

# Survey Report

## **Campus Writing Program Evaluation Survey Campus Writing Program University of Missouri-Columbia**

**Center for Advanced Social Research  
School of Journalism  
University of Missouri-Columbia  
April 2005**

### **Introduction**

To examine the usefulness of writing intensive teaching experience in pursuit of academic degrees and career development at the individual level, 228 telephone interviews were conducted with former graduate students of University of Missouri-Columbia by the Center for Advanced Social Research (CASR) of Missouri's School of Journalism in March and April 2005. The survey was sponsored by Missouri's Campus Writing Program (CWP).

### **Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument was jointly developed by researchers of CWP and CASR. The design of the survey was to collect the following information.

- Significance of aspects of experiences as writing intensive TAs
- Perceptions of experiences as writing intensive TAs
- Demographics (current work status, academic/job titles, and etc.)

### **Sampling Methodology**

The 2005 Campus Writing Evaluation Survey was based on a sample of former graduate students who supposedly served as writing intensive TAs at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1993-2004. The database was provided by CWP. At least eight attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. The calls were scheduled over days of the week to maximize the chances of making a contact with a potential respondent. All refusals were recontacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to completed interviews.

### **Field Operation**

Two hundred twenty-eight (228) interviews were completed via telephone from February 28 until April 3, 2005 by the trained interviewing and supervising staff of CASR.

## Response Rate Calculation

Description	Telephone #
A. Total number released	467
B. Completed surveys <sup>1</sup>	228
C. Disconnected	55
D. Fax	7
E. Wrong numbers	68
F. Refusals (after two attempts)	31
G. Ineligible <sup>2</sup>	2
H. Respondents permanently unavailable	3
I. Ring No Answer <sup>3</sup>	55
J. Callbacks <sup>4</sup>	18

$$\text{Response Rate (RR)} = \frac{\text{B}}{\text{B} + \text{F} + \text{J}} = 82.3\%$$

### Notes:

1. Altogether 228 surveys were completed. Of them, 12 surveys were conducted to those who did not serve as writing intensive teaching assistants at MU. The final number of completed interviews, as presented in the report, is 216.
2. Ineligible numbers are defined as those that are cell phones, pay phones, and etc.
3. Ring-no-answers are defined as the phone numbers in which no one answered to any of the eight attempts made during the period when the project was implemented.
4. Callbacks are defined as the numbers in which someone answered during the project implementation period but a callback was scheduled because the selected person was not available.

### Reference

The American Association for Public Opinion Research. 1998. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for RDD Telephone Surveys and In-Person Household Surveys*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: AAPPOR

## Survey Findings

Through initial screening of the survey, of the 228 completed interviews, 216 were former graduate students who served as writing intensive teaching assistants at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1993-2004. The following report summarizes the survey findings based on the 216 interviews.

Nearly thirteen percent (13%) of the 216 respondents were working on a graduate degree when the survey was conducted. Twenty (20) of the 27 respondents are at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and the remaining seven (7) are in other colleges or universities. They expect to finish their degrees in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Of the 216 respondents who served as writing intensive teaching assistants, 87 percent (n=188) have completed their graduate degrees at MU, and 13 percent (n=28) have not.

**TABLE 1: In what year did you finish your graduate degree?**

Years	Percent (%)
1992	0.5
1993	4.3
1994	4.8
1995	6.9
1996	6.9
1997	9.6
1998	8.0
1999	11.7
2000	12.2
2001	13.3
2002	8.5
2003	9.0
2004	3.2
Others	1.1

*(n=188)*

**TABLE 2: What type or level was your degree?**

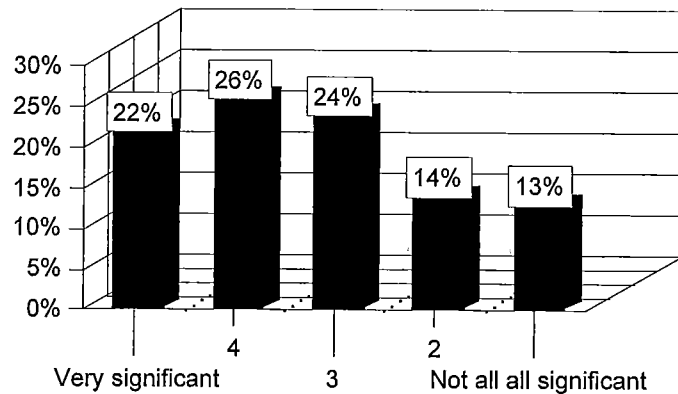
Description of degree	Percent (%)
PhD	25.0
M.A.	38.3
M.S.	14.9
Others	21.8

*(n=188)*

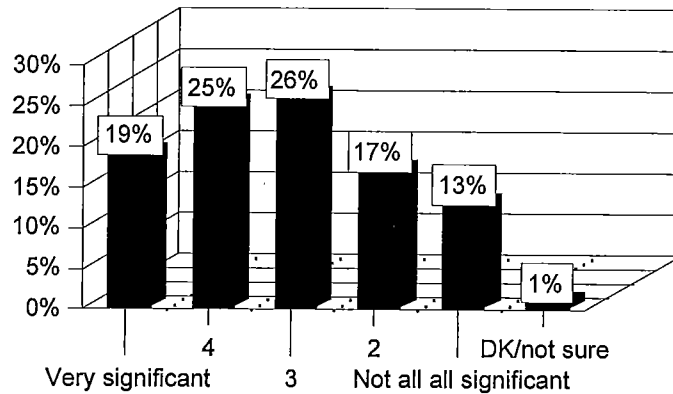
### Significance of aspects of experiences as writing intensive TAs

One of the core components of the survey was to examine the level of significance of various aspects of being a writing intensive TA in one's professional development. Responses to this series of question items were coded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all significant) to 5 (very significant).

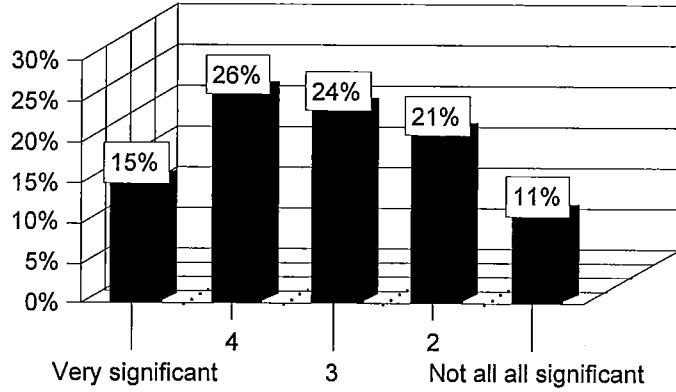
**Attending the writing intensive classes themselves (n=209)**



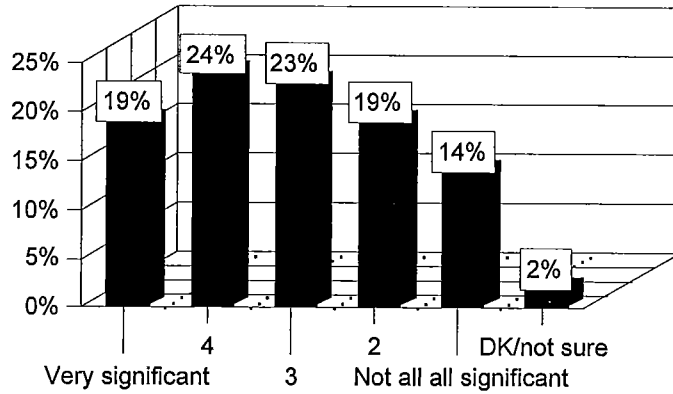
**Discussing writing intensive assignments with the professor (n=216)**



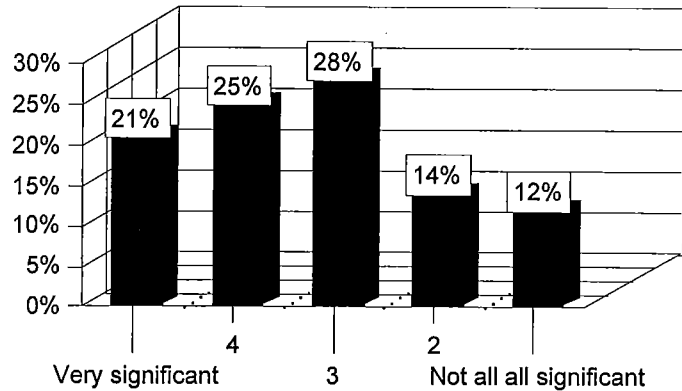
**Discussing writing intensive assignments  
with other WI TAs (n=166)**



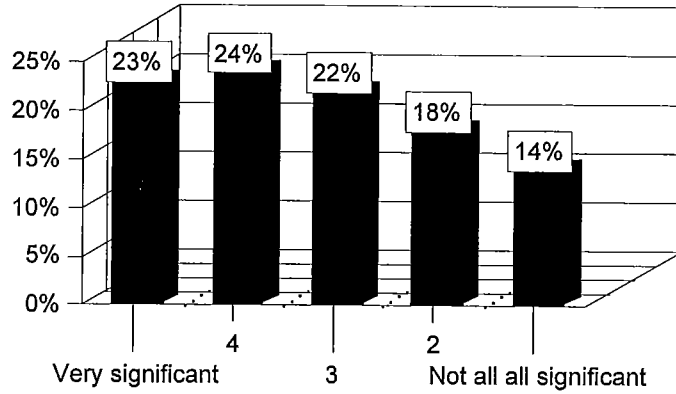
**Discussing student writing with the  
professor (n=216)**



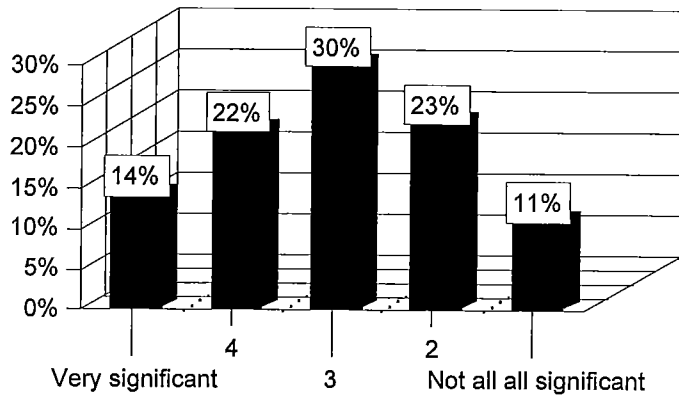
**Discussing student writing with other  
WI TAs (n=166)**



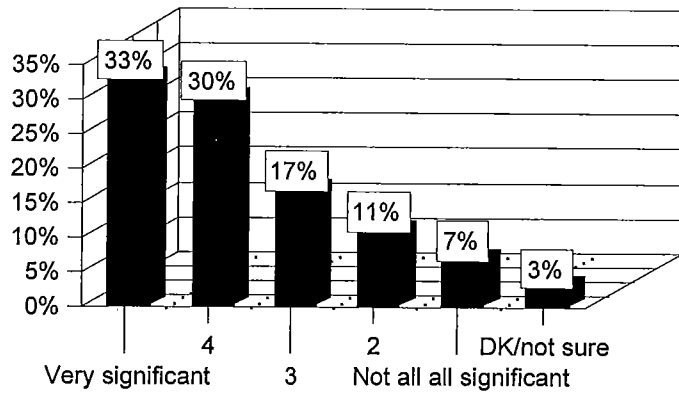
**Discussing course content with the professor (n=213)**



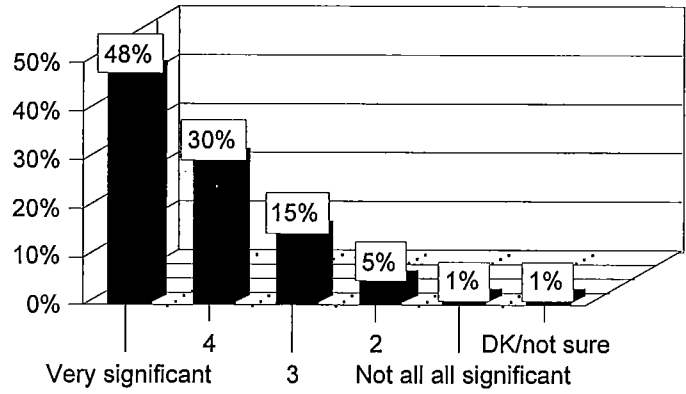
**Discussing course content with other WI TAs (n=166)**



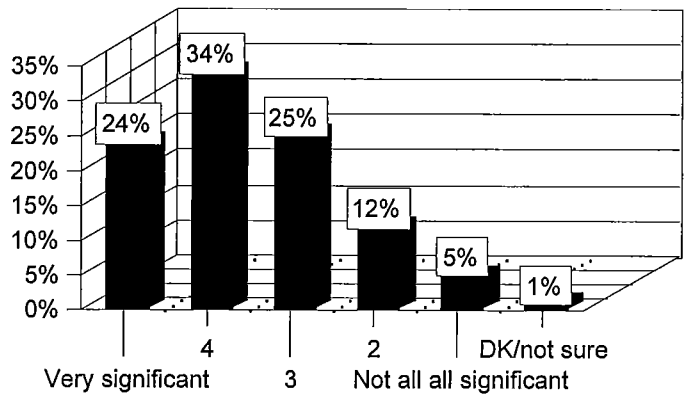
**Conferencing with students during your office hours (n=216)**



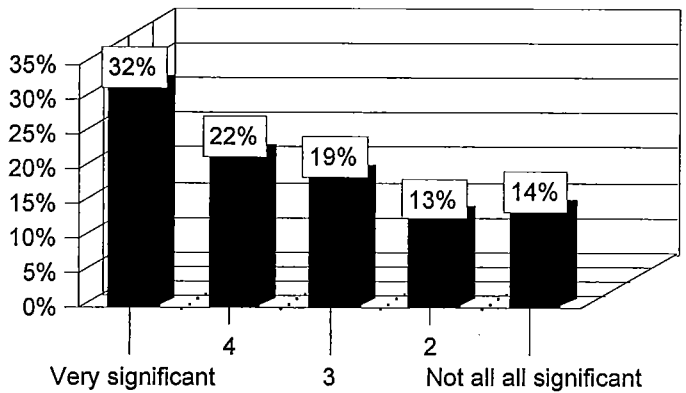
**Commenting on papers and helping students revise their work (n=216)**



**Assigning grades to students' papers (n=216)**

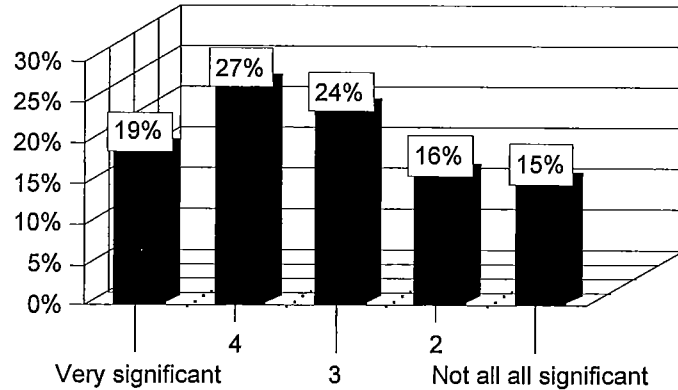


**The rapport that developed between you and the professor (n=214)**





**The camaraderie that developed between  
you and other WI TAs (n=166)**



Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents also provided other aspects of their experiences that they thought have been significant to their professional development. Their answers can be found in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

**TABLE I: Of all the aspects, which one stands out the most?**

Question Items	Percent (%)
1. Attending the writing intensive classes themselves	1.4
2. Discussing the writing intensive assignments with the professor	4.6
3. Discussing the writing intensive assignments with other WI TAs	1.9
4. Discussing student writing with the professor	4.6
5. Discussing student writing with other WI TAs	1.9
6. Discussing course content with the professor	5.1
7. Discussing course content with other WI TAs	1.4
8. Conferencing with students during your office hours	19.0
9. Commenting on papers and helping students revise their work	25.0
10. Assigning grades to students' papers	8.8
11. The rapport that developed between you and the professor	8.8
12. The camaraderie that developed between you and other WI TAs	6.0
13. Don't know/Not sure	10.6
14. Refused	0.9

According to the design of the survey, respondents also provided their reasons for the above question items that they thought were the most significant to their professional development. Their answers are presented in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

**TABLE II: Mean scores regarding significance of various aspects of WI TA experiences**

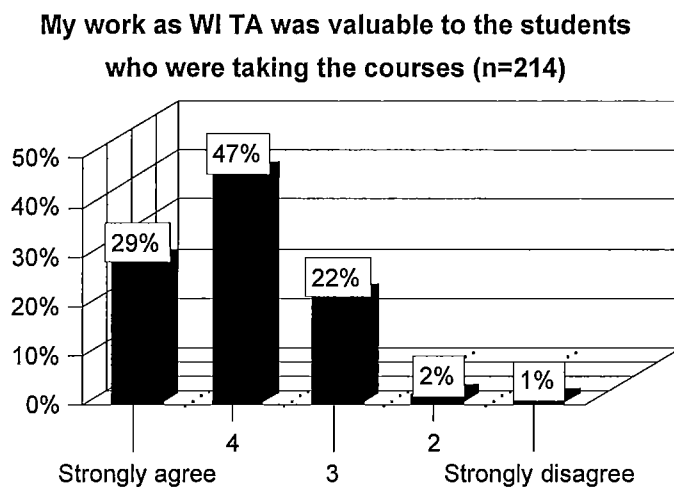
Question Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1. Attending the writing intensive classes themselves	3.30	1.31
2. Discussing the writing intensive assignments with the professor	3.20	1.29
3. Discussing the writing intensive assignments with other WI TAs	3.22	1.28
4. Discussing student writing with the professor	3.14	1.33
5. Discussing student writing with other WI TAs	3.30	1.28
6. Discussing course content with the professor	3.23	1.36
7. Discussing course content with other WI TAs	3.04	1.21
8. Conferencing with students during your office hours	3.73	1.24
9. Commenting on papers and helping students revise their work	4.19	0.97
10. Assigning grades to students' papers	3.61	1.11
11. The rapport that developed between you and the professor	3.45	1.41
12. The camaraderie that developed between you and other WI TAs	3.20	1.32

Notes:

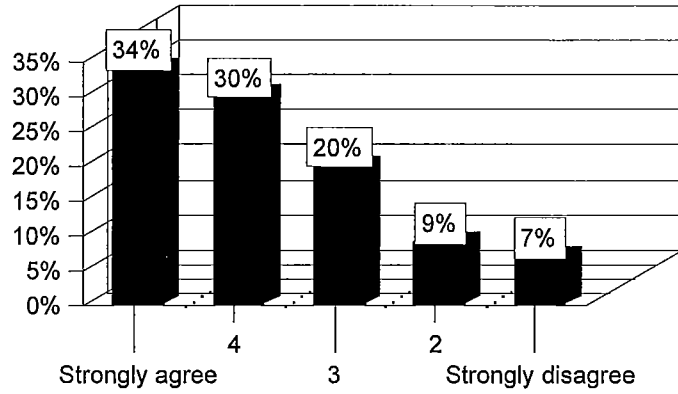
1. The question items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all significant) to 5 (very significant).
2. n = 216.

### Perceptions of experiences as writing intensive TAs

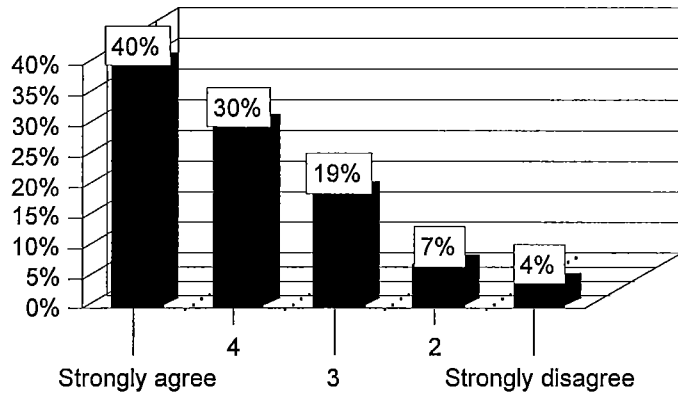
Respondents were then asked to how they perceive their work as writing intensive teaching assistants at MU to the undergraduate students, their own studies, their communication skills, and their career development. Responses to the question items were coded on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree."



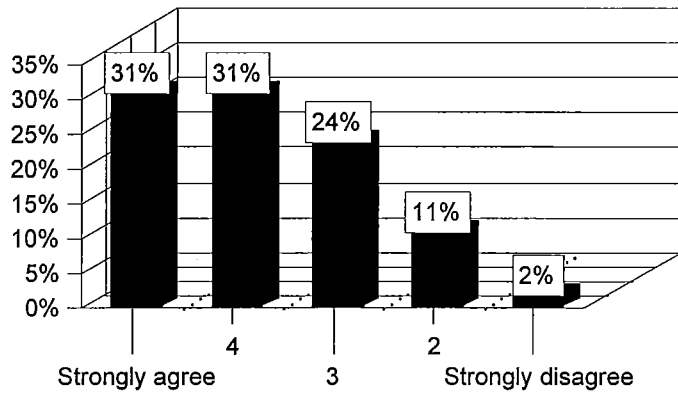
**My work as WI TA was valuable to my own studies at MU (n=215)**



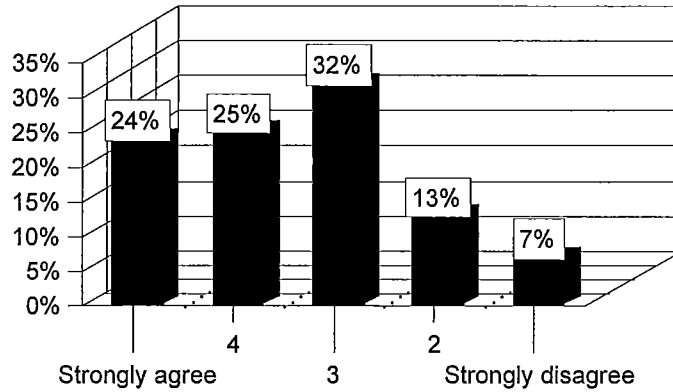
**My work as WI TA is valuable to my own career development (n=216)**



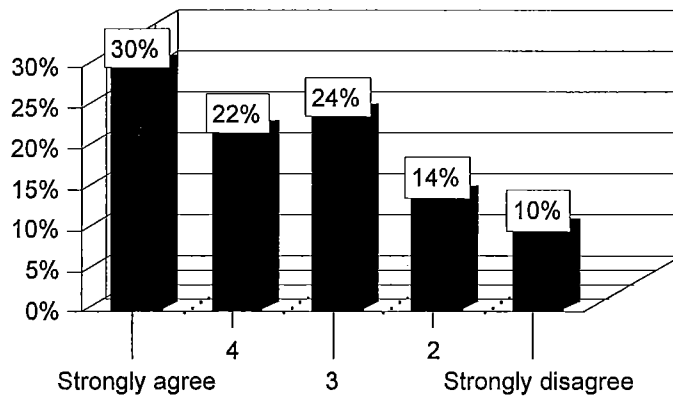
**Working as WI TA helped me better understand the course content ... (n=214)**



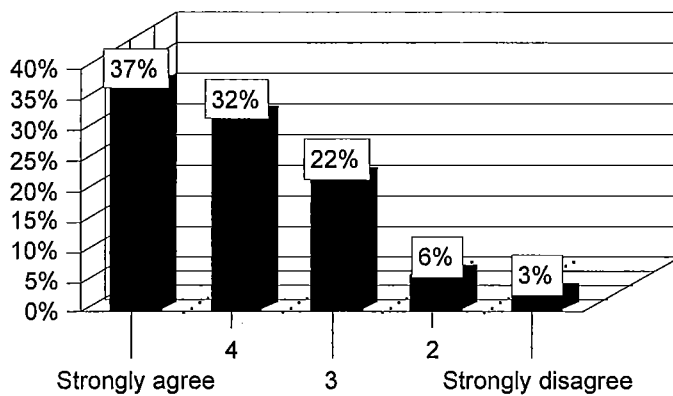
**Working as WI TA helped me better understand the writing I was doing ... (n=216)**



**Working as WI TA helped me with the writing I do now in my career (n=214)**



**Working as WI TA helped me with the communication skills I have now in. (n=213)**



**TABLE III: Mean scores regarding perceptions of experiences as writing intensive TAs**

Question Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1. My work as a WI TA was valuable to the students ...	4.00	0.82
2. My work as a WI TA was valuable to my own studies at MU	3.75	1.22
3. My work as a WI TA was valuable to my own career ...	3.94	1.12
4. Working as a WI TA helped me better understand the course...	3.78	1.08
5. Working as a WI TA helped me better understand the writing...	3.46	1.18
6. Working as a WI TA helped me with the writing I do now ...	3.48	1.31
7. Working as a WI TA helped me with the communication skills	3.93	1.06

Notes:

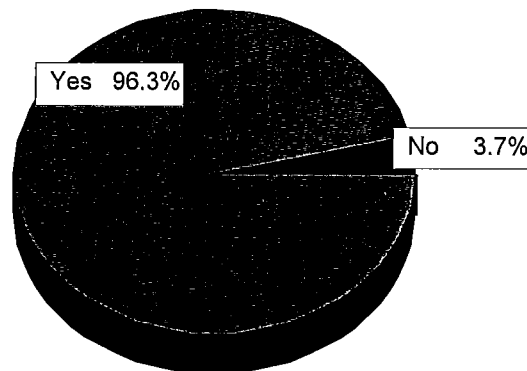
1. The question items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
2. n = 216.

As for either agreement or disagreement with the above statements, respondents provided specific reasons. Their responses are presented in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

Ninety-eight percent (98.1%) of the respondents also specified the aspects of their experiences as a writing teaching TA at the University of Missouri that they thought were the most beneficial to them. In addition, 72 percent answered the question *What aspects of your experience as a writing intensive TA at the University of Missouri do you wish could have been different?* All their responses can be found in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

When asked *Would you advise current graduate students in your field to serve as writing intensive TAs?* 96 percent said yes.

**Would you advise current graduate students  
in your field to serve as WI TAs? [n=216]**



## Demographics

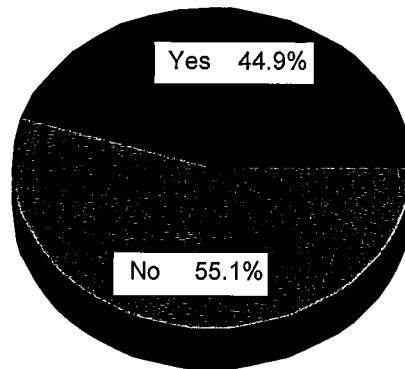
In the end of the survey, all respondents were asked questions about their current employment status, whether they work at an academic institution, and their job titles.

### Where do you work?

As shown below, 45 percent of the former graduate students currently work in academe, and the other 55 percent are not.

#### Do you work in academe now?

(n = 216)



Of those working in academe, they all answered the question *In what college or university are you working?* Their responses are presented in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses. Similarly, those who are currently not working in academe provided information about their job titles. Their answers can be found in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

### Academic rank/title

#### What is your academic rank or title?

Description of academic rank/title	Percent (%)
Professor	2.1
Associate professor	8.2
Assistant professor	25.8
Lecturer	2.1
Adjunct (part-time)	4.1
Adjunct (full-time)	1.0
Others	56.7

(n=97)

### **Final comments**

When asked *Is there anything else your writing intensive TA experience at MU you would like us to know?* 23 percent of the respondents answered. Their responses are presented in Appendix B -- Open-Ended Responses.

### **Consent for future interviews**

**Would you be willing to be interviewed by  
researchers of the study in the future? (n = 216)**

