

# Writing Across the Curriculum Wright State University

## Welcome Back, Toby Fulwiler!

Number 33  
Spring 2007

Make plans now to take part in a two-part workshop conducted by Toby Fulwiler later this spring. Many people will remember the workshops he conducted here in the early 1990s before the official implementation of the Writing Across the Curriculum program. I've been asked a number of times if we might be able to have him pay a return visit, and I'm happy to say that he has agreed to come help us celebrate 40 years of Wright State, as well as 10+ years of WAC.

The workshop will take place in the Berry Room in the Nutter Center, with lunch provided both days. The afternoon of the second day will be a reception honoring the many achievements of faculty and their students as part of the WAC program.

If you would like to take part in this workshop, please contact Tamarus Stokes (775-3740 or tamarus.stokes@wright.edu).

Below is Toby Fulwiler's description of the workshop, along with a brief bio. And, yes, he plans to motorcycle here from Vermont. I hope you'll be able to join us to welcome him back or get acquainted with him for the first time.

**Part 1. Writing to Learn**  
(May 23, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)  
This workshop emphasizes writing as a tool for learning in all disciplines. Participants examine strategies for using ungraded, informal writing to promote critical thinking, self-reflection, active learning, and classroom community. Topics explored include exploratory writing, journals, letters, and collaborative learning.

**Part 2. Learning to Write**  
(May 24—9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)  
This workshop emphasizes focused revision as the key to improved writing and deeper learning. Participants examine strategies for assigning and responding to a variety of student papers, including critical and personal essays as well as research reports. Topics explored include focused revision, peer editing, portfolio assessment, and classroom publication.

**Toby Fulwiler**, Emeritus Professor of English, directed the writing program at the University of Vermont from 1983 to 2002, at which point the university offered an early retirement plan he couldn't refuse. Before that he taught at Michigan Tech and the

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University of Wisconsin where, in 1973, he also received his Ph.D. in American Literature. His books include *The Working Writer*, *College Writing*, *The Journal Book*, *Teaching With Writing*, and *English Studies: Reading, Writing, and the Study of Texts*. He continues to conduct writing workshops for instructors across the disciplines, riding to workshop sites, weather permitting, on his BMW motorcycle.

## Moving from Copyediting to Revision in CST 241

One of the challenges of working with drafts is getting genuine revision in the final version of the paper. Rather than rethinking the topic and approach to it, student writers are much more likely to correct the surface errors that have been identified and add one-sentence elaborations where further development has been requested. (And, in fairness to students, anyone who has edited a journal will know that older writers are sometimes just as reluctant to engage in deep revision!)

To help students move beyond copyediting to genuine revision in CST 241 (Comparative Non-Western Cultures), Geoffrey Owens (Sociology and Anthropology) stresses revision throughout the quarter. This General Education course includes a brief (five-page) term paper, and revision is built into the assignment itself. The paper is developed in stages, beginning with one-page draft research proposal, which is revised and resubmitted for a grade after Dr. Owens has responded to it. Students later provide a working bibliography and a sample scholarly article or book chapter that they will use as a resource. Finally, they submit a draft for instructor and peer critique. He recommends that students “try to come up with a complete and somewhat polished draft early on,” pointing out that “the better the

draft, the more I and your peers can help you.”

Revision figures prominently in the grading criteria accompanying this assignment: “This set of grading criteria is based on the philosophy that writing is a process; that better writing comes with time and with practice. Therefore, grading is based on your improvement from one draft to the next as well as on your final product.” Likewise, the description of the A paper makes it clear that revision is a key to excellence: “With few exceptions, there is significant revision from first to final draft.”

When the draft is presented for review, Professor Owens supplies his students with a two-page handout to help them revise their papers. It opens with a statement concerning his expectations:

*Great writers are not merely writers; they are usually great rewriters. Great writers see what they do as a process, rather than as something that hits them suddenly in divine revelation. Good ideas develop gradually, as the writer rethinks what she/he has previously written and makes substantial changes to that writing over time. And revision means what you rewrite is really different:*

*perhaps 50% to 75% different from what you've started with. A good writer's final draft should bear little resemblance to the first. This does not mean that you will throw away the earlier draft and start over; but it means that you will have to work with the existing ideas and to be open to the possibility that the initial idea transforms into something that you could not have anticipated when you began.*

The handout also draws a sharp distinction between genuine revision and copyediting:

*Revising is not the same as copyediting. Copyediting is largely cleaning up spelling and grammar errors. Revising involves structure, focus, organization, and the thesis and evidence you use to support it; spelling is important inasmuch as these higher-order concerns will be lost to the reader if errors make it difficult to follow your line of reasoning. While it is important to clean up sentence level errors, a lot of the cleaning up will happen in the revision process—the rest is best left for the final draft about to be handed in.*

In addition to making expectations very clear, Dr. Owens provides four questions that students (and their peer reviewers) can use to move

toward a genuine rethinking of their topic. The first, which asks them to identify the major claim in the paper, points out that this thesis “will not be something that you copy or paraphrase from someone else’s book or article ... but it should be your own original idea and words.” The second question directs writers to look for counter-arguments, and the third calls for an examination of the evidence offered in support of the claim.

The final question is reproduced in full because it illustrates a strategy for developing an argument beyond the bare statement of ideas typical of an early draft:

***Are my paragraphs organized, with suitable transitions? Paragraphs should help build your argument; they should be more than just filler or paraphrases of someone else’s research. One way to think about reorganizing paragraphs is to use what is called the MEAL system:***

*M = Main topic.*

*E = Evidence based upon some research.*

*A = Analysis of that research.*

*L = Link back to thesis of the paper.*

*Here is an example of a paragraph before and after revision:*

***[Before]***

*Ullman claims that the internet isolates people*

*from the rest of society. She says that the internet does this through its commercial aspects, which remove the human connection of economic transaction. “[T]he near-complete commercialization of the web ... proceeded in a very particular and single-minded way: by attempting to isolate the individual within a sea of economic activity” (31). She is totally wrong, because the Net brings people together who might not be able to meet otherwise.*

***[After]***

*The net is a technology that allows people to establish communal connections without regard for physical space. [M] Some have argued that the Web is simply a tool of economic exploitation. Ellen Ullman, for instance, argues that “the near-complete commercialization of the web ... proceeded in a very particular and single-minded way: by attempting to isolate the individual within a sea of economic activity” (31). [E]*

*Commercialization is only one aspect of the World-Wide Web, however. Although we can call up any website and see advertising banners in predominant spots, we aren’t forced to use the Web for commercial purposes. In fact, websites often use these banners to pay for a larger, more important goal: allowing anyone with a computer and*

*a net hookup to argue, converse, and even fall in love with anyone else in the world with similar resources. [A] As we move into the twenty-first century, this type of electronic but very human connection will continue to overpower crude economic manipulations. [L]*

The difference between these two versions is striking, and the concrete illustration that Professor Owens provides is more helpful than a general exhortation to develop ideas more thoroughly. Additionally, the analysis keyed to the MEAL acronym provides a scaffolding that students can use independently or to assist one another as they revise their own drafts.

Perhaps the final word should be given to Professor Owens as well. Even as he cautions students that the MEAL approach may not always be suitable, he still stresses the connections between revision and learning more about the topic—one the principal goals of the WAC program:

Not all paragraphs will lend themselves to the MEAL system. But reorganizing paragraphs is one technique that might help you to improve your writing and even make your own ideas clearer in your own mind.

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## What Is College-Level Writing? Where Is It Learned—and When?

“What is college-level writing?” In a recent interview, Patrick Sullivan suggested some of the complexity of the question: “For starters, what characterizes effective college writing—probing, critical thinking or surface-level competency? What forms or genres of writing are appropriately taught in college? Should essay writing be the centerpiece? Should students be able to write scholarly articles in their chosen fields?” (qtd. in Bauman). Answers to these more specific questions are likely to vary widely. For instance, the reply of a high school teacher with a classroom full of college-prep students may well differ from that of someone teaching those same students a year later in ENG 101. Likewise, the response of the professor leading a capstone course in social work would diverge substantially from that of the professor leading a senior seminar in Victorian fantasy or a senior design project in electrical engineering.

Sidestepping the either/or trap inherent in his initial questions, Sullivan includes both critical thinking and surface-level competency in his own short list of attributes of good college-level writing. In his view, such writing is characterized by

- a clear sense of purpose and audience,
- genre knowledge (knowing what form one is writing in and the conventions required by the form),
- control over matters of grammar and mechanics to suit a particular rhetorical purpose and audience and genre,
- a depth of reflection and capability of expressing the implications of one’s subject. (Qtd. in Bauman)

The simplicity of Sullivan’s list may be misleading. None of these attributes is stable; instead, the writer must adjust for each new audience, each new purpose, each new genre, each new subject. As Lee Ann Carroll points out in a longitudinal study of student writers, development occurs in periods of transition, and transition is ubiquitous in college life: “For students, each semester in college involves various types of transitions, and each course, each professor, each task represents a more or less different ecological environment” (23). Under these conditions, writers are not practicing the same task time after time but developing new responses to new demands.

For this reason, Carroll has concluded that a “first-year course in writing cannot meet

all the needs of even our more experienced writers” and that students require additional explicit training because their “complex literacy skills develop slowly, often idiosyncratically, over the course of their college years, as they choose or are coerced to take on new roles as writers” (xi-xii). In her view, first-year writing classes provide “intensive practice and a few basic insights about college literacy tasks that students often can express but may find difficult to apply” (49). Additionally, students may experience difficulty applying those “basic insights” as they continue to move from one writing experience to another.

Carroll’s conclusions are consistent with the earlier findings of Susan Peck MacDonald, who identified four stages of writing through which a student passes while moving from outsider status to full membership in a disciplinary discourse community:

1. Nonacademic writing,
2. Generalized academic writing concerned with stating claims, offering evidence, respecting others’ opinions, and learning how to write with authority,
3. Novice approximations of particular disciplinary

ways of making knowledge,  
4. Expert, insider prose. (187)

The first two stages correspond to the types of writing done in first-year writing courses at most institutions—including Wright State (the second stage reads like a condensed version of the learning outcomes for our ENG 101 and 102—see pages 8-9). According to MacDonald's schema, at the end of the first year of college a student would seem to be positioned to move easily into writing in introductory-level classes in the discipline. That transition, however, is rarely smooth. Before gaining "particular disciplinary ways of making knowledge," novices must absorb tremendous amounts of information, including many tacit assumptions about the field. Carroll's study, which followed students throughout their college experience, indicates that students at this third stage often cannot distinguish between "what the professor wants" and discipline-specific expectations (such as the use of APA style). By the end of their four years, though, these same students showed a "growing" (if variable) degree of ability in "employing appropriate genre and discourse conventions, locating and interpreting relevant sources, applying concepts

from a discipline, developing evidence acceptable in the discipline, and organizing all of this information within a single coherent text." And Carroll reports that most of the students interviewed no longer saw requirements as just "what the professor wants" but as something necessary within the disciplinary field. Moreover, students could point to times "when writing was consciously learned and they understood what was expected" (90).

**"Typically, [a community that specializes in learning among its members] models ways of doing or knowing, provides opportunities for emulation, offers running commentary, provides 'scaffolding' for novices, and even provides a good context for teaching deliberately."**

**Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996), 20-21.**

Carroll conducted her study at Pepperdine University, which has no formal WAC program and no required upper-level disciplinary writing courses. However, those students in the study who had taken upper-level research courses (she cites history and psychology) clearly benefited from those classes, which "were quite effective in making explicit the often tacit expectations of the field" (124). She recommends adding such courses as the next appropriate "teachable

moment" after the first-year writing course, noting that "the next major transitions in [students'] development as writers took place as they struggled to integrate the content knowledge, concepts, and research and writing conventions in their major disciplines" (124-25).

At Wright State, these teachable moments can occur in the junior- and senior-level courses (and not just in those officially designated as writing intensive in our WAC program). To make the most of those moments means asking students to build on what they learned in their first-year writing courses, transferring what they learned there as they analyze and respond to a new writing situation. Intentionality is crucial—students may need an overt reminder of the expectations associated with the "generalized academic writing" they have done, as well as instruction concerning genres and conventions they are encountering for the first time.

A writer's initiation into the expectations of a new discipline is usually gradual. MacDonald's schema (above) casts the typical movement toward linguistic "insider" status in two stages, beginning with novice "approximations" of the way meaning is made in

a particular discipline. This, too, is not a simple, linear process. In an essay concerned with helping students progress into a new discipline, Jonathan Hall identifies introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels of competence, and provides general expectations for each level. Hall's presentation of this information is especially helpful in detailing expectations not only for a student's writing but for his or her critical thinking, reading, and research skills at each stage:

#### **INTRODUCTORY**

**Critical Thinking—Accommodating complexity and ambiguity:** *Students need to develop the ability to hold complex or ambiguous ideas in the mind long enough to explore their ramifications in a nuanced way, without prematurely oversimplifying them.*

**Reading—Intermediate “culturally-aware citizen” lifetime critical reading skills:** *Students can demonstrate through close textual readings an awareness of ambiguous levels of meaning in language; can articulate a critique of a current movie or book more sophisticated than “liked it”/“hated it”; can profitably read representative genres from the disciplines, or*

*popular approximations of them.*

**Writing—Ability to produce essays that analyze complex texts, and defend a student's own interpretation of ambiguous layers of meaning:** *Students should develop the ability to articulate how various sources disagree with, partially agree with, build upon, take off from, re-apply the insights from other sources, and to do the same in their own writing. Students may be writing about expository prose from any field, but they will always be supporting their own interpretive points with appropriate evidence.*

**Research—Synthesizing multiple voices:** *Students should be able to find and apply appropriate sources to supplement their assigned readings, and to gain a deeper understanding of their assigned subject matter using the insights of various disciplinary communities. Students must consider and interact with alternate interpretations of their chosen texts, or with sources that provide historical or other context.*

#### **INTERMEDIATE**

**Critical Thinking—Absorbing knowledge and making it one's**

**own:** *Students need to actively master the material of the course, and be able to put it together in different formats, not just recite memorized facts on exams.*

**Reading—Elementary discipline-specific critical reading skills:** *Students must demonstrate ability to understand key basic concepts of a field, and manipulate them in different intellectual contexts.*

**Writing—Ability to express and explore key basic concepts of field:** *Students must use their own words, appropriate analytical language, and carefully defined technical terms to write about their understanding of course material.*

**Research—Tracing knowledge back to original sources:** *Students should get beyond the textbook presentation of the field and demonstrate a familiarity with some of the key historical sources upon which modern distillations of specialized knowledge are based.*

#### **ADVANCED**

**Critical Thinking—Awareness of the making of knowledge:** *Ability to make*

*specialized distinctions within key concepts, and to identify ongoing issues/ areas of tension within the discipline.*

**Reading—Intermediate discipline-specific critical reading skills:** *Students should be able to read scholarly review articles describing the state of knowledge in the field, as well as articles distilling specialized knowledge for a general audience.*

**Writing—Ability to produce non-technical but discipline-informed mixed-mode documents:** *Ability to make an informed argument about current issues in the field using appropriate analytical language that incorporates some specialized terminology along with the student's own voice.*

**Research—Becoming familiar with the current state of knowledge on a**

**particular topic:** *With the guidance of the instructor and the librarian, students should be able to describe what is known, what is not known, and what is in dispute about a particular assigned topic. (Hall 12-14)*

Hall's list of competencies—deliberately generalized as a starting point for developing specific disciplinary expectations—may make a good starting point for articulating our own expectations of our students as they move into our own field of study and begin to make their way toward expert status. So what, then, is college-level writing, and where is it learned? Although we may agree that, in general, college-level is marked by both critical thinking and surface-level competency, both of those features may manifest themselves differently at various times in a student's academic life. Certainly, it should be learned—and taught—deliberately, throughout a student's unfolding academic experience.

## Works Cited

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- Carroll, Lee Ann. *Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers*. Studies in Writing and Rhetoric. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.
- Hall, Jonathan. "Toward a Unified Writing Curriculum: Integrating WAC/WID with Freshman Composition." *The WAC Journal* 17 (Sept. 2006): 5-22. 23 Apr. 2007 <<http://wac.colostate.edu/journal/vol17/hall.pdf>>.
- MacDonald, Susan Peck. *Professional Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1994.

## CTL WORKSHOP

### *The Letter Book* Book Group/Luncheon

Thursday, May 17, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in O23 Library

In *The Letter Book*, Sue Dinitz and Toby Fulwiler demonstrate how assigning letters in college classrooms can promote community and help students learn content and understand genres and literacy in general. The Letter Book illustrates a wide variety of ways in which letters can be used in the college classroom. To make your reservation and make arrangements to receive your complimentary book, call Tina Scarberry at x4522.

# English 101 & 102 Learning Outcomes

The following outcomes for ENG 101 and 102 were articulated by the English Department Writing Program Committee in March 2004. Students who have completed these courses will have been instructed in these areas and have been given numerous opportunities to work on these abilities. A copy of these outcomes is available online at [http://www.wright.edu/cola/Dept/eng/wsuwweb/guide/101\\_102\\_outcomes-04.doc](http://www.wright.edu/cola/Dept/eng/wsuwweb/guide/101_102_outcomes-04.doc).

## ENG 101: Introduction to Academic Writing and Reading: Writing Program Outcomes

***Use writing as a generative and analytical tool:*** Students should be able to:

- generate ideas for writing
- develop ideas and think on paper
- analyze the writing of others.

***Draft and revise with response from readers:*** Students should be able to:

- understand where writing needs development
- understand where writing needs clarification
- understand the needs of readers (including establishing common ground with them)

***Analyze their writing and class performance:*** Students should be able to:

- guide instructor response
- write accurate self-analyses of their own writing, both individual pieces and portfolios.

***Read critically:*** Students should be able to:

- identify the main idea in a piece of writing, the elements of the writing (description, details, organization, tone, voice, etc.) that the writer used to shape the writing & make it effective;
- identify the ways in which ideas are supported or argued in essays, the premises from which the writer started, and the context within which the writing was originally written (i.e., its original audience).

***Write clearly and effectively:*** Students should be able to write:

- lengthy invention materials and drafts in which they explore their subject
- clear thesis statements or articulations of controlling ideas
- thoughtful revisions that go beyond instructor comments to greater consideration of their subject and writing strategy
- 3-4 page essays that use various sources of information
- carefully edited and proofread, grammatically correct final drafts

***Work with others through effective speaking and listening:*** Students should also be able to:

- work collaboratively on their writing through groups, peer response, joint projects, etc.
- discuss their writing and reading, both in groups and in the class as a whole.

***Identify, assess, and present their best work:*** Students should be able to:

- present their work in a portfolio to demonstrate their abilities & their work in the course.
- assess their own work, describing with examples from their own texts their writing's strengths and weaknesses.

## ENG 102: Writing In Academic Discourse: Writing Program Outcomes

**Read critically:** Students should be able to:

- identify the main idea in a piece of writing, the writer's strategies, the premises from which the writer is starting, and the context within which the writing was originally written.
- evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate primary and secondary sources.

**Argue appropriately:** Students should be able to:

- find sufficient appropriate sources of information, to inform themselves of their topic & the range of potential viewpoints on it, and to use as authorities when they write.
- define key terms.
- write with precise statements and attention to accurate language.
- use appropriate forms of argument, in terms of logic & emotion.
- gather sufficient information on their topics.
- use relevant information of quality appropriate to the writing situation.
- provide adequate evidence for their assertions.
- use facts accurately.
- avoid blanket generalizations.
- avoid fallacious arguments (i.e., misleading or manipulating readers).
- demonstrate the ability to contribute to the ongoing conversation on their topic (rather than arguing to assert group membership or to win or lose).

**Recognize the integrity of the reader:** Students should be able to demonstrate understanding of their readers through:

- showing awareness of a reader
- assuming an open-minded reader
- using affectively balanced terms—no inflammatory or biased language
- avoiding stereotyping possible readers
- establishing common ground, developing appropriate counterarguments, or acknowledging other points of view;

**Write clearly and effectively:** Students should be able to write:

- clear thesis statements or articulations of controlling ideas
- using appropriate organizational structures
- correctly, with minimal errors, producing grammatically correct prose
- accurate summaries of others' writing
- accurate paraphrases of others' writing and incorporate them into their own writing
- brief analytical papers, such as critiques or brief arguments
- 3-4 page essays that use various sources

Students should also be able to:

- display evidence of ability to use writing processes (invention, drafting, revision)
- attribute ideas to their authors
- present the views of other writers fairly, with balance
- use source material accurately and appropriately (quotations, paraphrases, summaries)
- cite source materials fairly accurately, using MLA or APA format
- work collaboratively on their writing through groups, peer response, joint projects, etc.

**Identify, assess, and present their best work:** Students should be able to:

- present their work in a portfolio to demonstrate their abilities & their work in the course.
- assess their own work, describing with examples from their own texts their writing's strengths and weaknesses.

## What Academic Departments Say about Writing in the Major

Most members of the Wright State community are aware of the importance of assessment and of the many assessment activities carried out by academic departments, academic support services, and student services. The assessment plans of a number of academic departments address the development of students' writing abilities within the major. These plans often call for faculty review of student writing and other direct means of assessment. The following sampling of findings is excerpted from the 2004-05 and 2005-06 assessment reports posted to the University Assessment webpage (<http://www.wright.edu/assessment/bpra/outcomes/reports.html>).

- In **Art History** comparison of early research papers with senior work showed growth in students' ability to conduct research and think critically.
- All **Biological Sciences** students are required to take a senior seminar course during their senior year. This course was used to evaluate student performance in both oral and written communication. Students were rated by faculty using a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory), 2 (adequate), 3 (average), 4 (good), or 5 (excellent) in their ability to design a PowerPoint presentation, effectively present scientific information, deliver an oral presentation, and their overall knowledge of the seminar topic. Students were rated "good" to "excellent" in all areas. In addition, greater than 90% of the students successfully communicated a sound knowledge of essential biological concepts both orally and in writing.
- In exit interviews conducted by **Biomedical Engineering**, students' mean responses to the question of their ability to communicate effectively in written form was 3.38 (of 4.00). In the exit interviews conducted by **Industrial & Systems Engineering**, the mean response to the same question was 4.00.
- **Chemistry** graduates were surveyed on a variety of topics, among them their ability to write in a style proper for reports in scientific journals and the ability to give scientific presentations of an appropriate quality. Nearly half rated their ability as 3 (very well) or 2 (fairly well) while the other half rated it as 1 (not well). Most suggested a need for instruction in submissions to scientific journals.
- **Computer Science** surveyed COOP employers concerning the job skills of the CS majors they employed. Employers ranked students' "ability to provide written reports, memos, or letters" at 1.17 (CS majors) or 1.57 (CEG majors), using a scale on which 2 represented "outstanding," 1 adequate, and 0 inadequate.
- **Geological Sciences** faculty expect their students to "demonstrate the ability to write in a style consistent with that found in a scientific journal" and uses senior theses to evaluate this outcome. The single thesis completed during the assessment period was satisfactory in this respect. Faculty also reviewed term papers from GL 486 (Invertebrate Paleontology) and found 80% of the writing met this goal.
- **History** reviews the writing of students in the two 400-level courses required of all majors. The twenty-six students who successfully completed HST 401 (Research Methods) displayed writing proficiency, an ability to engage in critical and interpretative historical analysis and an understanding of historical methodology. The twenty-one students who successfully completed HST 400 (Historiography)

displayed writing proficiency, a grasp of historical analysis and a familiarity with various schools of historical interpretation. Similar writing proficiency was found in research papers from other 400-level courses as well.

- **Liberal Studies** graduates are expected to conduct “independent research and have effective research skills, including proper reference citation in bibliographies and footnotes; have strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills; and be effective writers.” According to the assessment report, “... evidence suggests near 100% success in terms meeting our goals concerning writing, research, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, of the nine papers evaluated, there was only one clear problem. Two of three evaluators agreed that one paper deserved a ‘no’ on *one* of the four measures.” The report also notes that “the average LS major took nearly 9 writing intensive courses for the major (7 more than required),” calling that record “a very promising sign, given our objectives.”

- **Political Science** faculty reviewed eighteen randomly selected writing samples from PLS 486/686, looking at three variables: critical use of sources, thesis/argument statement, and proper use of evidence. Evaluation of the writing samples confirmed that senior-level students do achieve the ability to engage in critical thinking, both in their use of sources and in ability to challenge an argument with evidence. An award at the 2005 National Model UN Conference for outstanding position paper went to a PLS 486 position paper, providing further confirmation of this finding. Additional corroboration comes from interviews with employers of graduates. The NASIC recruiter noted that analytical writing experience and oral presentation were key elements in hiring two of our graduates; the Vice President of the Dayton Chamber of Commerce also noted the importance of these skills in his recent hiring of a political science graduate in a policy manager position.
- **Psychology** faculty instructing 14 capstone courses evaluated the communication skills of students taking their second capstone class,

including their ability to write literature reviews and empirical research reports following the American Psychological Association Manual of Style and their ability to make oral presentations following accepted standards for scientific conferences. They rated 77.2% of the students as 4 or 5, indicating they had sufficiently met this objective.

- In surveys conducted by **Women’s Studies**, 68% of the respondents “felt that their writing skills were more firmly developed and enhanced by taking women’s studies courses; 66% said the same for their listening skills; and 50% their reading. When asked how these skills helped them in other academic courses, the students responded that they benefited from improving their writing skills over other skills. Students stated that their research ability/knowledge, vocabulary, confidence in writing, proper formatting, and critical thinking skills, had all been enhanced and was consistently demonstrated by their writing more effective papers.”

# Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Consultant

The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) faculty consultant program is a resource for faculty teaching writing intensive (WI) courses in the major. The program provides faculty the chance to work with an experienced writing teacher as they plan and teach their WI courses in the major.

**Who is eligible for WAC consulting?** Any faculty member who would like to enhance their teaching of WI classes in the major may work with the faculty consultant. (Faculty wanting assistance teaching WI Gen Ed courses should contact Joe Law, Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum.)

## How does it work?

Interested faculty can contact Peggy Lindsey, the faculty consultant any time to request assistance with a course. Normally, the consultant will work with a faculty member before, during and after the quarter he or she teaches a WI course. A typical set of interactions includes the following:

1. Before the quarter begins, the faculty member and consultant meet to design effective writing assignments and develop explicit grading criteria.
2. During the quarter, the consultant may -- if the faculty member wishes -- participate in the class itself, conducting or assisting with one or more workshops on specific aspects of writing, such as planning, research, revising or editing.
3. After students submit assignments, the faculty member can meet with the consultant to discuss ways of giving effective feedback.
4. At the end of the course, the consultant and faculty member meet to develop a plan for teaching the course again and for transferring ideas to other courses.
5. If desired, the consultant will provide a letter for the faculty member's chair detailing the work accomplished and teaching areas strengthened.

The above approach is merely one possibility. If you have different needs you'd like help with, just ask. You may reach Peggy by email ([peggy.lindsey@wright.edu](mailto:peggy.lindsey@wright.edu)) or by phone (775- 2096).

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FROM: Joe Law  
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