



Richmond Writing Across the Curriculum Newsletter

Issue 13, March 2005

Fellows & Tutors Wanted

We invite faculty to recommend freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to join the program. Students must enroll in the Eng. 383 training course next semester. To recommend a student, faculty should write a short letter of recommendation or send an e-mail to Writing Fellows Coordinator Cheryl Pallant (cpallant@richmond.edu).

Faculty should also tell the students they recommend to send a short writing sample (at least 3 pages) to Ms. Pallant (campus address: Writing Center). Potential Writing Fellows should have good writing, interpersonal, and organizational skills; all students would enroll in English 383 next semester.

WAC After Core 101-102?

If adopted as proposed, the TFUGE recommendations replace Core with a one-semester freshman humanities seminar. We intend to maintain the WAC program's current size, so it is not too early to consider uses for Fellows beyond Core 101-102 in existing upper-division classes and the proposed "Inquiry" classes. As we all consider different ways to employ Writing Fellows, Dr. Michael Kerckhove's article provides good advice for all of us.

Your participation in the upcoming anonymous WAC surveys will really help us to justify the size and shape of WAC at Richmond.

WAC at Work in Core & Math by Kate Seferian

It is what all Writing Fellows want: the feedback and the knowledge that what they are doing is actually making a difference in students' writing. Dr. Michael Kerckhove, Associate Professor of Mathematics, has been using Fellows sporadically since 1994 but now more regularly since he has been teaching CORE. He kindly responded to a few questions posed to him regarding the Fellowing program.

Dr. Kerckhove has used Fellows in Math 245: Linear Algebra, where he said the ultimate purpose is expository: "It turns out that the statement of the Fundamental Theorem of Linear Algebra is most effectively remembered through a diagram that appears on the back cover of the textbook I use." He explains further, "Writing Fellows had as their biggest task during the semester to help students write a paper, complete with effective examples, conveying their understanding of the diagram and its meaning(s) with their classmates as the intended audience." Contrary to what many may think, Fellows can have an influence on a student's writing even in classes of a mathematical or scientific nature.

It is, however, in his CORE class that Dr. Kerckhove received most of his feedback concerning the Writing Fellows. "In that course," he said, "many students attend to the quality of the relationship with their Writing Fellows over and above the quality of their prose." Dr. Kerckhove did mention, though, an idea of "stress position" that has helped students improve their writing.

He likened "stress position" to Enobarbus of Shakespeare's *Antony*

and *Cleopatra*, a character that is familiar enough with the principal characters to aptly interpret their words and actions, Dr. Kerckhove said, and therefore can help the reader comprehend the culture in the play. He asked his students to read lines aloud, stressing certain words and phrases of Enobarbus, such as "indeed" and "thus," to better understand the underlying themes of the play.

This same self-awareness of the writer can be found when working with the Fellowing Program. Dr. Kerckhove believes that the most important work with the Writing Fellows comes in "encouraging the writer to take risks in order to achieve increased awareness." The close relationships formed between the Fellows and the students lead to a level of comfort that allows the writer to broaden his or her style and voice, as well as engendering what Dr. Kerckhove called an expression of new thinking. "Fellows have helped me to convey to the students the importance of the 'stress position' in sentences, paragraphs, etc. and have helped the students...to utilize this awareness more effectively."

"Learning Over Lunch" Event

"E-Zines", Terry Dolson, English
Wednesday, March 30th, THC 331

Terry Dolson had students write materials for a "real audience," namely, an e-zine of their choice. Several of the students had their work accepted for publication.

Terry will discuss the project and ways to encourage students to extend learning outside the classroom.

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