

DICKINSON COLLEGE

# Dickinson College Writing Program

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Biannual Report

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2009 Dickinson College restructured the position of Director of the Writing Program. Currently, the director coordinates the college's Writing Across the Curriculum initiative and directs the Norman M. Eberly Writing Center.

After assuming the role of director in August 2009, my first project was to identify the college's writing-related needs and issues in order to define my goals. I began by studying the most recent "Writing Program Self-Study" and the "Evaluation of the Writing Program at Dickinson College," conducted by Carol Rutz (Carleton College) and Kathleen Skubikowski (Middlebury College) in 2006. These two evaluators stated in their report:

It should then be the responsibility of the new Director, working with the senior administration, with interested faculty, and with APSC, to recommit Dickinson to the centrality of writing in its curriculum; to refocus the First-Year Seminar Program on writing as a vehicle for entry into an intellectual community; to decide whether a three-tiered Writing Program with written capstone experiences in all disciplines is a viable goal at Dickinson, or if perhaps a two-tiered program with more than one WR course required might better serve the College; and to begin the process of establishing an extensive and in-depth faculty development and support program (including better integrating the Writing Center).

While the evaluator comments framed my understanding of the Writing Program's needs, new questions and concerns emerged as I interviewed departments; spoke with administrators; interacted with Writing Center tutors; conducted faculty development workshops; read files of past WR documents and reports; studied the Dickinson website; examined *The Bulletin*; read the 2007 APSC "Resolution to Approve New Description for First-Year Seminars"; compiled data from FYS Course Designation forms, Faculty Feedback Forms, and Student Feedback Forms; assessed a sample of FYS essays; and compiled data from WR Course Designation forms, Faculty Feedback Forms, and Student Feedback Forms.

Near the end of the semester in consultation with the Subcommittee on Writing, I framed a response to the outside evaluators' report in the form of a revised Writing Program mission statement:

The Writing Program exists to strengthen the culture of writing at Dickinson College, where students write at all levels and in every major. In harmony with the Dickinson Dimensions, students learn that writing is both an act that is knowledge-producing and a means to self-making, bridge-building, and interconnecting with the world. To support and celebrate the teaching and learning of writing, the Writing Program offers courses that emphasize the writing process and craft, sustains a learning community for writers through the Norman M. Eberly Writing Center, assists faculty in developing engaging and authentic writing-enhanced courses, provides opportunities for writing teachers across the disciplines to improve their pedagogical skills, and recognizes the successes of both student writers and writing teachers.

The following report details my findings and my first attempts to create a more coherent program structure, offer writing resources for instructors, and develop support for student writers. I welcome the APSC's feedback regarding roads worth taking, roads taking me in the wrong direction, roads better left untraveled, roads needing paving – metaphorically speaking.

## ETHNOGRAPHIC TOUR

### *What role does writing play in the Dickinson curriculum?*

To answer this question, I am in the process of undertaking an “ethnographic tour” of the writing culture at Dickinson with the goal of visiting every department by May 2010. To date, the following departments have met with me: American Studies, Anthropology/Archaeology, Art History, Chemistry, Economics, Environmental Studies, Film Studies, French, Geology, German, International Studies, International Business & Management, Italian Studies, Mathematics and Computer Science, Medieval & Early Modern Studies, Middle East Studies, Music, Philosophy, Physics & Astronomy, Psychology, Religion/Judaic Studies, Russian, Sociology, and Theatre & Dance.

This spring I hope the remaining departments will schedule a time to meet with me. These include Africana Studies, Biology, Biochemistry/Molecular Biology, Classical Studies, East Asian Studies, English, History, Neuroscience, Policy Studies, Political Science, Spanish & Portuguese, and Women’s & Gender Studies.

In each meeting, I pose the same five questions, take copious field notes, and collect writing artifacts (e.g. syllabi, writing guides, email follow-ups) when they are offered.

- 1.) To quote the original Writing Program website, how do you implement the “three-tiered” writing program in your department?
- 2.) Where is writing taught in your curriculum?
- 3.) How do you teach majors the writing specific to your discipline?
- 4.) How do you teach the writing process?
- 5.) What kind of support can the Writing Program provide for you?

By piecing together the departments’ narratives, I am forming a composite picture of attitudes, practices, frustrations, needs, and successes when it comes to teaching writing.

### Observations

- 1.) There exists an “Underground Writing Program.” The old writing program website and *The Bulletin* led me to believe that Dickinson students did a moderate amount of writing. When I spoke with departments, I found that Dickinson students do more writing than I had assumed. Most departments value writing highly, emphasize its importance, and assign it frequently at all levels of the curriculum.
- 2.) Many departments have reflected on and theorized how they teach writing within the discipline. Of these the most ambitious have developed a (usually flexible) plan that sequences the development of writing skills from the 100 to 400 levels. Other departments admit that they have not yet worked out the writing curriculum. (One department admitted they are “weak in that area.”)
- 3.) There are some courses that are WR or almost WR but not designated as such. When I asked faculty why they did not designate a course that seemed to fulfill WR requirements as WR, a few replied: “You want more than one?” In other words, since the department already had a WR course, they saw no need to designate another course as WR.

4.) As students move from one discipline to the next, they confront a wide array of genres: theoretical analysis of a primary source, theoretical analysis of quantitative data, literature review, study abroad interview, case study, summary, critique, proposal, collaborative essay, business plan, powerpoint, book review, podcast lecture, blog, wiki, website, response, biography, autobiography, art gallery catalogue, conference abstract, “laymen’s terms” paper, lab notebook, poster, argument, response, dissertation (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), composed commentary, policy brief, reflection, final exam questions, proofs, freewrites, evaluations – to name a few.

5.) Faculty think of revision in different ways ranging from constraining to flexible. Some place the burden solely on themselves and believe that the only way to meet the WR requirement is for the instructor to comment on each draft a student writes and then require those students to revise every assignment. (For some this is a personal preference; for others it is the rule.) Others couple instructor feedback with peer review and/or writing center feedback. If they have multiple assignments rather than one long assignment, they may ask students to revise several, but not all, of their essays. What’s more, they make a distinction between editing and revising.

6.) Many faculty admitted that they did not assign peer review because they could not afford to give up valuable class time devoted to content area material. This is a common and understandable concern.

7.) The student feedback reports rarely mention prewriting, indicating a lack of emphasis on prewriting despite the focus on process writing.

### Recommendations

- 1.) The Writing Program website has been revised to bring the Underground Writing Program to light: see <http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/home-page/> The website (and excavation) is a work-in-progress.
- 2.) Departments that have not theorized the writing curriculum for majors (or that have not done so recently) should make this an agenda item for a future department meeting.
- 3.) All courses taught as WR should be designated as such. APSC should encourage, but not require, departments to have more than one WR course offering.
- 4.) The Writing Program needs to revisit the WR outcomes in a forum in which all faculty are invited:
  - a.) The Writing Program should clarify that the requirement for fifteen pages of writing includes any genre authentic to the major.
  - b.) The Writing Program should rethink the revision requirement in light of both best practices and the way revision occurs in the discipline.
- 5.) To support multiple draft writing, the Writing Program will train “attached tutors” to facilitate peer review groups outside of class time. This will help instructors who value revision but choose not to sacrifice content to facilitate revision during class.
- 6.) Future faculty development workshops will address the importance of prewriting skills, which are also often discipline specific, to the writing process.

## FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

*What are the needs of First-Year Seminar students and instructors as they define themselves as a “community of inquiry” through writing (to quote the 2007 APSC “Resolution”)?*

### Student and Faculty Self-Evaluations

As a means to answering this question, the Subcommittee on Writing worked on revising the student and faculty self-evaluation forms in October (see Appendices A and B). At the end of the Fall 2009 semester, 540 students (out of 583) and 13 (out of 41) faculty had responded. When reading the surveys, I formed my generalizations after noting common themes repeated by the majority of students in the course.

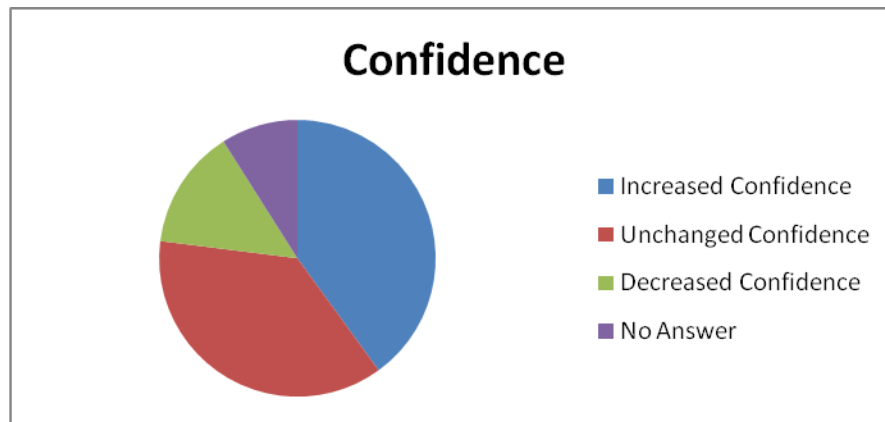
#### Observations

- 1.) Instructors interpreted the FYS learning outcomes related to writing in several different ways, given students’ descriptions of what they learned in the course. In terms of what instructors stressed about writing, I noted four categories:
  - a.) Sentence-level concerns: verbosity, “fluff,” economical language.
  - b.) Paragraph-level skills: topic sentences.
  - c.) Research methods and forms: databases, library resources, APA, AA, MLA, Chicago
  - d.) Essay writing: thesis, development, organization, transitions, etc.
  
- 2.) Students were involved in several writing process activities.

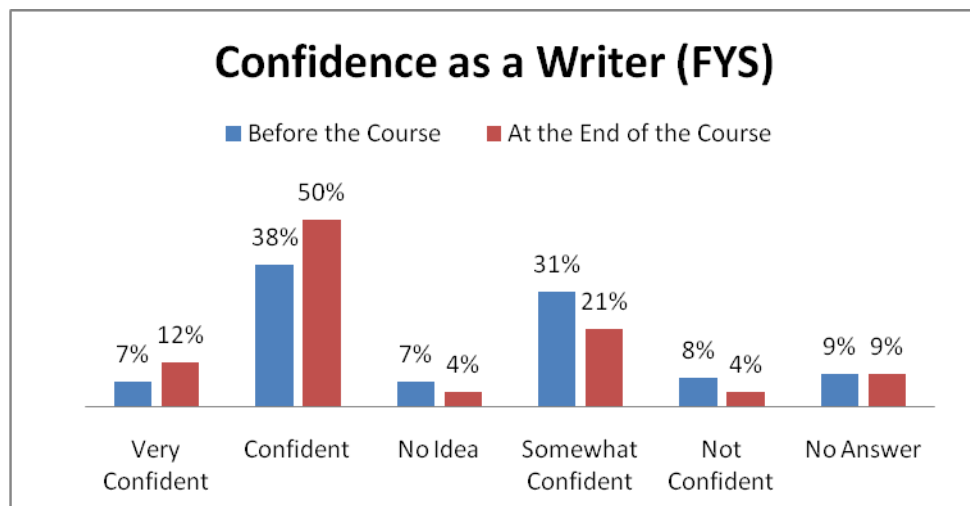
Process Activity	Number	Percentage
I engaged in several prewriting activities.	243	45%
I kept a journal and incorporated some of my ideas into writing assignments.	54	10%
I wrote posts for an interactive online site.	32	6%
I reviewed my writing with peers in class.	300	56%
I reviewed my writing with peers outside of class.	280	52%
I sought feedback from a writing center tutor.	381	71%
I met with the professor to discuss my rough draft.	256	47%
I received written feedback from the professor that helped me revise.	454	84%

- a.) There was more emphasis on revision than on prewriting.
  - b.) There was more in-class peer review in WR (77%) than in FYS (56%).
  - c.) 52% of students asked peers outside of class to review their writing. (I am interested in investigating how these peer writing groups work and whether they are prompted by the students themselves or their professors.)
  - d.) Only 381 of 540 respondents reported that they fulfilled the mandatory requirement to visit the Writing Center. According to the Writing Center’s data, 355 of 583 FYS students made visits.
- 3.) The writing-related experiences that most helped students improve their writing were professor feedback and/or the chance to rewrite, feedback from the writing center tutors, and specific assignments.

4.) The writing instruction in FYS tended either to increase or to support students' confidence as writers.



- 215 or 40% reported an increase in confidence.
- 202 or 37% reported no change in confidence.
- 74 or 14% reported a decrease in confidence.
- 49 or 9% did not answer.



5.) Many students accounted for the change in confidence in terms of culture shock/culture crossing. Several lost confidence when they realized that there was a big difference between high school and college writing. (“I learned writing high school papers is very different than college ones.”) Conversely, several gained confidence if the professor’s expectations were clear, and they were taught the necessary skills to achieve those expectations. (“Seeing what the difference was between high school and college writing and seeing how I needed to make that change [explains my increase in confidence].”) Other reasons for improved confidence included having to write frequently and receiving better grades over time.

6.) FYS instructors were interested in working with "attached tutors," but then tended not to use them during the semester. While 37 of 41 FYS instructors requested an attached tutor last spring, only 3 regularly met with the writers in the class.

### Recommendations

1.) The Writing Program will provide quality faculty development workshops for FYS instructors, encouraging instructors to develop a holistic interpretation of FYS writing outcomes. Bob Winston and I have planned FYS faculty workshops in teaching writing for May and August.

2.) Faculty development workshops for FYS instructors will focus, in part, on teaching the writing process.

a.) Workshops will emphasize the importance of prewriting skills.

b.) Workshops will offer further training in facilitating peer review. Since so many students seem to form peer writing groups outside of the classroom, teaching them how to peer review correctly could positively affect the learning community outside the classroom.

3.) The Writing Program will encourage FYS instructors to spend some time teaching students “*about writing*” in academia – that is, about the existence of discourse communities with their own forms and conventions. As Elizabeth Wardle asks, “What general knowledge can we teach students about academic genres that will help them write in later courses?” (“Mutt Genres’ and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?” *College Composition and Communication* 60.4 (June 2009): 769). Students claim to gain confidence when they learn what professors expect of them. However, rather than adopting a stance of cultural relativism, are the students becoming confused and/or creating a new set of (false) universals?

- “[I learned] to be concise with my thoughts. Contrary to what most English teachers teach you, short and to the point is better. Flowery language and extended writing is not required.”
- I feel my writing took a step in the wrong direction. This class caused me to avoid writing academically by encouraging simplicity. I feel I was discouraged from using words to create a picture or image.”
- [A science professor] didn’t like the way I wrote, [an English professor] did. It had an adverse effect on my skills and confidence as a writer.”

4.) The Writing Program suggests that the system for assigning attached tutors be re-evaluated and linked more closely to faculty development.

a.) Rather than allowing FYS instructors to “sign-up” for an attached tutor, the program should be competitive, available both semesters, and open to FYS and WR instructors.

b.) FYS and WR instructors should be asked to write a brief proposal in which they explain the rationale for and duties of the attached tutor in their course. The Writing Program will assist faculty in developing proposals.

c.) The Writing Program will vet the proposals, and the successful ones will become the basis for a contract between the tutor and instructor. (See Appendix C for a sample contract.)

## Assessment Project

Judy Gill and I conducted an assessment project on a sample of 2009 FYS essays. The first annual FYS Excellence in Writing Awards garnered 87 essays from 49 students who were enrolled in 26 different FYS courses. We assessed 49 essays, one from each student, in order to answer the following question: *to what extent are the best writers capable of meeting the writing goals (namely, thesis, logic, organization, clarity, and documentation) of the First-Year Seminar Program?*

In the interest of validity, or accumulating evidence that measures what we propose to measure, we chose a sample that was authentic and internal though not random. Rather than imposing an outside prompt, we wanted to study authentic assignments composed in the context of a course. The sample was not random because five \$100 prizes were being awarded to the top five. Thus, the essays presumably came from the best and/or most confident writers. We chose to assess the best essays, as opposed to a random sample, because we are currently re-designing WRPG 211: Topics in Expository Writing. The Subcommittee on Writing suggested creating a course that could meet the needs of writers who completed FYS yet sought more writing practice. Yet we did not want WRPG 211 simply to repeat the instruction students received in FYS. A goal of the assessment project was to define the areas in which top students needed more instruction and practice.

In the interest of reliability, or grading consistency, I developed an analytic assessment rubric based on the legislated FYS writing goals. Judy suggested revisions, and then we narrowed the focus to five (manageable) categories: thesis, logic, organization, language, and documentation (re: academic integrity). (See Appendix D for the rubric.) We chose an analytical rubric so that we could collect separate data on each of the five targeted learning outcomes. Then Judy and I met for three grading sessions during which we read all 49 essays and scored them on a scale of 1-5 in each of the five categories. To further ensure inter-rater reliability, we held three norming sessions during which we discussed several essays in order to come to an agreement on how we interpreted the rubric. In regard to composite essay scores, we agreed 82% of the time. (See the table in Appendix E for the raw scores).

	Thesis	Logic	Organization	Language	Documentation	COMPOSITE SCORE
<b>9-10</b>	14%	8%	20%	25%	29%	20%
<b>7-8</b>	37%	37%	31%	57%	16%	47%
<b>5-6</b>	41%	47%	41%	18%	27%	31%
<b>3-4</b>	8%	8%	8%	0%	10%	2%
<b>1-2</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%
<b>N/A</b>					8%	

### Observations

- 1.) The students tended to write better on the sentence level than on the paragraph or essay levels. In other words, they created clear and often complex sentences but not necessarily arranged in the most logical patterns to produce well-reasoned, focused and organized essays. This is indicated by the fact that 82% scored in the 7-10 range on language while 49+% scored in the 3-6 range on thesis, logic, and organization.
- 2.) Almost half the students did not document their sources correctly. Students erred when they created a hybrid mix of two documentation styles, made up their own style, or included

parenthetical citations but no bibliography. (The good news is that we did not detect any plagiarism).

3.) In essays that focused on primary sources, many writers made sweeping generalizations without supporting quotations from the text. Of the 35 essays that analyzed primary texts, 40% failed to quote them adequately, relying heavily on paraphrase and generalizations.

4.) The less successful thesis statements tended to describe, state the obvious, and/or revert to a formula (i.e three disconnected points).

#### Recommendations

1.) The Writing Program will assist the FYS program by holding grading workshops/norming sessions in which instructors create a new rubric or refine the existing rubric, and then practice applying it consistently.

### **FYS Excellence in Writing Awards Results**

The five winners of the FYS Excellence in Writing Awards will be honored at a reception on February 4, 2010.

Matthew Manarski, “Unsoiling Them: Reflections on and Hopes for the Achievement of Social Justice in American Education”

Professor Pamela Nesselrodt  
Social Justice and American Education

Leah McNamara, “Europe’s Skeleton’s: An Investigation into King Leopold II’s Concealment of the Extortion of the Congo”

Professor Benjamin Ngong  
Writing and Filming: Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa Francophone Societies

Alex North, “Dignity, Duty, and Devotion: Romance and Professionalism in *The Remains of the Day* and *The Turn of the Screw*”

Professor Thomas Reed  
Lord of the Castle, Lady of the House

Christina Socci, “The Irreconcilable: A Study of Paradox in the Lives of Scientists”

Professor Robert Boyle  
Galileo’s Commandment

Christopher Theodorou, “Honor Bound: Achilles’ Devotion to the Point of Paradox”

Professor Blake Wilson  
Ideas that Shaped the World

## WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

*How broad and deep is the WR curriculum? What are the needs of instructors as they teach and students as they learn writing in their disciplines?*

### The Curriculum

The following is a list of WR and V courses offered between 2007-2009.

**Red denotes courses that are often offered as WR.**

**Blue denotes courses that are always offered as WR.**

**Green denotes courses that are always offered as V.**

Subject	Course	Title
Africana Studies		
American Studies	202	Workshop in Cultural Analysis
Anthropology	331 235	Principles of Human Evolution State and Ethnicity in Upland Asia
Archaeology	390	Archaeology of Writing: Greek Texts and Contexts
Art & Art History	300 301 313 314	Italian Renaissance Art 1250-1450 Italian Renaissance Art 1450-1563 Modern Art Contemporary Art
Biology	325	Plant Physiology w/Lab
Biochemistry/Molecular		
Chemistry	347	Concepts of Inorganic Chemistry
Chinese	380	Topics in Modern Chinese Reading
Classical Studies	243	Lucretius
East Asian Studies	305 205 306 203 206	Colloquium in East Asian Humanities Topics in East Asian Humanities Colloquium on East Asian Society Topics in East Asian Literature Topics in East Asian Society
Economics	314	John Stuart Mill
English	212 220	Writing: Special Topics Critical Approaches and Literary Methods
Environmental Studies	330	Environmental Disruption and Policy Analysis
French	230 236	Comm. in French and Francophone Contexts Introduction to Cultural Analysis
Italian	231	Written Expression and Textual Analysis
Geology	206 209	Petrology w/Lab Sedimentology and Stratigraphy
German	202	Intermediate German II
History	204 304 350 211	Introduction to Historical Methodology Historiography and Advanced Methods American Science, Technology and Medicine History of American Feminism
International Studies		
I B & M	300	Business Ethics

	300 300 300 300 240 250	Leadership Development and Dynamics Creativity, Innovation, and Knowledge Management Issues in International Management Evolution of the Global Financial System Marketing Finance
Judaic Studies		
Math & Computers	C 251 C 332 M 211 M 262	Computer Organization Analysis of Algorithms Discrete Mathematics Intro to Linear Algebra
Medieval & Early Mod		
Middle East Studies		
Music	353	Seminar in Classic and Romantic Music
Neuroscience		
Philosophy	290 261	Contemporary Philosophy Workshop Intermediate Topics in Philosophy
Physics & Astronomy	211 212	Vibrations, Waves & Optics Medical and Radiation Physics
Policy Studies	290	Law, Policy, Society – East Asia
Political Science	290 290 254 221	Selected Topics in Political Science International Politics of the Middle East Comparative Asian Governments and Politics Constitutional Law II
Psychology	325 201 202	Research Methods in Biological Psychology Design of Psychological Research Analysis of Psychological Data
Religion	241 390	Topics in Art, Literature and Religion Interpreting Religion
Russian	223 224	Life's Cursed Questions: Russian Literature . . . Revolution and Dissidence: 20 <sup>th</sup> C Russian Lit
Sociology	331 230	Contemporary Sociological Theory Race, Family & Multiraciality
Spanish & Portuguese	231 305	Spanish Conversation & Comp Introduction to Literary Analysis and Theory
Theatre & Dance	313	Theatre History Seminar
Women's & Gender	201 250 220	Topics in Women's and Gender Studies Methods in Women's and Gender Studies History of American Feminism
Other	WRPG 211 WRPG 214 WRPG 200	Topics in Expository Writing Working with Writers: Theory and Practice Topics in English Language Writing
Other	EDU 121	Social Foundations of Education
Other	JRNL 200	Intro to Newspaper Journalism
Other	LAST 202	Mexican Culture and History
Other	SCIE 259	Writing Science News

### Observations

1.) All departments at Dickinson have offered at least one WR course; many departments offer more than one. Some disciplines prefer to meet the WR goals over two V courses. In addition, faculty often choose to teach as WR a course not designated as such in *The Bulletin*.

2.) During my ethnographic tour, approximately five departments discovered that courses that they assumed were always designated WR were not listed as such in *The Bulletin*. These departments notified Brenda Bretz and the changes are pending.

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After developing an understanding of the depth and breadth of the WR curriculum, I examined how May 2009 graduates navigated the WR curriculum.

How many of the 576 graduates of the class of 2009 took more than one WR course?

Number of Courses Taken	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
1.0	200	34.7%
1.5	65	11.3%
2.0	141	24.5%
2.5	33	5.7%
3.0	66	11.5%
3.5	15	2.6%
4.0	39	6.8%
4.5	8	1.4%
5.0	4	0.7%
5.5	1	0.2%
6.0	2	0.3%

How many 2009 graduates took their ONLY WR course outside the major?

Total Number of Graduates	Number with WR Course Not in the Major	Percentage with WR Course Not in the Major
576	92	16%

What were the majors of those 92 students?

Major	Number
Political Science	24
Biology	20
Economics	12
Policy Management	12
BCMB	10
History	5
Spanish	2
Anthropology	1
Archaeology	1
Art & Art History	1
East Asian Studies	1
MEMS	1
INBM	1
Theatre Arts	1

Observations

1.) Apparently, Political Science, Biology, and Economics do not offer WR courses as frequently as do other departments. Several of their majors satisfy the WR requirement by taking more frequently offered courses like ENGL 220: Critical Approaches and Literary Methods or SPAN 231: Spanish Conversation and Composition, to name just two.

Recommendations

1.) APSC needs to decide whether or not to require all departments to offer WR courses. Should departments offer at least one WR course once a semester, once a year, every other year? Or should there be no such requirement at all?

**Student and Faculty Self-Evaluations**

As a means to investigating the needs and concerns of WR students and instructors, the Subcommittee on Writing revised the WR Course Designation Form and the Student and Faculty Self-Evaluation Forms in October. (See Appendix F for the former; the latter two are identical to the FYS evaluations in Appendices A and B). At the end of the Fall 2009 semester, 356 students (from 31 out of 35 courses) and 12 (out of 43) faculty had responded. When reading the surveys, I looked for common themes repeated by the majority of students in the course.

Observations

1.) Instructors interpreted the WR learning outcomes related to writing in several different ways, given students' descriptions of what they learned in the course. There were four categories:

- a.) Sentence-level writing: grammar and mechanics
- b.) Writing in the disciplines: the language, forms, and conventions of the discipline
- c.) Writing process: the importance of multiple drafts, feedback, revision
- d.) A combination of writing process and writing in the disciplines

2.) Not many students reported engaging in writing-to-learn activities.

3.) Students were involved in several writing process activities.

Process Activity	Number	Percentage
I engaged in several prewriting activities.	204	57%
I kept a journal and incorporated some of my ideas into writing assignments.	41	11%
I wrote posts for an interactive online site.	57	16%
I reviewed my writing with peers in class.	275	77%
I reviewed my writing with peers outside of class.	171	48%
I sought feedback from a writing center tutor.	127	36%
I met with the professor to discuss my rough draft.	214	60%
I received written feedback from the professor that helped me revise.	311	87%

- a.) There was more emphasis on revision than on prewriting.
- b.) In-class peer review occurred more often in WR (77%) than in FYS (56%).
- c.) 48% of students ask peers outside of class to review their writing. (I am

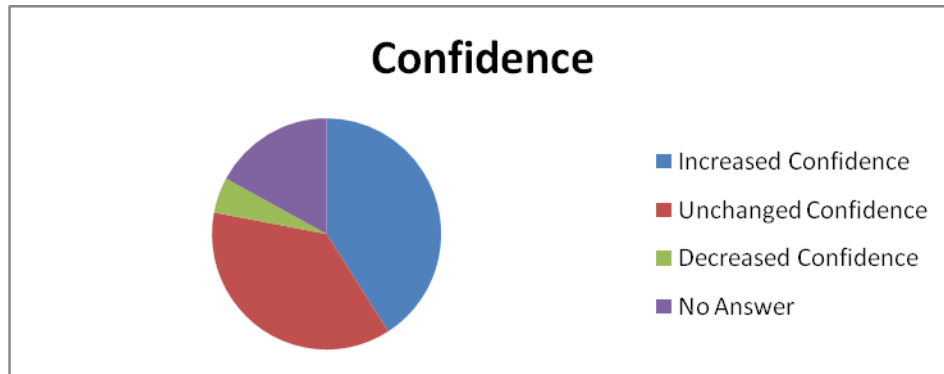
interested in investigating how these peer writing groups form and whether they are prompted by the students themselves or their professors.)

d.) Only 36% of students sought feedback from Writing Center tutors.

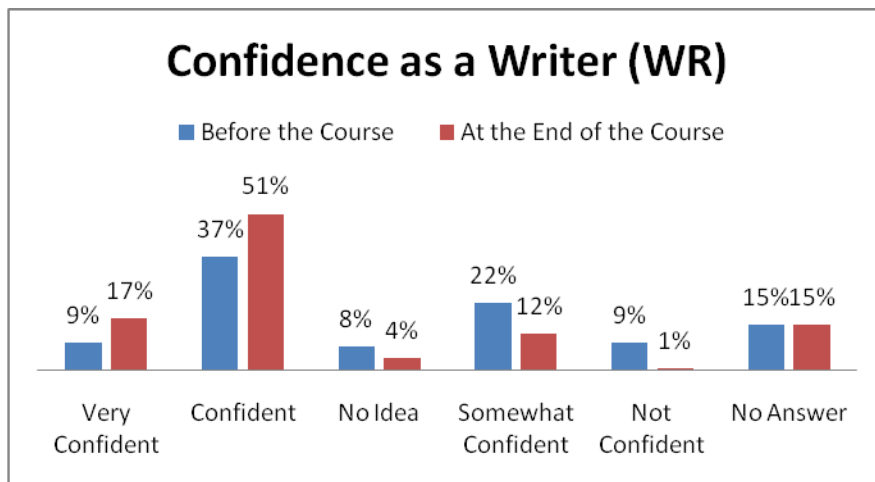
4.) There were several writing-related experiences, according to students, that helped them improve their writing:

- a.) The majority valued professor feedback and/or the chance to rewrite. Students often expressed appreciation for the time professors spent with them outside of class discussing their drafts.
- b.) Not one student complained that there was too much writing in the course. Instead, many commented that the large amount of writing led to improvement or increase in confidence.
- c.) 77% of students reported doing in-class peer review but relatively few went on to describe the experience.

5.) The writing instruction in WR tended either to increase or to support students' confidence as writers.



- 146 or 41% reported an increase in confidence.
- 131 or 37% reported no change in confidence.
- 18 or 5% reported a decrease in confidence.
- 59 or 17% did not answer.



6.) Those who reported a decrease in confidence often remarked that the class offered a corrective to overconfidence.

7.) I was struck by the difference in the way two foreign language departments teach writing as an example of the range of diversity that exists within departments. Not only do the French and Spanish Departments differ in how they teach writing, but the French WR courses appear to be more pedagogically similar than Spanish WR courses. There were surveys of four SPAN 231, two FREN 230, and two FREN 236 courses – taught by a total of eight different instructors. The French professors focused on literary and cultural analysis and stressed the writing process, learning to think in French, and French academic genres of writing. Two of the Spanish professors emphasized writing literary analysis, one stressed writing the three-point paragraph, and one taught the rhetorical modes.

### Recommendations

- 1.) The Writing Program will focus future faculty development workshops for WR instructors on balancing the writing in the disciplines and writing process outcomes, teaching prewriting skills, using writing-to-learn activities to support content area instruction, and facilitating effective peer review. As with FYS, since so many students seem to form peer writing groups outside of the classroom, teaching them how to peer review correctly could positively affect the learning community outside the classroom.
- 2.) APSC should consider requiring professors who are new to Dickinson and assigned a WR course in their first year to attend a pre-semester, half-day workshop on teaching writing in a WR course.

### SENIOR CAPSTONE WRITING EXPERIENCE

*Do most departments offer a senior capstone writing experience? In the words of the outside evaluators, would Dickinson best be served by a two- or three- tiered Writing Program?*

To answer these questions, I first reviewed *The Bulletin*.

Major or Program	Course	Description in <i>The Bulletin</i>	Length
Africana Studies	400: Writing in Africana Studies	Seniors in the major will . . . produce a lengthy paper or special project. . . .	
American Studies	402: Writing in American Studies (2 semesters)	Students research and write a substantial research project. . . .	40-60 pp
Creative Writing	418: Senior Workshop	Students must complete on substantial body of work in their chosen genre. . . .	
East Asian Studies	490: Senior Research	Leading to a senior thesis. . . .	
English	403,404: Senior Literature Seminar and Workshop	Each workshop requires students to . . . produce a lengthy manuscript . . . .	35-50 pp
Health Studies	400: Senior Seminar in Health Studies	Students . . . will complete a research project . . . and offer a final presentation . . . in the forms of academic papers, oral presentations, or some other creative project. . . .	
History	404: Senior Research Seminar	a substantial research paper	
Judaic Studies	490: Senior Thesis	The product of this course will be a written term paper. . . .	
Latin American Studies	490: Latin American Interdisciplinary Research	Students must successfully defend their research paper. . . .	
Mathematics & Computer Science	491, 492: Senior Seminar	Written and oral presentation of project progress. . . .	
Medieval & Early Modern Studies	490: The Senior Experience	Seniors in the major will . . . produce a lengthy paper or special project. . . .	35-50 pp
Middle East Studies	Fourth Year Independent Study	Majors should consult with their advisors . . . about designing the senior thesis. . . .	
Music	493, 494: Senior Seminar in Analytical Theory 495, 496: Senior	. . . creation of a major analytical essay  . . . culminating in a major research paper	

	Seminar		
Physics & Astronomy	491, 492: Senior Research Seminar	The course emphasizes . . . oral and written communication. . . .	
Sociology	400: Senior Seminar 405: Senior Thesis	A thesis is the written report of such a research project.	400 requires 30 pages. 405 requires 50-100 pages. All students must take either the seminar or the thesis.

Observations (based on *The Bulletin*)

- 1.) Out of 38 majors, 15 already have a senior capstone with writing component as stated in *The Bulletin*.
- 2.) Others have a senior capstone, but it is not clear whether writing is involved or not.
- 3.) The capstone extends the work begun in the WR course by having students write in the disciplines, often focusing on original research.

I continued my investigation by compiling the data collected from a survey distributed by the Writing Program last May and asking departments about their capstone writing experience during my ethnographic tour.

Major	Senior Writing Course(s)
Anthropology	400: Senior Colloquium
Archaeology	They are in the process of revising major with plans to add a capstone course.
Art & Art History	407: Art Historical Methods
Biology	
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology	
Chemistry	They just eliminated CHEM 490, the senior capstone.
Classical Studies	Distributed capstone: Some majors opt for a thesis. Most feel “taking more seminars or reading courses are more helpful for their language ability and their graduate school chances.”
Economics	495: Economics Seminar
Environmental Studies	406: Seminar in Advanced Topics
French & Italian	362: Seminar in French 365: Seminar in French (senior level courses) 400: Senior Tutorial in Italian Studies
Geology	Historically, there has been no capstone course. There is a capstone experience – either an independent research project or an internship. Both involve writing, the former a thesis.

German	400: Senior Seminar
I B &M	400: Seminar
International Studies	401: Interdisciplinary Seminar Research
Italian Studies	400: Senior Seminar
Neuroscience	
Philosophy	Distributed capstone: 300-level courses
Policy Studies	401: Senior Seminar
Political Science	
Psychology	None
Religion	490: Research Seminar
Russian	Distributed capstone
Spanish & Portuguese	
Theatre & Dance	Students who focus on dramatic literature (as opposed to technical/design or performance) do a written capstone project.
Women & Gender Studies	400: Senior Seminar in Women's Studies

Observations (based on May 2009 survey and meeting with departments)

- 1.) There are two types of senior capstone writing experiences. In the **traditional capstone**, students define an area of interest and immerse themselves in the complexity of a narrowly defined topic. In the **distributed capstone**, students pursue several topics across two or three courses in the major.
- 2.) Based on the survey, 15 majors (in addition to the 15 already noted in *The Bulletin*) also offer writing intensive senior seminars. Another 3 have a “Distributed Capstone” – all the elements of a senior capstone but distributed over three mandatory courses.
- 3.) Several departments require considerable writing in their Senior Seminar courses. However, they do not use the word “writing” in their descriptions for *The Bulletin*. In fact, they use words like “discussion” and “conference” that point more toward an oral component.

Recommendations

- 1.) APSC should recognize the existence of a three-tiered Writing Program and decide whether or not to require all departments to articulate either a distributed or traditional capstone.
- 2.) APSC may want to recommend that departments revise *The Bulletin* descriptions of these senior capstone courses to include a brief description of the writing requirements, making the depth and breadth of the Dickinson writing initiative more transparent to students as well as to outside consultants and agencies (like Middle States).

## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

*How can the Writing Program assist faculty as they develop their writing pedagogy? What do faculty need to learn about teaching writing?*

The Writing Program is committed to offering a quality workshop series, online support, and individual and group consultations to assist faculty with the teaching of writing.

### Fall 2009 Writing Workshops

Wednesday, August 26 from 1:30 to 4:30 in the Stern Great Room

*Introduction: Writing at Dickinson College*

What are your concerns about the teaching and learning of writing at Dickinson College? What do you find most challenging? What are your frustrations? What can student writers do/not do? What learning outcomes do you envision for student writers? What tools do you think you need to help students become better writers? As the new Director of the Writing Program, I want to hear from you.

*The Art of Creating Effective Assignments*

What makes an assignment clear, engaging, and intellectually challenging? We will look at the various components of writing assignments: key terms, task, format, requirements, audience, purpose, and process. We will spend most of the time critiquing and offering feedback to each other on assignments. Please bring copies of one of your FYS assignments to the workshop.

Friday, September 4 from 3:00-4:00 in Denny 204

*Building an Effective Assignment Sequence*

What is the best way to sequence assignments throughout a course? We will look at several writing assignments for one course and discuss the logic of the assignment sequence. We will focus on how to scale and build assignments in order to guide students toward more complex thinking and writing. We will also consider the benefits of assigning ungraded and/or in-class writing within a sequence. Please bring your syllabus or descriptions of assignments to the workshop.

Friday, October 2 from 3:30-4:30 in Denny 204

Monday, October 12 from 12:00-1:00 in Denny 104

*Prompting Writer Re-vision*

How do writers become revisers? We will discuss how to explain revision to students, particularly how it differs from editing or proofreading. We will learn how to orchestrate productive peer review groups, seek support from the writing center, and hold effective conferences with writers. Finally, we will discover techniques that will enable us to hold students accountable for multiple drafts (without having to read every draft ourselves).

Friday, November 13 from 3:30-4:30 in Denny 204

Monday, November 16 from 12:00-1:00 in Denny 104

*Responding to Student Writing*

We will consider how to respond to student writing in a way that helps students grow as writers and thinkers. Examining the art of margin notes and end notes, we will discuss approaches to commenting, the pitfalls of over-commenting, our purpose and sense of audience when commenting, and the amount of emphasis to place on sentence-level (grammatical) errors.

Friday, December 4 from 3:30-4:30 in Denny 204

Monday, December 7 from 12:00-1:00 in Denny 104

*The Research Paper: Pet Peeves and Peccadilloes*

Do you find that sometimes your students cite the source but copy the words without using quote marks? Does it seem that they all use sources ornamentally? Maybe you have even seen their complete rough drafts with parenthetical reminders to themselves to “insert quote here.” We will discuss the frustrating issues that come up again and again regarding student research writing with the goal of formulating solutions and interventions.

### Observations

1.) The collective attendance count for the workshop series is 76: 45 different faculty, 22 of whom came to more than one session.

2.) The response to the workshops was positive and encouraging. (See Appendix G for a summary of the evaluations.) The workshops for Spring 2010 were designed entirely based on faculty suggestions.

3.) 23 faculty members attended the first spring workshop, “Crash Course in Teaching Writing.”

### **Spring 2010 Writing Workshops**

Wednesday, January 20 from 10:30-2:30 in Stern 102

*Crash Course in Teaching Writing*

An abridged version of the fall workshop series, this half-day workshop will help you prepare to teach writing in the spring. We will discuss creating effective assignments, sequencing assignments, prompting revision, designing rubrics, and responding to student writing. Stay for lunch and leave with a plan to teach writing in your courses!

Friday, February 5 from 3:30-4:30 in Althouse 207

Monday, February 8 from 12:00-1:00 in Althouse 207

*Reflections on the Fall Workshops/Teaching Materials Exchange*

What ideas and techniques from the fall workshops (or the January “Crash Course”) did you incorporate into your approach to teaching writing? What revisions did you make to your assignments and syllabi? What worked well with students? What did not? We will reflect on the changes you made to your teaching, share both successes and challenges, and bring to the table some revised teaching materials (assignments, rubrics, peer review prompts, etc.) that we can share with each other. This workshop is open to all faculty, regardless of whether you attended any fall workshops or not.

Friday, February 26 and March 26 from 3:30 to 4:30 in Althouse 207

Monday, March 1 from 12:00-1:00 in Althouse 207

*Writing in the Disciplines: Teaching the WR Course*

How does your discipline shape the way you teach writing? How do you teach your students the language and conventions of your specific academic discipline? What constitutes revision in your discipline? Do you have to offer feedback on every rough draft written by every student in the class? Or are there other ways to help students re-see their ideas? We will look at these questions over three separate workshops facilitated by faculty from each of the three divisions.

Friday, February 26: Sarah St. Angelo, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Monday, March 1: Elizabeth Lee, Assistant Professor of Art History

Friday, March 26: Jerry Philogene, Assistant Professor of American Studies

Regardless of your division, you are welcome to attend any and all of these sessions.

Friday, April 9 from 3:30 to 4:30 – “The Scientific Paper” in Althouse 207

Monday, April 12 from 12:00-1:00 – “The Humanities/Social Science Research Paper” in Althouse 207

*How to Create a Rubric for Your Assignment*

Rubrics are a way for you to define the learning goals you want your students to achieve and to communicate your expectations to your students. How do you choose what to include in your rubric? How much is too much detail? During the Friday session, we will create a rubric for a scientific paper. Then on Monday we will develop a rubric for a humanities/social sciences research paper. In the end, you will come away with a rubric that you can adopt or modify to your needs.

**Other Forms of Faculty Development**

One-on-one consultations: I conducted thirteen one-on-one consultations with faculty seeking advice about writing issues in their courses.

Group consultations: Two groups requested workshops – service-learning faculty on reflective writing, and Overseas Assistants on tutoring second language writers. One instructor requested that I visit her class and discuss the writing process.

Online support: A Moodle site filled with handouts, links, and other internet media related to writing is available for any faculty member who wishes to join. (To date, there are 55 subscribers. See Appendix H.)

## WRITING CENTER

*How well does the Writing Center fulfill its stated mission, and how might it extend its mission to meet the needs of writers at Dickinson?*

I will discuss the Writing Center's goals, data, and recommendations in the May report. There is, however, a major program development to report.

### Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence

The Writing Program and faculty members in the departments of French & Italian, German, Spanish & Portuguese, and East Asian Studies (Chinese & Japanese) seek to develop a Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence starting in AY 2010. Instead of creating a separate facility, we wish to repurpose the Eberly Writing Center as a multilingual writing center where undergraduate peer writing tutors and Overseas Assistants will work with students of all levels and abilities who are seeking feedback to improve their writing skills in any language taught at Dickinson.

#### Background

In meetings with foreign language faculty regarding the teaching and learning of writing in their departments, I learned that they had many of the same needs and requests. In August I consulted with Margaret Frohlich, who was seeking ideas for training Spanish writing tutors. Then in September, when I met with the Italian Studies Department, they expressed the need for writing support for their students. While the Eberly Writing Center has been a good resource, the tutors there just cannot provide consistent support in all of the foreign languages. The OSA's are another good resource, but they work as assistants for only twelve hours per week, and some of that time may be spent helping professors in the classroom. In addition, they are relatively untrained, and they cannot take the tutor training course in the spring because they do not arrive on campus until August. As a short term solution to the problem, I conducted a "Crash Course for Foreign Language Writing Tutors" – a workshop that took place on October 8 from 3:00-5:00 pm and was attended by OSAs and faculty from Italian, French, Spanish, Arabic, and German. The workshop focused on the best practices for writing tutors with some suggestions to faculty for specific follow-up exercises in the language. Given the success of this initial effort, I arranged a meeting with the faculty from those departments to discuss developing a writing tutoring program.

#### Rationale

- A Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence would be a distinctive feature of an already distinctive foreign language program – that is, Dickinson would be the first school to have a truly global writing center learning community. There is no established model for a Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence – one that builds bridges between the language departments.
  - A search for other colleges and universities that have a Multilingual Writing Center yields few results.
  - The University of San Francisco has a writing center that assists writers of French, Japanese, and Spanish.
  - There are Spanish Writing Centers at the University of Minnesota, Amherst College, Grand Valley State University, the University of Iowa, Ohio State University, State University of New York, and St. Lawrence University.
  - There are even fewer French and German writing centers.

- There are several English language writing centers that provide foreign language tutors, as does the Eberly Writing Center at Dickinson.
- A Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence would reinforce Dickinson’s academic mission.
  - The center would “combin[e] active learning . . . with engagement in the wider world.”
  - The center would support the mission of the foreign languages to move students toward greater fluency and literacy in a space where students can practice a target language with other people.
  - In addition, the center would advance the mission of The Writing Program by supporting WR courses in the foreign languages and making those courses more visible.
  - The center would be a place where foreign language majors seeking secondary education certification could apply to be undergraduate writing tutors. As such, they would receive valuable experience working with second language learners.
- A Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence would support the Dickinson College global learning initiative.
  - As stated on the Dickinson website, the Foreign Languages is a distinctive program in which “students have countless opportunities to practice speaking and translating.” With the development of a writing center, we would add “writing” to this list as well.
  - Students would deepen their literacy skills for the Study Abroad experience with the support of a writing center learning community. The center would also facilitate a more seamless post-study abroad experience.
  - The center would contribute to the endeavor to make the Dickinson campus a global learning community.
  - With improved writing skills, graduates would be all the more prepared to participate in the global community.
- A Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence would provide the tutor recruitment support that the Eberly Writing Center cannot consistently provide.
  - This fall, for example, the French Department had to scramble to find more French writing tutors because the qualified writing center students who could tutor in French were studying abroad.
  - Not all the foreign language departments can recommend students for the tutor training course that is a prerequisite for working in the Eberly Writing Center. For example, there is difficulty recruiting Italian Studies majors to take the tutor training course in their sophomore year because most do not have the confidence in their language skills to tutor until after they have returned from study abroad in their junior year.
  - With an increased personnel budget, qualified tutors could be hired to help overburdened OSAs. For example, the current Chinese OSA provides assistance for 60-70 Chinese language learners. With an increased budget, qualified Chinese international students could be hired to help the OSA.
- A Multilingual Center for Writing Excellence would provide an institutional structure for the tutoring of writing.
  - Language learners would be able to seek support in one location rather than having to track down tutors in individual departments.
  - Foreign language faculty would benefit from collaborating with the Writing Program and its solid infrastructure, including an ESL specialist, to train effective tutors and evaluate their success.

- OSAs and undergraduate writing tutors would have a global community of fellow tutors with whom to discuss their tutoring and writing.

### Budget

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Personnel		
Student Assistant/Receptionist	\$ 8880	Federal Work Study
OSAs	\$ 0	Departments
Undergraduate Peer Tutors	\$18,960	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 27, 840</b>	
Nonpersonnel		
Computers	\$ 3213.70	Eberly Gift
Furniture	TBA	
Supplies and Photocopying	\$ 1500	Eberly Gift
Software	\$ 2545	Eberly Gift
Books	\$ 1000	Eberly Gift
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8258.70</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 36, 098.70</b>	

### Budget Explanation

The Student Assistants/Receptionists would be responsible for greeting students, managing the appointment calendar, and performing light office work. As Category B Student Assistants, students would earn \$7.40 per hour and work forty hours per week for thirty weeks. In order to staff this forty hour per week position, several students would be hired.

No additional funds are needed to employ OSAs as they already are paid for their work by Global Education.

Peer Writing Tutors would be matriculated Dickinson undergraduates (both international and American) who are hired as foreign language writing tutors. Currently, the language departments directly request funds in order to pay these tutors. We are asking that the funds now be diverted to the Writing Center's budget. Like the Eberly Writing Center tutors, they would be Category C Student Assistants paid at a rate of \$7.90 per hour. Calculations are based on employing two tutors for each of the forty hours the center is open over the course of thirty weeks.

Five computers for the center cost \$642.74 each.

Several software packages are needed for the computers: Microsoft Proofing Multilingual (French and Spanish) at \$100 per computer; Antidote (French) at \$100 per computer; Babylon with dictionary at \$109 per computer; Blind Dragon software with read aloud software for visually impaired students at \$200 per computer

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

*Are ELL students well-served by The Writing Program's placement system and course offerings?*

I will discuss the ELL Program goals, data, and recommendations in the May report.

### CONCLUSION

In light of the challenge set forth by the 2006 evaluators, the Writing Program has sought to

- “recommit Dickinson to the centrality of writing in its curriculum” by excavating the Underground Writing Program and bringing it to light;
- “refocus the First-Year Seminar Program on writing as a vehicle for entry into an intellectual community” by determining the faculty development and writing support needs of instructors, and assessing the writing skills of students;
- “decide whether a three-tiered Writing Program with written capstone experiences in all disciplines is a viable goal at Dickinson, or if perhaps a two-tiered program with more than one WR course required might better serve the College” by examining the breadth and depth of the current writing curriculum;
- “begin the process of establishing an extensive and in-depth faculty development and support program (including better integrating the Writing Center)” by creating a practice-centered workshop series and nurturing a learning community of writing teachers.

The Writing Program welcomes the feedback, insight, and support of the APSC Committee.

**APPENDIX A**  
**First-Year Seminar**  
**Student Self-Evaluation**

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

The writing goals of the first year seminars include teaching students the **writing process** as well as **the skills of forming a thesis, crafting logical arguments, writing with an awareness of audience, and using clear and concise language.**

1.) What two or three specific things about writing did you learn in the course?

2.) What kinds of writing process activities did you do in the course?

\_\_\_\_ I engaged in several prewriting or invention activities.

\_\_\_\_ I kept a journal and incorporated some of the ideas into my formal writing assignments.

\_\_\_\_ I wrote posts for an interactive online site (i.e blog, wiki, forum, etc.).

\_\_\_\_ I reviewed my writing with peers in class.

\_\_\_\_ I reviewed my writing with peers outside of class.

\_\_\_\_ I sought feedback from a writing center tutor.

\_\_\_\_ I met with the professor to discuss my rough draft.

\_\_\_\_ I received written feedback from the professor that helped me revise.

\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

3.) What was the one writing-related experience in the course that helped you improve your writing **the most**?

4.) What aspect(s) of writing do you realize you still need to work on?

5) Before you began the course, how would you rate your confidence as a writer?

Not Confident      Somewhat Confident      No Idea      Confident      Very Confident

6.) After you took the course, how would you rate your confidence as a writer?

Not Confident      Somewhat Confident      No Idea      Confident      Very Confident

7.) If there was a change in your confidence level, how do you account for the change?



**APPENDIX C**  
**Sample Writing Fellows (Attached Tutor) Contract**

**Job Description**

You will be working with two courses, GEOG 3556 and THEA 3178, in order to assist with the Bibb City: Collected Lives Project. The classes meet on Monday through Friday from 9:00-11:30 and 1:00-3:30 at XXX. The instructors, Dr. R and Dr. B, have asked that you perform the following duties:

- serve as Assistant Curator to the project, managing small group writing in-class and online to meet the goals of the project;
- meet regularly with the instructors to discuss any problems and concerns with the project;
- meet with the students before or after class to discuss any problems or concerns with the project;
- attend one or two evening rehearsals;
- serve as liaison between Dr. B's and Dr. R's classes on one or two joint group projects to make sure project goals are met;
- assist in shaping student writing to meet the goals of interpretation;
- assist in supporting the development of the project web site.

**Guidelines for Writing Fellows**

In addition, you promise to

- arrive for class on time and not leave early (as per the instructor's orders);
- honor your appointments with individual students/groups outside of class;
- check email in order to remain in communication with the instructor;
- attend meetings with the instructor not to exceed five hours per month;
- attend meeting with Dr. Lape on the second Thursday of every month at 12:30;
- treat the students who seek your assistance with the highest degree of professionalism;
- refer any serious problems or complaints to Dr. Noreen Lape.

**Guidelines for Faculty**

You promise to

- adhere to the job description;
- contact Dr. Noreen Lape should you need to extend the WF's duties (in some cases, if the WF is amenable, there may be funds available to renegotiate);
- communicate with the WF about your needs as an instructor and/or the WF's performance;
- administer program evaluations to your class(es);
- refer any serious problems or complaints to Dr. Noreen Lape.

**Agreement**

I understand that my inability to fulfill this job description and/or comply with these guidelines may result in the termination of this collaboration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Writing Fellow

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Instructor

**APPENDIX D**  
**Rubric for 2009 FYS Assessment**

	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Thesis	Clear thesis kept in focus  Controvertible and compelling	Clear and consistent thesis  Attempts to be controvertible and compelling	Clear but simplistic thesis (i.e. three-point thesis)  Focuses thesis but in a superficial way	Either no thesis at all or no consistent focus throughout  Fails to maintain a consistent position	No thesis  Has no clear position
Logic	Appropriately balances general statements, concrete details, and specific examples	Adequately balances generalizations and specific examples	Supports thesis but not all points are connected to the thesis, creating logic problems	Often fails to support generalizations with examples and details	Forms few, if any, clear general ideas and fails to provide supporting examples
Organization	Complex, crafted development	Satisfactory and non-formulaic organization	Formulaic organization (i.e. five-paragraph essay)	Muddled, unclear organizational plan	No discernible organization
Clear and concise language	Complex and sophisticated sentences  Few grammatical and punctuation errors  Does not read like a first draft	Mainly complex sentences  Errors arise from an attempt to use sophisticated syntax	Safer, simpler sentences  Frequent errors do not compromise the meaning  Reads like a first draft	Limited vocabulary and poor grasp of sentence structure  Errors distract and interfere with communication	Limited range of sentence patterns  Pervasive errors that distract and interfere with communication
Citation of Sources	Almost perfect documentation	Mainly accurate documentation	Contrived documentation	No documentation	No documentation

**APPENDIX E**  
**FYS Assessment Project Raw Data**

<b>Essay</b>	<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Logic</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Documentation</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
#1	10	10	10	9	10	49
#2	7	5	7	8	7	34
#3	8	8	8	9	6	39
#4	6	6	6	7	10	35
#5	6	6	10	8	N/A	30/40
#6	7	7	9	8	10	41
#7	5	5	4	7	2	23
#8	8	8	7	9	6	38
#9	4	4	4	6	2	20
#10	4	5	6	8	6	29
#11	8	6	7	8	7	36
#12	6	6	6	8	4	30
#13	8	8	10	6	N/A	32/40
#14	8	8	8	8	8	40
#15	6	5	5	7	2	25
#16	4	4	4	7	4	23
#17	5	6	4	5	4	24
#18	5	5	6	6	6	28
#19	6	6	8	8	2	30
#20	6	7	8	8	8	37
#21	8	6	6	6	8	34
#22	5	4	5	7	2	23
#23	9	8	6	8	8	39
#24	9	6	7	7	8	35
#25	8	6	8	10	6	38
#26	10	9	10	10	10	49
#27	6	4	6	6	6	28
#28	5	7	8	8	N/A	28/40
#29	7	8	7	8	5	35
#30	6	5	6	7	6	30
#31	6	7	7	7	6	33
#32	6	7	5	9	10	37
#33	7	9	8	9	10	43
#34	6	8	7	9	8	38
#35	8	6	6	9	10	39
#36	5	5	6	6	6	28
#37	9	7	10	8	10	44
#38	7	6	6	8	10	37
#39	5	5	5	6	10	31
#40	7	6	6	7	3	29

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#41	3	7	9	8	N/A	27/40
#42	8	7	6	8	6	35
#43	6	5	6	5	5	27
#44	9	7	9	9	9	43
#45	8	7	6	9	6	36
#46	8	9	9	9	10	45
#47	6	6	6	6	4	30
#48	8	6	8	8	10	40
#49	9	8	9	8	9	43

**APPENDIX F**  
**WR Course Designation Request**

Course Number \_\_\_\_\_ Course Title \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Is this the first time you taught a WR course? Yes / No

1.) Are students required to produce at least 15 typed pages (4000 words)? Yes / No

2.) What kind(s) of writing are students required to do? Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of articles or chapters   | <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory report                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical essay                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Examination of data or data structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argument essay                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Comparative analysis                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research essay                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction or poetry                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application of theories           | <input type="checkbox"/> Review of literature                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of texts, events, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Response to readings                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated bibliography            | <input type="checkbox"/> Web-based writing                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please explain) _____      |   |

3.) How many different writing assignments are students required to complete?

- One long research essay written at the end of the semester
- One long research essay written in multiple stages throughout the semester
- 2-3 shorter essays
- 4+ shorter essays

4.) How do students engage in the writing process? Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students engage in planning exercises.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students write a proposal or prospectus. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students revise one paper.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students revise all papers.              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students perform in-class peer review.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students discuss drafts with instructor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students perform peer review outside of class.                                    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students revise after receiving written feedback from the instructor.             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students revise after receiving individualized oral feedback from the instructor. |   |

5.) What specific forms and conventions of writing common to your discipline do you teach students? (Please list at least three learning goals.)

6.) What percentage of the final grade is connected to writing tasks? \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Noreen Lape, Director of Writing, Biddle House ([lapen@dickinson.edu](mailto:lapen@dickinson.edu), x1904)

**APPENDIX G**  
**Faculty Development Workshop Evaluations**

**Creating Effective Assignments**

29 August 2009

FYS Faculty

- 1.) What did you learn from the workshop?
  - The critique of colleagues assignments was particularly helpful. Terminology provided by Bloom's classification is great. Overall very helpful conversation.
  - Rubric for assignments that balance specificity and creativity.
  - Useful feedback on specific assignments
  - Hints for level of detail in terms of grammatic "intervention"
  - That I need to articulate writing assignments extremely clearly, keeping in mind how/where they fit into the flow of the semester – I knew this, but the peer editing made it hit home on several assignments
  - Good feedback on assignments – I wish there had been more assignments to compare & critique.
  - Transfer authority to students
  - Be explicit about an assignments purpose.
  - Key terms to purpose
  - Thank you very much! I received very useful specific feedback on my proposal assignment, learned some interesting frustrations that other instructors experienced, and picked up numerous practical tips. Thanks again.
  - I found the information about feedback strategies/commenting on assignments to be useful, although I would have welcomed specific examples.
  - The ideas on how to write assignments was very helpful. The review of others' writing assignments modeled the peer review process, which was beneficial. Also, the discussion about patterns of error when grading assignments was useful.
  
- 2.) What suggestions do you have for future workshops?
  - Revisions!!!
  - Grading/responding to papers
  - Grammar/line editing
  - Great overall! Use slightly larger font for overhead display. ( : Perhaps move tables a bit closer together --? It was sometimes hard to hear in the big room.
  - Would be better for FYS to have the writing workshop in the spring alongside the syllabus building workshop so that we would have more info as we go into the summer planning for our seminars.
  - Responding to assignments [in a way that transfers authority to students]
  - The workshop was very useful, but a little too diffuse and slow-moving. I believe the same amount of useful material and discussion could be compressed into 1½-2 hours.
  - I would appreciate having a better sense of the progression of assignments over one course or a semester from more simple to advanced.
  - Create grading rubrics

## Sequencing Assignments

4 September 2009

Attendees: Natalia\_Chernysheva, Jessica Westin, Cindy Samet, Bob Winston, Greg Howard, Elena Duzs, Meghan Reedy, Patricia Moonsammy, Ed Webb, Walt Chromiak

### 1.) What did you learn from the workshop?

- Specific models for sequencing – very helpful!
- Bloom’s taxonomy – new to me!
- New modes of sequencing
- Practical ways to structure writing assignments in my classes
- New ways of thinking about writing assignments
- Some good suggestions about ways to think about sequencing – and nice discussion of ideas about it. Thank you!
- Very useful workshop. I like thinking out high/middle/low stakes assignments and will incorporate more low stakes assignments in my syllabi.
- The sequencing section of the presentation makes lots of sense, and is very helpful in thinking about how I would revise my syllabi.
- Great! Nice example. I should have sent you my assignments, but I’m not sure whether you should require that. Bob’s was a great example. Thanks!
- A few different ways to think about sequencing
- Types of sequencing assignments! I did some of this before, but now I know what it is that I was doing.

### 2.) What suggestions do you have for future workshops?

- Responding to writing (comments)
- Assigning “grades” to writing
- Peer review within the classroom
- “Writing-to-learn” techniques
- Teach writing as a recursive process
- Responding to different levels of student writing
- Nothing at this time
- Include a handout to accompany your lecture notes
- Have a packet of materials that we can take and look at later as we develop our assignments (best practices/sample assignments, etc.)
- A detailed treatment of how to teach writing process
- Helpful!

## Teaching Students to Revise

2 October 2009

Paul Glead, John Ransom, Jessica Westin, Cindy Samet, Bob Winston, Wilson Bell, Mariana Past, Megan Yost, Lucille Duperron, Ed Webb, Margaret Frohlich, Al Masland, Jerry Philogene, Brett Pearson, Sarah St. Angelo, Lisa Wolff, Elizabeth Lee, Rebecca Marquis, Elise Bartosik-Velez, Patricia Moonsammy, Greg Howard, Tony Pires, Shirley King, Vanessa Tyson

### 1.) What did you learn from the workshop?

- I got some good ideas for running peer reviews and making students accountable.

- I particularly liked the open-ended questions that they will answer during review. I used a check-sheet on the last peer review but wanted them to do more. I think they will next time with a new companion sheet.
- I found the advice on how to structure peer review sessions the most helpful (eg. # of students per group, use of reviewer document, types of acceptable feedback)
- Lots! Having access to these resources on Moddle is a HUGE help – thanks!
- Distinction betw editing;revising – I guess I knew this, but hadn't really thought about it.
- Details of how to organize peer review, very helpful
- How to explain the importance of revision to students
- Helpful links. Strategies for student/professor conferences, how to generate helpful peer review.
- Hadn't considered revision as a group effort in the past – have not used peer review groups. Have a much better understanding of the academic process. . . and its purpose/usefulness.
- Providing access to a variety of resources for more info.
- Examples of how to approach peer review goals w/students.

2.) What suggestions do you have for future workshops?

- I would like some science-specific writing workshop and teaching writing in a class with ESL students present with additional needs.
- Include an outline of what will be covered in the workshop.
- Establishing standards for a class – communicating what your grading rubric is, so students don't come back to say that grading is unfair & they didn't know what they were being graded on (this may not be your area at all, but it's something I've been struggling with)
- I'll think about that – Ah – writing in specific disciplines workshop: social science, humanities, sciences. What are the necessities for each?
- This was helpful – as a 1<sup>st</sup> timer I didn't have any expectations so no suggestions.

**Responding to Student Writing  
Evaluation  
11/13/2009 and 11/16/2009**

Nate Lorentz, Rebecca Marquis, Lucille Duperron, Margaret Frohlich, Cindy Samet, Brett Pearson, Wilson Bell, Jessica Westin, Sharon O'Brien, Lisa Wolff, Mariana Past, Elena Duzs, Jeremy Vetter, John Henson, Lisa Dorrill, Bob Winston, Alex Bates, Shawn Bender, Kerry Waller, Helene Lee, Meghan Reedy, Jennifer Froelich

**1.) What did you learn from the workshop?**

- I appreciated the shift from general “more specific” comments to more specific comments. Looking at the paper was useful.
- It was really helpful to think about types of comments (assessment vs. feedback) and go through an assignment as a group. Very knowledgeable presentation.
- Reintroduction to developing a rubric. I don't know very much about Langston Hughes's poetry. Helped me focus on creating more useful comments for the students.
- To ask more questions in margins; to think more about rubrics
- Great workshop – conversation at end was illuminating and helpful. I especially liked your strategies” for commenting on writing and describing it as “playing roles.”

- Some examples of rubrics; some strategies for responding; the different types of goals for responding
- Very useful. Thanks!
- Importance of elaborating comments without going overboard; Imagining student's point of view
- A lot! Strategies for being more global in terms of feedback.
- It's hard because my biggest problems have no answers (quantity of comments, how to best weigh grading). However, the discussion absolutely helps me to think more about these questions and brainstorming different approaches. I loved the 1<sup>st</sup> year rubric you handed out.
- I learned how to refocus my response strategies. What to do with a very unexperienced writer without being overwhelming. I also learned how to articulate better my boundaries.

## 2.) What suggestions do you have for future workshops?

- Maybe different discipline-specific workshops might be helpful. The focus was on a humanities paper but less like social science, math, science writing.
- Working with a sample to stimulate discussion was useful. Do things like this again.
- Can't think of anything right now.
- Discuss papers for courses other than FYS.
- Rubrics; What do students consider a successful writing assignment?
- Perhaps providing a list/catalog of what rubrics/examples/supporting documents are available on Moodle (I'm a tech idiot!); (This is minor!) Perhaps a phrase in the announcement that indicates it's okay to bring lunch. ( :
- I would like to attend a grading rubrics session. I would like another discussion on how to attach grading to the writing process (weighing different drafts, how to grade a paper that is all over the rubric (inconsistent). Maybe a workshop on how to help student who come in "disadvantaged."
- Give us less frustrating examples. I correct lots of papers every week and I don't want more headaches! Just kidding. Give us a copy you annotated. I would learn a lot from your responses and strategies.

### **The Research Paper: Pet Peeves and Peccadilloes 4 and 7 December 2009**

Nate Lorentz, Marc Mastrangelo, Greg Howard, Margaret Frohlich, Meghan Reedy, Bob Winston, Kerry Waller, Ed Webb, Sharon Kingston, Lucille Duperron, Alex Bates, Tony Rauhut, Mariana Past, James McMenamin, Amy Steinbugler, Al Masland, Jessica Westin, Magda Siekert, Sarah Skaggs, Elizabeth Lee

#### 1.) I learned useful things at this workshop.

Somewhat Agree	2
Agree	11
Strongly Agree	6

#### 2.) I would attend another writing pedagogy workshop.

Agree	5
Strongly Agree	14

### 3.) What did you learn from the workshop that will influence the way you teach writing?

- A number of issues to think about/reflect on: should you give a minimal number of sources; should you give students topic choices for papers
- The concept of “the conversation” and how to engage the students
- I thought it was good idea about encouraging students to use articles/scholarly resources in such a way that the students are forced to have them speak to one another
- I think the discussion about how to help students reach the 15-page requirement was most helpful.
- Sensitivity towards student struggles with “entering the conversation”
- I was able to confront some of my solutions to pet peeves (or simply to the task itself) with those proposed by my colleagues
- Model – research questioning early on in the semester
- Different models for staging/setting up the research paper
- Replace a topic w/question
- Write conclusion from methods and results
- Great ideas for activities from other professors
- The ideas about the conversations in the field, and how to enter that, were very interesting and helpful. Sometimes I think that the sciences are so different than lit crit that it’s hard to draw out ideas for my field, but there is a lot of overlap.
- A more curricular approach to teaching research; self-realization of what I am actually doing with my students and their writing
- A better understanding of sequencing assignments. How to focus on teaching disciplinary specific reading skills.
- The importance of sequencing is something I know but I always need to be reminded. I also got some good ideas about class discussions that can lead to good research papers.
- The conversation about how students might feel encountering “the parlor” was a nice reminder about their perspective. Assignment types – limiting sources, sharing/mimicking “the conversation,” the annotated bibliography with justification
- Some techniques to encouraging useful reading en route to effective writing.
- Again, I like how we uncover and make explicit the composing process so that we can communicate it more deliberately to our students. In my field we call it “consciousness raising.” It matters! Key words: demystifying, entering a conversation, sequencing
- Adjusting questions to student level; Emphasizing the importance of the question to be answered

### 4.) What suggestions do you have for spring workshops?

- How to create meaningful assessments
- Both have been good . . . I trust your choices
- Writing in the First Year Seminar
- Having faculty exchange materials from successful peer-reviewing activities, etc. (Everyone comes away with party favors!)
- Maybe 1st one of the semester should be a recap of this semester’s topics and discussion of what we all attempted in the fall that worked or not and new directions
- I love handouts! ( -:
- More
- List of more sources like Harris that we might be interested in reading
- How to teach writing as a part of the curriculum – i.e. what you teach at what levels

- Research paper assignments – but I have enjoyed the topics you’ve put out – things I wouldn’t have, or didn’t, think of.
- Fostering a sense of audience
- Keep the workshop as it is!
- A workshop that used examples of student work to reiterate points made today

**Crash Course in Teaching Writing  
Workshop Evaluation  
January 20, 2010**

Sarah Sherwood, Andy Wolff, Suman Abwani, Sharon Kingston, Amy Farrell, Nate Lorentz, Andy MacDonald, Jennifer Froelich, Kristi Humphreys, Lisa Dorrill, Stephanie Gilmore, Amy Steinbugler, Todd Wronski, Ann Hill, Jeremy Vetter, Sarah Skaggs, Chad Thralls, Wilson Bell, Lisa Wolff, Mike Poulton, Helene Lee, Nicky Tynan, Dominique Laurent, James McMenamin, Nicoletta Marini-Maio

<b>Content</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
Usefulness of overall content	17	3		
Practicality of topics	18	2		
Organization of information	17	3		
Level at which material was presented	13	5		
Usefulness of visual aids and handouts	15	4		
Effectiveness of group activities*	6	3	2	

\* No Answer = 9

<b>Facilitator’s Presentation Skills</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
Knowledge of the subject	20			
Presentation style	15	5		
Ability to communicate clearly	16	4		
Responses to participants’ questions	17	3		
Balance of lecture and discussion	11	8	1	

**What advice can you offer about how to improve this workshop?**

Group activities

Split tables by division so that some small group discussion would take place among colleagues

More sharing in small groups

Let us do some work/practical discussion in small groups

Maybe we could split into small groups for additional discussion within certain disciplines

Small group discussions on writing before shifting to large group discussions

Discipline specific workshops

Perhaps separate workshops for disciplines

Use division specific groups to allow us to talk with other colleagues about our

assignments

More time to analyze actual works

More work with specific examples

Focus on practical examples

How to create worksheets/rubrics in connection with our disciplines

Bring in an assignment to do or to revise or to modify

**Overall, how would you rate this workshop?**

**Excellent**

16

**Good**

3






**Adequate**

**Poor**

## APPENDIX H

### Faculty Development Moodle Site

#### Topic outline





-  News forum
-  [Purdue University OWL file](#)
-  [Take 20 \(A Documentary about the Teaching of Writing\) file](#)
-  [Grammar Girl Podcasts file](#)
-  [The Top Twenty Common Errors file](#)

#### Creating Effective Assignments

What makes an assignment clear, engaging, and intellectually challenging? We will look at the various components of writing assignments: key terms, task, format, requirements, audience, purpose, and process.

1



-  [Highlighted Notes file](#)
-  [Assignments: Mindful or Mindless? file](#)
-  [Bloom's Taxonomy file](#)
-  [Thinking About Your Assignments PDF document](#)

#### Building an Effective Assignment Sequence

What is the best way to sequence assignments throughout a course? We will look at several writing assignments for one course and discuss the logic of the assignment sequence. We will focus on how to scale and build assignments in order to guide students toward more complex thinking and writing. We will also consider the benefits of assigning ungraded and/or in-class writing within a sequence.






-  [Highlighted Notes file](#)
-  [Sequencing Writing Assignments PDF document](#)
-  [The Winston Sequence file](#)

#### Prompting Revision

How do writers become revisers? We will discuss how to explain revision to students, particularly how it differs from editing or proofreading. We will learn how to orchestrate productive peer review groups, seek support from the writing center, and hold effective conferences with writers. Finally, we will discover techniques that will enable us to hold students accountable for multiple drafts (without having to read every draft ourselves).








3



-  Highlighted Notes file
-  Sharing and Responding Word document
-  Peer Review Guide for Reader Word document
-  Peer Review Guide for Writer Word document
-  Workshop Logs file

### Responding to Student Writing

We will consider how to respond to student writing in a way that helps students grow as writers and thinkers. Examining the art of margin notes and end notes, we will discuss approaches to commenting, the pitfalls of over-commenting, our purpose and sense of audience when commenting, and the amount of emphasis to place on sentence-level (grammatical) errors.

- 4 □
-  Research Paper Rubric file
  -  Lab Report Rubric (Physics) Word document
  -  Sample FYS Rubric file
  -  The Manifesto on Student Feedback (Podcast) file
  -  Tips for Responding to Student Writing file
  -  Tips for Handling Error PDF document
  -  Practice Essay file

### The Research Paper: Pet Peeves and Peccadilloes

- 5 □
- Do you find that sometimes your students cite the source but copy the words without using quote marks? Does it seem that they all use sources ornamentally? Maybe you have even seen their complete rough drafts with parenthetical reminders to themselves to “insert quote here.” We will discuss the frustrating issues that come up again and again regarding student research writing with the goal of formulating solutions and interventions.

-  The Research Paper -- Discussion Summary file
-  Reading Academic Writing -- Elizabeth Lee's Approach Word document

### Crash Course in Tutoring Writing for Foreign Language Tutors

- 6 □
-  Tutor Prompt file
  -  The Tutoring Process file
  -  Affective Tutoring Tales file
  -  Prewriting Strategies file

 Developing and Organizing Strategies Word document

## Reflective Writing in Service-Learning and Community-Based Research Courses

7

 Highlighted Notes file



## Crash Course in Teaching Writing

**An abridged version of the fall workshop series, this half-day workshop will help you prepare to teach writing in the spring. We will discuss creating effective assignments, sequencing assignments, prompting revision, designing rubrics, and responding to student writing. Stay for lunch and leave with a plan to teach writing in your courses!**

8

 WR Courses file

 Increasing the Mindfulness of Your Students file

 Writer's Personal Profile

 Principles of Assignment Design (WR) file

 Thinking About Your Assignments (For Student Use) PDF document

 Sequencing Assignments (WR) file

 Bloom's Taxonomy file

 Teaching Students About Revision and How To Peer Review file

 Types of Peer Response Word document

 Sample Peer Review Response Guide file

 Sample Rubric for a Writing Assignment file

 Sample Rubric for Scientific Papers Word document

 Tips for Responding to Student Writing file

