



Richmond Writing Across the Curriculum Newsletter

Issue 8, Spring 2003

New Fall 2003 Class

The university will offer an interdisciplinary class, *Writing From the Body*, taught by Cheryl Pallant. The course aims to generate writing from movement and to elicit movement from writing. With class emphasizing an exploration of process and assumptions about expression and meaning, selected readings and creative exercises are designed to intensify an awareness of constructed identities and perceptual limitations. The goal is to generate personally embodied work and better appreciate the power of words and dance.

Most learning adheres to the mind/body split. *Writing From the Body* mends the split by focusing on what both forms of expression share in common: breath, inspiration, and the urge to create, communicate, and understand. As languages, writing and dance establish invaluable inroads to who we are and help develop skills and access to adapt to an ever-changing world. Together they form a potent and largely unexplored combination.

WAC and Dance

by Kate Morrison

This semester the Writing Center is pleased to have begun its collaboration with the university's dance department. Initially, one might see this as an unlikely pair, as most people associate the Writing Center with writing-intensive courses such as the freshman Core course. As a Writing Fellow for an Introductory to Jazz class, I have found this pairing to be beneficial to the students in the dance program as it has helped them articulate ideas formed throughout the semester.

Dr. Anne Van Gelder feels that writing plays a significant role in

her classes because "students should learn to analyze their initial responses to dance. If we encourage them to look at a piece in a more in-depth way, they will hopefully have a richer experience with dance and art in general." The dance professors noticed that students were previously explaining performances with statements like "I liked it" or "I didn't like it." In conferences, Fellows encouraged the students to discuss why they held these opinions, which opened the door for a more detailed analysis. Over the semester, Writing Fellows have helped dance students establish critical theses, analysis of performances attended, and organized, clear thoughts.

The class that I worked with was assigned one research paper as well as numerous performance critiques. Through these assignments, the students were able to approach writing about dance in a variety of ways. The research paper allowed them to explore an area that contributed to the dance field, which expanded their knowledge on why dance is how it is today. The critiques had the students analyzing the meaning in a particular dance performance and evaluating the company's ability to relay that meaning through such aspects as costume, choreography, and musical selections.

This successful partnership will hopefully open the door for other departments to see the benefits that can be gained from stressing writing in their curriculum. Dr. Elizabeth Turner summed up the significance of writing perfectly by saying, "Writing is an integral part of the dance curriculum because in this day and age writing is an integral part of being an educated human being."

This year has been a good one for our program, an appropriate end to our 10th year of placing Writing Fellows in classes. The WAC program and Writing Center continue to grow. This comes from your dedication to improving students' writing.

We are proud to announce that Jessica Gring is Tutor of the Year; Patricia North Writing Fellow of the Year. Both will receive an award certificate and gift certificate from Carytown Books. This year we had difficulty choosing our winners. We'd like to thank the hard-working seniors who were eligible for the award and the faculty who nominated them. We wish all of our graduating students good luck in the world beyond UR's gates. Have a long and rewarding summer break.

Joe Essid, Writing Center Director
Cheryl Pallant, Writing Fellows Coordinator

Announcements & Reminders

Eng. 383

Faculty, it is not too late to nominate good students for the program. To nominate a student to enroll in English 383, contact Joe Essid ASAP.

Don't forget your preferences! For fall classes, faculty should go to <http://writing.richmond.edu/wac/facultypref.html> and students to writing.richmond.edu/writing/preference.html.
