Article

Dissertation Pedagogy in Theory and Practice: Extending Our Roundtable

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Abstract

In this paper, we extend our roundtable session from the 2019 Canadian Writing Centre Association Conference in Vancouver, which ignited dialogue about how writing centre practitioners and educational developers can help faculty review and strengthen their approaches to providing feedback on graduate student theses and dissertations. We discuss how we designed and delivered an instructional development workshop for faculty at our university to strengthen their approaches to supporting graduate student thesis and dissertation writers. In doing so, we aim to foster further dialogue about how writing centre professionals and educational developers can partner with faculty to enhance and develop their approaches to providing feedback on large-scale writing projects.

Keywords: dissertation pedagogy; graduate writing; graduate supervision; educational development; writing studies

Introduction

We set our plates, drinks, and metal cutlery down on the wooden table and pulled out chairs directly opposite each other. We dropped ourselves lightly into them and, at the same time, did that awkward, and quite noisy, shuffle-and-glide to tuck ourselves in closer to the table.

"Do you come here a lot?" Tommy asked, picking up their food with their bare hands. A veggie burger.

"Not as much as I'd like to," Sarah said, "but it is one of my favourite places on campus." She picked up her butter knife and fork and started cutting confidently into her food. A Mediterranean pizza.

"And it's student-run?"

"Yeah, which is great because all the money goes back into the Central Student Association for the Undergrads. It literally did used to be a bull ring for auctioning off livestock once upon a time."

"Cool." Tommy looked around at the circular architecture and took another bite of their burger.

"Oh," Sarah said, lifting her plastic cup of ice water and angling it slightly in the direction of Tommy. "Cheers to your first day at Guelph!"

"Thanks!" Tommy raised their cup as well and softly tapped it into Sarah's. No resounding clink, but a nice, soft clunk that didn't echo. "I'm very happy to be here, and I am really looking forward to working with faculty more."

"What kind of faculty development work were you up to at Waterloo?" Sarah asked. Tommy was joining the University of Guelph's teaching centre as an Educational Developer after covering a parental leave for an Instructional Developer at the University of Waterloo's teaching centre.

"Not much," Tommy said, "since my portfolio was mostly TA Training, but the Writing Support piece had me consulting with faculty and instructors on writing assessments, a bit of course design, but mostly feedback."

"Similar here, too. I consult with both grads and faculty on their writing. I'm also one of the facilitators for our Faculty Writing Retreat. Feedback is definitely something I'm interested in. Managing feedback loads on large-scale writing projects like dissertations, and even supporting multiple dissertations

and theses at once, is a challenge faculty seem to be starting to look for tips and resources with."

"I've noticed that, too." Tommy sipped their water and swallowed. "A few times after my workshop on written feedback, faculty members have either lingered to chat or emailed me for a follow-up, and they are wanting to discuss how to give better feedback on the dissertations they supervise – or, how to get their supervisees to receive it better! Do you cover that at all in your Dissertation Boot Camp here?" Tommy and Sarah did a Dissertation Boot Camp together during their PhDs at Waterloo; that's not how they met, but that is when they started working together.

"Not really," Sarah said, "unless it comes up in questions or discussions. Dissertation Boot Camp is more about sharing effective writing strategies and giving grads the time and space to work toward completing their dissertations. Not so much about how to navigate receiving feedback from their supervisors."

"That would be a cool program to have, actually. Or even something like a Dissertation Feedback Boot Camp for faculty." They took the last bite of their burger and dabbed their mouth with a napkin before adding, "There's not much out there currently on this, I don't think."

"I've actually been thinking about this a lot lately." Sarah cut the last piece of pizza on her plate into three smaller pieces. "And have begun researching a little into it. It's exciting that you have been consulting on this with faculty, too. So, what if we built a faculty workshop or something together on giving effective feedback on dissertations?"

"That would great!" Tommy said. They opened their notebook and took the cap off their blue Sharpie pen. "And I think it would go over really well to be offered between the writing centre and the teaching centre."

Sarah finished her pizza, opened her notebook, too, and started writing.

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"Dissertation Pedagogy in Theory and Practice" extends our roundtable session at the 2019 Canadian Writing Centres Association Conference in Vancouver, "Providing Dissertation Feedback: Developing Pedagogical Practices," which ignited dialogue on feedback processes for thesis and dissertation pro-

jects. In this article, we share how we designed and delivered an instructional development work-shop for faculty at our university to strengthen their approaches to supporting graduate student the-sis and dissertation writers. In doing so, we aim to foster dialogue about how writing centre profes-sionals and educational developers can partner with faculty to enhance and develop their approaches to providing feedback on large-scale writing projects. We hope this dialogue will lead to the develop-ment of new programs and new opportunities for faculty across Canada to strengthen their approach to providing dissertation feedback. As dissertation feedback is a form of pedagogy in its own right, we argue that the practice deserves dedicated study and attention from a variety of perspectives, including those of writing centre professionals and educational developers.

Dissertation Pedagogy: Background

Tommy Mayberry and Sarah Gibbons are academic staff and white settler-scholars who work at the University of Guelph (U of G), which is situated on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron People and on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. Gibbons is a writing specialist who works in Writing Services on the Learning and Curriculum Support team in U of G's McLaughlin Library. In her position, she works with graduate students and faculty in both individual writing con-sultations and workshops. When she started in this role, she met with many graduate students who found the revision process of their writing difficult to navigate. Meanwhile, faculty members had noted to her, and to her colleagues at Writing Services, that they were looking for strategies for providing more effective feedback on graduate student writing. In June 2018, Gibbons attended the Consortium for Graduate Communication in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where many conversations cen-tred on offering more support to faculty on providing feedback to graduate students. [1] This event inspired her to look for opportunities to support faculty at U of G. Mayberry is an educational devel-oper who works in the newly-formed Office of Teaching and Learning (formerly, the Educational De-

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[1] The plenary speakers who engaged with this topic included Shannon Madden, Doreen Starke-Meyerring, and John Swales and Christine Feak. Madden's scholarly work explores the level of graduate writing support in higher education (2018). She highlights the specific structural barriers that scholars of colour, scholars with disabilities, and queer scholars experience in graduate level-writing (Madden, 2016). Starke-Meyerring, whose plenary talk focused on the impact of institutional discourses on writing for PhD students (2018), has previ-ously examined the relationship between dissertation supervisors and supervisees from a workplace learning perspective (Paré, Starke-Meyerring, & McAlpine, 2011). Swales and Feak (2018), who discussed the roles of faculty and staff in the context of changing expectations for graduate communication, suggested a need for greater support for graduate students who must become skilled at diverse types of writing and presenting out-side of the traditional thesis process.

velopment Unit in the Department of Open Learning and Educational Support) at U of G. Before start-ing in this role, Mayberry was the interim instructional developer, TA Training and Writing Support, at the University of Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence where they worked almost exclusively with graduate students' educational development but, within the Writing Support portfolio, collabo-rated with faculty on designing and providing feedback on written assessments as well as on writing across the curriculum. While not working with graduate students specifically on receiving disserta-tion and thesis feedback from their supervisors and advisors, Mayberry did work with faculty and advisors on providing more effective written feedback on written projects, including theses and dis-sertations.

Joining forces and experiences together on Mayberry's first day at U of G, the time was right for us to start working on what we have begun to call "dissertation pedagogy." (The formal and full title to our dissertation pedagogy workshop was initially, "Toward a Pedagogy of Effective Thesis & Disser-tation Feedback Processes," but that neither rolls off the tongue nicely in quick conversations nor makes an effective hashtag in marketing and social media discussions online, so we quickly, and al-most indeliberately, started referring to our work, research, and workshop as "dissertation peda-gogy.") By *dissertation pedagogy*, we mean the discrete methodological practice in teaching and learning of embodying effective feedback processes in supervising and advising graduate student thesis and dissertation writers. While "dissertation pedagogy" at the moment might not yet, perhaps, be seen as its own academic subject and theoretical concept for teaching and learning on many Ca-nadian campuses, we have found that it is not a hard sell once pitched and framed as such (to all of faculty, graduate students, colleagues and peers, and even Deans and higher administration). We know that there already is a small, though proud, pool of scholarship and scholastic thought under this umbrella that we call dissertation pedagogy (see, for example, Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Casa-nave, 2016; Madden & Stinnett, 2016; Rogers et al., 2016; Flora, 2017). Barbara Kamler and Pat Thomson (2006), in *Helping Doctoral Students Write*, an early contribution to this research area, ar-gue for viewing the dissertation through a pedagogical lens. We, too, see this pedagogical approach as central, yet often overlooked; at the university, we often speak of pedagogical approaches to course or curriculum design, but dissertation advising is often not framed as a pedagogical practice or supported as one.

In exploring this area, we draw inspiration from Shannon Madden and Jerry Stinnett (2016), who argue that responsibility for graduate student writing should be centred within the university, rather

than offloaded to private consultants; in making this argument, they note the following:

"Faculty across the disciplines are already writing grants, articles, and books, and performing peer review as part of what it is to be a member of their respective professions. Writing experts, as those who theorize writing, writing pedagogy, and writing assessment, can support faculty across the disciplines in uncovering and becoming metacognitive about the discipline-specific writing they already do and expect students to perform while acquiring content knowledge." (para. 4)

Our work responds to Madden and Stinnett's (2016) call to create greater partnerships between faculty and writing centre professionals. Such partnerships can bring together faculty's disciplinary knowledge and publishing expertise with the multidisciplinary and multimodal experience to create authentic learning and mentorship experiences for graduate student writers. However, we also see partnerships across the university as central to strengthening these mentorship efforts. As Caplan and Cox (2016) show in an international survey of graduate communication efforts on university campuses, support for graduate students is often fragmented, and sometimes even professionals in graduate communication are unsure of what programs and services are offered by other units within their own institutions (p. 39). Therefore, we add to this call a further partnership with professionals in the field of educational development to greater position the practice of dissertation supervision as a teaching and learning practice in its own right — as an area that deserves the same attention, on the part of educators, as course design and curriculum development.

We were fortunate to start this project in an incredibly supportive institutional context. Both of our units and teams have built strong relationships and have established trust with faculty on campus. U of G faculty recognize writing specialists as expert consultants for their own academic writing, in addition to that of their graduate students, thanks to the work of the Writing Services team, including Kim Garwood, Acting Head of Learning and Curriculum Support; Jodie Salter, Acting Manager of Writing Services; Lenore Latta, English-as-an-Additional-Language Specialist; and Jacqueline McIsaac, Writing Specialist. Every May, U of G Writing Services hosts an annual faculty writing retreat that features workshops, consultations, and dedicated writing time. Over the years, the program has seen 184 participants from all seven of the University's Colleges (specifically 99 unique participants, as many faculty members return from year to year). In May 2019, Writing Services hosted its largest Faculty Writing Retreat yet, with 42 faculty members from a variety of disciplines taking part. Similarly, U of G faculty also have recognized the expertise and teaching and learning leadership of the

Educational Development team in the former Department of Open Learning and Educational Support (OpenEd). This team (now, the Office of Teaching and Learning) annually hosts the Teaching and Learning Innovations (TLI) conference, which is one of the oldest teaching and learning conferences in Canada (2020 will be our 33rd year), and we have collaborated with faculty on over 163 curriculum development and improvement initiatives as well as completed a large-scale curriculum mapping project of all 27 BSc Majors (600+ courses) across the five involved Colleges. The educational developers and educational analysts in the Office of Teaching and Learning also are involved in over 15 collaborative SoTL (scholarship of teaching and learning) research projects with faculty. In short, we had a receptive audience for our workshop.

When we did our field survey research to see what similar workshops had been offered elsewhere at institutions across Canada, we saw a posting for one that had been offered by Andrea Phillipson (now at Mount Royal University) in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Queen's University, "Supporting Your Graduate Students Throughout the Thesis Writing Process," in January 2017. We were very encouraged when Phillipson was kind enough to share her existing materials with us; we are very thankful for her generosity. In preparation for our workshop, we were also inspired by a study by Paul M. Rogers, Terry Myers Zawacki, and Sarah E. Baker (2016) that looked at the differences between what faculty and what PhD students identify as challenges in dissertation writing. This study conducted focus groups with both demographics. [2] Supervisors found that their students were struggling with some of the larger cognitive tasks surrounding dissertation writing, which they described "using phrases such as 'seeing the big picture,' 'understanding the spin,' 'explaining the meaning of all these things [the data sets],' 'articulating the 'so what,' and 'moving from the concrete to larger concepts'" (Rogers et al., 2016, p. 61). Meanwhile, graduate students noted that responding to and integrating feedback was particularly challenging. They felt that their advisors often gave vague feedback that lacked explicit direction, with one student noting that their feedback was to 'dig deeper' (Rogers et al., 2016, p.65) and another student in the same focus group agreeing that going to their advisor was the grad school equivalent of going to Yoda and receiving advice and guidance along the lines of "'Be with it'" (Rogers et al., 2016, p. 66). Graduate student writers wanted more specific instructions and directions on what to do. One student even proposed that graduate chairs require supervisors to fill out rubrics for dissertation writing so that students could know exactly what to fix

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[2] Throughout this paper, we use the terms "advisor" and "supervisor" interchangeably. Across our university, both terms are common (though unique in the specific discipline, school, or college) to describe the faculty member who takes the primary role in supporting a dissertation or thesis writer.

in terms of categories like structure, organization, style, and so on (Rogers et al., 2016, p. 67).

We suspected, however, and for two reasons, that faculty might not be attracted to creating rubrics: one, it is perhaps too rigid a tool for this level of thinking and of writing, in which graduate students are entering the scholarly community and sharing their ideas more broadly; and two, it can be impressively time-consuming — we are aware that one of the largest barriers in terms of providing effective feedback is time. Faculty are teaching large course loads, taking on multiple students, and managing their own research portfolios among other jobs, duties, and interests. Speaking to these competing responsibilities, Helen Sword (2017), in a study of academic writing practices, notes that these draining activities can leave writers feeling "crushed under the weight of expectations and the rubble of our fractured workdays" (ix); these responsibilities also mean that faculty can realistically devote only so much of their time to supervising their students. Plus, life needs to be considered – wellness and work-life balance most certainly are not just best practices for the student body of our universities and institutions. But we thought that the spirit of that student's suggestion from the literature was something that we could work with — even if just to rile our faculty participants up for a moment to generate impassioned discussion (and objection!) — so for the workshop, we introduced a tool that faculty could give to their students to have their students compile the feedback that they have received and to develop a plan for revision. This tool was a revised version of a resource that Gibbons had initially developed for graduate students at U of G who were looking to organize their approach to integrating and responding to feedback. Essentially, this tool allows for students to create a revision document in which they determine and prioritize the cognitive tasks involved and expected in addressing feedback that requires them, as Yoda might say, to go deeper. As Robert Runté (2017) points out, graduate students absolutely need support with this process of revision because many undergraduate courses still require only one draft. In other words, students who are accepted into graduate school because they received high marks on their undergraduate papers on their first try may not have acquired meaningful strategies for revision.

With the research in mind, we set out to create our workshop. We wanted to discuss strong strategies for providing feedback. We wanted to identify approaches and tools that faculty could use both themselves and with their students. And we wanted to create a space where faculty could share their ideas, where seasoned supervisors could share with new faculty some of their strategies, successes, and (yes) failures, and where new faculty could share some of their insights as recent graduates and newly-minted PhDs. We designed our workshop with these key objectives in mind.

Dissertation Pedagogy: Workshop Development and Delivery

We first began our discussions of the workshop in May 2018, and we spent the summer semestre
researching and planning. We chose a launch date of October 3, 2018 for the workshop. We avoided
a September date because we were mindful that faculty and we would have many commitments at
the start of the term, but we still wanted our workshop to be early enough in the semestre that faculty
could prioritize it in their schedules. We created a registration page for the workshop on McLaughlin
Library's Workshops and Events page. We began advertising this workshop across campus on Sep-
tember 13. The Communications team at McLaughlin Library supported our marketing efforts by de-
signing our poster[3], spreading the word through their social media channels, and sharing the event
on the U of G's NewsLinks and intranet events page. We placed physical posters throughout campus,
including in the Library's Writing Room and in Day Hall and Johnston Hall, the two buildings where
the Office of Teaching and Learning had an on-campus presence. Gibbons sent an invitation email to
previous participants of the Faculty Writing Retreat, who were already familiar with the writing cen-
tre's programming. Mayberry and colleagues sent an invitation to faculty involved in previous TLI
conferences, to previous participants of the Course reDesign Institute (CrDI), and to faculty alumni
of both the Inquire certificate in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the EnLITE (Educa-
tional Leadership in Teaching Excellence) certificate programs. We also tweeted about the workshop
from our personal accounts to garner support and interest.[4] We had set capacity for the workshop
to 25 individuals, which was the maximum number we could accommodate given the space of the
classroom and given our interest in cultivating a comfortable place for faculty to share their own
experiences. On October 3, we had 15 participants in our workshop, which was an ideal number for
the activities we had planned. Our recommendation to colleagues launching similar efforts, based on
our experience, is to advertise broadly while also reaching out to existing contacts.

We divided our workshop into four parts.[5] Part One is "Getting Started with New Students." In this
first section of the workshop, we give faculty a personal inventory sheet to reflect on their current
practices for getting set up with a new student. We ask, for example, whether they prefer to wait for
drafts or to create deadlines, and this reflective activity opens up conversation about the affordances
and constraints of each process. Creating deadlines can provide much-needed structure, but waiting

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[3] Please see Appendix A for our workshop poster.
[4] Please see Appendix B for a Twitter tweet for our workshop.
[5] Please see Appendix C for our workshop agenda and Appendix D for our workshop outcomes.

for drafts can encourage students to take responsibility for their approach. Participants in the first session decided on a combined approach, in which the faculty member and the graduate student would work together to create a deadline. Another question that provoked interesting discussion was, "How many revisions would you like to see before the document goes to the committee?" The answer to this question, in most cases, was a resounding, and trickily simple, "as many as it takes." This then prompted recognition that for graduate students who are not accustomed to revising (from the undergraduate writing experiences, as Runté (2017) situated), going through even just one or two, let alone six, rounds of revision may feel like failure. After asking faculty to reflect on their personal inventory sheets, we ask them to imagine what might happen if they asked these same questions of their students as part of setting up their expectations for the supervisor-supervisee relationship. We ask them to consider asking their students, for example, whether they work best with strict deadlines or more flexibility. We note that while students, as new writers, may not have answers to these questions yet, the benefit of asking such questions is that the process allows for greater transparency. In other words, while requiring multiple drafts is fine, students who know this expectation in advance may be more inclined to see writing multiple drafts as a normal part of the process, as opposed to an individual failing. We then invite participants to reflect on an example of when they had success with a strategy for delivering feedback to a graduate student dissertation or thesis writer and an example of when they experienced a challenge delivering their feedback. In some cases, what emerged was that the same strategy that had worked well for one faculty member with one student had been ineffective for another faculty member and their student; this discussion highlighted the importance of building a repertoire of different strategies and approaches.

In Part Two of the workshop, "Peeking at the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," the two of us share some of the findings from research studies, with a particular focus on Rogers, Zawacki, and Baker (2016). We ask faculty how many of them feel that they have been Yodas, acknowledging that we ourselves feel that we have inadvertently been Yodas at various points in our careers. Our facilitative strategy to soften this quotation for a well-intentioned audience, and to productively situate it in our workshop and discussions with faculty participants, was a slide featuring Gibbons's cat, Shodan, in a Yoda costume (Figure 1). The quotation, we admitted, was harsh but ultimately worth sharing because it is useful and even at times necessary to be aware that what we may view as an exciting process of discovery in terms of delving deeper into the research may be confusing for new graduate students who are not sure what cognitive tasks or questions are involved in 'going deeper.' We view the challenge surrounding this lack of vocabulary as consequential from the fact that dissertation and

thesis writing is often not explicitly taught in the manner in which other concepts are taught in a course and throughout a degree. Dissertation supervisors often supervise based on the examples to which they have been exposed – based on what their own advisor did and on what their own end-product and processes were (Rogers et al., 2016). And so, what may appear to a graduate student writer initially as Yoda-speak is not coming from a place of deliberately wanting to obfuscate communication. Rather, it may be coming from a place of not being sure how to teach explicitly the tools and techniques that you needed to learn yourself in an implicit way. For example, faculty may have implicitly learned which writing conventions are central to their discipline and what constitutes effective writing in the journals in their field based on what they had read, as opposed to what they had learned in a writing course. Graduate students may be doing extensive reading in their courses, but they may not be trained in a genre analysis reading practice, as outlined by John Swales and Christine Feak (2012). We conclude this part of the workshop by transitioning into a discussion of how to balance providing enough instruction so that the graduate student writer has some direction without inserting your own interpretations or arguments into the text by saying to the student what a deeper point would be; in other words, we examine how you support someone in building on their ideas, in pushing their thinking further.

Figure 1. Slide with Yoda analogy for hard-to-decipher feedback and a photo of Gibbons's cat Sho-dan in a Yoda costume for a visual connection and meta-commentary.

In Part Three of the workshop, "Effective Feedback Processes," we discuss terminology, and spe-
cifically the distinction between the processes and the words themselves of *writing*, of *revising*, and
of *editing*. We point out the utility of distinguishing between these three terms in the context of man-
aging expectations for graduate students who may think that finishing a full draft of the dissertation
or thesis means that they are about to defend and graduate, who have not factored in the time and
energy that it will take to revise, and then edit – not just adjusting their wording, but rethinking,
reinterpreting, restructuring, and re-visioning their writing in response to their supervisor's feed-
back that is and should be, as Nancy Sommers would say, "an invitation [to the graduate student
writer] to contribute something of their own to [the] academic conversation" (Sommers, 2006, p.
255). In addition to encouraging a scaffolded approach to feedback and to promoting transparently
the iterative process of writing, revising, and editing that is deliberately communicated to the grad-
uate student dissertation and thesis writers, we assure faculty that it is not their job to outright *edit*
their students' theses and dissertations. The editorial mode of feedback is not only time consuming,
but also of limited pedagogical value in terms of mentorship within the discipline.[6] Referencing Roger
Graves' (2018) podcast on teaching graduate student writing, we also encouraged faculty members
to support their graduate students in creating writing and feedback circles, which allow new students
to engage with authentic readers and allow senior students to develop their mentorship capabilities.
We end this part of the workshop with a debrief on effective feedback practices shown in Figure 2
that, aligning with Gibbons's Shodan on the Yoda comment, brought Mayberry's Sam into the work-
shop (costume-less, unfortunately; but still present, perky, and accounted for).

Part Four, "Effective Feedback Tools and Resources," shows many of the tools that we use with
graduate student writers for outlining and reverse outlining. We focus on a feedback chart template

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[6] While it is important, yes, to have polished manuscripts that go out to external committee members and then are
archived in institutional databases, most universities do not employ editors whose institutional job it is to edit stu-
dent theses. We reiterated that editing students' work is not part of writing centres' mandates and practices either
and explained that the Editors' Association of Canada provides guidelines for graduate students seeking editing sup-
port. However, we encouraged faculty to let students know that they can certainly visit the writing centre to learn
how to become stronger self-editors of their own work. For additional discussion on the complex topic of editing
graduate student theses, particularly concerning the works of students who have English as an additional language,
see James Corcoran, Antoinette Gagné, and Megan McIntosh (2018).

that encourages graduate student dissertation and thesis writers to organize the feedback that they

have received based on three categories of Content, Structure, and Style.[7]

Figure 2. Slide with discussion topic areas covered in the workshop and a picture of Mayberry's dog Sam making an alert face for a visual connection and meta-commentary parallel to Gibbons's Yoda Shodan slide (Figure 1)

Our experience from working with graduate students has been that many of them attempt to address

comments chronologically through their documents using track changes rather than ordering the

comments based on level of priority and engaging with them perceptively as such. The chart sets out

a Comments column where students can transcribe their advisor's comments to ensure each one is

accounted for. Next to this is a Tasks column where students can look at a comment and break down

the tasks needed to address it, such as reading another article or explaining a concept in more detail.

Breaking down the tasks for each comment also lets graduate student writers ask more specific ques-

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[7] Please see Appendix E for images of the feedback tool that we use with faculty. An accessible version of this tool can be downloaded from the "Resources for Writing and Revising" Library Guide on the University of Guelph's Library website.

tions from their advisors about their approach to revision. Finally, a Results column allows the graduate student writers to record how they have responded to the comment, which can be a useful tool both for discussing the revisions in person with their supervisor as well as for preparing for the dissertation or thesis defense if the candidate receives conflicting feedback from their readers and needs to justify their approach.

To date, we have held this workshop five times. In October 2018, the workshop ran for two hours, and fifteen faculty member participants attended. One of the comments that we received after this first workshop was that it felt rushed; as facilitators, we felt rushed, too, so we extended the workshop to two and a half hours for the second offering in March 2019 and for the third offering in May 2019. We had another fifteen participants in March 2019, and then in May 2019, we had five. In October 2019, we delivered the workshop at the invitation of the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences (CSAHS) at U of G; in this case, we facilitated a two-part, bookended, discipline-specific offering of Dissertation Pedagogy in The Hub for Teaching and Learning Excellence (The Hub) in CSAHS – one part for faculty on giving thesis and dissertation feedback, and one part for graduate student writers on receiving thesis and dissertation feedback. In our student session, we flipped our workshop script, and began with a personal inventory for graduate students to fill out about their own writing and revising process. We then asked them to imagine what might happen if they initiated conversations with their supervisors about this process. This student-focused session was an opportunity for us to ensure that messaging to faculty and students with respect to feedback processes was consistent, so that each group would have access to the same strategies and resources. Although both the sessions at The Hub were primarily marketed to faculty and students in CSAHS, in the faculty session our ten attendees came from multiple colleges within the University. We were back at the Library for our most recent offering of the workshop in January 2020, which thirteen faculty members attended. In all sessions, we had a great mix of faculty from the Arts and Humanities, the Life and Physical Sciences, and the Social Sciences.

The initial feedback that we received from faculty on the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. Faculty responded well to how we encouraged them to set up expectations collaboratively at the beginning of the supervisory-supervisee relationship, and they expressed appreciation for our question prompts that would allow them to do so. We also heard from our faculty participants that learning about the research on challenges in dissertation writing from both the faculty and from the graduate student perspectives was informative and a helpful reminder of what their own concerns were as

graduate students writing theses and dissertations. New faculty commented that they found seeing mid-career and senior faculty in the room encouraging; this emphasized to us the value of bringing faculty together, in a protected space, to share their stories of successes and challenges in giving student feedback. We also asked our faculty participants what they would do differently after the workshop, and they noted that they would ask their students, first, what areas they wanted to develop further, before launching into a discussion of the more specific strategies. From our perspective as teaching and learning and writing consultants, this facilitative strategy bore similarities to consultation strategies.

Dissertation Pedagogy: Takeaways, Next Steps, and Future Directions

We are excited and encouraged by the early feedback from all five of our 2018-2020 offerings, but we are still in the early stages of this project. We have two key next steps in terms of the development of our content. Our first next step is to include more examples of authentic feedback comments in our workshop. We knew at the outset that we wanted to move away from the language of framing comments because that support is offered for instructors of undergraduate courses, but we did not include many real examples in this workshop as currently offered. However, our faculty participants were interested in seeing this kind of modelling. Our second next step is to enhance our discussions of approaches to providing feedback in person as opposed to (or, in tandem with) in writing. Although our workshop emphasizes the importance of supervisors and advisors having in-person conversations with their graduate student writers about their dissertations and theses (and does so particularly because the scholarship and research suggests that these processes are so effective), many of our techniques are still centred on providing written feedback. Faculty participants wanted strategies for how to navigate the live, in-person feedback meetings. They wanted to know how to have conversations that would give them a clearer indication of how the graduate student writer is thinking and feeling about their writing. These comments suggested to us both the need for greater faculty support for navigating in-person meetings and the need for workshop offerings like our student-focused workshop at The Hub that gave graduate researchers insight into faculty approaches and perspectives on dissertation mentorship.

To incorporate this new content, we may choose to scale back our discussion of research surrounding challenge areas and spend more time discussing specific strategies. Faculty found the research interesting, but they were well enough aware of the challenges surrounding different perceptions between graduate students and faculty that they wanted to move toward new possibilities, to

try new ways of doing things. As the two of us had at one time conceptualized our discussion of feedback as a community of practice, as opposed to a workshop, we found this feedback encouraging; faculty participants, despite knowing that we ourselves did not supervise doctoral students in our roles, respected our expertise in writing studies and the scholarship of teaching and learning and wanted to know more with and from us. The workshop model, and the instructional approach, was more desired than a facilitated discussion group. Although the community of practice model would have allowed for scheduled ongoing discussion, we are mindful of faculty time constraints and the challenges of committing to ongoing meetings. We see continuity and systematization in our efforts in the relationships that we build and strengthen with faculty during this workshop, in which faculty both learn about research-based approaches and learn that we are contact people that they can reach out to for further strategies, partnerships, and insights on this topic.

In addition to developing our content further, we have two future directions with our research into dissertation pedagogy as we continue to learn and grow as scholars in this new field and as leaders with this workshop: 1) conducting a formal study of how faculty feedback practices or perceptions of student writers has changed (or has not changed) as a result of participating in this workshop and 2) determining how other universities in and across Canada are partnering with faculty who provide feedback on dissertations. We have already learned from Dr. Andrea Phillipson, and at the 2019 Canadian Writing Centres Association (CWCA) Conference, we connected with colleagues Dr. Nadine Fladd, who provides a training session on this topic for incoming University of Waterloo faculty, and with Alyssa Foerstner, who co-delivers sessions to faculty on how to better support international graduate students at Queen's University. The Purple Guide *Western Guide to Mentoring Graduate Students Across Cultures,* by Western University's Dr. Nanda Dimitrov (2009), will also serve as an important resource for us as we continue to consider the implications of effective dissertation pedagogy for graduate student identities. Moving forward, we are excited to connect with other writing centre professionals and educational developers on what we are identifying as the emerging field of Dissertation Pedagogy, and we are currently preparing a Research Ethics application for our faculty feedback practices and perceptions study. We will also, for the first time, be taking our Dissertation Pedagogy workshop outside of U of G and facilitating it with attendees at the 52nd NeMLA (Northeast Modern Language Association) Convention in Philadelphia, PA in 2021. And it is with incredible excitement, as well, that we extend our CWCA roundtable outward and connect with you as readers.

***

"Okay, so we've offered five workshops so far—"

"With great feedback and tons more expressed interest!"

"That's right! The CSAHS special offering of Dissertation Pedagogy has gotten other Colleges interested, too."

"And we have our sixth regular offering coming up for 2020."

"And we're going to Philly in 2021 for NeMLA!"

"Yup, so numerous offerings in a variety of functions and capacities."

"We've also taken it to CWCA and have this essay in CJSDW/R."

"And we've shared our slides and resources on it with Writing Centre and Educational Development folks from other institutions, too."

"What's next, then?"

"Well, we've been wanting to bring in examples of authentic comments on thesis drafts to enhance discussions in the workshop of how to approach framing comments."

"And we definitely should expand the part about approaches to delivering feedback in-person, as opposed to only on the page, more. Faculty seem excited about this, and the literature shows this is already more effective."

"Exactly."

"So." We look at each other, grinning. "Let's get started."

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Appendices

Appendix A Poster for our first workshop - designed by Tiffany Murphy

Appendix B Tweet promoting our workshop
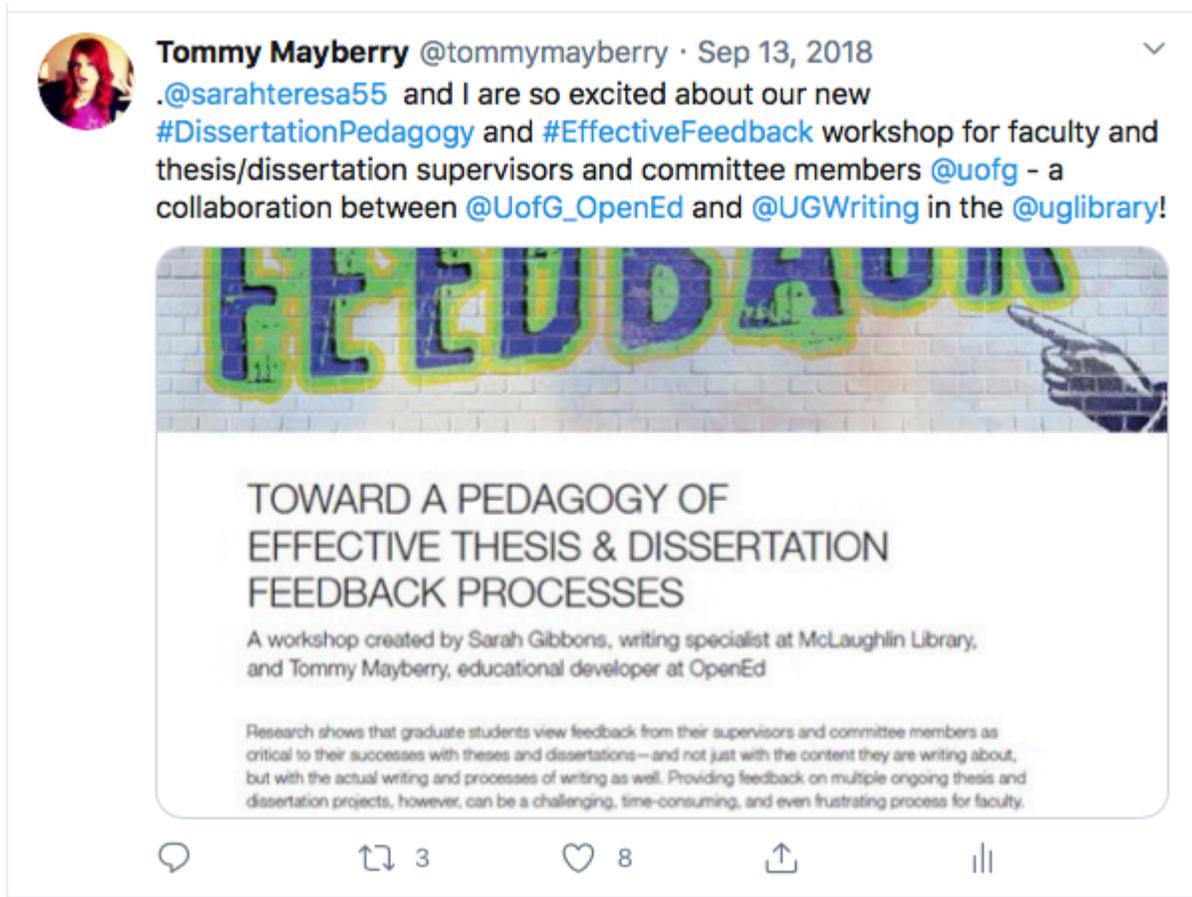
Appendix C Slide with our workshop agenda

Appendix D Slide with our workshop outcomes

Appendix E Images of our Responding to Feedback template

Responding to Feedback

Working with feedback on large writing projects can be challenging because you must address comments on multiple aspects of your project, from your overall ideas, to your paragraph organization, to your sentence structure. Creating a feedback chart can help you to organize and respond to the feedback that you've received, ensuring that you move beyond incorporating small suggestions and engage deeply with the big-picture issues that your advisor or peer reviewer has asked you to consider. Follow the four steps below to create a template for addressing feedback that you can modify for your own purposes.

Step One: Compile Your Feedback

Transfer the comments that you've received on your draft to a separate document. Create a chart with four columns that have the following headings: Type of Feedback, Comments, Tasks, and Results. Record both the end comments and the marginal comments that you have received into this chart. Use the first column to categorize your comments by feedback type and the section column to record the specific comments that you have received. Categorize your feedback based on whether it relates to the content, structure, or style of your writing project. You may wish to use a colour scheme to highlight these different comment types.

Feedback Chart: Step One

Type of Feedback	Comments	Tasks	Results
Content	"Provide more context here." Page 3		
Structure	"This paragraph is too long." Page 6		
Style	'This sentence is unclear." Page 9		
Structure	"This paragraph is out of place." Page 10		
Style	"Grammar." Page 11		
Content	"Develop this section further." Page 13		

Feedback on Content
Feedback on Structure
Feedback on Style

Step Two: Organize Your Feedback

Rearrange the comments in your chart so that you can start with feedback on content, move to feedback on structure, and conclude with feedback on style. Another way to think about this organization is starting with higher-order comments (big-picture issues) and moving to lower-order or later-order comments (sentence-level issues).

You should address feedback on content first because these changes will be most important to your advisor or to your reviewer. After you've completed your changes to content, you may find that you need to change your approach to addressing feedback on structure and style. By making content changes, you may have rearranged the order of your ideas, and you may have deleted sentences that previously contained grammatical errors.

Feedback Chart: Step Two

Type of Feedback	Comments	Tasks	Results
Content	"Provide more context here." Page 3		
Content	"Develop this section further." Page 13		
Structure	"This paragraph is too long." Page 6		
Structure	"This paragraph is out of place." Page 10		
Style	'This sentence is un-clear." Page 9		
Style	"Grammar." Page 11		

Feedback on Content
Feedback on Structure
Feedback on Style

Step Three: Identify Your Tasks

Identify the specific tasks that you must complete to address each comment that your reviewer has provided. In some cases, the specific tasks will be clear from the instructions that your reviewer has provided. In other cases, you will need to think about the specific steps that you should take to address the comments that your advisor or reviewer has given you.

Feedback Chart: Step Three

Type of Feedback	Comments	Tasks	Results
Content	"Provide more context here." Page 3	-Revisit the three articles referenced in this section. -Decide what information the reader needs to understand this critical debate.	
Content	"Develop this section further." Page 13	-Reread this section and note the specific places where I should develop my idea. -Make an appointment with Writing Services to talk through my idea for developing this section.	
Structure	"This paragraph is too long." Page 6	-Divide paragraph into two paragraphs.	
Structure	"This paragraph is out of place." Page 10	-Create a reverse outline to decide where this paragraph should go.	
Style	'This sentence is unclear." Page 9	-Clarify the ideas in this sentence.	
Style	"Grammar." Page 11	-Consult a grammar guide to figure out where the punctuation marks should go in this sentence.	

Feedback on Content	
Feedback on Structure	
Feedback on Style	

Step Four: Record Your Changes

As you complete your tasks, record the changes that you have made in your document. Keeping a record of what you have changed will help ensure that your revised draft reflects your engagement with the questions and suggestions that your advisor or reviewer provided.
You may receive some feedback on a draft that you decide not to incorporate into your revised version. In these cases, you should note the reason why you decided to take a different approach so that you are better able to respond to questions about these aspects of your work.

Feedback Chart: Step Four

Type of Feedback	Comments	Tasks	Results
Content	"Provide more context here." Page 3	-Revisit the three articles referenced in this section. -Decide what information the reader needs to understand this critical debate.	I added three sentences that will help the reader understand what is at stake in this critical debate and how it relates to my research question.
Content	"Develop this section further." Page 13	-Reread this section and note the specific places where I should develop my idea. -Make an appointment with Writing Services to talk through my idea for developing this section.	I clarified my argument, and I provided new evidence to support my claims.
Structure	"This paragraph is too long." Page 6	-Divide paragraph into two paragraphs.	I divided this paragraph into two paragraphs. I created new topic sentences and concluding sentences for each paragraph.
Structure	"This paragraph is out of place." Page 10	-Create a reverse outline to decide where this paragraph should go.	I moved this paragraph to page 8. I revised the paragraph before it and the paragraph after it to strengthen the flow of ideas in this section.
Style	'This sentence is unclear." Page 9	-Clarify the ideas in this sentence.	I divided this sentence into two sentences and added a noun after "this" to clarify my point.
Style	"Grammar." Page 11	-Consult a grammar guide to figure out where the punctuation marks should go in this sentence.	With reference to a grammar guide, I revised my punctuation usage in this sentence and other sentences in this section.