



Richmond Writing Across the Curriculum Newsletter

Issue 12, Spring 2005

Announcements:

Welcome back!

Special hellos to the new tutors and Fellows from Dr. MacAllister's Fall, 2004 section of Eng. 383. Likewise, we want to welcome Dr. Linda Boland and Dr. Richard Marfuggi, who will be working with Writing Fellows for the first time this semester in their Biology courses.

Making a Good Start:

Fellows and faculty should meet as soon as possible to discuss the requirements and deadlines in their courses. Faculty should give Fellows 7-10 days for conferences after they receive 10-15 drafts.

Faculty should introduce the Fellow(s) in class and let writers know that all of them will benefit from having a trained reader look over their work. If at all possible, faculty should arrange for every writer in a section to see a Fellow at least twice during the semester.

Salaries & Schedules:

The Writing Center will open on Monday, Jan. 24. All tutors will be "on call" before then.

New Fellows and tutors should be prepared for their tax paperwork for the university. The IRS will require an original (not copied) Social-Security card and a photo ID.

Tutors should contact Lee Carleton (lcarleto@richmond.edu) to schedule their shifts at the Writing Center.

Wisdom Pearls from:

Leigh Jason

Thesis, thesis, thesis! The most common issue I find in students' work is an undeveloped thesis, and consequently the students' body paragraphs tend to be disorganized and lack coherence. I ask students to explain what they are trying to show in their papers, and then I write down what they say. The students are then able to parse the various components of their thesis, so that they can arrange their body paragraphs to parallel each component.

Kate Reynertson

Try not to overload yourself by scheduling too many appointments right on top of each other as a Fellow (if it can be avoided). Giving yourself a little more time to be thorough will be more helpful to the students than rushing through papers to get the meetings finished earlier.

Caroline Weist

Give students the print-outs from Writer's Web. They explain things clearly and give the students a resource that they can take with them and use while writing.

A New Approach: Eng. 103 Kate Seferian

I understand what Scout Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* meant when she said that she did not love reading because "one does not love breathing." My love of reading has spread into a love of writing, and lately I have been forging my path to becoming an editor.

As I machete my way to my career, Dr. Essid asked me to join him as a

Fellow in his Expository Writing class this year; however, his class would be unlike any other class connected with the Fellowing program. Instead of attending class twice during the semester, I would be in his class once or twice per week. I would experience this class as though I were an Expository student myself, and assimilate myself into the group. The students would get accustomed to my personality and presence and hopefully become comfortable with asking me for help. I am essentially one of them; to some extent I am a freshman all over again, but one that is capable of answering any questions they might have regarding writing or perhaps any other query about student life.

But these are bonuses. My purpose in the classroom is to guide the students in communicating ideas, formulating theses, and developing their writing. I am able to frequently work one-on-one because I am in the classroom so often. I recognize recurring problems, and I can identify many of the students' styles and conflicts. Working with the portfolios allows the writer and me to organize essays into one whole product and compare these finished products to one another. The students track their progress with the notes of their peer editors and writer's memos. As a tutor I have a more definite direction to follow when the construction of thoughts and drafts are somehow organized into one product – there is a focus. The writers and I can look at their written comments, participation, and development as academic writers through the information kept in the portfolio.

Dr. Essid's method of instructing Expository Writing and his expectations for me as a Fellow have really helped to spotlight a direction for me in this first semester. In setting a course for the students through

portfolios, I am able to concentrate on particular aspects of a few essays at one time. When working on the next portfolio, the writer and I can assess whether or not the previous critiquing methods were efficient in creating a solid paper. We both benefit from seeing each other each week, and I think this benefit is easily conveyed through their portfolio work.

Postscript by Joe Essid:

I was humbled by my 103 students' informal responses to our class. Several noted that they felt more comfortable sharing a draft with Kate than they did sharing it with me! To that degree, Kate did become a peer in the classroom. Since Kate knew my assignments well, her help never went far from the mark.

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS

PETE and the WAC Program are co-sponsoring "Learning Over Lunch," and all faculty are invited. Please let your colleagues know about this program.

If you would like to participate, please notify Pat Schoknecht (x6689) to reserve a box lunch. Of special interest to WAC faculty:

"How I Stopped Fearing Blackboard and Came to Love (part of) It" w/ Joe Essid, THC 331, Jan. 19, 12:30-1:30. Dr. Essid. and advocate of open-Internet materials, hates courseware, which he calls "the gated community." Yet he has discovered a few great ways to use Blackboard in the classroom. . .

"Culture Shock: International Students Discuss the Issues" w/ Nuray Grove, THC 331, Jan. 26, 12:30-1:30. Get a look at Ms. Grove's video of international students and their reactions of academic and cultural adjustments at UR.

SEND US YOUR IDEAS!

We need "Wisdom Pearls" from you for our next issue. We would also like to feature any announcements or longer reflective pieces about writing or teaching.

Send all polished and unpolished pearls to Cheryl Pallant at cpallant@richmond.edu.