). I argue that "Dual

Apprenticeships" has to say about literacy can be applied to our notions of professionalization, especially as we consider how years of experience in the field of education can work against the best intentions and most thorough understandings of contemporary pedagogical theory. According to its authors:

> We must understand clearly what we are asking potential teachers to do in expanding their understanding of teaching and learning. We are asking them to engage in a radical re-learning process that has powerful personal and political repercussions. Rather than just adding on ideas, they must reconceive and reconstruct their knowledge and in doing so struggle against the fundamental beliefs and habits of mind of their experience and their society. (Ritchie, Wilson, 1993, 67)

Decades after "Dual Apprenticeships", assumptions about what graduate laborers do and do not know continue to form the cracked foundations of upper-level curriculums. This is noted in the 2016 introduction of "Praxis: A Writing Center Journal", where Shannon Madden says that discipline-specific writing practices are the presumed skills of those who are accepted into the university. This reflects the "tacit belief that being admitted to graduate school is the end of the learning process and not the beginning, that having read books and articles in their disciplines should have prepared students sufficiently to write books and articles of their own" (Madden, 2016). Although my study does not address graduate writing specifically, unlike the articles in this edition of Praxis, it does point to a disturbing trend in which the *entry* into academic communities supersedes the inclusion, support, and education within them. Crucially, this is true for adjunct and other new faculty hires, frequently left without support once they have obtained their less-or-more coveted positions within our departments. Significantly, Madden addresses the lack of discipline-specific writing instruction for graduate laborers, but this problem seems to carry into the writing work of full-time faculty (2016). When

and how are committee members trained to write recommendation letters? Exam questions? Student Wellness alerts? Petitions to the Dean?

Are instructors of graduate courses teaching from the values of their disciplines or the philosophies of their own mentors? My research indicates the latter: each participant in my study, regardless of academic rank, stated that they intend or currently model habits of advisement and teaching on that of their own favorite instructors--for better or worse. This indicates that pedagogical values and methods of implementation are not taught for a diverse community of scholars, but passed from one small, privileged handful of mentees to another. In their article “The Ph.D. Isn’t Working Now” as well as in his recently published book, “The New PhD: How to Build a Better Graduate Education”, Leonard Cassuto and Robert Weisbuch note that only one in eight doctoral students will obtain a teaching position at an R1 university (2021). This is a many-legged problem, produced from a system that was built long before most of us got here, but it is not one we can avoid responsibility for--especially when this projection is only the most recent example of our institutions choosing to educate the few before the many.

Transparency

Curricular decisions at the graduate level should be made explicit. Doing so will be a start when it comes to tracing pedagogical lineages through the MMIP. I recommend transparency for those working with graduate laborers as this community, more than undergraduates, learn from observation. This strategy is implicit, but not by any means *passive*. In the Model-Method of Pedagogical Inheritance, graduate laborers

assess, interpret, compare, and critique the behaviors of faculty, staff, and administrators, both privately and as a collective--storing these assessments in informal channels of communication rather than the neatly formatted charts of the institution's end-of-instruction evaluations. Critically, this is more than workplace gossip--it is the foundation of GTA training and not dissimilar from the peer mentorship undergirding most Writing Center Theory. In their article, “Gossip as a Burdened Virtue” the authors Mark Alfano and Brian Robinson argue that gossip serves as a form of resistance and is viewed as a (gendered) vice by oppressors because of it (2013, 484). They also note that informal economies of information do little to challenge social norms--tenured faculty should, then, consider the degree to which problematic practices of a department are neutralized by their containment within these private channels. If a few years in a graduate program is enough to disillusion degree-seekers, what problems do long-term contracted faculty face, and why are graduate laborers excluded from these battles?

The MMIP offers little support for challenging inequities within the department and no incentive for faculty to justify their approach. Recommitting to an ethos of transparency would allow graduate laborers to simultaneously learn from and position their own teaching philosophies against the decisions of their instructors, in terms of curricular choices, communication habits, research interests, and professional trajectory. Additionally, the lack of explicit, community-built, graduate pedagogical training implies that the end of the career race is a tenure track position and that once we reach it—those few of us who will—our learning is done. But this is antithetical to our role as educators and, if we want any say in the political future of the humanities, upper-level faculty have an obligation to share their own professional lore.

Programmatic revision at the graduate level frequently invokes outrage at a loss of scholastic freedom when coursework is standardized, the same argument deployed against the recognition of GTAs as employees. This is usually exaggerated, although I do believe that our best practices should be constructed by the communities who would employ them, not the administrations who might regulate them to fit corporate interests. Introducing principles for ethical mentorship, measurable outcomes, and systems of support for those preparing to teach graduate courses is nothing less than what we do for our undergraduates, so why not ourselves?

In his 2002 essay, “Professionalism: What Graduate Students Need”, Andrew Hoberack gets at why we need to include advanced pedagogical study in our graduate-level curricula. Challenging the surface-shallow logic of those who consider professionalization as “anti-pedagogy”, he writes:

> “…we need to think more seriously about graduate education as professional training: that is, as training geared towards preparing students to perform the work of professional academics. Implicit in my argument is, of course the idea that we don’t do this now. The closest we come is when we think about preparing our students ‘for the market’. The sadly appropriate resonances of cattle ranching in this phrase aside, such preparation assumes that our students disappear once they get that magical call from the chair of another department. (Hoberack, 2002, 52)

Upper-level faculty have an obligation to see that the next generation of degree-seekers are prepared for the “job market” and *beyond.* Including a component of advanced pedagogical theory in the courses required of entering degree-seekers will benefit new and old faculty, sponsor better relationships between graduate laborers and their professors, and make the “real” content of these courses more accessible. Although this type of professionalization lends itself more naturally to the field of Comp/Rhet, it should not be ignored in the fields of Literature, Film Studies, TESL, or Creative Writing. This

is especially true for programs struggling beneath unfair advisor-advisee ratios, because while it might be assumed that mentors will help students develop their professional identities along with their professional skills, this (largely affective) labor is not equally shared--not among instructors and certainly not between students.

Mentorship

In Mary Jo Hinsdale's book, "Mutuality Mystery, and Mentorship in Higher Education", the author discusses some ethical complications of advising underrepresented students:

> Among the myriad concerns that might trouble a mentor's relationship with a protégé are the student's personal experiences of educational barriers and negative academic interactions; the exclusionary history of higher education that is alive in an institution's campus climate; the mentor's unexamined academic and social expectations regarding her field of inquiry and her own socialization into the field (how does one mentor differently from how she was mentored?); and the mentor's assumptions about underrepresented or first-generation students and relationships with them. (Hinsdale, 2015, xiii).

This is true of all graduate laborers who deserve but find themselves competing for the time, resources, and civility of upper faculty serving as advisors, a position which often involves translating academia's more obscure policies and practices. However, this is complicated when faculty have received little compensation and less training for this work--either in terms of mental health, communication and feedback turnaround, institutional procedures, and alt-ac career paths. Preparation for these roles should start at the graduate level so that developing educators might recognize and replicate good advisement practices, as well as recognize, respect, and replicate the boundaries set by their mentors. The importance of this cannot be overstated for educators who expect to work with international students or other marginalized communities, already alienated

within the academy and exploited for their labor in ways that can be compounded by toxic relationships with their mentors.

Labor

Published six years after Hoberack's essay, and seven years before Hinsdale's book, Marc Bousquet's, "How the University Works" offers an unmissable analysis of academic capitalism and how it inflicts hardship on nearly everyone involved in the production of knowledge in the university--except for its shareholders (2008). With frank language and a keen understanding of the economics of oppression, Bousquet resists, on every page, the impulse to bury his criticism of the academy in verbiage. He says that "unorganized graduate employees and contingent faculty have a tendency to grasp their circumstances incompletely—that is, they feel 'treated like shit' without grasping the systemic reality that they are waste" (Bousquet, 2008, 26). The effects of overwork, underpay, and the uncertainty of one's position in the academic hierarchies are felt *bodily* but far too often assessed as neutral lines on a computer screen. For example, GTA participants in my study described the chronic hair and sleep loss they have experienced during their time in OSU's graduate program; they discussed depression, anxiety, and the limited treatment they'd received from the campus' Mental Health Services. However, while acknowledging stress and financial security, interviewees across degree levels spoke about these struggles with a tone of apology, most qualifying their remarks with the caveat that 'others have it worse'. This is a trend that continued in my interviews with OSU faculty, begging the question of how long we have taught our students and ourselves to believe that the best, most capable academics don't ask for relief, help, or change.

Bousquet might point out that dismissing pain and the consequence of overwork is the language of abuse victims, rooted in the failure to see our individual traumas as a collective struggle. I would add that this is also the consequence of a feared loss of reputation, upon which our careers *and* education hang, and that this is tied into the MMIP's informal economy of information. It may additionally reflect the enforced scarcity of resources for graduate laborers: minimal salary increases between degrees or contracted positions, the goodwill of committee members, and the perceived moments of rest between academic responsibilities may act as behavioral carrots to dissuade instructors from protesting unjust working or learning conditions. GTAs especially may code, understate, or deflect their difficulties to avoid "rocking the boat" with upper faculty. These habits, while acting as a survival mechanism for graduate laborers, may have the opposite effect when employed in the long-term. As these scholars obtain a contracted teaching position the impulse to downplay confusion, anxiety, and outrage may present as a lack of empathy in interactions with their own advisees and so continue the cycle.

This observation correlates with the testimonies of graduate laborers in "Learning from the Lived Experiences of Graduate Student Writers", which offers a range of narratives of the academy's systemic issues and evidence-based solutions to these, proposed by the communities most affected. For example, in "The Trauma of Graduate Education: Graduate Writers Countering Epistemic Injustice and Reclaiming Epistemic Rights" Beth Godbee discusses ways in which pervasive inequalities are "internalized by those who are marginalized and written off by those with privilege and power" (2020, 38). This is seen when degree seekers who don't fit the mythical academic norm are

“presumed incompetent” and this violence is replicated at every stage of the matriculation, hiring, and tenure processes (Godbee, 2020). Testimonies like these, in which academics speak to institutional injustices, have become more common in recent years. Still, this collection and others focus more on the role of literacy in graduate coursework--this is, of course, fitting for our discipline but I believe more attention needs to be paid to the material and social conditions under which graduate laborers write, texts being a product of their environment and the environments of graduate coursework being in a state of slow collapse.

This extended crisis demands action, but first, it demands that we recognize our problems as collective, and so too their solutions. Educators in under-resourced departments must stop expecting fair and dignified working and learning conditions to come from above and create them for themselves. “I think the ‘crisis of higher education"’”, writes Bousquet, “challenges us to make equality a reality. It asks us to identify the agencies of inequality in our lives…to find a basis for solidarity with inequalities antagonists, and to have hope for a better world on that basis” (2008, 154). Faculty who teach and mentor graduate employees have a social debt to the student communities from which they come--but they are not the only ones responsible for establishing fair learning practices. In “How the University Works", Bousquet describes graduate and contingent faculty gambling their lives on the chance of “future citizenship in the academic community” (2008, 28). If this is true, graduate and contingent employees have an obligation to make things better for themselves and their peers, to fight for more-than-survivable wages, health benefits, and an inclusive education. We

must make things better from where we are, wherever we are, and not from the positions we hope someday to find ourselves in.

But this is made difficult in a system that encourages--not competition, as this would indicate a fair prize--but silent, social scrabbling for academic acclaim. Almost every degree seeker hopes to be the 1 in 8 to obtain the R1 teaching job that they are trained to want, if not to perform the work of (Cassutto, Weisbuch, 2021). Academics know the importance of maintaining their reputations--this is hardly mitigated by the increasing demand for publication. However, without effective and accessible means of seeing and protesting the causes of systemic inequalities, graduate laborers *and* upper faculty are inclined to see their colleagues as adversaries, and fight, accordingly, for minimal ideological and financial gains to be found in an English department.

This is not how we are going to fix things. Academics can only construct fair learning and working conditions if they are working together. In his book, "Rhetoric and Resistance in the Corporate Academy", Christopher Carter writes about the power of collective resistance, made possible when teachers and students cross "lines of difference" (2008). He critiques the professor who teaches members of their class just enough to recognize the capitalist traps they are locked in without helping them realize an alternative, a way out. Acknowledging the possibility that students themselves might have progressive ideologies and a desire to take action, Carter writes that anxieties related to teaching about oppression is not an excuse enough to avoid the subject (2008). The chapter "The Student as an Organized Intellectual" is about the way we sometimes perceive students as vessels for potential action and ourselves as the fuse. Ignoring, as well, the student's own propensity for change-making, this neglects an identity shared

between student and teacher: worker. Unlike in my study, Carter focuses on the relationship between graduates and the undergraduates they teach, rather than GTAs and contingent/upper faculty, but his argument is transferable to both. This dissolution of the student-worker dichotomy is crucial if we are going to dissolve the dichotomy between the roles GTAs play as students *and* employees in the corporate academy. This is further necessary to remove the barriers between those who are learning to teach and advise graduate laborers and those who are currently teaching and advising *them.*

Learning conditions *are* working conditions for the graduate instructor; these are not distinct (Carter, 2008). The economic straits experienced by GTAs under their contracts qualify as "sweatshop conditions" according to Carter, who characterized these by "uncertainty of future work, low pay, long and irregular hours, limited or no benefits, and physical abuse" (2008, 113). Thinking of the ways and frequency with which academics swap stories of the sleep deprivation required to finish their work, taking caffeine pills to delay hunger until payday, rereading faculty emails in order to assess the degree to which an instructor's careless tone might derail their academic futures, or simply the embarrassing inadequacy of the mental health resources on our campus, I am truly unsure as to whether we should categorize this abuse as physical or psychological.

And yet, very few of the participants in my study could explain their problems without justifying them against the imagined "others", who always have it worse. Ever-present is the notion that for there to be positive change in our system, we cannot be able to compare ourselves positively with another institution, another academic, another form of work. However, it is a mistake to think of graduate laborers as sharing a unified defeatism, just as it is wrong to portray the actual sweatshop worker as undesiring or

undeserving of dignified working conditions (Carter, 2008). Working/learning conditions experienced by other academics at other institutions may be better or worse than our own. That is not a sufficient reason to maintain the status quo.

Nor are the long hours, at low pay, with a tenured career ever-further on the horizon, which might leave ourselves and our colleagues “exhausted, so that even those who recognize the necessity for activism may not be able to undertake it” an excuse to let this crisis simmer (Carter, 2008, 111). It does no good to ask for change, for justice, for compassion that we ourselves are unwilling to implement in our day-to-day practices. This is true of all educators. However, consideration of how individual, overwhelmed graduate laborers survive their programs must necessarily consider the ways they survive and how they are assisted by the faculty--or not. In the MMIP, most of the behaviors, values, and habits displayed by academics are inspired by their preferred instructors or advisors (not always the same). When support from these is deficient, graduate laborers fall back on their peers for guidance, resources, and reassurance. These may or may not offer accurate information or wholesome recommendations, but at least what they provide is given freely--unlike those who contribute to the commercial industry of advice for degree-seekers.

Commercialized Advisement

For my first example of this, I recommend Kevin D. Haggerty’s 2010 piece, “Tough Love: Professional Lessons for Graduate Students”. Composed of personal anecdotes from the writer’s experience and those shared by close colleagues, this text offers suggestions for those entering grad school and a particularly useful appendix with

an overview of specialized terms. However, academic equivalents of advice columns which employ the term “tough love”, while perhaps considered tongue-in-cheek by those sharing authorial status, are condescending and presume that the readers have it easy. I would caution any reader against suggesting this to the graduate laborers of the current economy, especially those who would go out of their way to supplement their education with additional reading.

Nevertheless, Haggerty’s essay and the book he expanded it into five years later, “57 Ways to Screw Up in Grad School” offers a concise list of social and education strategies for degree-seekers to consider (2015). Its inclusion in this literature review is due to its position in a genre of “survival guides” composed for degree seekers, supplementing the support lacking in the MMIP and outlining some of the unwritten rules that guide our daily realities. However, like many texts in the genre, Haggerty’s survival guide offers advice on how GTAs should manage their academic lives while ceding rare acknowledgement to the financial realities of them. The author holds up examples of poor student conduct as cautionary tales but does not allow these pseudonym-masked students to speak in their own defense. Lastly, Haggerty’s guidance is limited in the same way that many of our university-sponsored workshops are limited: because they imagine that the end of a scholar’s professional development is a job offer.

One more example from the survival guides, released the same year as Haggerty’s, is Karen Kelsky’s “The Professor is in: The Essential Guide to Turning your PhD into a Job”. In the front jacket reviews of this book and Kelsky’s own assessment of her work, the author is commended for the frank, sobering advice she sells to graduate laborers (2015). This is designed to help them succeed in their doctoral programs and the

job market, though not beyond. The strength of Kelsky's guide lies in the links she makes between suggestions for effective writing strategies and career negotiations, as well as her discussion of alt-ac careers--something too often left out of our pedagogical concerns and their related literature. However, while the academic consultant demonstrates certain features of the transparency I recommend in an earlier portion of this chapter, her work is not burdened with nuance or much by way of ethical principles. From advising readers to get out of their chairs and find an "alpha male" to teach them how to give a proper handshake, to avoiding both the mention and practice of service work, Kelsky seems most concerned with helping degree seekers conceal differences in their professional identities that might betray them as a nontraditional/nonwhite/nonmale applicant (2015, 45, 45). For example, she warns applicants against using adjectives like "excited" and "pleased" in their teaching statements, as phrases that include these are "overly emotional and highly feminized" (Kelsky, 2015, 136).

While it may be interesting to consider why emotion and femininity are traits not valued in the corporate academy, there is little else worth discussing from this book or similar examples from the survival guides. Claiming to reveal the hidden secrets of the university, they merely narrate its most petty practices and preserve its most biased principles. I would argue that any instruction on how to navigate higher education and beyond must be accessible and inclusive to all graduate employees, built within their local contexts, not as a one-time event or singular commercial guide, but as a curriculum that all degree-seekers might encounter naturally in the course of their programs[2].

[2] I do not argue that students are not receiving guidance from our department either in individual advisor-advisee conversations or the job market workshops sponsored by faculty--only that the

Programmatic Reform

Curricular standards for graduate coursework should, of course, be contributed to by adjunct/contingent/nontenured faculty. One such text that argues this, powerfully, is Jacob Babb and Courtney Adams Wooten's "Traveling on the Assessment Loop: The Role of Contingent Labor in Curriculum Development", in which they write that leaving "contingent faculty out of these decisions divorces them from the content and administration of these courses, negatively impacting their relation to the writing program and their investment in instruction" (2017, 171). Babb and Wooten's argument is another example of resistant pedagogies developed by and within members of our writing programs, but again focuses on the development of undergraduate courses rather than their 6000-level counterparts. Crucially, though, the authors argue that contingent faculty bring vital practical experience and awareness of the most current conversations in pedagogical theory into these discussions, which is why we must invite them to the table (Babb, Wooten, 2017). The same can be said of graduate employees who, however early in their careers, can and certainly should contribute to conversations about their own learning and working conditions. The authors also note that these projects should be compensated when participated in by non-tenure-stream faculty, whose service work is too often uncredited and unrewarded, compounding the exploitation they are trying to mitigate (Babb, Wooten, 2017).

Better funding, better job placement, better local and national recognition for the kinds of scholarship our universities produce should be valuable to us all. Beginning this

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existing academic crisis and the absence of an explicit graduate pedagogy education is too big, too consequential, to cover in any single hour-long meeting.

work at the graduate level will leave these future ranks of contingent faculty in a stronger position, with a sounder understanding of their prospects and power to change them. However, none of these changes should ignore the input of adjuncts and Visiting Assistant Professors, most recently exposed to the capricious "job market" and best able identify differences in professionalization offered at our institutions.

Daniel Davis' "Contingent Academic Labor: Evaluating Conditions to Improve Student Outcomes" offers a rubric to assess, quantitatively, the material, professional, and social inequalities at our academic institutions (2017). His book is part of a growing body of scholarship that seeks to support contingent faculty and although it is not written with graduate laborers in mind, his Equity Scorecard, or the rubric Davis provides for evaluating fair labor practices--with points allotted to universities that provide benefits, freedom, and opportunities for advancement-- might be adapted to help us evaluate labor conditions from a pedagogical perspective (2017).

Gaye Tuchman, meanwhile, has been useful to this project for her sharp rebukes of academics who propose simple reforms without understanding the links between our institutions and the corporate/political world, all of which have an invested interest in keeping the system as it is. The author discusses methods of resisting institutional policies as well as a cold-eyed assessment of how universities respond to researchers who push back against these policies. Referring to the tendency of universities to seize on social justice movements as a chance to rebrand or reposition their control over employees, the author compares the "gradual institutionalization of the administration's legitimacy over academic matters", to the "proverbial frog in the pot" (2009).

Leonard Cassuto's "The Graduate School Mess" treats the crisis with the same urgency as Tuchman, but advocates for the overhaul of the graduate curriculum. He is especially concerned with the attrition rates of PhD students, although his text is notable for including MA programs in his recommendations for reform (2015). Too many of the texts that deal with graduate coursework or labor issues leave out graduate laborers earning their master's degrees, forcing these into a liminal space where they are acknowledged to be affected by the academic crisis, but not considered full actors within it. Cassuto's text comes closest to matching my argument for reconstructing graduate pedagogy education. I am particularly interested in his proposal for a graduate-level "History of the Academy" course, as this offers incoming degree-seekers a critical introduction to the issues they encounter.

In "The New PhD: How to Build a Better Graduate Education" Leonard Cassuto and Robert Weisbuch continue the work begun in "The Graduate School Mess". This book, published in 2021, is the most recent and comprehensive text on graduate education and the efforts being made to prepare graduate laborers for careers past their degrees. With consideration of the pandemic's impact on labor movements, advising, pedagogy, and matriculation within the academy, the authors discuss how we might best prepare PhD students for the careers they are likely to get rather than the ones our universities train them to want.

In this chapter, I have attempted to identify the texts which have most contributed to my understanding of graduate pedagogy education and outlined key features of the work being done in regard to graduate pedagogy, advisement, and labor. In the next chapter, I discuss Institutional Ethnography, the work done by scholars in our field that

makes this methodology ideal for my research, and the specific methods by which I collected data for this project.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Institutional Ethnography

The methodology through which I have approached this research is Institutional Ethnography, a form of social inquiry developed by sociologist Dorothy Smith, which has, most recently and to great effect, been applied to our disciplines' study of our academic systems. This is due to IE's emphasis on understanding communities from the perspectives of their own members, resisting the logics of universality which tend to highlight white, patriarchal, capitalist narratives and bury the experiences of individuals who contradict these norms. Reliant on Feminist Standpoint Theory and the practice of "Looking Up" to consider the ruling relations under which we work, learn, socialize, IE offers new ways to see 'the university' as an ongoing project (Miley, 2017). It is a work-in-progress, a collaborative text whose features change with the visions, priorities, and habits of its many, many, many authors. Because the university itself is not a single, static object with a single, static observer, no reflection of its practices or the consequences of these can be objective. Institutional Ethnography recognizes this and offers the field of Writing Studies a page on which we might scratch-out old misconceptions and replace them with new stories.

Key scholars who have brought this methodology into our field include Michelle LaFrance, Melissa Nicholas, and Michelle Miley, although for this thesis I have also considered authors outside of our field. Peter Grahame's work, as well as Marie Campbell and Francis Gregor's co-authored "Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography" have been useful for expanding my understanding of this methodology. The latter authors use IE to examine nursing education but discuss the theoretical concepts in a manner accessible to readers with diverse career goals. Many of the authors I cite use Institutional Ethnography to assess and reflect on the practices of Writing Centers, valuable because the work done in this field converges--and provides the space to break with--so many others. Our own university's writing center plays a pivotal role in training graduate laborers to mentor writers across disciplines, introducing them to the culture of the university and the many ways of being a scholar within it. However, my work is not exclusively concerned with Writing Centers, but graduate pedagogy education, which, like the WAC movement or the FYC program, resonates throughout our departments (Miley, 2018).

The everyday experiences of academics navigating through these frequently unfair systems of learning creates a fascinating map for understanding Capitalist institutions. According to Michelle Miley, these maps can show how our work impacts each other (2018). However, the (justifiable) fear of challenging or changing the institutions to which we are indebted denies faculty and staff a fruitful site of scholarship and collaboration. Institutional Ethnography refers to these sites as the 'problematic', not because "everyday life is problematic (troublesome, perplexing, difficult, etc.), but rather that we can treat the world of everyday life as sociology's problematic (the complex of

concerns, issues, and questions which generate a horizon of possible investigations)" (Grahame, 1998, 352).

There are many problematic features of our work and how we view the work of others within our departments. I do not mean to imply that my peers and upper faculty are not concerned with these or dedicated to resolving them. For a ready example of such work, we can look at collaborative projects as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion taskforce, created recently to address racist policies within the institution--or we might consider Writing Center inquiry groups such as A.R.R.O.W., which explore theories of labor exploitation in the corporate academy. Participants in my study are exceptional teachers, writers, and activists (not to mention artists, performers, parents, etc., identities which make descriptions of them based on their labor alone reductive). They contribute crucial scholarship to the growing fields of queer, anti-racist, and disability studies, and their perspectives on how their work is performed and compensated is invaluable as an entry point into understanding structures of power in the academy.

The most interesting discovery I have made in this project has been the discrepancy between what graduate laborers expect to receive from their educations (namely, the training for a long-term career) and the conditions that make this difficult. These conditions are systemic (the underproduction of jobs for new degree holders, the inadequacy of GTA salaries, hiring practices which skew toward academics of a class who can afford to linger on the job market) and programmatic (the alienating habits of advisement, rigidity of the canon, and failure to prepare students for the work they will do *after* being hired). Most significantly, these discrepancies seem to carry over into the teaching and advisement practices of faculty, who share many of the same problems of

stress and job insecurity, recognize that students 'have it rough', but are not provided the training or resources to help.

These assumptions and discrepancies are sites of inquiry for those who work with Institutional Ethnography. In their book, "Institutional Ethnography as Materialist Framework for Writing Program Research and the Faculty-Staff Work Standpoints Project", Michelle LaFrance and Melissa Nicolas argue that these contribute to our maps of the university and show us how academics are reading the institution. They write:

> As we explore how staff and faculty experience the institution differently and the ways in which individuals are positioned by institutional discourse to make assumptions about and assign value to the work of others, we cannot help but think that such assumptions are a product of institutional history, local systems of value, and any number of other factors that may impact what an individual does. IE's focus on the social nature of institutions recognizes the complex layers of value and meaning at work within a site. (LaFrance, Nicolas, 2012, 138)

In this project, I have been especially interested in learning about the value graduate laborers and faculty place on their own work as opposed to their perceptions of how the institution views this and how they view the work of others. Though it would be inappropriate for me to make assumptions about data I did not collect and speculate about the values, habits, interests, needs, or beliefs of faculty who have not participated in this study, I bring to this project one fundamental assumption, and little in my research has contradicted it: most individual academics are committed to their work, to their students, and to making a difference in their field. If there are flaws in the way we have mentored, taught, or managed the labor of graduate laborers, it is not because of an inherent lack of interest in doing it well.

Methods

My methods for evaluating the values, habits, and beliefs of those working with and as graduate laborers are as follows: I met with ten graduate laborers and six members of the faculty across a variety of degree levels, disciplines, research interests, age, race and genders. The former were recruited through the university's listserv as well as through social media. Faculty were contacted individually through the university email system, primarily through the snowball method, where some members of the study indicated others who might be interested in the project. I attempted to reach out to instructors from each program in our department, wanting a range of perspectives that would balance the diversity of my graduate subset. When this proved difficult, I broadened the scope of my recruitment to include a member of the Gender and Women's Studies department. I most regret the conflicts of interest which made the inclusion of data from members of the Comp/Rhet department and Writing Center unfeasible, as these have the greatest impact on graduate-level pedagogy and the most to offer in terms of theoretical knowledge and experience with this work.

I conducted virtual interviews with participants which lasted anywhere from forty minutes to an hour but inclined towards the latter. Each participant was briefed (via email, in the consent form each signed prior to scheduling our meeting, and before the interviews began) about their rights to back out of the study at any time, to decline to answer any question, and to view and amend the transcript of their own interviews. Every interviewee was asked a set of 16-20 predetermined questions, with a certain number of follow-up questions based on their responses. Faculty were asked a different set of questions from the graduate subset of my study, generated from the revelations provided

by the first group. For adjuncts and VAPs who could not meet the classification of graduate laborer but whose work had only minimally involved the advisement and instruction of these, I adapted some questions from the graduate laborer list. For accessibility, the question lists were offered to participants shortly before each meeting. Interviews were recorded with a secure app and transcribed--initially by hand, then with the software, Sonix. All recordings were stored on my personal computer.

Following each interview, I sent participants a link to an anonymous survey using Qualtrics. They were asked five questions, one demographic, one which provided individuals the safe chance to comment on the process of the interview (so that I might adjust any aspect of my behavior or the process that might have made them uncomfortable), and three broad questions to allow them to clarify or expand their comments on the department's mentorship system, pedagogical practices, or working conditions.

Originally, I had hoped that these interviews would be repeated after a length of one semester, to assess if and how my participants' answers had changed. There was a moment in several interviews where the participants began to reflect on their own lack of training to teach the graduate courses they had been assigned or expected to be assigned; there is a disturbing trend in academia where resources, support, rest, and compensation is perpetually felt to be just around the corner, despite the material realities that suggest otherwise. It would, therefore, be useful to examine the changing perceptions and values participants place on graduate education and labor without the assumption that advanced pedagogical training (including instruction on how to mentor and advise graduate laborers) is going to be provided 'down the road'.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of my study in order to answer the following research question: what values, habits, and beliefs guide the teaching and mentorship practices of those who work with and as graduate laborers? This study further attempted to discover where and how instructors develop these values, habits, and beliefs and how these were situated against the perceptions of the working and learning conditions of graduate laborers. Using Institutional Ethnography, which seeks to understand "how things happen" in the university, I have created a 'map' of Oklahoma State University's English department based on the experiences shared by its members (LaFrance, 2019). This data was collected via virtual interviews with my sixteen participants, each of which were recorded and transcribed--initially by hand, and then with the subscription software, Sonix.

I have organized this chapter into a two-part set of ethnographic narratives, for graduate laborers and then faculty. For the sake of coherence and to give as much

autonomy as possible to the owners of these experiences, I have chosen to summarize their data under each of six themes: Mentorship and Learning Experiences; Departmental Differences in Practice, Disciplinary Differences in Purpose; Graduate-Level Pedagogy Preparation; Graduate-Level Advisement Preparation; and Evaluation of (Emotional) Labor, Compensation, and Support. For each theme, I show data for the graduate subset of the study first, and then the faculty responses to the equivalent questions.

It is my hope that the repeated features of these testimonies offers support for my discussion of the findings while the differences in the shared experiences paint a more nuanced picture than an alternative approach. All of the data collected for this project has been anonymized--graduate laborers are referred to as "GTA 1, GTA 2, GTA 3…" while their counterparts are called "Faculty A, Faculty B, Faculty C…" Where the names of students, faculty and staff who did not consent to be part of this study are mentioned, I redact their names entirely. I have, however, made certain to use the given pronouns for each individual cited or referenced in this text. For one participant in my study I have, deliberately and upon request, obscured their gender identity--this interviewee wanted to discuss certain negative experiences they had had while earning their degree but did not wish to expose themselves to retribution, by the faculty named or by the department as a whole. The academics who participated in this project represent a spectrum of gender, age, race, rank, and discipline; all but one worked within the English department--Faculty F is an educator in the Gender and Women's Studies department. Her experiences correlate and enhance the narratives of the other faculty and provide insight into how these findings might resonate with other programs.

Mentorship and Learning Experience

I began each interview by asking participants how they would describe their experiences in OSU's interlocked system of mentorship and pedagogy. In general, those who had been in their program (MA or PhD) for over a year were likely to immediately name a member of the faculty who had supported them. This faculty member was frequently the same individual--I am not certain if this reflects an unrecognized bias in my recruitment methods or an imbalance in the distribution of advisory labor among faculty in our department. Four of the graduate laborers who met with me named a positive relationship with their advisors as a key factor to their success in their programs. Two indicated that they had a generally positive relationship with their advisors but found more support with another member of the faculty. Three reflected generally about the mentorship system at OSU and one had had a distinctly negative relationship with her advisor, which she framed her success against.

The faculty participants in this study, asked questions designed to assess their perspectives on and experiences within the current system of mentoring and instructing communities of graduate laborers, naturally reflected on how the system they were teaching in compared to those in which they had learned. This occurred throughout our conversation as well as in response to questions asking, specifically, how participants perceived the differences between graduate and undergraduate work as well as how Oklahoma State University compared to other universities they had worked for or attended.

Graduate Laborers, asked about their experiences with the mentorship/learning system:

- GTA 1 was in the process of changing majors so that she might continue receiving the support from one member of the faculty that she had found specifically lacking in her own program. She said that, "certain faculty members are more willing to aid students [...] than others, um, definitely [redacted], you know, she's been the biggest support system I've had here. I honestly don't think I would have made it through the program without as much help as she's given. If it wasn't for her--she kind of helped me from day one and guided me through the entire process and so yeah, but it's kind of sad because, really, there aren't a lot of faculty members like her."
- GTA 2 immediately referred to a mentor she'd had at a previous university and continued to do so throughout our interview. This instructor's name came up with the same frequency as that of her current advisor, who, to some degree, she had chosen because of the professional resemblance.
- GTA 3, who had only been a part of her program for a couple of months at the time of our interview, indicated that most of her support had come from the facilitator of the first-semester teaching observations. Covid 19 had shifted classes online; she had not many instructors outside of her classes and had only been assigned to observe an asynchronous course.
- GTA 4 did not name her mentor, but spoke of one positively, especially in terms of the grace this person had provided: "The first semester of your Ph.D. is hard and also doing a program in the middle of a global pandemic is extra-complicated. It's been really helpful to have someone who's like, I get that life is a mess right now, and it's OK if you're not on top of your game, which I definitely haven't felt."
- GTA 5 was the first who, in addition to her main advisor, referenced her Comp AD in the interviews. While she tended to credit her advisor as a role model for how she aimed to conduct research, the AD had been instrumental in shaping her professional identity as a teacher. Praising the AD for her ready response to questions and for her help crafting class materials for the undergraduate Comp course she had been assigned to teach, GTA 5 said that her AD, "...would give us the materials that she had used in the activities that worked really well. Her assignment sheets, her syllabus. So we weren't just kind of going in blind like some other people had to do." The AD had further helped her manage her craft a deliberate professional identity: "I was always concerned that my students were not going to take me seriously, especially because I look so young. And she kind of really helped deal with all of that. Gave me tips on how to be a small, young-

looking woman in this new kind of authoritative role and how to make people always take you seriously."

- GTA 6 did not name a specific mentor. New to the university in a semester where all of the orientation materials, staff meetings, and classes were online, he described navigating his first year in the program alone: "I had spent a large amount of time as I was applying to the program, looking at all the information available online through the Department of English website and looked up information on the assistantships and what kind of work they entailed throughout the three years of study...So I had researched a lot and I came away, I guess, with only basics and not all the details." He had no contention with the 20 hours of labor he was expected to provide but expressed regret that these expectations had not been detailed in the orientation materials. Information about mentor groups, for example, were explained weeks after he had budgeted his time in a detailed, daily schedule.
- GTA 7 reflected broadly and philosophically about their experiences with the mentorship system and pedagogical training, noting that all academics are mentors to each other.
- GTA 8 is the only participant who responded to this question by comparing his experiences with multiple members of the faculty, speaking positively about several members of the Writing Center staff and how leadership had changed during his time in the program. He valued the new leadership in the center and it's more compassionate approach to training consultants but indicated that some of his most influential mentors had, unfortunately, left the university.
- GTA 9 described a negative relationship with their advisor but was dissuaded from seeking support from the rest of the faculty. Asked about their experiences with the mentorship system and their training to be an instructor, they said, "I'd describe it sort of like calling something a sandwich when it's just bread with butter on it. Or, you know, like. Or doesn't make sense, that's like calling a bowl of plain pasta, like spaghetti meatballs...we meet with mentors, like, once a week in our first semester, which is nice, right? But then, like I mean, as a grad student right now, in the semesters after that, I feel like we're just kind of dropped like hot potatoes, which is nice because I like to work on my own. But at the same time, I wish I had somebody who wouldn't like, respond meanly to emails. And we're supposed to be able to ask [Redacted] for help, but if you ask for anything, she'll get mad at you. So we're very much supposed to be independent and like looking through all the stuff on our own, which can be confusing because a lot of times the documents are contradicting themselves."
- GTA 10 described a positive relationship with the FYC director and her advisor, with the exception of one incident in which she had received a failing grade for submitting a project late.

Faculty, asked about their experiences with the mentorship/learning system:

- Faculty A had been teaching for forty-four years, including her TAship, and had worked with graduate laborers for approximately thirty of these. She reflected on the structure of the graduate programs where she had started and compared this to OSU, specifically contrasting the mentorship strategies of the Writing Lab to the administration of Oklahoma State's Writing Center: "I went to the [University]; that was a huge program when I was a graduate student. The English building was five stories, oh, you only knew a fraction of the people; the teaching assistants had offices that they shared with only one or two other people, usually just one other person. The building was very dark. So I always felt like somebody in a Dostoyevsky novel. Anyways, it was very impersonal. And there was absolutely no instruction in how to teach. I was just thrown into a classroom and given a book.... And there that was very different too, because you taught literature first. In some ways, literature is much easier to teach than writing, and it's much easier to teach sophomores than it is to teach first-years...So we would teach an intro course, kind of like [OSU's] 1213, and an elective, after you had some experience, then you could apply to teach composition. And then, if you were good, and if you were handpicked by the lab directors, you could maybe get to work in one of the labs... The writing lab was one that I volunteered for, of course, no course credit and no salary for a year, just to get in good with the lab director... It was [Director] who is one of the founding mothers of writing centers. Oh, well, now she was one of the first writing center directors. She authored that statement, "The Students Write to Their Own Language" was an MLA position statement. Back in the 70s, she pioneered the use of free writing as a right to learn pedagogy. But she was very persnickety, and she wouldn't pick everybody. So I felt very grateful that she picked me!"

- Faculty B had been an instructor for eleven years and had worked with graduate laborers specifically for approximately three semesters. Comparing her current professional role to her former, Faculty B explained that she had consistently considered how her degree work might offer transferable skills to other professions, even while working on her dissertation. Perhaps because of this, she prioritizes professionalization in her pedagogy/role as a mentor. She pointed to some opportunities for conversations on this, both in the Intro to Grad Studies course and at the advisement stages of a degree, but noted that this can be challenging, as it is difficult to identify a graduate student's career goals through coursework versus advising them one-on-one. Reflecting on her own learnings experiences as a graduate laborer, she referred to an instructor who would assign readings, show up to her graduate class and tell them to "talk" --offering no other instructions or commentary during the class discussion. "As graduate students, this was very challenging, because we are all grappling with very difficult material and, you know, the professor maybe wouldn't talk at all, ever, in class or, like, would maybe answer questions, but not really create any structure. You know, I learned a lot from those models and I learned

a lot from certain professors, but when I started teaching at the graduate level here, it was very important to me to create more structure, that I felt that that was not a very effective pedagogical model of the graduate level...so I actually have moved toward employing a lot of pedagogical strategies at the graduate level that I also employ at the undergraduate level which I find effective, though maybe in slightly different ways."

- Faculty C had been an instructor for forty-three years and had worked with graduate laborers specifically for approximately twenty-seven, although not all of this time had been spent in the United States and not all of the work done with graduate laborers had been limited to strictly teaching. He noted that in addition to teaching writing and research skills, graduate coursework involved teaching the conventions of the profession, and that this was different from the major goals of undergraduate work. In terms of professionalization, Faculty B noted that the new hires in the department might offer the best guidance and up-to-date skills on constructing job materials, and that the various workshops offered by the programs would give graduate laborers their best chance of successfully entering the market.
- Faculty D had been an instructor for thirteen years and had served as an adjunct professor for three of these. She had only worked with graduate laborers through the apprenticeship program, where they had observed the instruction of her undergraduate Comp courses.
- Faculty E had been a teacher for five years, most of these as a graduate laborer. She had not yet worked with graduate students in a teaching capacity, although she had served on some undergraduate committees.
- Faculty F had been a teacher for nine years and had worked with graduate laborers for four of these.

The selection of responses provided above offer a few points worth considering regarding the research questions for this study, specifically in how graduate laborers position themselves in the program. I find it notable that those new to the degrees at the time of our interviews were more likely to critique the overall structure of the program, assessing the demands of TA-work, institutional policies, and interdepartmental communications. Those who had been a graduate laborer for over a year were more likely to define their education in terms of their relationships with their mentors. Few to no participants categorized these relationships in terms of shared research interests but, rather, the quality of emotional support provided (or not provided) by these mentors. This support was described in terms of willingness to answer questions and emails or translate

contradictory or obtuse programmatic policies, as well as an expressed interest in the graduate laborer's mental or emotional well-being.

Departmental Differences in Practice

As the participants in my study discussed their experiences within the mentorship system, they frequently perceived differences in the values and the approaches to pedagogical training between programs in our departments. I asked graduate laborers what, if any, recurring learning methods they had consciously observed in the classes they were taking. Some named specific practices, like the assignment of heavy reading load or the use of discussion boards. Others compared departments in terms of their instructor's attitudes towards student dissent, revision, and alt-ac careers. I asked faculty what, if any, consistent pedagogical strategies they employed in their courses.

Many of the strategies seem inherited: faculty could identify and justify learning strategies (ie: class-led discussions, with minimal instructor involvement) that had worked for them and which they could see working for their students. They were less likely to compare teaching strategies between disciplines, except when reflecting on their own experiences as graduate laborers. That the efficacy of some strategies was contested by other members of the faculty or left out of the responses by the GTA sample, may indicate that we are best able to judge the success of a teaching method with students predisposed to the learning styles of their instructor. It further suggests that the teaching strategies employed in graduate courses are supported by valid practitioner lore, but that they are not employed with explicit consideration for how graduate laborers may or should adapt these strategies for future graduate communities.

Graduate laborers, when asked what consistent teaching practices they had observed in their coursework….

- GTA 1 reflected that, although most of her graduate courses relied on class discussion of an assigned text, the conversations were more guided in the Literature classes she was taking: in [Mentor's] classes, she often structures things where she'll do, like, an introduction to the readings and stuff but then she lets us speak and kind of share our feedback and what we thought of the readings and our ideas. And in my lit courses, I notice it's more of a lecture style. So they'll speak for most of the class and then it doesn't really allow time for conversation. I don't know…like, our experiences are pushed back or if they do ask us questions, they're not really asking for, like, personal experiences. They want a certain answer, and they usually have a certain answer in mind."
- GTA 2 said that she noticed some instructors being more inclined than others to allow student-led discussions, a practice that she considered valuable for her own education and intended to replicate in her teaching. She also observed that grading practices varied between instructors and that these variances--especially the use of the alphabetical grading system, under scrutiny in her Comp Pedagogy course, caused dissonance in her academic identities. "I do feel, like, in the role of a graduate student you are paralleling two worlds of pleasing. At a faculty level you're...trying to be your own academic and I think that's where problems can come up, and anxieties for other graduate students, when [faculty] want us to be academics, but not really, because everything we turned in is for an alphabetical grade, [which] imposes extra anxieties that the real world doesn't." GTA 2 further expressed concern with the assigned reading loads, noting that these were consistently heavy between her Literature and Comp/Rhet classes but that it was never clear how much of the 150-250 pages her class or instructor had read: "I think that's all a sign of that it just might be cyclical, where they were assigned that page amount in grad school, and feel that's what they should do without, kind of, like, interrogating their own actions."
- GTA 3, another Creative Writer, appreciates that the assigned readings in her Writing Center Pedagogy and Theory relate to each those in her Composition Pedagogy and Theory class. She observed that discussion boards, another commonality between her classes, can feel performative but offer some students a nonverbal chance to demonstrate their intellectual abilities.
- GTA 4 indicated that there were few similarities between the structure of her pedagogy courses and the workshop she was taking, although, positively, she said that each instructor had emphasized self-care.
- GTA 5 referred to the connections between the theoretical texts her instructors assigned. She emphasized her approved of the readings, finding them valuable for her work (both as a teacher and researcher) and interesting on their own merit, but believed that their quantity might be better managed: "There's too much, there's always too much, yeah, I mean, hundreds of pages of reading for a week is not easy for one person to do, especially if they're in our position as a graduate laborer. That's not the only class we're taking. We're also teaching or working in

the writing center. Some of us have additional responsibilities while teaching in the writing center as an assistant director or a mentor for the program or a mentor in the writing center or doing other things that we have to do in order to build our CV to further our education or get hired. And that's not even touching on the outside research that we're doing, working on a thesis, or working on a complex presentation or a publication. And to expect a student to do all three hundred pages of reading a week and to understand it and to do a discussion post about it and to have nuanced things to say is like... It's not a thing that can happen for us to still be able to survive and do all the other things that we have to do to get our stipend and to live as a human being."

- GTA 6 noted that his courses were similarly framed around assigned readings, discussed in small groups. These readings were not "necessarily difficult, it's just time consuming" but differed in that, in his pedagogy courses, readings were from published academic papers, while in his workshop, the readings were by his peers.
- GTA 7 noted that most of his classes were structured to produce a paper or portfolio.
- GTA 8 observed that his Comp/Rhet classes were more scaffolded towards the production of a paper, presentation, or portfolio--this goal seemed to be shared with his classes in Film Theory, without the scaffolding--students in this discipline, he said, were expected to join the discourse as experts, regardless of their entry point.
- GTA 9 said that their classes revolved around the discussion of assigned readings, but that their Comp/Rhet instructors appeared more willing to address harmful ideologies that arose in these discussions, particularly when these related to gender and sexual assault.
- GTA 10 identified reading-based discussions as a commonality in her classes.

Faculty, when asked what consistent strategies they have employed in their graduate teaching…

- Faculty A said, "I got no training in how to teach graduate courses. I wouldn't--I don't teach graduate courses the way that I was taught. No, no. The only thing I do [is based on] what my beloved dissertation director, who is 77 years old and just published another book [did for her classes]. She's amazing. She's a dynamo. I think she's like 15 books or something right now. She [...] would prepare two to three times as much as you could possibly squeeze into a class. And I still do that. Unfortunately, I'm always overprepared. Yeah. So I do that. And yet one of the things I find is if you can work with your students in learning to ask good questions, in some ways there's a point after about the third week that you can just come in and say, OK, what about it? Oh, you can't do that at the beginning

because they need to learn how to ask certain kinds of questions. But after a while, it's really fun to just watch them go."

- Faculty B reflected on her own learnings experiences as a graduate laborer and described an instructor who would assign readings, show up to her graduate class and tell them to "talk"--offering no other instructions or commentary during the class discussion. "As graduate students, this was very challenging, because we are all grappling with very difficult material and, you know, the professor maybe wouldn't talk at all, ever, in class or, like, would maybe answer questions, but not really create any structure. You know, I learned a lot from those models and I learned a lot from certain professors, but when I started teaching at the graduate level here, it was very important to me to create more structure, that I felt that that was not a very effective pedagogical model of the graduate level...so I actually have moved toward employing a lot of pedagogical strategies at the graduate level that I also employ at the undergraduate level which I find effective, though maybe in slightly different ways."

- Faculty C described a range of writing assignments designed to draw student's attention to secondary material for their research. "I have them write a short seven-to-nine-page critical review of a secondary article or book that they feel might be important to whatever research that they want to conduct themselves...and a eighteen to twenty five page seminar paper that they are to complete by the end of the semester. And, related to that, I have my students give a presentation, a somewhat informal presentation, although it must be coherent, and so forth, based on the critical review. And toward the end of the semester, I have people anticipate what they are doing in the longer paper in the form of what would serve as a conference paper."

- Faculty D had not yet taught a graduate course but expressed a wish for further training--not just in specific teaching methods for graduate content, but for negotiating the learning styles, expectations, and insecurities of this community. "Both graduate students and undergraduate students need...not only specific feedback about what maybe they need improvement on, but also specific guidance on how to get there. And I think a lot of times that assumption is made for graduate students that, like, you should have already figured it out. And I don't think that that's true. I think that there's always an opportunity to learn something else. [Graduate] students are, hopefully, excited about learning new things. And so I think it's important to [not deny] them that opportunity."

- Faculty E prioritized a certain breadth of assignments, so that even students with different priorities and research interests might find the requirements of the course useful for their own goals.

- Faculty F reflected that "the main strategy that she had consistently implemented was to try to prioritize student choice, but I try to eliminate as many parameters as possible around that when I teach graduate students. So like, for example, in an undergraduate class, I might assign a final project that has to point towards a

> particular question[...] And so their final project essentially has to fill in a gap in this, like, in this domain. Whereas with my graduate class that I'm teaching right now, [Course Name], I say, 'You determine all of the parameters. What's the question? How does it connect to the topic? How do you want me to grade you?' So I ask students to make a rubric... I don't even grade what I [assign] without sort of, like, framework for how they want me to grade their class. And so I think the consistent theme is, like, a deep prioritization of student intellectual needs and intellectual curiosity. And I don't want to make it sound like I squash that in the undergraduate classroom, but it just feels like there's a bit more flexibility with graduate students."

The (necessarily abbreviated) responses provided above may indicate which teaching methods the programs within our department are inclined to employ. These may be identified differently according to the learning styles of individual graduate laborers. In a later portion of this thesis, I will compare and contrast these strategies with those named by the faculty participants of this study. I am not critiquing any individual teaching strategy or demanding that these be made uniform: instructional methods can and should vary according to instructor preferences and the inclusion of a critique of any one method does not reflect my disapproval of these. However, as I am attempting to investigate where academics are learning to teach graduate laborers, it is worth considering what specific methods are recognized by members of a graduate class and how these are valued by the instructors employing them. More significant is the frequency with which faculty and GTAs, asked about specific strategies employed in their graduate coursework, chose to link these methods to the learning values they themselves prioritized, in terms of academic freedom, entry into the discourse, etc. The six faculty members I spoke with appear to prioritize student agency and non-hierarchical dissemination of knowledge--but sharing these values does not mean that identical teaching methods are produced from these. It is unclear if graduate laborers are perceiving these values behind the methods that do *not* work for them specifically.

Disciplinary Differences in Purpose:

After asking the ten graduate laborers what, if any, specific teaching practices they observed in their coursework, I inquired about what their coursework shared in terms of explicitly or implicitly named outcomes, purposes, or values. Almost every participant referred in some way to professionalization and the development of teaching identities. However, these responses were positioned against training they had received to teach the undergraduate Composition, Literature, and Creative Writing classes--*not* graduate-level courses.

Graduate laborers, asked about the shared purposes of their coursework…

- GTA 1 observed that the focus of her Literature classes seemed to be on the sentence-level perfection of her writing, whereas Comp/Rhet seemed to value the social context of her writing: "my Comp/Rhet classes are more concerned with, um, the work that I'm doing overall and what that means to the community and the university and adding to what's already out there and so it's more ...comprehensive."
- GTA 2 named the development of critical thinking skills and professionalization as the focus of her classes. Professionalization in this interviewee's response may or may not refer to pedagogical training: "I also think that our instructors are really big on professionalization, which can be problematic depending on what one wants to do with their PhD. So I guess the best approach for them is getting to know the graduate students and their goals before pushing an agenda on someone where it might not align, for instance, in their professionalization. But personally, I don't mind professionalization. I kind of enjoy it. I don't know. I want to stay in academia for now. So that works for me in terms of critical thinking."
- GTA 3 indicated that undergraduate pedagogical education was a shared goal between her (first semester) classes. Her instructors, she said, seemed to value, "...becoming a better instructor, which I appreciate, and I also think that there's a lot of work being done as far as getting us to connect and engage with academic texts that may or may not be always applicable to our teaching, but they may not like…I'm not a Comp/Rhet person, like, I'm a creative writer here, so I'm very interested in things like threshold concepts and like. I do appreciate that both of these [Pedagogy] classes are like, you're in this world, you need to speak this language, which is fine. So I think overall, I think they're both aiming to have us be better instructors and really equipped for the classroom and being academics."

- GTA 4 indicated that professionalization was valued in her classes but that this was defined differently for the Creative Writing program than in Composition and Rhetoric. “Something that I definitely feel is important for both of my classes pedagogically is this idea of professionalization. So in my poetry workshop, we're really talking about the craft of poetry, but like what it means to be a poet after we graduate. What it means to be a writer who is publishing. And, for most of us, we probably want to go into academia. So what does that kind of look like? And then, in the competitive force, that's really important, too, because we're learning about, OK, how do you actually become a good teacher?”
- GTA 5 noted the value her instructors placed on interpretation and application of theory.
- GTA 6 compared and contrasted the perceived values of his Comp/Rhet courses to his Creative Writing, specifically that he was learning to be a better teacher in the first and a better writer in the second. He also noted “a kind of assumption that [Graduate Laborers] will have a more extensive background in theoretical concepts. Foregrounding in all the -isms, and even if [instructors] don't assign them explicitly, the expectation is that [Graduate Laborers] will just roll with it and put ideas together versus the undergraduate experience of explicitly breaking down and scaffolding the teaching of abstract concepts and -isms. So there's this assumption that they'll be able to do the abstract thinking for themselves and others, bring it to class and have these collaborative experiences.”
- GTA 7 said that all his classes valued the production of written material.
- GTA 8 said that where his classes most differed was in the expected level of discourse experience prior to entry in the course: “So, yeah, and I would say the Comp/Rhet courses were a tad more democratic in the sense that there was an even playing field for people to participate. Whereas Screen Studies seemed more niche towards the screen studies folks and saying, ‘Well, if you don't have this background, if you don't have this or knowledge before coming in, well, we can’t help you’.”
- GTA 9 noted that the expectation for how one positioned themselves in the research was different between programs and the reaction to improperly framing one’s argument could trigger different responses, depending on the instructor. Otherwise, GTA 9 described the goals of their coursework in terms of the production of written material: “The goal is always to produce publishable work. So a lot of professors will ask at the end of a workshop, OK, what do you see like, as the barriers to getting this published? And so the goal is the improvement in writing, I guess, for the Fiction workshops and in Film. I think Film is, like, my favorite program here; the materials are really hard, but, like, man, the film professors are the least toxic professors I have ever had...Because they’re not saying that you need to know this material backwards or forwards or you need to be an expert, because whatever else a professor [from another discipline] says, they're positioning themselves as somebody who is like handing down information on a silver platter, but like, that's not how information works.”
- GTA 10 described her courses as sharing the common goal of her courses was to “succeed and learn and do well”.

The diversity of the responses to this question, which sought to understand the (perceived) commonalities between graduate courses in terms of explicit or implicit values and goals, reflects the varieties of individual and academic interpretations. Curriculums, like any genre, are shaped by the prior investments of student and instructor--and the professional goals and prejudices of each are read in the construction and performance of this genre. In considering how academics are learning to teach and advise at the graduate level, observation is the primary model by which graduate teaching practices are passed down. In any learning environment, it may be normal for the values, habits and beliefs of instructors and students to cross wires. However, more explicitly framed outcomes and a community negotiation of ethical communication practices might serve academics on both sides of the gradebook.

Preparation for Graduates to Teach Graduate Curriculums

I next attempted to assess how graduate laborers were perceiving and positioning themselves against the explicit or implicit values and purposes of their graduate coursework at OSU, I next asked participants in both the faculty and graduate sample about the training (current or prior, at OSU or other institutions) they received to teach graduate-level classes. GTA responses are defined by their expectations of further training while the faculty were most likely to declare the absence of training and then describe the actions they had taken to overcome this. Participants representing both graduate laborers and faculty referred to learning experiences that they had or would deliberately model.

GTAs, when asked what, if any training or instruction they had received to teach graduate-level courses:

- GTA 1 explained that she had planned to change majors, preferring the professionalization she had received from Comp/Rhet. She said that she had not been trained to teach upper-level courses, but expected to, further in her degree or when she was an official member of the Comp/Rhet program: "I definitely don't have the confidence to [teach graduates] yet um... I don't feel I've gotten enough training in that, but that really just might be because I haven't taken a lot of Comp courses and maybe if I had... I feel more confident and prepared to do that but um, I think the courses I've taken have prepared me to teach undergrad. They've been scaffolded, they're really good at that... It's set me up for success and I always found that every class I've walked away from I found myself taking new ideas to bring into the classroom with me...I don't really see the same for grad pedagogy? I don't know if that's just because, like I said, I haven't taken a lot [of Comp/Rhet classes] or maybe it's just because I haven't allowed myself to think in those terms just because I am still in the MA and so I don't quite see myself teaching other grad students just yet, but maybe in the PhD I'll get there, especially when I start to buckle down and take more courses in that area…"
- GTA 2 felt prepared to teach an upper-level Creative Writing workshop, primarily because of her experience helping her peers in the program. She also noted that, while teaching at another university, an observer of her (undergraduate) class had praised her teaching methods and inquired as to how she might apply them to a graduate class. This was, she said, the first and only time her attention had been drawn to this.
- GTA 3 had prior teaching experience but had never considered advanced pedagogical training, although she expressed an expectation that this would be included in a future course offering at OSU. Although in her second MA, she did not believe that she had been given the tools to teach graduate courses.
- GTA 4 expected that future classes would specifically prepare her to teach graduate-level classes. She noted that the current training consisted of mirroring the positive behaviors of her instructors and that the instruction in graduate pedagogy education focused on, "...leading by example, so it's not something so much that we've talked about in class, especially in we've really been focusing on like, OK, how do you teach like undergraduates and particularly how do you teach undergraduates that are just coming into college, maybe, for instance? So I think that most of what I've learned about, as far as teaching upper level, has been just observing and intuiting like how [faculty] are running their own classes. I'm noticing things that I like and maybe don't like that I would like to do." GTA 4 emphasized a desire to be taught how to adapt her graduate teaching to the needs of different (graduate) classrooms.
- GTA 5 said that her preparation to teach graduate courses was based on the observation of her own instructors, from whom she often adopted a strategy and tested its efficacy in her own (undergraduate) classes. Reflecting on this practice, GTA 5 said that there are "lots of issues that could arise and it could…get kind of

nuanced and deep, it could almost turn you into a teacher with, like, a fake persona. So you're not putting your real pedagogy forward because you're trying to model it after these great teachers that you've had before."

- GTA 6 noted that he would likely model his teaching habits at the graduate level on his Composition and Pedagogy instructor, whom he admired for changing his perspective on the inclusion of controversial topics in the Comp classroom, and he specifically planned to apply the principles behind labor-based grading to all of his future teaching.
- GTA 7 said that he planned to model his teaching practices on that of his instructors and that this was, in his opinion, the ideal model of learning to teach, at all degree levels.
- GTA 8 explicitly planned to model his teaching on the approach of faculty in the Comp/Rhet program, although this was not his discipline. He especially valued and intended to replicate the "democracy" with which Comp/Rhet instructors treated students with a diverse range of entry-level knowledge.
- GTA 9 said that nothing in their workshops, coursework, or advisement had prepared them to teach at the graduate level--either at OSU or other universities for which they had taught or attended. They wished for an upper-level Creative Writing pedagogy course. GTA 9 could not imagine how they would approach teaching or advising at the graduate level, because they did not want to replicate the behaviors or methods of their advisor and did not feel that seeking mentorship outside of their department would be encouraged: "It's so easy to get 'canceled' by our chair. If somebody assigned me a graduate course tomorrow, I'd just die. I would just like, go 'Bye, world. Peace out.' I don't see anything preparing us to teach a graduate course, which is funny because that's a discussion-based course. And despite being a graduate course, sometimes it's hard to get graduate students speaking, which is funny because it's like we're interested. Right? But we're also scared that people are going to take a shot at us because we're talking too much. I guess there's, like, different strategies you'd have to employ if you're teaching a course to try to address or get over the trauma of being a grad student, which I don't see being addressed here [at OSU]. Here, we just really address teaching undergrads, which, you know, I mean, those are the courses I'm teaching. So that's important. But at the same time, like, I guess it would be cool if we had some kind of graduate teaching workshop. Yeah. And not, like, teaching for grad students, but teaching grad students."
- GTA 10 stated that more in-depth knowledge of her subject area would help her prepare to teach a graduate course, but that she was observing the personalities of her instructors to see who she would prefer to model: "Just, like, thinking of all the professors that I've had, and realizing how some of them were different in their approaches, and some of them were similar, and it seems like all their pedagogical approaches were tailored to their personalities. You know, like I had relaxed teachers and then non relaxed teachers and I'm on the more relaxed side. So, you know, if I ever want to teach graduate classes, which I'm not sure I do at this point, you know, I know that I can tailor my approach to that kind of personality."

Faculty, when asked what if any training or instruction they had received to teach graduate-level courses:

- Faculty A had received no training to teach at the graduate level, although she modeled her teaching practices on her own dissertation advisor and "stole" methods from respected and trusted colleagues. She expressed regret that there were few wider resources available for teaching at the graduate level; online sources primarily offer support for undergraduate and K-12 classes. "If I ever Google anything, I just find stupid things I don't want to do."
- Faculty B stated that her graduate-level pedagogy was based on conversations with peers and her own experiences as a GTA. "It's even quite rare, I think this is changing, but it's even in some ways rare to get any pedagogical training at all, even for the undergraduate level. I had less than [students at OSU have] in my own graduate program. I had one six-week uncredited tutorial. That was it. No course, no credit hours for a pedagogical training. And that was very much focused on Comp 1. So I never had any training, even in how to teach in my own discipline in literature. Wow. And certainly not for graduate education at all."
- Faculty C stated that he had not received any training before teaching his first graduate course, except through what he had experienced in his own graduate classes. He noted that the genre of the syllabus had developed significantly from his own days as a graduate laborer, and at the time of earning his degree, syllabi were skeletal or entirely absent. "The whole kind of codification of what we're doing in an undergraduate and graduate class by means of the syllabus and the syllabus [having] a kind of contractual status with respect to the students' responsibilities to the class and the institution's responsibility to the students. I mean, that that's really a comparatively recent development."
- Faculty D stated that she had not been very well prepared to teach at the graduate level. "I took a teaching, like, a pedagogy class that was focused on teaching composition. And then, actually, the semester that I finished my Ph.D., after I defended, I took a class on teaching technical writing so that I could adjunct in that program. But I focus on literature as a research area, not on Composition. None of my literature classes ever focused on pedagogy at all. And so my experience in those classes, I mean, has certainly informed the way that I teach. I went to a small liberal arts college [...] and so I was used to very small classes. And then graduate classes were similar. I've only taught smaller classes as well, but... All of those experiences were very discussion based, and the first time that I taught an upper-level class, I don't think I knew what to do with it when students didn't discuss."
- Faculty E had received no training to teach graduate classes: "Oh, gosh, none for graduate courses zero. Just my own observations in my undergrad classes, but no formal."
- Faculty F had received no training to teach graduate classes, although she noted that her previous university had "opened up the opportunity for graduate students to teach graduate level classes, master's level" and speculated that some training might be provided for this. "But I didn't have any formal classroom training. I did guest-lecture in graduate classrooms, so I had faculty members invite me to share certain elements of my research and teaching. In that context, there was no formal

> training in terms of, like, a curriculum or like a certain number of credits that I had to complete to learn about graduate level pedagogy.

None of the graduate laborers with whom I have spoken have been trained to teach at the graduate level, and only one had ever had a member of the faculty broach this topic with them. This was not a member of the faculty at Oklahoma State University, but an instructor assigned to observe an undergraduate class that GTA 2 facilitated. It would be, therefore, be worth considering the mandatory Comp teaching observations as a potential site to introduce graduate pedagogy education. Although new and nervous graduate laborers might be more focused on defending their methods of teaching the undergraduate course on the day observed, instructors assessed to be confident enough might be prompted to consider their future careers. Doing so might spark productive conversations about how to best transfer teaching strategies into a graduate classroom and might encourage graduate laborers to assess their own education. Interestingly, Faculty C was the only participant to note the development of graduate syllabi as a contract of student-faculty-institutional responsibilities. This suggests that efforts to clarify graduate pedagogy education have been focused on this genre and represent a relative gain in terms of fair labor practices.

Although graduate laborers, naturally, spoke positively about the behaviors/methods they intended to model in their own teaching of graduate-level classes, I do not believe that this is evidence that supports the continuation of the Model-Method of Inherited Pedagogy. People--not just those in academia--tend to mimic behaviors aligned with their own personalities, learning preferences, and prejudices. A practice adopted from one academic with whom an instructor (at any level) has had a

positive relationship is not a guarantee that this is an effective, equitable approach for all members of the class--now or with future, diverse generations of students.

Preparation for Graduate-Level Advisement

Advisement is an expected component of most educational work. Faculty at the graduate level are not only expected to perform local, class-specific advisement but serve on thesis and dissertation committees--the approaches to this work are well known to differ among instructors. It was, therefore, important to understand where instructors were forming their basis of this work. I asked the participants of my study about the training or instruction they had received to serve as an advisor to future graduate students. My specific question to the sample of graduate laborers was, "What goals or values guide your approach to mentorship as developed through your work as a tutor or as a teacher and how do you think these might translate into your future work as an advisor on a thesis or doctoral committee?" For faculty participants, I asked what, if any, training they had received to advise graduate students.

GTAs, when asked about the training they had received to advise at the graduate level...

- GTA 1 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work she would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with her. In imagining herself in this role, she said that she would stress to her students the importance of service work, which was of particular value to her, and that she would otherwise try to model her behavior off of her own mentor's. She further complicated and distinguished this role from her work in the university Writing Center: "It's hard to think of myself in terms of an advisor…which is weird because…we have people that come to us for help... but it's hard to think of myself as an actual mentor. [Instructor] is a mentor, right? How can I be [like Instructor]?
- GTA 2 linked her intended practices as an advisor to that of her own and named these directly: "Listening theories have guided my mentorship because when you listen...you're kind of the witness to something or someone without promoting or pushing your own agendas or ideologies on someone, so listening for sure is part

of my values. Construction criticism matched with kindness is also important to me. Seeing the human, you know, be vulnerable, you know, like you asked if I was on a committee. So, maybe, not seeing the product-only which might be the dissertation but also seeing the human that had to sweat and struggle through something to produce, you know, these hundred two-hundred-page documents. So I guess grace is also important to me, and not ever judging somebody because we don't know what people are going through, and where they are going, so meeting people where they are is really important to me. And so yeah, those are my values on mentorship. I think."

- GTA 3 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work she would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with her. In imagining herself in this role, she said, "Dear God, no. But I mean, I like obviously there's a level of care that is required there. You know, as far as like my experience in the writing center, I have the most success with students when I try to connect with them, be personable with them, and then also when I'm honest with them, I'm like, this isn't working…I mean, obviously, there are moments where you have to be delicate, but like...You just kind of read the room, your audience. But [when students] feel comfortable being able to progress, when [they're] not just in the weeds or when they can see that I'm invested in making it work, I feel like they're more apt to listen and gauge. So as a mentor, for sure, I would need to care about the student. And their work and, then, kind of be on the level with them and just see what they want out of this experience."
- GTA 4 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work she would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with her. She stated that her pedagogy was based on an ethos of care and being available to her students, so she was likely to apply these to her role as an advisor. She was, however, concerned that she was not being trained to manage the emotional labor on which these principles depended, especially when working with graduate students.
- GTA 5 stated that she would try to approach advisement of future graduate laborers in a manner consistent with her teaching philosophy, which was committed to helping students shape their writing around a true passion: "...but I do feel like you have a much closer relationship with your mentees than you do with your students. So you can really kind of focus everything specifically on them. I know that with my advisor, we kind of have that same general philosophy of wanting what's good, wanting you to progress, wanting you to do your best, wanting you to do things that you truly care about, it's easy for us to work together and it's easy for both of us to want the best for the other. Kind of like we're working with a colleague as well. That's what I want to be. Does that make sense?"
- GTA 6 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work he would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with him: "My goals...I'm not for this hierarchical approach where I'm trying to pour knowledge into the student. But I'm opening their eyes to avenues they haven't seen. So, say, in creative writing or literature, I would be vague about introducing them to concepts that had not been explored before and encouraging diversity in their reading and in their thinking about different ideologies just to give them more

perspective, a more rounded perspective. And encourage whatever their vision might be, ask if there are any resources that I can offer…"

- GTA 7 stated that the current system wants all students to succeed but had not discussed mentorship with any member of the faculty.
- GTA 8 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work he would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with him. He said that he would try to approach mentorship in a similar fashion to his own advisor. His primary goals were to be honest about the job market with students.
- GTA 9 stated that they would set clear but fair boundaries with their advisees, but make sure that they remained available to them, for resources and support. This was not a behavior mirrored from their own advisor. GTA 9 imagined, at length, the situations in which they might perform their role as an advisor to future GTAs: "If I were an advisor...I'm thinking about, like, the comp exams. I know those exams are meant to, like, show you that somebody is an expert in the field. But at the same time, I mean, experts in the field call other experts in the field, like, idiots and not experts. It is a gruesome business. So I think the test is really flawed in that if you answer is like, well. OK... so it depends on who you have on your committee. If you have, like, a group of good people, then they're going to say, well, 'I disagree with this, but I say that you justify it appropriately.' So if I were like other members of the other advisory committees, I'd be focusing less on what the student is saying as opposed to like how they're saying it. And 'are they, like analyzing this on a deep level to come to that conclusion?' I would do that."
- GTA 10 had not, prior to our interview, considered the work she would perform as an advisor on a committee, nor had this been discussed with her. She noted that she might replicate her approach to her work as a consultant in the Writing Center, focusing on "building relationships with people."

Faculty, when asked about the training they had received to advise at the graduate level…

- Faculty A had not received training for advising graduate laborers, except for what she had observed from her own mentor. However, she stated that as a graduate director she had led a workshop for new faculty to prepare them for these responsibilities. She had also created "cheat sheets" for graduate faculty, "because the guidelines are rather thick, and [they] need to be thick for all kinds of legal reasons. But having a one-to-two-page thing is really helpful. And I would share that [cheat sheet] and talk [to new faculty] about just what their role is; what a Plan of Study is; what are the differences between an advisory committee and a thesis committee or for the doctoral students, an exam committee? Because when you come in from someplace else, you're thinking of it according to the model that you have, like our two new faculty from [University] and [University] they are just about as bright and wonderful as can be, but they're coming in with their models of how it's done." Faculty A noted with concern that the cheat sheets she had developed "seemed to have gone missing" and had not been replaced since her tenure as graduate director.

- Faculty B had not received training for advising at the graduate level: “None. I would say that was the biggest challenge for me when I started advising and still is. I would say that's like the area I still feel like I have the least confidence in my training and ability. And, you know, I feel like I'm operating without...without a system of good best practices for advising and mentorship.” Faculty B observed that this was a flaw in the system because, “a lot of people just kind of import their own relationship to their advisor” and that this could “exacerbate the inequalities in the classroom.”
- Faculty C had not received training for advising at the graduate level. “...it was basically, ‘OK, I'm teaching graduate students here at Oklahoma State. I guess I had better read the graduate guidelines, so I know what I'm talking about’. Or more realistically, have a copy of the guidelines at hand so I can refer to them when I need to pronounce on something, since no one could get the guidelines by heart. And there again, I advised in ways that I had been advised as a graduate student. So I think, you know, adjusting for the differences that have taken place in the profession. The kind of advisement that I've done has, in fact, been modeled on the really good advice that I was on the receiving end of when I was in graduate school.”
- Faculty D had not received training for advising at the graduate level, nor had anyone at OSU approached her to discuss this aspect of her work. “I will figure it out right and draw from my own experiences both good and bad, but I do feel like additional, like, guidance would be helpful.”
- Faculty E had not been specifically trained to advise at the graduate level, although her experiences advising an undergraduate dissertation at a university overseas had given her a chance to hone these skills. She noted some ways in which her experiences may have shaped her cohort’s approach to teaching and advisement: “...it led to a lot of us being like, if you're not going to teach us how to teach them, clearly we need to like, teach ourselves and we will get the books and we will do the reading or whatever. And so I think I internalized a lot of that. And I don't think in my brain, I necessarily distinguish it from undergrad teaching like some of that stuff, but also having a lot of friends in grad school who had very extreme relationships with their advisors, either in an extremely positive way, where they were like, ‘I would die for him’ or in a really, really negative way, like, ‘I got him fired from his 10-year job.’ So some of those are like experiences that I have not had and are not personal to me, but that people that I know very well have had. And so I think I've taken in some stuff there, too.”
- Faculty F had not received training to advise at the graduate level. “I think that in some ways, being an adviser means that there is like a little bit more intimacy sometimes if you're working with a student pretty regularly, through a thesis or a dissertation. And I don't think it's intimate in an unprofessional way. But if someone's life is falling apart and you're having your regularly scheduled thesis meeting, it's going to come up that this person's life is falling apart. And I also, I mean, I unfortunately did this to my advisor when I was a graduate student. I did not know if I should drop out or continue with the program [and I remember that] I cried in her office a lot. And so, in some ways, I use how she responded to me as a guide to handle those situations. But I also now retroactively feel guilty for it

> because I sometimes feel like I am making a situation worse because I don't have a sort of clinical or therapeutic background that I just have to be like, oh yeah, this sucks. This really sucks. And I don't know what to do. I just tell you it sucks."

Many of the graduate participants of this study discussed the values they would take to their roles as an advisor or committee member in terms of the treatment they had or had not received from their own. More notably, several participants referred to their intention to discover the individual goals and communication preferences of their hypothetical advisees and negotiate their practices accordingly. No member of my study had been trained for this work. This is among the most serious findings of this project. In the Model-Method of Inherited Pedagogy, graduate laborers learn to base their professional identities on that of their advisors, who are not likely to have been trained for this role and who, in the interviews with the representative sample of OSU faculty, noted how this left them at a disadvantage.

Evaluation of Emotional Labor, Compensation, and Support

Recognizing the inherent flaws of the MMIP, the next necessary goal was to review the obstacles to shifting the values, habits, and beliefs of those who perform graduate teaching and advising. Teaching and advising is challenging and time-consuming, regardless of the levels of degree and rank involved, but perhaps especially for graduate faculty, who have to contend, with minimal resources and a bleak perspective of the job market, with institutional restraints and the heightened emotions of students facing some of the most demanding work of their lives. I asked the participants of my study five questions in relation to this hypothesis: that lack of financial, departmental, and administrative support served as obstacles to reform, and that the

emotional exhaustion created by this situation maintains the status quo. The (5) specific questions I asked were: How would you categorize the emotional labor required by your work? How would you categorize your current work/life balance? Do you feel adequately compensated for your labor? Do you feel supported by your department, and do you believe that the department is supported by the administration? The answers to these questions are below. To the best of my ability, I have honored the confidences of my peers by letting them speak of their own experiences, as directly and comprehensively as possible.

GTAs, when asked about emotional labor, compensation, and support…

- GTA 1; On Emotional Labor: "The effects that it has on me, just everybody in this department is just... This work is demanding, and it takes an emotional toll on literally everyone. I can't think of a day I've woken up and I've just been, like, 'Wow. I'm just in an emotionally great place right now with school and everything going on.' I can't imagine saying that. I don't even know where to start. Like, it's a mess." GTA 1 also expressed concern about discussing her stress with members of the faculty, noting that these were likely to be overwhelmed themselves and not wishing to look like a lesser scholar in comparison with those who only speak about their troubles in private.

  On Work/Life Balance: "...the workload [and] what's expected of us with our assistantships...Um, it's just never ending. I don't know if it's the case for most people, but I think it is. I'll wake up in the morning, and I'll have 20 emails from students and so I'll start off by doing that, and then it just... it moves right into Writing Center, mentor hours, I have to work on my class prep, grading papers...it just never ends and there's no time to really just sit and reflect on your feelings about it and, so, your emotions...for me, at least... they build up and there's nowhere to have a release... it's just, you never have time to think. And I know I'll usually work until 2:00 in the morning, so it never ends. There's no stopping point with this, which is kind of hard, but we can't really go to the faculty with that. We're going to people for help that are, in a sense, suffering themselves."

  On Compensation: GTA one does not feel compensated for her labor.

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: "Okay definitely not. The biggest way is in our pay. I feel the work that we do is...They don't…. I just don't believe they

appreciate the work that we do at all. It feels like we get walked all over a lot and when we voice concerns they're dismissed so quickly. It gets really frustrating. I feel as if no one cares about us or listens to us, um, even with not necessarily just upper admin but even in the classes we want to take, the faculty members we want to have on board, even with the asbestos on the fourth floor. Either our worry or our cares just kind of get dismissed and I know the faculty talked about hiring... Look, we have so many literature faculty, but hardly any people of color. We [also] really need faculty in other areas and that was expressed frequently. I know I went to several job talks, and everyone expressed that, and we still ended up hiring another lit professor and so it's... I feel like no one's really...we don't get taken seriously. Not as graduate laborers...we need conversations with faculty and everyone, but we've been doing that, and we've been pretty patient about it, and it just hasn't gotten us anywhere."

- GTA 2, On Emotional Labor: "There is regular emotional labor, which I developed [strategies to manage], which involved you know, students over-sharing, coming to you for support. Those are kind of, like, the great moments [where] we get to act as a guiding person for them. Like, I've had students that have had three suicide attempts in a semester, and I'm the first person that they're telling and, you know, I have to be quick to listen, give them support, and say the right thing, and offer no judgment and you know, and then they thank me at the end of the year. Like those are, you know... those are [the kinds of] emotional labor makes you think, oh we come into this because we're teaching them. But, also, we can be this human on the other side of the room that sees them as they want to be seen and that's the emotional labor that I love. The other labor, forced by the powers that be...sometimes they can disadvantage us."

  On Work/Life Balance: GTA 2 specifically resented the burden of mandatory office hours and student meetings. "I hate being in the offices that were provided to us because there's no windows, people are talking, and there's no privacy. And that was exhausting, so... I moved my office hours to be, like, by appointment or 'I'll be in the library this-or-that hour and email me and I'll tell you a room.' I'm in there so that I can get my work done in private, in quiet. Because I'm a mom, I don't get to come home at five, cook dinner and get back on my computer at 6:30 to midnight. Like, my working hours are nine to five, so someone's taking away at least two draining, emotional hours three days a week."

  On Compensation: "No. I don't think gradually laborers are ever paid enough. Neither are adjuncts. The prep hours, the grading hours, the classroom hours, the office hours, if they want us to do, you know, 30 hours [a week of labor] and two days of doing, you know, in-person meetings, you know, four times the semester, that's taking advantage of graduate labor."

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: "I think that the English department supports it's grad students more than the president of the university. I don't know. I've always... I feel like I've always been the type that has been self-motivated and I felt like I've always... I'm not gonna get support unless I really aggressively but

kindly seek it, so I don't even like to think about that stuff because I'm not expecting it, but that's the system training me not to think about it...Whereas, perhaps [someone] on an engineering or athletic track might think otherwise. I think they could, you know, obviously increase pay because we talk about being a liberal department and we want to say we are for human rights, but is it? Are we?

Are we practicing what we're preaching when we treat graduate students as less than humans by asking them to do work that the university cannot come up with the pay for, but Mike Gundy, the head football coach, can make well into mid six figures or more, you know? So that's a problem. We also seem to be people that, again, want human rights and also feel bad for the graduate student workers, but also, they're not doing anything about it because the whole system is messed up. So it's like a systemic issue that no one really wants to mess with because it seems too big. But it seems too big because nobody really wants to mess with it. And especially considering where we are in the world and where we are within this university, we are alone as English Graduate Laborers."

- GTA 3, On Emotional Labor: "The emotional labor. God, that's so long, though, because it depends on how much you care. And I care immensely. And I'm also an emotional person anyway. I mean, I would say, like, not more than what it's worth. I don't feel like I'm putting in more emotional labor than I should be, I think. But I know myself, like I truly know myself. So it's fun. And I worked in [a Nonprofit], So I'm kind of used to being frustrated and understanding...what hills I want to die on. I've gotten better over time. When I was younger, I was like, I will die every day. And I was like fighting everybody. But like, yeah, it's not really that case."

  On Work/Life Balance: "I am extremely happy to be working. And so as far as work life balance, I get disappointed when I'm on top of everything and I'm like, it's like eight o'clock. And I'm like, oh, OK. I guess I'm done. It can be…. There's a lot of work, there's a lot of work. But I don't feel like I'm not managing it."

  On Compensation: "Yeah, I'm really focused on health insurance right now. It's [great to have the] Health Center. I have gone to the Health Center like three weeks in a row now. It's like my best friend. [laughs]. I didn't have health insurance before because I moved from [City] to here last year and I left that job, and I was doing freelance work. But you don't get health insurance [doing that], so. Yeah, yeah, I feel fine with the compensation. I'm very happy for the health insurance again. So I'm sorry I'm not, like, raging against the system. Although I do wish we had vision and dental."

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: GTA 3 felt strongly supported by the English department. She did not, however, consider herself to be supported by the administration or the English department to be supported by the administration: "No, I don't feel it's hard for me to feel supported. I do not feel seen at all. And I kind of prefer it that way. I don't really have a say…I began this very pandemic-related job search, but I have to manage, that's all I have to work off of, answering

that question. So it's just like I don't feel like anything I say matters and it's like whatever happens. happens. And again, I'm very happy to be here. So that's not a problem. Before I even started the program, I was really, really stressed about whether I would have to be in person because I was not ready to be in person. And I was very strictly social distancing. So I just didn't know who I was supposed to contact. I had no idea; I didn't know if I should annoy my professors and ask, you know what I mean? [Maybe the faculty don't have the information either] because we didn't even find out until very late, when I had already lost hair just, like, stressing...But I don't want to be negative, because it could be worse."

- GTA 4, on Emotional Labor: "So one of the dangers of this kind of pedagogy [an ethos of care] is that it can be difficult to set up boundaries for emotional labor. And that's something that I've always really struggled with because you want to make yourself available. But in my first couple of years of teaching--and this is my fifth year of teaching now--I would find myself thinking about and worrying about my students all the time. And so that's something I've kind of had to work on, setting up some boundaries about like, OK, this is when this is when I'm doing the teaching stuff and being a teacher and this is when I'm not, right, I'm just myself at home. And I think that's something that I'm still working on balancing. But I think it's an important thing to think about. And I think especially for grad students because there's kind of this attitude that, like, if you're not working all the time, you're doing it wrong, or at least I feel like that's kind of the prevalent attitude. So I believe in fighting that, especially if you already have those tendencies to be a people pleaser, which I've noticed a lot of grad students are, but is challenging…"

  On Work/Life Balance: "I wouldn't say it's necessarily a balance. It's like that game Jenga where you like to pull the blocks out and you try to stack them back up. I feel like it's that I feel like I'm constantly like, is everything going to collapse? [...]There's also a lot of attitude about our labor, like it's basically a joke now, that line, 'but it looks so good on your CV', like, everybody's heard that. And so this idea that we should just be working more and more and more so that we can have the savings, sp that we can get this job, so that we can get to tenure, that we can become these people who are in charge right now…I think that's something that probably gets talked about a lot in unofficial circles."

  On Compensation: "[Graduate Laborers] are working many more hours than we're being compensated for. Nobody's really working just 20 hours a week teaching or working in the writing center. That is not a real thing. So the fact that we sort of pretend that that's real and then they're like, no, look, we're supporting you, we're paying you part time, but I'm definitely working full time. Yeah, I would like to see more compensation for graduate laborers and just more acknowledgement that, like, if suddenly all of us quit, like, universities would not be able to function, because we're doing so much work, that kind of doesn't get acknowledged."

On Departmental/Administrative Support: “I think the administration is trying. I do think that there's not as much acknowledgement of how much work graduate labors do, and I feel like there's kind of this expectation that, like graduate labor should just be so grateful that they're here at all, that things like compensation or better health care shouldn't even be a concern because we should just be so glad that we're not going into more massive debt than we're going into, which is a little frustrating to me.”

- GTA 5, on Emotional Labor: “I mean, it's outrageous. If I were paid to care as much as I do, I wouldn’t have to have a second job. I wouldn't have to have student loans if they paid me to care as much as I do. I [would] have no stress, I would never have to worry about money again, and that's just talking about teaching, that's all. I'm even talking about the other projects that I'm working on that I am so emotionally invested in. It's exhausting. I'm talking about the emotional strain of doing my actual coursework or my thesis or application materials for future programs. And just thinking of the emotional labor that comes with our assistantship...God.”

  On Work/Life Balance: “You never ever have a free moment. I am lesson planning or I'm responding to student emails or I'm giving feedback or I'm doing something for the writing center or...it's just nonstop.

  On Compensation: “[I work] forty or fifty [hours a week] and I’m paid [for] 20. 1200 a month. It’s bullshit.”

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: “Some of the administration, I think, probably really supports gradual laborers for the most part; our department is really supportive and really bright. I mean, I don't know who decides our paycheck, but I feel like if they could pay us more, they probably would do that.”

- GTA 6, On Emotional Labor: “There are certain things that I am still trying to adjust to. Today is where I have, say, three synchronous sessions of tutoring in a row, and I find…I kind of start to lose focus in last session because they take so much time. I kind of overcompensate and I find that I will lose time to fill out the client report reform because I'm talking so much, trying to give the students so much. So I guess it's a matter of finding a balance. It may be specific to this semester with everything online. A lot of my stress comes from staring at my laptop for so long. Like I said, I’m the kind of person just to do, like, two hundred pages of reading for the week in one day. So I have a few meetings in the day, and I’ll be sitting for hours on my laptop, and especially on Monday, which is my longest day. I've been staring at my laptop for like 10 hours straight and my eyes hurt and I'm losing focus. Technology wears me down. And I'm starting to, like, lose sleep with it. I do know that I can go to sleep when I want, um, I go to bed at 10:00 every night. But I keep waking up a lot. And I think part of that is just that I've been staring at a screen and that’s just my speculation, I’m not a doctor. Yet!”

On Work/Life Balance: “I guess I had anticipated that I’d be able to balance my personal life balance with the work better. But I guess I’ve been trying to obsessively stay ahead in my classes. Like, each day balancing my work hours and my academic meeting hours and personal goals, something gets lost. So like, I have personal goals and I like guitar playing, I want to practice like two hours in the morning. But the problem is, I'm not able to wake up [and start] my life because I'm so tired. And the other thing is, later in the day, I have a lot of hours I need to put into my own personal writing, because I'm in a program where I am supposed to try to become a novelist. So I'm working on my novel all the time and the last two weeks have been terrible, I’ve barely worked on it at all.”

On Compensation: “So I see that the administration is borrowing from these journals the importance of the emotional labor we do. It’s being addressed in groups, but I just don't think it even if it's possible to actually pinpoint the number of hours invested, right? [...] I think the actual amount of hours invested is higher than anticipated by administration and the amount of emotional labor is also higher than [Graduate Laborers] anticipated, because we are English students, and overachievers and we’re trying to read as much as we can and seem competent in what we're doing. So that's going to stretch the amount of hours of investment in this, even though it doesn't look like that way when we enter our hours into an Excel sheet.”

On Departmental/Administrative Support: “I do like especially the attitude that the English administration has taken to [the pandemic] by prioritizing safety. At the same time, though, I don't really feel like the graduate students and teachers themselves had much of a say in this. I don't know if they can have a say or what that kind of democratic process would entail. But, you know, even being able to voice an opinion, perhaps that like maybe you should...do this.”

- GTA 7, on Emotional Labor: Declined to answer.

  On Work/Life Balance: Declined to answer.

  On Compensation: In comparison to other work performed, GTA 7 feels grateful for his TAship. “As for compensation, I mean, everybody wants more, don’t they?”

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: “[My]ideal support is sort of like, um, not to interfere or obstruct, and I think [the faculty] supports [us] as much as the greater system allows them.”

- GTA 8, On Emotional Labor: “Personally, I think even talking more openly about emotional labor and one's emotions would be healthy. And yeah, I mean, to go along with that, like even the gendered element of emotions, like, so it's not only women or females that can talk openly about this. It's anyone. It’s all of us.”

  On Work/Life Balance: “You know, there's just that shrugging of the shoulders saying like, oh, well, that's part of the deal through graduate school. Everyone

goes into debt. Everyone has stress, everyone. So it's all in absolutes. There's no end, and it's like, well, yeah, but we didn't sign up for all this financial stress then all this, like, condescending stuff which translates as abuse. You know, it's like, well, why is this like a Sissifian task of pushing the boulder and then the boulder just keeps going down at us?"

On Compensation: "I think some professors have made great strides in funding for graduate education, particularly our stipends. Right, because I think over the years, I mean, it's not much, but I think a few hundred dollars more, [faculty has been] fighting for that. And again, it's unfortunate that I should be framing it that way, fighting for a decent wage to support graduate students. So I think actually, you know, I'm becoming a little bit more upset about it [right now]. But it's true [that there have been] efforts to establish a livable wage for graduate students, not only PhDs, but Masters as well. And just seriously consider Stillwater. Right? What is the livable wage [here] and how can someone comfortably [do their] research without going severely into debt and worrying about all this? I think, you know, just that we need conversations about that. And we have to pay our student fees in addition to the wages. So we're turning a portion of our paycheck back to the university."

On Departmental/Administrative Support: "No, and I guess by other administrations is that, like, broadly put, like outside of the department, like the university as a whole? Yeah, I mean, there are times when I think sometimes, like OSU doesn't even acknowledge Morrill Hall or the English department. You know, I don't know if that's like just the overall ethos, you know. Oh, you know, this is how they think. This is how they view the world."

- GTA 9, on Emotional Labor: "So I hate the shame of being a grad student, you know… Being put in this position, underneath these people, who are supposed to be your peers but also, like, aren't your peers and especially have, like, a really competitive nature, we're always being compared to other grad students…I get [published fairly regularly]. And it's just kind of like, 'OK, you checked off that box now, get published again', like it's not like a system which is going to, like, reward me in any other way than saying, 'You've met the status quo when I'm comparing you to other students in the program.' Yeah. So it's like the constant feeling of inadequacy that your advisers are like, never going to praise, they're never going to do anything, going to say [anything but], 'OK, you're meeting like the very bottom line for being a grad student'."

  On Work/Life Balance: "I actually don't know. I think... It's like... the problem is, like, when I'm not working, I'm thinking about work, you know? So if I ever stay up to play video games, I feel guilty about playing video games or if I'm taking a break to make dinner, I feel guilty about taking a break. If I have to go to sleep. I feel guilty about not completing more work that day. But actually, like, I don't [ever feel like I] do that much work. I probably do, I just don't think I do."

On Compensation: “Yeah, well, I mean, we don't get paid to be students. I guess. Just for teaching and teaching two classes. How much do we get paid? I mean, I'm working two jobs, so I don't really know because like, how much is Job One paying [versus Job Two] [...]Yeah, no, it's super toxic, I mean, we're teaching the big money-making courses, and the thing with a grad position is that you're not just being compensated for classes are teaching, I mean, you're supposed to be being paid to be studying because it's like a scholarship almost, where like, you're working and then you're getting the tuition for your classes and a living stipend. It's like fifteen thousand. But we are required to pay, like, two thousand a year minimum in university fees. It’s gross.”

On Departmental/Administrative Support: “So [the administration is] like, oh, mental health is super important to us. So, like, every time a grad student offs themselves, they send some fucking university email about how awful that was and how like we care about our grad students, but you get like... Three sessions paid for at the university counseling center before they're like, ‘You have to start paying us now’, [so maybe some of the instructors support us], OK, because the fucking grad school doesn’t; it promotes crippling self-doubt and depression and suicidal ideation. And yet they're like, okay, have three sessions. Should be enough for your five-year program, which will tear you down as a person. And then [they don’t] pay for any medications. It's just such fucking bullshit. I'm so mad.”

- GTA 10, On Emotional Labor: “Well, I'm only teaching one class, it's [Redacted]. Same thing with that, I mean, in the beginning of my program, I used to think about my students all the time and, you know, wake up in the middle of the night and think about them and worry about how I was teaching and, you know, I worried about the responses that the students do at the end of the semester, the course evaluations, but now I've really had to change my perspective. You know, I try to have fun in class. I try to take off all the pressure, and it's probably because it’s [Program] there's not so much oversight, there's not so many rules, there's a lot less pressure. So it's been a lot less stress this semester.”

  On Work/Life Balance: “Oh, I was probably working more than 20 hours a week, last semester. That's the reason why I switched. I felt like I felt like it was necessary for me to balance my work in my life because I'm a human being first. I'm a mother second. And I'm a student, like, tenth, and so I would make sure I balanced my life, but I always felt guilty and like I was doing something wrong because I was seeking to balance my life and I was seeking to stay healthy. So, you know, there was like little congruence between what I was doing on the outside, you know, being in this PhD program and what I wanted to do and how I wanted to be on the inside. And so [it’s] changed now; there’s a lot of the pressure off me. And again, I'm in the master's program. And that feels more congruent. You know, with the way I want to live my life in terms of balance and not feeling. Like, I'm not always fulfilling my work responsibilities because I do seek to balance my life.”

On Compensation: “I mean, it's really nice that we get a tuition waiver. You know, it's nice that we get a stipend every month...I guess what I don't worry so much about is compensation for the labor that I do, that we do. I think we just need to be doing less labor.

On Departmental/Administrative Support: “I see OSU as a business. Yeah. And I think they care more about building fraternities and new athletic buildings. You know, I think they care more about money than human beings.”

Faculty, when asked about emotional labor, compensation, and support:

- Faculty A, on Emotional Labor: “You know, I had a student a couple of years ago who was basically saying that he feared that he was going to harm himself. Yeah. And he said that to me and another faculty member. And that was very, very frightening because he wanted something that we couldn't deliver. I have certainly never gotten any training for these situations. I went to one of those safe zone training sessions, really wanting to know how to do that. And it was terrible. I didn't learn anything. And the facilitator sort of said, oh, well, I don't think we really need to do this. You all seem fine and let us out, like, supposed to be three hours, about 45 minutes. So that was terrible.”

  On Work/Life Balance: “My work and my life have always been the same thing...There’s never been any kind of separation.”

  On Compensation: “I mean, financially. There are two answers to that. The one answer is, I'm doing fine. I am very privileged. You know, I'm a white female academic in a university which has finally become friendly to women, which is actually as a majority of women in the department. That doesn't always mean everything is all sweet and lovely, but it does mean that it is unlike when I came here and I was one of three women; it's a very different place and I have enough money. So in that sense, I mean, there are people who have families of eight people living in a single room. So I've got good health insurance and everything, so I refuse to complain. I'm OK. On the other hand, are people in the humanities compensated for the work they do? Of course not. If I look at--and I don't because it's bad for morale--but if I look at what people of my rank and other colleges make, you know, I make a half of what they make, maybe even less.”

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: “I can't speak for other programs, but literature is all happy, loving each other. I mean at our program meetings, we're just all so happy to see each other. It's like Big Love Fest. Everybody's really nice now. When I first came here, this was a very nasty, awful place to be and I used to cry a lot. But that's all gone. That's good. All those nasty old men retired, died or left.”

- Faculty B on Emotional Labor: “I think it's always a big part of educational labor and it's a complicated question because I think, on the one hand, [emotional labor is] one of the things I value most in my work, the personal connections that I have with students and colleagues. Those relationships are really meaningful to me and I think, sometimes, those relationships can be very challenging, but also, that's what we do, if [all the emotional labor we do] only took place within the context of the formal classroom, that would feel, like, really sterile to me. [...] And then, of course, there's also structural differences here: some faculty are asked to do more of that work than others. And again, since it's not recognized or compensated, that can produce larger inequalities. So, yes, it's a complicated question, but I also care about that work.”

  On Work/Life Balance: “[It’s] terrible, especially now, because it's just like everything is collapsed and I'm just like always at home and working. So there's no distinction anymore. I mean, I think being on a tenure track, there's a lot of pressure to be productive above and beyond. Because the goalposts aren't clear, you know, there's a pressure to constantly be working harder than you are. So it's very hard to take time off and I usually work on the weekends. I often work evenings and very rarely take vacation. So in some ways, that is like a continuation for me of what graduate school is like.”

  On Compensation: “I know that it's complicated because the job market is so terrible. I feel very privileged to have [this] position. Most of the people I went to grad school with left academia or [are] in contingent positions still, you know, five plus years after graduating. So, I feel in some ways very, very privileged to have the position that I have, if not the compensation [I deserve]. At least the stability to pursue my research and to pursue this profession, my career […]I don't own my house. I don't have a lot of savings. My retirement is nonexistent. So it's a lot of sacrifice. But in terms of, like, monetary reward, academia obviously is not really the place where you're going to find that.”

  On Departmental/Administrative Support: “I do feel supported by the department, especially the literature program. Yeah, I feel like we have [...] a culture of mutual support. And I feel lucky to have that in my program. I don't think there's a lot of, like, formal structures of support. I mean, we do have a mentorship program, but that's sort of like take it, if you will, or use it if, you know, you want. It's not really like very, very formal or, rather, it’s just sort of like, here's your mentor.”

- Faculty C on Emotional Labor: “The emotional labor, I guess I would have to break that down into various categories of candidates, just that I mean, when you work with students. Even students who are not necessarily your advisees, but who are just kind of in a seminar with you... their welfare really has a big impact on your own sense of welfare. And that's really been the case this past year when we've been in this pandemic and we went from in-person to online. [You] become really kind of concerned and worried about people if they're not showing up or if

their performance is slipping. And I mean, you really feel that, and you see it in the performance of people [you know are] under a lot of stress and so forth, and you have to try to make adjustments for that and so, you know, that kind of thing. That's an emotional burden, and don't mean that is an unwelcome burden, but it is something that is a part of the job."

On Work/Life Balance: "I mean, I kind of work all the time. But then again, if I'm talking about the varied activities that come under the umbrella of my professional activities, I'm talking about teaching and administering, but I'm also talking about research and writing and, you know, the writing and the research often takes place on weekends, or it takes place during the summer and so forth, and I can put just hours and hours into something. And [at the time] that just seems like what I want to do, [not just what I have to do]. So it's [sort of] not like work, but it is work, if you know what I mean."

On Compensation: "Well, I mean, I don't feel like I'm wanting anything. I don't feel financially stressed out. I mean, it would be nice to be compensated at the level of some of my colleagues in other departments. I mean, the disparity between what people in the humanities take home and even within humanities, there's a whole lot of difference. Yeah. I mean, I have a salary in a world where there are a lot of people who don't get enough to eat, you know, people in our own country, people in our own city of Stillwater, who are food and housing insecure. So there's a part of me that says, 'don't you dare complain about your compensation'. There's another part of me that says, 'I wish it were more equitable across the university'."

On Departmental/Administrative Support: "So, I mean, the support could be better in some ways, but it also could be a lot worse. I mean, I think of what I hear from colleagues at other universities [and that] makes me feel that we're not among the most privileged members of English departments. But nevertheless, we can rely on the college in the university for the most part, for the support that we need without, you know, without the college or the university wanting to direct our activities or intervene with what we do."

- Faculty D on Emotional Labor: "I spend a lot of time worrying about even, like, a short response to a student, because I am anticipating the way that they could possibly misconstrue or misunderstand what I typed. And so, for example, I'm providing feedback today for my students and I'm meeting them later in conferences. So I want to communicate to them, like, what I typed here is not all of my feedback, like, I'll have feedback for you during the conference. And so I type, like, I'll have specific feedback for you at the conference. But then I'm like, 'oh no!'. What if they assume that that means [something] horrible and then they go into this downward spiral and they don't want to meet? So then I'm like, how can I communicate to them like that? […] I think about every student individually and how they will respond to everything that I'm going to say, and it's an amazing amount of pressure all of the time."

On Work/Life Balance: "I sometimes do OK with compartmentalizing, but the pandemic has made that impossible. And so if I am doing work, like, there's always someone else around to distract me or need something. And so right now everything is blurred together. And I don't think that that's going to change until the pandemic's over."

On Compensation: "One of the things that's been hardest about this position is knowing that I'm a contract employee. So the salary is not great. It's better than I was making as an adjunct before, better than I was making when I was in grad school... I think the lack of a path forward is the way that I feel [the] most inadequately compensated. Every semester, I've had really great reviews from all of my students. I've volunteered to participate in the apprenticeship program. I've given a talk at the beginning of the semester and nobody has ever, like reached out and said we'd like to make this position permanent. [And so VAPs are constantly trapped] in this, temporary slot."

On Departmental/Administrative Support: "I don't feel like really invited. There is, probably, a good example of this is [that] we get the emails at the beginning of the semester that says, oh, there are these different meetings. And so I was teaching two [Literature classes this semester] And so I was like, well, obviously I should go to the literature meeting. And so I walked in the door and I was told like, oh, I'm sorry, this meeting is for you. This is only for tenure track faculty. And I was like, OK, but I'm teaching the same classes the tenure track faculty are teaching. So it seems like I would also need to know what was going on. But I felt very excluded."

- Faculty E on Emotional Labor: "OK. I have a really hard time distinguishing what the university is asking of me versus what has been socially ingrained. So they haven't explicitly told me that I need to reach out to my students [when I am] afraid for the ones that don't have running water. [But] probably I should, right?" Faculty E also discussed the onus of labor placed on faculty to create equitable learning environments for diverse student populations, without establishing standards that would support that work.

  On Work/Life Balance: "I don't know how much of it is labor that I'm putting on myself, but the way the way that it works, if you're a faculty member and you only do what you're contractually obligated to do, you probably don't get tenure. Like if you stick to the letter of your contract, just like if you stick to the letter of your grad student contract, you're not going to get a job. You're going to get tenure. So there's always unwritten expectations. I have a hard time putting a numerical value to the work because the work feels so amorphous and nebulous sometimes and also because we don't have work hours."

  On Compensation: "I'm like, should I be getting paid when I'm [taking an hour to cook dinner and] thinking about my one student who didn't submit a long enough

essay and [what I'm going to do about it], is that labor? I don't know if I should be getting paid for that or if that's just, like, me doing that when I don't need to do that. I don't... I don't know. I don't know if I feel like I'm getting fairly compensated. There's no measurement of the labor that [GTAs] do at all, and I think that just carries on [as a member of the] faculty...I think capitalism means that anybody who's not working to produce more money is criminally underpaid."

On Departmental/Administrative Support: "So I think, in some ways, English is an easy department to support because we don't ask for a ton of money in comparison to other departments. We don't have a ton of space or technology needs like other departments do. I don't know, I think it's probably complicated by declining major numbers, of course, enrollment and stuff like that, but I don't think I've been here long enough to see it."

- Faculty F on Emotional Labor: "I don't necessarily think it's required by the university, but I think that because I teach in a discipline that for better or worse, has been characterized as being [feminine] I mean, my PhD is in women, gender and sexuality studies. So I've been getting this for a while. But there is sort of this idea that because we talk about emotional aspects in our classrooms that, like, I can sort of serve in a therapeutic role as well, even though I can't. So I think there is an assumption of the kind of labor--and I don't mean this in a bad way--but I think students think that they can disclose certain things to me that they wouldn't disclose to another professor because of what I teach, [because of] what my background is. And so, I mean, it has felt overwhelming at times the amount of emotional labor that I've had to navigate, people coming to my office crying, people crying on Zoom calls, people dealing with, like, massive life issues that I'm literally not equipped to handle. Like someone disclosing the house that they're renting is growing mold in the basement. And they are going to have to be living in a hotel. And I'm, like, I was never trained on how to navigate this. Like, I can be really useful in giving feedback on a paper. I can even be useful in navigating some of the weird institutional ins and outs of power dynamics at a university. I have not received training [beyond this] and that makes this difficult and dangerous work."

  On Work/Life Balance: "So it's been worse, my work life balance when I was a grad student did not exist. My work life balance when I was a visiting assistant professor did not exist. My work life balance only came into existence as a tenure track faculty. I think there's a lot to unpack there; I think there's a lot of problems with that."

  On Compensation: "God, that's so hard to tell. So, I mean, like, I'm very firmly middle class. So, like, I've never made this much money in my life. I make more money than my peers, than my mom does. So in some ways I'm like, yeah, I am fully compensated. But then I think about all of the little bits and bobs that make some days longer or, like, the fact that [I am] developing classes for an online semester versus an in-person semester versus a hybrid semester takes longer. And so it feels ungrateful to say that I'm not fully compensated and I'm aware of the

> gendered and class dynamics of the fact that make it so for me. However, I mean, honestly, what would make me feel fully compensated would actually be [...] getting a course release for a future semester. I feel like I'm financially compensated well, but I think that time compensation and having actually more built-in time off, which I know is antithetical in some ways to how academics are compensated for their work. But I feel financially compensated. I would love more time compensation."

> On Departmental/Administrative Support: "I feel it feels difficult to compare English to us simply because it's so much bigger. Like, English is so much bigger than our little cluster of three people, plus a program director. But I would say in general, beyond OSU, I am worried about how English departments are supported nationwide...I'm worried about the larger patterns that I see how English is being treated nationwide, certainly."

The experiences shared by the diverse set of graduate laborers and faculty are significant to the findings of this study because they demonstrate how the demands of coursework, teaching, and advisement are inextricably linked with the compensation for our work--simultaneously in terms of money, time, and compassion. These stories further illustrate the many embodied traumas inherent to the current system of graduate education, actively reflected on by the participants in this project. The excerpts from the interviews, which I have attempted to relay authentically and with consideration for the participants' privacy, raise serious questions about how graduate laborers evaluate their working and learning conditions outside of the End of Instruction forms and University polls and will, I hope show how urgently we need to address the concerns raised here.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Values, Habits, Beliefs

This thesis sought to investigate the values, habits, and beliefs of those working with and as graduate laborers in the English department of OSU, specifically seeking to understand how perspectives of graduate working and learning conditions impact the quality of their training. The findings suggest that these perspectives *do* impact our professionalization, but not in the most expected way. Rather, the perspectives of the conditions under which graduate laborers learn and work are framed and blinkered by a lack of consideration for explicit graduate pedagogy education. The six faculty who participated in this study clearly value their student communities and the work performed by them; they contribute to conversations and practices that create more opportunities for success for these communities; they undeniably believe in and are committed to creating better learning models than the ones they themselves experienced. And while individual faculty members may view their purpose in the system based on principles significant or lacking in their own training, it is evident that these principles have produced insights that graduate laborers should seek out.

Reviewing the faculty data, I have found a better understanding of the strides (for better pay, for manageable teaching loads, for clean and safe workspaces, for interdepartmental collaboration, for compassionate advisement and research-based instruction) made to make our institutional policies more humane. I think these testimonies, even from a limited sample of graduate faculty, rewrite the maps of our growth institutionally and as a field. From the sample of graduate laborers, these maps show where we need to look next, not despite what we have achieved in terms of ethical praxis but because of it. I especially appreciate the repeated instances in which OSU faculty emphasized their choices to *not* teach, to *not* advise in the ways that they had learned. Originally just another factor to consider in a hypothesis that pedagogical practices derive from a system of modeled, limited inheritance, these examples reframe the existing methods and philosophies of our department as ones which are based, above all, on *care.* I do not believe that I initially gave this interpretation the credence it deserved: reviewing the limited research available on graduate education, I focused on collecting evidence to prove the existence of the problems--not imagining more than half of the day-by-day anxieties that go into making proposed solutions a reality. I invested in the available scholarship on labor exploitation; I respect the language and metaphors by which researchers describe theories of labor, learning, and knowledge-making--and I learned still more from hearing these stories spoken by my instructors and peers.

For this, and much else, I owe a debt of gratitude to the methods of research by which feminist scholars have made Institutional Ethnography applicable to our field. I believe that this work resonates with the descriptions of the findings discussed in their

book, “Institutional Ethnography: A Theory of Practice for Writing Studies Researchers”. Michelle LaFrance’s thoughts on “the power of the local” are worth quoting at length:

> When our research reveals more about the material relations we are negotiating locally, we begin to see how our work is co-constituted in actuality. We are able to see where the macro and the micro intersect, coordinating our work across time and space in relation to the work that others do. We are able to seek out the spaces where change might take hold and strategize effectively for the actualities we would like to see. (LaFrance, 2019, 135)

However, micro to macro generational gains is part of the practitioner lore that should be made available to academics across ranks. Graduate laborers struggling to survive their current programs cannot be expected to appreciate the evolution of fair labor practices if these are not being communicated to them. I agree with Leonard Cassuto, who argues in favor of a graduate-level “History of the Academy” course which might provide a space for these conversations (2015). I do not currently know if the relative strides we have made for a more just and humane education are a product of the MMIP, though it is worth considering that this reproductive system has allowed for the inheritance of teaching philosophies which value social justice in addition to those which are discriminatory.

This is something that I continue to grapple with: The Model Method of Inherited Pedagogy does not produce good teachers. It also does not, perhaps, produce *bad* teachers. Pedagogies that are inherited can have unintended consequences, positive and negative alike--they amplify tendencies already formed, from the earlier learning experiences and personalities of the individual. Because this system of learning is based on implicit observation and experience, we cannot fully control or predict what we are teaching graduate laborers to do and we preserve methods which, regardless of how they were employed in their original context, may alienate new and diverse learners. We

should keep in mind Cassuto and Weisbuch's projection that only one in eight doctoral candidates will obtain a tenured position at an R1 university (2021, 1). One more way we might consider this is in our selection of advisees which, as Mary Jo Hinsdale writes, "...continues the legacy of exclusion: if a professor only mentors those students who are most like herself in terms of interests and personal traits, this limits the pool of potential protégés from the outset. Such selectivity has another repercussion, whether intended or not: the mentor's academic discipline is not stretched and challenged by outsiders' perceptions. Instead, the parochialism inherent to the academy is reinforced" (2015, 52). I do not mean to suggest that we abolish mentorship in the academy, only that we should investigate how to extend its benefits to academics who do not already specialize in it.

This is not a palm-up philosophy of entitlement, demanding more from faculty already working full-tilt to provide resources and support they didn't and don't receive themselves. Graduate laborers are not excused from the business of making their education better--for themselves or the generations that follow. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that they are avoiding or disinterested in these goals--my peers are striving to meet them through more avenues than I have space to name: through inquiry groups, through research done in multimodal, antiracist, and queer pedagogies, through the EGSA, through formal and informal conversations with members of the department, through their coursework and private readings. Any claim that graduate laborers are not taking advantage of the opportunities for professional development fails to see how rigorous and exhausting the existing model of graduate education is, demanding the mirroring of behaviors which inflict consistent epistemological violence and minimize the potential for building relationships across degrees of difference. Further, if GTAs are

primarily observing and absorbing the behaviors which stand out in their experiences of coursework and advisement, they are missing icebergs of labor that go into constructing our graduate curricula. This might be the crucial distinction between our undergraduate and graduate work--carefully scaffolded lessons in the early Composition classes may not need to have their theoretical underpinnings exposed; this is less true for those whose degrees are shaped around learning to teach.

So much of the "Why are we doing this?" of graduate education goes unquestioned--not just in relation to the so-called job market and the massive debt into which academics fall for the sake of prolonging their roles as researcher-writer-educator. It is as or more important to ask ourselves and each other, "Why are you teaching the way you are, and what is it in response to?" Because of the exemplary education I have received, simultaneously from the examples set by *my* mentors and from OSU's incredibly well-constructed FYC program, I can name learning experiences that were not based on best practices, not researched, or theorized, and not, above anything, professional or kind. It is not enough for individual educators to decide that they will treat others as they wished to be treated; we have to construct a model of graduate education that will help diverse academic communities safely and consciously construct their professional identities. Part of this means teaching graduate laborers and faculty to set boundaries on the treatment they are willing to accept--from each other, from role models, from students, from themselves, and from the institutions they work for. Part of this involves recognizing how much of our professional identities are modeled from past examples and *are being observed and mirrored now.* As educators, we will always have to be one inch more professional and more kind than necessary if we want the next

generation of academics to be more broad-minded, more innovative, more engaged, and more inclusive.

Suggestions

Perhaps if we were to devise a model of explicit graduate pedagogical education, similar to that which prepares members of the MA and PhD programs to teach and advise undergraduates, we might have a chance to break a troubling cycle--and solve, collaboratively, the wider problems of exploitation in the academy. This is a larger project I am invested in, so at this time, I am only calling for the co-creation of best practices, a list of principles by which graduate laborers and faculty can reconceive the education they are receiving and providing. In my original conception of this project, I had intended to use this space to list and defend these principles, distilled from the narratives shared by the participants. But I know these would be better designed through a broader conversation between members of our department. Not willing to call for change without providing examples of how to actually practice it, I have instead taken the liberty of creating *some possible suggestions* for how our department might draw more focus to graduate pedagogy education. Most of these can be readily adapted into the existing curricula, with little to no additional revenue from the tight-pursed administration. They are not listed in any particular order, although each (tentative, contingent, non-prescriptive) recommendation is complemented with a justification for and benefit of the suggested strategy:

1. Negotiate levels of involvement and communication preferences early in the advisor-advisee, advisee-committee relationship. This conversation must be initiated by the faculty; graduate laborers have too much stake in maintaining the

goodwill of their mentors, especially in the programs with a limited (and, sometimes, deliberately policed) amount of external support.

2. Encourage a component of research into and presentation on alt-ac careers in the early stages of a graduate's degree program. This will highlight the (research, writing, administrative) skills that graduate laborers are already developing/expected to develop in their coursework and spark productive conversations about how these skills might transfer. Including this as part of an existing curriculum would protect graduate laborers from the existential insecurity of having these alt-ac careers suggested by their mentors.

3. Low-stakes discussion boards might ask students in the existing pedagogy courses how they might adapt a theory/approach/teaching method for a graduate class. This will create a clearinghouse of new ideas and help faculty assess how graduate laborers are viewing the relative needs of undergraduate students/themselves/their peers.

4. Discourse Dictionaries: set aside time to clarify specialized terms that graduate laborers will be expected to hear/employ/understand/structure their scholarship or professional identities against. A Google-Doc, collaborative dictionary project might make for a sensible first-week project, requiring minimal additional labor from the instructor and better enable them to see where members of their class are at in their understanding of key rhetorical concepts. Much of our discipline-specific language is picked up naturally as students move through their degrees. But this becomes an ableist paradox when instructors withhold definitions on the basis that students should already know them.

5. Initiate a study in which graduate laborers track the hours of labor they perform *or* propose that they keep an emotional labor diary (for needs analysis and to assess how educators are qualifying the difference between mentorship and emotional labor).

6. Host informal, roundtable discussions with multiple faculty members about their experiences with and perceptions of the job market, in addition to the relative strengths and weaknesses of OSU's institutional support for new hires. VAPs and adjuncts should ask what programmatic changes they would like to see even without the expectation that they will remain at the university.

Limitations

This study, its findings, and the ideas for possible pedagogical strategies are bounded by many limitations, not just the time and space constraints of this genre. I acknowledge first that my position as a white, female scholar prohibits my understanding

how graduate pedagogy concerns impact scholars of color, especially because of the abbreviated sample of recruited participants for this project. The voices of international students are particularly underrepresented in this project, but these are most impacted by the demands and constraints of our educational system, especially in regard to our unsustainable salaries.

Next, because I am only a few years into this program, it is impossible for me to understand the problems fully and completely in our education system--there are too many questions I have not yet thought to ask and too many obstacles I have yet to encounter. I consider these opportunities for growth, both professionally and personally--but I recognize that some of my proposals may be naive and some claims problematic, with yet-unconsidered complications. I hope that my future work in this area will offer clarity towards this.

Because I was only able to recruit five members of the faculty, my data and its subsequent analysis is biased, supporting the claims I and fellow graduate laborers make but not allowing the full range of diverse counter-arguments. Faculty who did volunteer for this project may already be inclined to support programmatic reform, but I will not speculate about the opinions of instructors I have not met--the additional burden of the pandemic may have made their contributions unfeasible. I also take responsibility for the ways in which my recruitment methods impacted data collection: this study was structured in a way that I met with the graduate participants first, using their shared experiences as a scaffold to frame my approach to conversations with the faculty. Once I had met with ten of these, I had intended to reach out to members of the administration. The benefit of this approach is that I was able to snowball the collection of data along

with possible interested participants. However, the drawback of being unable to meet my interview goals with the faculty prevented me from proceeding. In imagining alternatives to this order of recruitment, I have difficulty justifying a refocus on prospective participants in the administrative positions before or alongside the graduate laborers. The issues related to the labor and learning conditions of GTAs are certainly relevant to this group, in terms of impact, interest, and interventions. But the concerns I hope to address in this thesis are centered on the voices of my peers. In all of my roles: writer, researcher, educator, and student, they were and continue to be my priority.

Further Research:

However, I do believe that the data I've collected support my current claims and the limitations addressed above only outline some of the many other avenues for further research. This study would be improved not just by expanding the current range of participants but by repetition--a long-term assessment of the values, beliefs, and habits of those working with and as graduate laborers, conducted at yearly intervals, might provide amazing insights into how graduate pedagogies develop. I would also like to repeat this research with other departments, as the available literature and my discussion with Faculty F indicates that the lack of explicit graduate education is an inherent problem in higher education. Following this, I hope to investigate pedagogical inheritance outside of the United States, to assess and compare the differences in teaching and advising practices.

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Interview with Faculty F by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, March 8, 2021

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Interview with GTA 2 by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, September 29, 2020.

Interview with GTA 3 by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, September 30th, 2020.

Interview with GTA 4 by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, October 5th, 2020.

Interview with GTA 5 by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, October 6th, 2020.

Interview with GTA 6 by Lyndsey Elizabeth Key, October 7th, 2020.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

For Graduate Laborers

Interview Questions for Graduate Laborers:

1.Teaching apprenticeships at OSU rely on a mentorship system for professional development. Can you describe your experiences within this system?

2.What, if any, consistent pedagogical practices have you experienced in the graduate courses you have taken?

3.What do your graduate classes have in common in terms of purposes and goals, either expressed by the instructor or intuited from the syllabi/classroom activities/discussions/assignments?

4.How have the graduate classes you've taken prepared you to teach upper-level (graduate) courses?

5.What, to you, differentiates training in Graduate Pedagogy from training in Undergraduate Pedagogy?

6.What goals/philosophies guide your own teaching habits and how might these translate into an upper-level (graduate) class?

7.What goals/philosophies guide your approach to mentorship, as developed through your work as a WC consultant or teacher? How do you see these translating into your work on a thesis/doctoral committee?

8.How would you characterize the emotional labor required by your work for the university?

9.How would you categorize your work/life balance?

10. On average, members of the MA programs earn a salary of $1200 a month. Members of the Phd programs earn, approximately, $1600. Both of these estimates do not include the semester fees. Do you believe that graduate laborers are adequately compensated for their work?

11.Do you believe that graduate laborers are fully prepared to enter the job market? What, if anything, would you change?

12.Do you believe that graduate laborers are prepared for careers outside of academia? What, if anything, would you change?

13.Do you believe that graduate laborers are supported by the department and administration? How might this be improved?

14.In your opinion, how do your experiences at OSU compare to others you have worked for or attended?

15.Can you briefly describe your professional goals?

Questions for Faculty

1.How long have you been an instructor?

2.How does OSU compare to other universities you have worked for or attended?

3.How many of the years you have been an instructor have been spent working with graduate laborers?

4.To you, what is the difference between teaching undergraduate students and teaching graduates?

5.What, if any, consistent teaching strategies have you employed in your graduate courses?

6.What, if any, training did you receive to teach graduate courses?

7.What, if any, training did you receive to advise GTAs?

8.How many graduate laborers do you advise, officially?

9.How many graduate laborers come to you informally for guidance?

10.How would you describe the emotional labor required by your work for the university?

11.How would you characterize your work/life balance?

12.Do you feel fully compensated for your work?

13.Do you feel supported by your department?

14.Do you feel supported by the administration and do you believe that the English department is supported by the administration?

15.On average, members of the MA programs earn a salary of $1200 a month. Members of the Phd programs earn, approximately, $1600. Both of these estimates do not include the semester fees. Do you believe that graduate laborers are compensated for their work? (If not--what effort do you see the department making to change this?)

16.Do you believe that graduate laborers are prepared to enter the job market, once finished with their coursework/degrees?

17.What are you, as an instructor and advisor, doing to help your students pursue careers in academia?

18.What are you, as an instructor and advisor, doing to help students who are *not* interested in staying in academia?

19.What's one thing you wish graduate laborers knew?

20.Can you briefly describe to me your professional goals?

Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. What is your academic rank/general professional title?
2. Is there anything about the process of this interview that you would like brought to my attention?
3. Regarding the university mentorship system, is there anything that you would like to add that was not discussed during your interview?
4. Regarding graduate-level pedagogy, is there anything you would like to add that was not discussed during your interview?
5. Regarding the working conditions of graduate students, staff, and faculty, is there anything you would like to add that was not discussed at the time of our interview?

Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	09/18/2020
Application Number:	IRB-20-406
Proposal Title:	Works in Progress: Establishing a Set of Best Practices for Graduate Pedagogy and Professionalization
Principal Investigator:	Lyndsey Key
Co-Investigator(s):	
Faculty Adviser:	Anna Sicari
Project Coordinator:	
Research Assistant(s):	
Processed as:	Exempt
Exempt Category:	

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which <u>continuing review is not required.</u> As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Lyndsey Elizabeth Brieann Key

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: Works in Progress: Establishing Best Practices for Graduate Education

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

Current Degree in Master of Arts in English at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma in 2017.

Experience:

Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma) Writing Center Consultant
Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, Oklahoma) Instructor
- Composition 1113
- Composition 1213
- Cowboy Concurrent Composition 1113
- Composition 1314