

Vintage WAC: Improving the Learning Impact of WAC

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Abstract: This article is a report on the 2006 WAC Conference at Clemson University, written from the perspective of two international "critical friends." We use our reflections on the conference as a springboard for exploring the current state of play of the WAC movement, and for suggesting future areas for development. We noted three common sets of metaphors at play throughout the conference: spatial/architectural; mechanical; and aging. We suggest that these metaphors are triply revealing. They help reveal the healthy and vibrant range of WAC activities; they point towards common problems and shared difficulties; and they illuminate some of our current blind spots about our own practice and our critical understanding thereof. We end with some suggestions relating to the future work we consider significant for the continuing flourishing of WAC, and look forward to WAC 2008.

Starting Points

We are very pleased to have been invited to share some reflections about the excellent event that was WAC 2006, and about where we might hope to be by WAC 2008. For us, this has been a great opportunity to think back over our experiences, and to use this process to reconsider parts of our own professional practices. We hope that our observations and ideas will serve as spring-boards for readers' own thoughts, reflections, challenges and plans.

Our impressions of WAC2006 are obviously coloured by our own national and professional perspectives. For a start, I (Neill) have just signaled my Britishness through that "u" in coloured! We come from Sweden (Magnus) and the UK (Neill). We work in a Language and Communications Centre and a Teaching and Learning Development Centre. We have a shared interest in what we refer to as "educational development" in the sense of development of higher education at various levels and units towards improving student learning. Our interest in writing is as a crucial component in much development work and as intrinsic to learning and knowledge production.

We were also invited to facilitate one of the pre-conference, Thursday morning workshops, and our experience of meeting colleagues at that workshop had an ongoing impact on how we viewed the WAC event. In that workshop we worked first with participants to consider what "teaching" is, and then we moved on to think about what goes into supporting high quality student learning. For us it was certainly true that being able to listen to the participants' eloquent, and quite honestly moving, articulations of the factors that support learning came to influence our experience of the conference. In fact, though WAC06 was probably not planned as an educational development conference as such, we find it useful and interesting from our European perspective to look at the conference and WAC through this lens of educational development towards high quality learning.

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The Lasting Good Impression of WAC 2006

The lasting impression of the WAC 2006 conference in Clemson for us is a very good one. There is something energizing about such intensive, focused *getting together* that creates an atmosphere of great creativity. Conference delegates seemed keen on sharing ideas and problems and this openness appeared to become a part of the logistics, and of the very fabric, of the conference. Many of the panels had activities in them that promoted audience interactivity and the generous breaks between sessions enabled people to continue their conversations. The ease with which delegates were able to approach a presenter or a fellow delegate at WAC06 was indicative of a collegial and creative atmosphere that we thoroughly enjoyed.

Of course, this *getting together*—whilst hugely enjoyable in itself!—also served a purpose beyond the social. Another lasting impression we have of the conference is the commitment to change and improvement that was so widely shared by delegates. One of the most powerful levers for change in Higher Education is simply people spending time together talking, sharing ideas, questioning and offering support and re-energization. This notion sounds so simple that we would hesitate to write it down, were it not for the fact that such sharing, at least in our experience, remains the exception rather than the rule. A comment we heard time and again from delegates was that they were returning to their home institutions charged up with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence. Furthermore, the element of *getting together* was also apparent in the many sessions with multifaceted representation where there would be a team from a university involving someone from administration, faculty from the disciplines, and faculty or staff from a WAC-programme. Such sessions capture the power and essence of the WAC idea as educational development for us: present colleagues at various levels of the university with an idea with potential and trust they will find a way to make good use of it in their context (possibly with our help).

On top of this, the delegate profile of the WAC06 conference struck us as being that of the "good practitioner." Of course there were well-established researchers at the conference but there were also teachers who are comparatively new to WAC, and the ratio of good practitioners at WAC06 was high. More importantly, the ratio of good practitioners among the researchers at WAC was also high. This is something that strikes a newcomer and outsider as crucial not only for the atmosphere of the conference but also for the power of the WAC-related movement as educational development.

This WAC conference was also an international conference - and of course these reflective comments are offered as part of a growing set of international perspectives on WAC. We had an interesting sense, however, that the international delegate profile tended to be different from the North American one. The international delegates were more likely to be WAC staff and did not represent the same range of disciplinary faculty or administration as more "local" delegates. So it seems the strength of national WAC has not quite reached beyond the borders yet and it remains our task and challenge in international settings to transform US WAC strengths into strategically strong versions in our respective settings and bring such WAC teams to future conferences. Panels, papers or Special Interest Groups on this topic at future WAC conferences would, from our perspectives, be very welcome, and we hope would help advance the further internationalization of WAC.

WAC Mirrors and Metaphors

As we were thinking about how to structure our reflections, it struck us that we had both heard a number of metaphors being used regularly throughout the conference—during sessions; in the corridor conversations; even over dinner. These metaphors have helped us clarify our senses of the picture of WAC that emerged in its 2006 conference, and of some of the priorities we think are (or, to be honest, we think *ought to be*) coming up next.

The first set of metaphors we heard could be described as spatial or architectural. We identified this in the language of *building writing centres* that somehow often remain *on the margins* or *at the periphery*; of

programmes, students and faculty facing problems of *not fitting* or *falling between the (institution's) gaps*; and of the productive potential of *staying outside the mainstream* or *working in the interstices* (of disciplines or institutional/administrative structures). The second set of metaphors was mechanical in nature. Delegates talked about *needing to find the right levers* to effect change; of *prying open the cracks* and seeing what kinds of opportunities then arose; of *firing up the engines*. The final set related to age and aging: to WAC having arrived at its *middle age* or, ominously perhaps, its *mid-life crisis*; even *not being sexy any more*; and in the ongoing language of reflection and re-evaluation.

The following three sections of this reflection will focus on each of these sets of metaphors in turn. Our interest is in exploring what these metaphors reveal to us about trends and currents in how the community appears to be thinking about WAC in theory, policy and institutional practice. We are also interested in thinking about the limits to each of these sets of metaphors—and in trying to identify blind-spots and limiting beliefs. In our conclusion, we lay out a potentially productive path ahead, and look forward to WAC 2008.

Metaphors of Space and Architecture at WAC 2006: Sustainability

It is inevitable that we will wind up mixing our metaphors in this section, as there is significant overlap between the spatial and the architectural. But that would also reflect the metaphors were in fact used in mixed ways at the conference. They were also used in ways that hovered between metaphor and literalization of the tropes. One minute, delegates would be talking about the need to *carve out some recognized institutional space* or to *create breathing space*, and the next the talk would be about the bricks and mortar of building a writing centre or redesigning classroom spaces.

One of the greatest emerging tensions was surely in the use of the term *writing centre* itself. Very often, the *writing centre* was mentioned in the same breath as comments to the effect that writing activities were institutionally *peripheral* or indeed actively *marginalized*. While we will not be discussing building nor running writing centres as such, three significant and recurring conversational themes emerged in this tension between centrality and marginalization:

- The professional spaces we inhabit
- The institutional and curricular locations of WAC
- The power and potential of acting from the margins

One of the tensions we recognize in our careers as European education developers is that nobody really starts out as a pedagogical developer—we have all come into this line of work after careers in a variety of other academic disciplines. One of the emerging tensions in both the UK and Sweden is that educational development staff now find themselves in the unfamiliar situation of falling between the gaps of higher education careers, since they do not fit well within pre-existing career structures. For educational development as such, this is partly because there is no sufficiently established "research community" to cater for such career structures. But is that also the WAC community situation? Career structures seemed to be an issue for some—but not all—delegates at the conference.

How we react to the sometimes invidious institutional positions into which we are cast can vary hugely, however, as can our sense of empowerment in creating working relationships with other academic colleagues. Some of the delegates at WAC 2006 held positions of considerable power. Others found themselves stymied by their positions. Some delegates carried with them an air of enormous self-confidence; others had endured institutional storms that had left them feeling isolated, and consequently more diffident and tentative. In terms of the personal and professional development that the WAC movement could offer its members, creating further networking and mentoring support for colleagues working in "difficult" institutions would seem a highly desirable goal. Although we imagine that this is probably widely done in

the work-place, a productive discussion of career structures and mentoring does not seem to have reached the conferences. Making this a "valid" topic for WAC conference presentations would be productive to everyone involved, we suggest.

A related tension arises also in the professional relationships—and areas of primary responsibility—that education developers and WAC practitioners create with the academic colleagues with and for whom they work. We know as education developers that initiatives can indeed be both resented and resisted by faculty. One of the aspects of WAC 2006 we particularly enjoyed, therefore, was seeing the mixed panels of WAC professionals, discipline-based academics, and higher education administration working so well—and respectfully—together. There were many positive experiences on show, and we certainly heard academic colleagues talking in terms of how their exposure to WAC initiatives had *transformed [their] teaching* and led to increased confidence and enjoyment in teaching. By the very nature of conferences such as this, however, those faculty who had not had good experiences with us were absent and *their* stories remained unheard. So, the task remains to figure out how we create the most positive conditions where productive faculty uptake and use of WAC initiatives become most likely.

Architectural Variety for Sustainability?

When it comes to considering the institutional position of WAC programmes rather than its faculty, then the most obvious theme that recurred in many panels was that of security and sustainability. Predictably, this theme was intimately linked to discussing forms of administration of WAC programmes and the funding for various types of programmes, projects, and/or interventions.

For us, coming out of a European environment where it seems that student writing and its development is somehow generally taken for granted by institutions and therefore does not require much organizational support or funding, it is with some envy that we see the degree to which "WAC programmes" exist and are supported by administrations. But support obviously comes in many guises, and we quickly came to realize that there are downsides as well. One place where these surfaced was in discussions about whether WAC or a WAC programme should be compulsory or not. The risk of associating compulsory or any WAC interventions with any notion of deficiency (be it among students or faculty) is often observed but more importantly, it seems there may be a risk that compulsory interventions become mere lip-service in the organization, and that in some contexts it may be actually preferable to work with the slower momentum of voluntary participation that engenders a deeper and more sustainable presence among faculty. Here we see the metaphors of spatiality at play in the everyday tensions of our work. Where and who are we? Representatives of central administration, or free-wheeling mavericks darting in and out to work as and where we can? And how do we balance these opposing metaphorical drives in the real contexts of our institutions?

So, with WAC programmes, writing centres, long projects, and short projects, a rich variety of models for introducing WAC are in play. Predictably, some practitioners were very clear that they found power in acting *from the margins*, in responding to, and helping shape and develop, faculty-generated initiatives. It seems there is quite a difference between initiatives stemming from faculty concerns with student learning and some administration imperatives relating to student completion rates, achievement levels and the simple desire to be seen to have WAC programmes on campus. Other practitioners had found opportune and productive ways of hitching WAC to promising institutional initiatives—such as the development of electronic portfolios for student assessment, guidance or reflection. In these cases, WAC activities and programmes were introduced as ways of helping institutions meet goals they were already committed to achieving.

What all of this left us wondering was this: are these mixed strategies—some of which might indeed be incompatible within the setting of a single institution - indicative of a period of creative growth in WAC or of a need to retrench and rethink the balance between inspired projects and initiatives on the one hand and

sustained programmes on the other? And has the time now come for us to re-problematize our operational practices—particularly those of our institutionally embedded programmes? What are we really trying to achieve? Are cross-institutional programmes always the best ways of achieving our aspirations? How do we avoid the perils—bluntly—of "doing WAC for WAC's sake" rather than (as we would see) "doing WAC for the sake of our students"? The mix of "project" and "programme" panels at the conference was probably indicative of the creative flux of the moment, and of the "WAC-movement" as a dynamic site of exploring ways of sustaining WAC. However, sometimes we felt that the kinds of questions we have just posed seemed missing from the conversation and we would venture to suggest that conversations about these issues would form an important part of the *revitalization* of WAC that we often heard about.

Architectonics and Improving Student Learning

Given our status as educational developers—and in the particular context of that workshop we ran—as we have already mentioned, we spent the conference largely thinking about student learning first and WAC second. Or, to put this another way, the main question for both of us that underpinned our experience of the conference was this: how does WAC really promote and improve student learning?

One specific curriculum area where this question came into focus for us was looking at how WAC activities help students build their transferable skills base. We trade in absolutely central "transferable skills" yet the promotion of these skills must affect the core curriculum. How does the proficiency work done in writing centres and on writing-intensive courses impact on the rest of a student's studies? And what do we really know about this as yet? We all know that in many discipline-based courses, content is King, and the notion of developing student skills remains marginal. So what are our models for the inter-relationship and integration of WAC into writing-intensive courses, and (more problematically) of WAC and writing-development into the overall student learning experience?

With that immediate question left unanswered, we would like to turn now to the remaining two metaphors and connect them to the issues introduced through the architectonics of WAC to indicate how it seems themes at WAC already potentially addressed the questions introduced in the first set of metaphors. Shifting our lenses, we will try to look at cracks in the WAC fabric and the ongoing work to further develop and critically analyze WAC.

Tip-toeing through the Minefield: The Mechanics of WAC

Many presenters and participants talked about how WAC programmes and activities needed to find the right *levers* or *cracks* to effect institutional change or development, and despite the fact that we simply do not know the US situation well enough to understand the conditions under which all WAC efforts are pursued, there are still themes we feel usefully able to pursue in this context. So, first we are going to take a deep breath, tip-toe through the minefield, and mention the elephant in the room. Perhaps it is precisely because we are (respectful!) "outsiders" that we can do this—and we intend our comments here to be those of helpful "critical friends" entirely motivated by trying to promote education development.

Cracks in the fabric can be productive or destructive. They can give us places to introduce new initiatives and open up new spaces. A really positive element we found within this domain of the mechanical metaphor was the realization that many WAC practitioners are really savvy operators, with smart ideas and strategies about initiating and sustaining institutional change. As one workshop leader urged her participants: *start by figuring out what it is that your institution really values; then go after that*. Excellent advice! However, cracks can also bring the whole edifice tumbling down. Furthermore, cracks and fault-lines do not just exist within institutions, they also—and how could it be otherwise?—exist within the WAC community itself. In hushed, and not so hushed, conversations we found ourselves in time and again—but conversations that themselves always took place in corridors, in corners, over lunch-tables but never in any of the sessions we attended—colleagues kept on circling around what we came to think of as "The WAC Crack."

It seems to us that there are two very different sets of emphases held by sets of WAC practitioners and institutions. On the one hand, there is a conceptualization of WAC that focuses on WAC activities as the means to the end of improving student learning; helping students increase their "academic literacy" and learn what and how it is to become a critical meaning-maker within their disciplines, and learn how writing is itself implicated in the construction of knowledge. On the other hand, there is a conceptualization of WAC that places the stress on improving students' abilities to write correctly. It is not for us to judge between these two ideas: in any case that would always be a false judgment as both currents have their rightful place, and they are dialogically intertwined not diametrically opposed.

However, we must acknowledge a danger here: and this relates to the worrying trends in automated assessment so eloquently exposed and explored during the conference keynote. We must at least acknowledge that to the extent that we convey an impression through our activities and talk with our students, faculty colleagues, and institutions that WAC is "only" about learning to "write right" (the case is deliberately blunt, we admit), then we are ourselves implicated in a current that inevitably leads to the commercialization of low-level, surface learning in the form of assessment programmes that fail completely to assess intellectual content or critical engagement. Encouraging a more nuanced understanding of WAC within our institutions will certainly be a necessary strategy as we seek to resist commercial developments likely to harm our students' learning and, ultimately, achievement.

The Aging of WAC: The Joys of Growing Old(er)

Now, it could just be that both the authors of these reflections are men in, or approaching, their early 40s (!), but we could not help but be struck by the amount of talk at the conference about aging. In a way, this was quite paradoxical, because reflecting on the various panels we attended and the many conversations we enjoyed, WAC2006 gave a very vital and energetic impression. At the same time, however, there were also recurrent comments about the fact that WAC is getting old(er). The metaphors of WAC being middle aged kept recurring and the notion of mid-life crisis was present in some conversations. The closing panel went as far as suggesting WAC is no longer sexy.

While it is true that being sexy might be an advantage for getting center stage and lots of attention, and that being seen as new and shiny might be a powerful advantage during the early days, we are not actually too worried whether WAC is sexy or not. But the related trope of mid-life crisis—of what is often colloquially called "the change of life"—appears to us one worth staying with for a while, because it suggests ways in which the time is ripe to reflect, and—particularly - to rethink our attitudes to change. This dimension struck us as implicitly present at WAC 2006, but we also wondered whether some more explicit attention to the process—and models for how to conduct it with grace—might not be useful. In particular, it seems worth addressing the risks where talk of running and sustaining programmes is done on a tacit assumption of some (unexamined) givens about writing and learning and without explicit models for change.

One way of looking at educational change that can be derived from the many panels concerned with change is to think of our interventions as fairly similar versions of a chain of events we probably recognize. This chain of events is not always as linear as we present it below. It can skip stages (though there are dangers with that); repeat; reverse and create recursive loops. However, there seems to be a core sequence something like the following:

- We make an intervention with faculty or students, based on our understandings (implicit and explicit) of writing and learning.
- This has some effect on faculty and student understandings of writing and learning.
- This changed understanding (possibly) has some impact on faculty teaching, learning and assessment practices.

- Faculty teaching, learning and assessment practices have a number of effects on student behaviours and on student learning (these effects are contextual and far from uniform across a cohort of students).
- Students' behaviours and approaches to learning have an effect on student performance and outcome.
- Evaluating what has happened leads to new interventions, taking place within changed circumstances, and the cycle starts again.

This is a hugely complex system and we still know relatively little about how changing one element will impact on the whole. There is some convincing evidence that links some of the steps with the next one; but we know of no really good educational work that successfully addresses the whole sequence. In other words, we are still in a primitive state of knowledge about what impact our interventions have, eventually, on student learning. And we need to think carefully about some of our—frankly—naïve implicit assumptions or explicit claims about this since we will continually have to adjust our interventions to the altered initial conditions for each cycle of development.

To offer but one example from the WAC06 topics that lend themselves to this tentative sequence we outlined above, the theme of "accreditation" comes to mind. Accreditation was an issue that was present in many panels and one that obviously is linked to funding as well as the balance between projects or initiatives and good practice mentioned above. Many panels exemplified how accreditation criteria can be used to promote WAC and help make it sustainable. Such a strategic attitude to accreditation criteria is something we will increasingly be facing/needing in Europe in the future in the attempts to bring European higher education towards a point of transferability.

Accreditation criteria thus help promote revision of WAC. It would be interesting, however, to pursue a discussion in the future first about the balance between accommodating new criteria and revising in the face of changes in educational environments and the student body. In other words, if criteria are imposed (and contrived) can we still revise WAC interventions in view of the changing educational environment we experience? How, for instance, do we balance the forces of new (external) criteria against new learning environments inside the university (new student body, new technology, new connections to other courses/educations)? A second discussion that seems necessary in the future, as far as the above sequence of events is concerned, is to what extent the WAC intervention is adjusted as the second revolution of the sequence is due. Not in terms of a new or modified set of criteria being generated but in terms of adjusting the intervention for faculty.

The sequence for educational initiatives offered above also connects to the workshop we facilitated on Thursday morning through their shared emphasis on trying both to promote and critically understand learning. For us, this then opens a series of challenging questions about the relationship between writing and learning in WAC. From its very beginning *writing to learn* has been a natural dimension of WAC. But how do we really understand that much-used phrase? How are students helped to find their own ways of best using writing to promote learning? What responsibility for learning can—or should—WAC professionals take? And how do we present frameworks for writing to learn in WAC interventions for faculty?

In specific relation to that final question, there were numerous panels where presenters referred to "WAC workshops." Some programmes even have extensive WAC summer workshops and summer schools. It would be fruitful to (re-)open the discussion about what goes into these interventions; whether there are any genuinely common denominators in WAC workshops; and, if so, what? But most of all, it would be fruitful for us to explore the impact these workshops have, and to try to understand what it is about them that truly helps faculty use WAC activities to help their students. What seems perfectly clear is that these workshops and summer schools can be very (trans)formative for faculty. This most likely explains some of the large impact WAC has had in Higher Education in the States. However, there are different possible

emphases that can be stressed in faculty development events and it would be interesting to explore the different productive potentials of what might be described as a "WAC to improve student writing and hence learning" approach against one stressing "improving student learning through WAC."

This element of considering the impact factor of working with faculty is particularly interesting in the light of the developing conversations and relations between WAC and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning movement (henceforth SoTL). The SoTL potential in WAC is surely high with such an excellent ratio of good practitioners within a community of scholars. Yet, the time has surely come to challenge and advance the level of informedness in our WAC-oriented higher education professionalism. How well can we truly explain what it is that works in our practice, and enable that to be transferred into different contexts? Which of our interventions lead to change and improvement? How does that process work? Why does it work? A WAC2006 session that specifically addressed the issue of WAC SoTL found our practice often strong on instructional procedures and often of high quality for teacherly "intuition in action." But the workshop also prompted us to look at the higher orders of expertise and scholarship - exemplified in accounts of critically reflective practice, action research, and SoTL. For these higher orders of scholarship, it seems that many of us favour our own original research discipline rather than our WAC activities and teaching and learning practice. This can partly be explained by a brief back-reference to our first metaphor and the problem of career paths but could it not also be a case of a less than fully explored aspect of WAC brought to the fore at WAC06?

Concluding Reflections: Three Challenges over the Next Few Years

Our choice of three metaphors to organise our reflections about WAC06 was informed by the kinds of comments we heard and the conversations we enjoyed during the successful event. We will not have been able to capture all of the important themes and issues of the conference but maybe our selection and reflections will generate further thought among delegates and in the WAC community generally. We want to end our reflections by reframing some of the issues we have introduced in terms of some of the challenges that seem to await WAC.

Judging from our impression of WAC2006, then, where sometimes learning seemed taken for granted as an outcome of writing activities, we believe there is a need to challenge and re-problematize the objective of WAC and the meaning of the phrase "writing to learn" in higher education. For example, the discussion about the sustainability of WAC interventions risks losing sight of what it means to put facilitating high-quality student learning at the heart of our practices. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves continuously to re-think both in theory and in practice what high quality learning is and how writing is related to it. Not all writing, not even all WAC-initiated writing, necessarily promotes learning. It might then reasonably be the case that having some writing automatically graded is no bad thing, if the purpose of that writing is, for example, to practice grammar drills. However, where the aim of the writing is to improve learning, then the specter of clumsy automatic grading is a worrisome one.

In order to achieve such continuous problematization of the relationships between writing and learning, we need two developments to be fostered. First, we need to work as a community to improve the quality of our critical and scholarly reflections on our own practices. To be as blunt as we can, we are not inspired by "WAC for WAC's sake." If our concern is really promoting student learning through WAC, then it seems "WAC workshops" must promote higher levels of teaching and learning expertise in an effort to avoid the relative danger of merely introducing procedural levels of expertise and losing sight of systematic inquiry into our practice.

In other words, the level of critical analysis of WAC activity should be a shared concern among us. In view of a project management cycle of planning—doing - reviewing—explaining—re-planning, then at WAC 2006 there were a lot of accounts of doing; far fewer properly critical reviews; and (from the sessions we attended—so ours may be a skewed sample) very, very few attempts to explain in terms of existing research

bases on writing, learning, or pedagogy. Therefore, we must act as critical friends in the work of publishing WAC to make sure that what strikes us as a very well-published movement also continues the work of the workshops to prioritize the problematizing, explaining, and reviewing. Secondly, at least from our European perspective, something that is likely to support the move towards a more effective scholarship of practice would be building much more informed alliances between professional education developers and WAC practitioners.

This brings us back to one of our very first comments about the intense atmosphere of *getting together* at WAC06 and the thrice repeated mention in this article of the many panels with representation of faculty and administration as well as WAC staff. The generative power of *getting together* may well be the single most important outcome of the event! Yet, now seems a good time—a necessary time, even—to bring educational developers into the WAC fold as professional allies with valuable perspectives to bring to future WAC "meetings." Initiating conversations between administration, disciplines, WAC, and educational development, holds the potential promise of at least three possible outcomes of interest to us all.

First of all, such an alliance might find new ways to promote WAC staff and hence create new career paths. Secondly, with a forum of disciplines, and educational development, WAC staff might find additional mass in which to disseminate research and therefore minimize the risk of doing WAC research for a WAC community only. Such an increased research community would help promote the WAC SoTL potential further. Thirdly, this four-faceted alliance might also make it possible, where necessary, to turn *writing across the curriculum* also into *writing across [on] the curriculum*, by which we mean that when WAC interventions are required or requested for situations that do not really promote learning we need a host of allies from different angles to help us revise the curriculum.

A different challenge that comes specifically from our European perspectives and interests is the internationalization of WAC. Particularly, we need to be more aware of the second / third language issues. The connection WAC and English for academic or specific purposes (EAP/ESP) is obvious but in terms of "transferring" good WAC methodology to higher education in non-English speaking contexts, we may have to work in our native languages first. The special interest group that was initiated at WAC06 is a good first step to begin to isolate what WAC ingredients transfer well and how to adapt WAC to new educational contexts. Yet, creating and sustaining the internationalization of WAC is/should be a two-way communication scenario. American WAC can be internationalized through encouraging American colleagues to think about what American WAC can learn from international contexts.

Our final reflective comment perhaps exemplifies this internationalization of WAC as we see a challenge for ourselves in our UK and Swedish contexts definitely to capture the critical components of the excellent WAC work with creativity and multimedia we witnessed at WAC06. What was specifically rewarding to see were the examples of using student creativity to inform learning and metacognition in order to move beyond surface learning very effectively. We also find it significant that we saw examples of using creativity not "just" as a means of reflection on "information transmitted" but as genuine learning projects. Such examples, to us, capture the true potential of writing to learn in WAC. Furthermore, the fact that "creativity" was used this convincingly is maybe an indication of an inherent strength of WAC and one that should be included in future revision of WAC and strategies for WAC.

So, what in the end did we see? A vibrant community of practitioners, scholars, and researchers, with strong commitments to the best potentials of their students. We met the kinds of colleagues we are proud to be associated with. And we met a community that is clearly well up to the challenges in practice, research, and scholarship of the next 2 years. As two of the excellent participants in the Thursday morning workshop variously put it: "Learning is about never staying still" and; "Learning is about being brave enough to have all your complacencies challenged again and again." This is a community of learners fit for those two tasks, so let us look forward to meeting again in 2008, with new battle-scars and stories to tell—but above all with

ever smarter and more insightful ways of understanding ourselves and supporting each other in the ongoing project of improving learning and writing.

Editor's Note: The archives of WAC 2006 can be found on the Clearinghouse at <https://wac.colostate.edu/proceedings/wac2006/>.

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