

TEACHING WITH WRITING

THE OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING INTENSIVE CURRICULUM (WIC)

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 3

SPRING 2007

Upcoming WIC Events Fall 2007

WIC FACULTY SEMINAR

MONDAY, OCT. 8
MONDAY, OCT. 15
MONDAY, OCT. 22
MONDAY, OCT. 29
MONDAY, NOV. 5

WALDO 121
3:00-5:00 PM

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FOR DETAILS

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Kathleen Blake Yancey visits OSU

Michael Faris
WIC GTA

What do we know about the writing skills students transfer from one situation or class to another?

This was one of the questions that Kathleen Blake Yancey addressed during her talk “The Things They Carried: A Preliminary Review of Research on Transfer, on Transfer in College Writing, and on Ways to Design for Transfer.”

On Wednesday, May 16, WIC was pleased to host Yancey, Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of Eng-

lish at Florida State University and president-elect of the National Council of Teachers of English. Yancey shared ideas on transfer, new media, and electronic portfolios during a lunch session with WIC faculty and gave her talk in the afternoon.

Yancey argues that transference of skills is dependent upon our understanding of writing as contextual. In an older understanding of writing, people used to think that if a writer was good in one setting, he or she would be good in another; one might

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Photo by Jeanna Towns

Yancey speaking in the MU

Pre/Views



Vicki Tolar Burton
WIC Director

WIC teachers hope and believe that students who learn to write in their major will transfer writing knowledge and skills to other academic settings and to the workplace. How can we teach to encourage this transfer?

WIC's 2007 Visiting Lecturer Kathleen Yancey presented research-based practices that can help us support transfer of writing and learning. Michael Faris's page one article sums up Yancey's advice and invites us to reflect on our writing pedag-

gies. Do we ask students what they already know about writing in the major? Do we build on their prior knowledge of writing process, genre, and organization? Do we build redundancy of writing practice into our department curriculum? Do we give students explicit language with which to discuss writing in our field? I especially like Yancey's idea of having students develop concept maps for writing.

One concept I'd like to map as the year ends is the significant contribution of WIC TA, Michael

Faris. It has been a privilege to work with a student who is as bright, creative, and professional as Michael. I especially enjoyed his gift for the visual, which is evident on every page of this newsletter. I wish him all the best in completing his groundbreaking thesis, “Traversing the City of Blogs: Public Spheres, Pedagogy, and Performance.” I feel sure Michael will be running a writing program of his own before long. Thanks for everything, Michael. I will miss having you as my partner in WIC.

Fall 2007 WIC Faculty Seminar Call for Participants

Faculty interested in the Fall 2007 Introductory WIC Faculty Seminar should ask their department chair to send an email nomination to WIC Program Director Vicki Tolar Burton at vicki.tolarbuton@oregonstate.edu.

The seminar, designed both for faculty who plan to teach WIC courses and for those who want to learn to use writing in non-WIC courses, will meet five Monday afternoons from 3 to 5 pm: October 8, 15, 22, 29, and November 5.

About Teaching with Writing

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Teaching with Writing is the newsletter of the Oregon State University Writing Intensive Curriculum Program. As part of the Baccalaureate Core, all OSU students are required to take an upper-division writing intensive course in their major.

The content of WIC courses ranges from Bioengineering Design to the History of Photography. While subject matter differs by department, all WIC courses share certain commonalities defined by the Faculty Senate:

- Informal ungraded or minimally graded writing is used as a mode of learning the content material.
- Students are introduced to conventions and practices of writing in their discipline and use of borrowed information.
- Students complete at least 5000 words of writing, of which at least 2000 words are polished, formal assignments that have been revised.
- Students are guided through the whole process, receive feedback on drafts, and have opportunities to revise.

For complete information on WIC guidelines, visit the WIC website at:

<<<http://wic.oregonstate.edu>>>

2006-2007 Culture of Writing Awards

As of press time, five Oregon State University students have received honors for their writing ability in Spring 2007 – a Writing Intensive Curriculum Culture of Writing Award.

Presented by the students' departments and OSU's Writing Intensive Curriculum Program, the awards recognize the top undergraduate paper written in the respective departments during the 2006-07 academic year.

Additional departments will be handing out awards for this school year, and the award recipients of those departments will be published in the Fall 2007 issue of *Teaching with Writing*.

The WIC program congratulates the following students for their excellence in writing.



Photo by Jeanna Towns

WIC Culture of Writing Award in DHE recipient Katy Mullis.

WIC CULTURE OF WRITING AWARD IN DESIGN AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Katy Mullis

Title: "A SWOT Analysis of Walgreens in the Competitive Pharmacy Marketplace"
Course: Design and Human Environment 401 – Conducting Social Research

WIC CULTURE OF WRITING AWARD IN FOREST ENGINEERING

Brendan Welsh

Title: "Timber Plan for West of the Rockies"
Course: Forest Engineering 450 – Capstone Project

WIC CULTURE OF WRITING AWARD IN HUMANITIES, OSU-CASCADES

Erica A. Dietz

Titles: "Faulkner and Picasso: How Modernism Demands the Thought Process of its Audience" and "Environmental Consequences of Conquest"
Course: English 480 – A Cultural History of American Art and Literature

WIC CULTURE OF WRITING AWARD IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, OSU-CASCADES

Amanda J. Deney

Title: Critical Book Reviews of Akhil Reed Amar and Alan R. Hirsch's *For the People: What the Constitution Really Says about Your Rights* and Adrienne Rich's *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966-1978*.
Courses: Political Science 323 – American Constitutional Law; Political Science 363 – Gender and Race in American Political Thought

WIC CULTURE OF WRITING AWARD IN WOMEN STUDIES

Sarah Wiebenson

Title: "A Journey to Agnosticism"
Course: Women Studies 495 – Women's Theology and Spirituality

WIC's 2007 Development Grants awarded

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Michelle Inderbitzin, Proposer

Goal: Inderbitzin's proposal is to attend the Association of American Colleges and Universities Conference on "The Student as Scholar: Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice," focused on methods for developing faculty-undergraduate researcher relationships in order to help students develop as researchers and writers. She will hold six meetings with OSU Sociology faculty and undergraduate researchers to share what she learns and develop a culture of writing in the Sociology Department. Inderbitzin will also share what she learns with WIC faculty.

ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

Roger Graham, Proposer

Goal: Because the College of Business is elevating the Accounting Program to a Degree Program, Graham will develop a new WIC course titled Accounting Theory, which will expose students to controversial accounting issues with the objective of developing students' critical thinking and writing skills.

NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Jeffrey A. Hale, Proposer

Goal: NMC instructor Pam Cytrynbaum will restructure NMC 301 in order to remove instruction that duplicates earlier NMC courses. The new course will be oriented toward multi-dimensional storytelling based on the strong fundamentals found in the journalistic tradition. This WIC course will serve as a foundation for NMC coursework.

WOMEN STUDIES

Susan Shaw, Proposer

Goal: In order to better incorporate technology into writing instruction and assignments, Women Studies faculty will participate in a one day workshop led by Dianna Fisher from Extended Campus. During this workshop, faculty will receive skills-based training in writing technologies that they will incorporate into their courses for 2007-2008. Grant funding includes reference books and refreshments for the workshop.

WIC Development Grant provides the opportunity to assess writing in DHE

Carol Caughey

Design and Human Environment

A WIC Development Grant in 2006 allowed the faculty of the Department of Design and Human Environment to review the current state of the WIC and WAC (Writing across the Curriculum) programs in DHE and to brainstorm ideas for expanding them.

In the past three years DHE has added seven new faculty members for a total of fourteen. We as a faculty recognized the need to review our current WIC courses, to educate new faculty about the goals of WIC and WAC, and to encourage continued department support of WAC through the inclusion of writing-to-learn activities in all of our classes. Two more issues to be addressed were to review our use of oral presentations in classes, and to review our Department's writing guide, The Design and Human Environment Learning and Style Guide.

DHE has been and continues to be committed to supporting writing excellence. In 1994 we held our first WIC retreat. Since that time we have met in retreat settings in order to develop and expand a department-wide WAC policy. But it was time to involve the new faculty members, whether or not they had taken the basic WIC seminar.

The retreat program was planned and conducted by the two WIC instructors in DHE, Mary Pedersen (AD and MM) and Carol Caughey (ID and HS). We met in a local retreat setting at the end of the fall 2006 term and included breaks for walking to various local restaurants in order that our conversations could continue more informally over meals. WIC Director Vicki Tolar Burton presented an overview and history of the Writing Intensive Curriculum Program at OSU, and Peter Saunders presented an overview of the services of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The DHE faculty members then reviewed most of our course syllabi, and each person discussed her course outcomes. By hearing

about each course, its content and its writing activities, we gained a deeper understanding of the holistic experience provided for the undergrads in DHE. Equally important was that this knowledge enables us to support each other's courses.

The most useful and lively activities during the retreat were the break-out sessions by major, in which we discussed how best to support a developmental approach to writing-to-learn. Opportunities to share insights about teaching and learning are rare in academia. Our opportunities to gripe and commiserate while also suggesting solutions to the problems were among the best learning experiences of the one and one-half day retreat.

During a spring 2007 "Wrap-up" dinner meeting, faculty members each provided a summary of changes in courses made since the December retreat. We reviewed both our progress in implementing continued support for WIC in our courses and the extent that The Design and Human Environment Learning and Style Guide continues to support our writing activities.

Thank you to the WIC Developmental Grant program for providing the occasion for us to hear each other's goals for improving student writing.

Two New Writing Guides on WIC's Website

Many departments at OSU have developed writing guides to assist their students in writing in the discipline.

The WIC website hosts links to writing guides and has recently added links to new writing guides from Mathematics and Human Development and Family Sciences.

Links to departmental writing guides are available at http://wic.oregonstate.edu/wic_dept_writ_guides.html

WIC discusses plagiarism with CAMP students



Photo by Jeanna Towns

On April 25, Vicki Tolar Burton and Michael Faris visited Oscar Montemayor's class for the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), a federally funded program on campus that provides educational assistance to students whose family history includes migrant agricultural work. The WIC staff discussed issues of plagiarism and academic honesty, including issues of incorporating source material (see below) with the class of first-year students. For more information on CAMP, go to their website at <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/camp/>

Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing: A quick and easy guide

Quote:

- Using the exact wording as the original, put in quotation marks
- Reasons to quote:
 - To use wording that is memorable or powerful
 - To express a respected authority's opinion
 - To emphasize someone's opinion
 - To give voice to different opinions

Paraphrase:

- To put someone else's ideas into your own words
- Reason to paraphrase:
 - When you do not wish to quote, but the details are important

Summarize:

- To briefly express the main points of something
- Reason to summarize:
 - The main point is important, but the details aren't

Information adapted from Andrea A. Lunsford's *The Everyday Writer*, 3rd ed (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), page 169.

Yancey, cont.

Continued from page 1

expect a good poet to be good at a lab report. But now we understand writing as contextual, so we must wonder if writing skills taught in one class can transfer to another class or situation. During her talk, Yancey shared the results of research she conducted with three of her graduate students at FSU.

Students transfer in various skills at the beginning of college, including a sense of an organized text, an idea of a thesis statement and support, a knowledge of the literary discourse community, and a sense of editing.

Additionally, students often transfer skills from first-year writing courses: They generally carry forward a writing process, although they adapt it to new situations and often still do not write multiple drafts for later courses. Yancey also discovered that many students conduct peer reviews informally outside of class and carry forward a sense of genre.

Yancey noted that there are differences between experts and novices when it comes to transference of skills. Experts see patterns and often build mental maps and make connections that novices do not see. Therefore, teachers must be explicit about connections, and the classroom must be a location for metacognition: a place to talk about what students learned and how they learned it.

Various actions are important for transfer, according to Yancey: teachers need to invite

students' prior knowledge into the classroom; teachers need to be explicit in their assignments about the elements of writing and genre; students need to reflect on what is being learned; and teachers need to help students construct mental maps of the field and of their writing assignments.

Yancey found that redundancy is perhaps one of the most important keys to transfer. Students must encounter similar writing tasks in similar contexts in order to solidify their understanding and transference of that type of writing.

Here are some tips for WIC instructors in order to teach for transference:

- At the beginning of a course, ask students what their prior knowledge of writing in the discipline is. Can you build on it? Or is it different from or at odds with what you want them to know?
- Identify key terms of writing in the course and in assignments, including writing process, subject matter, genre, rhetorical situation, and discourse community.
- Be explicit about genre in assignments. The title of an assignment can help teach genre.
- Encourage students to create mental maps of the discipline and of their writing.
- Use reflection and metacognition in the classroom, asking students what they learned, how they learned it, and what they still need to learn.

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