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New Programmatic Directions

As experience, research, and theory relevant to WAC have developed so have programmatic issues and initiatives. New ways of organizing student writing experiences across the curriculum have grown, as have ways of reaching more students, and ways of monitoring the success of students and of programs. One of the best general sources to look for new programmatic developments in WAC is the collection *WAC for the New Millennium* (McLeod, et al., 2001). A number of the programmatic developments in WAC have to do with coordinating with other curricular offerings (writing intensive courses) and other campus services (writing centers and peer tutors). Serving the needs of second language students within a WAC Program has also become a matter of programmatic concern. Other efforts have been aimed at changing the character of student experiences, by organizing students into self-support groups (Interdisciplinary Learning Communities) and by engaging students in disciplinary-based hands-on learning experiences using writing (service learning). Two other programmatic initiatives have been aimed at enhancing writing opportunities through electronic communication (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum) and developing assessment tools appropriate for the evaluation of student writing in disciplinary contexts and the evaluation of WAC Programs.

Coordinating with Other Campus Resources

Writing Intensive Courses

Writing intensive courses are an institutional method of putting greater stress on student writing throughout a greater range of courses and

of providing support for student writing in those courses. Typically a number of general education and/or more advanced courses in the major are designated writing intensive, writing enhanced, or writing in the major. These courses, then, are required to assign at least a certain amount of writing and count that writing as a significant component of the grade. Typically students must then complete a certain number of those courses in order to graduate.

Farris and Smith (1992) in their article, "Writing Intensive Courses: Tools for Curricular Change," identify some general characteristics of writing intensive courses.

1. Small (or at least limited) class size
2. Taught by faculty instead of TA's
3. Page and/or word count requirements for each course
4. Revision requirements
5. Writing makes up a certain varying percentage of the final grade
6. Some guidelines regarding types of assignments (i.e. not just a "term paper" at the end of the course)
7. Evaluation guidelines given to instructors
8. WI workshops, WAC consultation and/or writing center tutoring

According to Farris and Smith, the most common feature is a page or word count requirement. Townsend (2001), however, points out within that general framework, that details of WI courses are highly local due to their need to be institutionally specific.

The WI course approach and WAC share a commitment to spreading the responsibility for writing instruction "across the curriculum" and many WI programs also are similar to WAC programs in their promotion of writing-to-learn assignments within courses. The WI course approach nonetheless can be criticized for ghettoizing writing within specific designated courses rather than integrating writing into all courses. Students in schools with WI programs sometimes complain when writing is assigned in non-WI courses and WI courses are often doled out to junior faculty. Also legislated writing requirements in non-writing courses can become increasingly nominal and periph-

eral to the course. Requirements may be ignored unless the requirement is monitored. The key to a successful WI requirement that is viewed positively by faculty and students is continuous support for the disciplinary instructors incorporating writing into their courses in ways that are meaningful for the learning goals of that course.

Writing Centers

Writing centers can have a variety of forms, functions and missions within a university. There are as many organizational “types” of writing centers as there are colleges and universities that put them into place. But almost all deliver one-on-one tutorial support for students in their writing for all courses and almost all place emphasis on fundamental issues of learning to write rather than simply providing a proofreading or correction service.

Writing centers and WAC grew up together due to open admissions, changing university population demographics, a new emphasis on job skills, and increased focus on institutional accountability. These changes in the university environment coupled with the “writing crisis” led to the development of both WAC programs and writing centers. Like WAC, writing centers tend to reject a one-size-fits-all writing instruction approach and instead strives to explore disciplinary differences in writing and differing faculty expectations within those disciplines (Mullin 2001). See also Barnett & Blumner (1999).

Some schools do not have formal WAC programs, per se, but the university writing center serves writing in all courses and implements writing across the curriculum activities. Alternatively, schools establish a WAC program and as faculty assign more and varied writing, the need for a writing center becomes apparent in order to assist students with these assignments. In some WAC programs, the WC acts as a hub within the university community, offering services to both students and faculty. Some WC’s go beyond this and offer outreach services to the larger community’s citizens and institutions.

In a recent book, *Demythologizing Language Differences in the Academy: Establishing Discipline-Based Writing Programs*, Mark Waldo (2004) argues that Writing Centers are the best site for the development of WAC programs. Because writing centers can be institutionally separate from any department they can take the languages, projects, and forms of creativity of participating disciplines seriously on their own terms, apart from the language beliefs and commitments of the

department which would house the writing program. He also provides many detailed suggestions about developing and running such a center, along with the training of tutors who would carry out an inquiry-based approach that attends to linguistic differences of departments.

Peer Tutors and Writing Fellows

In the early days of WAC, peer tutors were seen as ancillary, part of a support service for students confined to the WC on campus. Curriculum-based peer tutor programs have their roots in the Brown University Writing Fellows Program, though Harriett Sheridan is credited with first linking peer tutors with WAC programs at Carleton College and later helping Tori Haring-Smith in the establishment of a similar program at Brown. The role of peer tutors has grown in importance over the past decade, though, and a new brand of tutor has evolved: the curriculum-based peer tutor. Mullin (2001) explains that these tutors work within a program of “tutor-linked courses” (189). Writing tutors, sometimes referred to as “writing fellows,” are assigned to undergraduate courses and work with the students in those courses on writing assignments. Soven states, “In the curriculum-based model, peer tutors are written into the plan of instruction. They are part of the course, which gives them a distinctly different role than that of the writing center tutor” (Soven 2001, p.204). These tutors generally assist students by reading drafts and conferencing, however some tutors provide in-class tutoring, conduct discussions or give classroom presentations.

Curriculum-based peer tutors act as a practical means of achieving WAC goals by providing concrete assistance to instructors (Song & Richter 1997). Debate is ongoing regarding the qualifications of tutors in a curriculum-based peer tutor program. Many argue that tutors should be majoring in the discipline where the course is located so that they may provide a more “expert” reading of the papers students write. Others argue for the “generalist” tutor whose expertise lies in writing and the writing process, leaving the content of papers to the judgment of the individual professors. Whether from the major or not, tutors usually get specialized training and support in providing writing assistance, either through an academic course or series of required workshops.

English as a Second Language in a WAC Context

The changing demographics of many universities combined with an increasing understanding of the advanced academic needs of students from whom English is a second language have led more systematic concern for how those students can be supported in a WAC environment. The students needing additional, directed support are not only foreign students or recent immigrants (traditional ESL students), they include students who may have been in the country for a number of years, long enough to gain fluency, but have not gained the skills of advanced academic literacy. They may even be born and educated in the U.S. but lack expertise in either their family's original language or English. Such educated in the U.S. ESL students are sometimes called Generation 1.5 (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal 1999). Even when such students have gained fluency, they may have cultural differences that may stand in the way of understanding the expectations of writing in their various courses (Johns 1991) and may lead them to prefer courses and majors with fewer language demands and fewer culture specific presumptions. While students with more limited English Language proficiency may be provided focused ESL instruction, all will at some point be likely to enter into the mainstream curriculum, not only in English but in courses throughout the curriculum. Johns (2001, pp. 141–164) provides a good overview of ESL issues confronting WAC programs.

When ESL students turn up in regular English language courses (and even more when they turn up in disciplinary classes which have substantial writing requirements) their patterned errors, transitional forms of language, unidiomatic expressions and different assumptions about desired academic performances may cause their writing to be stigmatized as showing lack of academic talent (Zamel 1995). Students struggling with the forms and expectations of the language, who do not have deeply habituated patterns of correct usage, need time and opportunities to revise in order to bring their sentences to standard form. Further their struggles with language take attention away from the intellectual tasks of any piece of writing, or if students focus on the intellectual challenge, they divert attention from formal correctness. Because of the need for conscious revision to bring the language to standard form, errors are particularly likely to turn up in timed writing, as on exams; when assignments require a higher level of complexity and cognitive challenge; and alternatively when students feel

that their writing will not be held to formal standards (Leki 2004). Sensitizing writing teachers and instructors of writing intensive disciplinary courses to the kinds of struggles ESL students have with the language can help them respond more appropriately and usefully to student productions.

But the difficulties ESL students may have with WAC go beyond formal correctness. Because of cultural patterns of self-presentation and argument, as well as cultural differences in schooling and school writing, students may produce inappropriate or ineffective work even if the work is formally correct. Cultural differences are likely to turn up quickly on the issue of plagiarism. Some cultures, for example, expect accomplished writers to incorporate phrases of the classic literature without comment. And in some educational systems one is expected to show that one has learned the material by repeating assigned readings verbatim on exams, rather than rephrasing to show your understanding. Finally, ESL students, because of more limited vocabulary are more likely to repeat well-phrased originals rather than to seek alternatives (Leki 2004).

The field of Contrastive Rhetoric helps explain some of the differences in stance, argument, explicitness, and text organization that students from other cultures and trained in other languages might take and also provides teachers means to explain to their students the alternative expectations of their own assignments. (Connor and Kaplan 1987; Connor 1996; Purves 1988; Li 1996). Even more deeply, differences in students expectations of education may lead them to dissatisfaction and alienation from the education offered from their classes and may create difficulties in finding productive ways to respond to assignments (Casanave 1992). The more fully and explicitly the assumptions of education can be presented and the expectations and purposes of assignments can be made explicit, the more likely the ESL student can find ways of meaningfully participating and producing writing that speaks to the purposes and forms of the course. (Casanave 1995). Much of the work of ESP discussed in a previous chapter is aimed at making explicit the forms and purposes of writing in university classrooms. One particularly useful collection exploring the implications of a Genre approach to ESP is Johns 2002, *Genre in the Classroom*. Among other things the book has a chapter on teaching the literature review by Swales & Lindemann. Also useful are text-

books written from an ESP perspective such as Huckin & Olson 1991; Swales and Feak 2000.

Casanave (2002) in the book *Writing Games* considers the complex struggles ESL writers undergo in order to survive their writing assignments. Through an extensive examination of the case study literature on undergraduate, graduate, and professorial academic writing to which she adds many of her own case studies, she comes to see students developing strategies to address local, situated writing games in their classes. Learning the rules and conventions of the game are only part of the story as one also must want to play, develop a strategy and respond to the complex contingencies of the unfolding situation with appropriate tactical decisions. Through the case studies focusing on literacy practices she gives a strong sense from the students' perspective of what it takes to succeed in academic writing in different disciplines. She also provides some good general strategies that students can adopt.

Enriching Student Experiences

Interdisciplinary Learning Communities

Learning Communities serve to forge relations between students who are engaged in similar studies so that they can learn collaboratively, provide mutual support, and increase each other's engagement in the learning process. According to Zawacki and Williams (2001), learning communities are "curriculum change initiatives that link, cluster or integrate two or more courses during a given term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, and involve a common cohort of students" (109). While Learning Communities vary in their organization depending on the institution, they share the goals of "fostering greater academic coherence and more explicit intellectual connections among students, between students and their faculty, and among disciplines" (109).

Three of the most common variations of Learning Communities are:

1. Sections of a first year composition course are linked to a large disciplinary lecture course

2. Fully linked sections of two or more courses with overlapping syllabi and reading/writing assignments
3. Fully linked sections of courses with some sort of service learning component

Some plans for Learning Communities go so far as to house students with similar schedules together in the dorms and to provide some courses and support services in the dorms themselves.

Both WAC and Learning Communities or linked courses see writing as a vehicle or tool for reflective and critical development in students. Zawacki and Williams view Learning Communities as an expansion of the ideas behind WAC as they encourage genuine interdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation. They state that “WAC may be most fully realized within the learning communities movement, which shares its values of inclusiveness, conversation, and collaboration, and the belief that writing should be a central mode of learning in a learning-centered pedagogy” (137).

Service Learning

Service learning brings students out of the classroom to provide useful service for the community. While engaged in this service, students study the meaningful application of their disciplinary learning to serious community needs (Zlotkowski 1998). Often writing is incorporated in service learning courses as a means of identifying disciplinary knowledge useful for the service tasks, to report back on the service experiences and their disciplinary implications, and to carry out the actual service work (Jolliffe 2001).

WAC and service learning developed during roughly the same time period out of similar motives, but they have generally remained separate entities, both nationally and within individual institutions. Because of their common interest in making learning more meaningful, in supporting writing within motivated practice, and providing students the technical tools for valued accomplishments, some institutional convergence has occurred between service learning and first year composition programs. In 1998, the 4 C's launched an effort to bring service learning and composition together led by Thomas Deans who went on to author “Writing Partnerships: Service Learning in Composition” (2000), a description of composition programs incorporating a community service component.

According to Deans, WAC and service learning have much in common. He lists the following nine links:

1. Pedagogy that aims for more effective student learning
2. Departs from “traditional teaching and learning in college courses”; curricular innovation is valued
3. Have potential for cross-disciplinarity
4. Can promote re-visioning within disciplines
5. Often touted by administrators, students and parents
6. Often devalued by “old school academics”
7. Can be “perceived to take time away from content and lower standards”
8. Have found support in secondary education circles
9. Have developed along a cautious and careful path due to the conservative nature of higher education

Much potential exists in the linking of WAC with service learning programs because they both have writing at their center. Jolliffe sees the greatest potential in WAC’s ability to collaborate with service learning programs in the area of genre. He suggests that WAC could help inform genre choices within service learning courses.

Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum

The WAC movement from the very beginning implied Reading Across the Curriculum because all disciplinary writing relies on and refers to the prior texts of the field. It soon easily expanded to encompass other communication forms, casting them as a set of interrelated activities fundamental to academic success. “While continuing to envision writing as central to the academic enterprise,” explain Reiss, Selfe, and Young (1998, p. xvii), “such CAC [communication across the curriculum] programs emphasize speaking, visual communication, reading, critical thinking, advocacy, social negotiation, and problem solving across the curriculum.” At the same time, the advent of the personal computer (PC) provided educators with relatively affordable word-processing systems, which quickly made their way into the writing

classroom. Over time, networking hardware and software further enhanced the computer environment by enabling students to share their work, collaborate, and engage in peer review with students at a distance, both synchronously (e.g., chatrooms) and asynchronously (e.g., email, newsgroups, World Wide Web). So it was this 1980s emergence of the computer-supported writing environment, combined with the communication across the curriculum (CAC) movement, itself an outgrowth of WAC, that formed the foundation of what Reiss, Selfe, and Young (1998) have recently called “electronic communication across the curriculum,” or ECAC: a movement that “recognizes that e-mail, synchronous and asynchronous conferencing, multimedia, and the World Wide Web offer new modes of communication to construct and enhance learning within and across the disciplines” (p. 306).

The introduction of computers into the composition classroom generally encouraged process-oriented pedagogies by incorporating revision operations like cut-and-paste into word processing functionality. Nonetheless, some educators initially used computers as automated grammar and spelling monitors, reinforcing a pedagogy of mechanical error correction and automated drill instruction (Reiss, Self, & Young, 1998, p. xii; Hawisher *et al.*, 1996, pp. 17–63). In 1980, Robert Taylor offered a classification scheme that cast the various instructional software available to educators in the functional light of tutorials, style tools, and programming environments; soon thereafter, Helen Schwartz (1982) identified simulation as another dimension of computer technology relevant to education. The writing-as-inquiry and writing-as-process movements had expanded teachers’ conceptions of computers beyond that of mechanical tutorial devices for ensuring “correctness” in English language usage. Process-oriented articles in *CCC*, such as “Computerized Word-Processing as an Aid to Revision” (Bean, 1983) and “The Computer as Stylus and Audience,” (Daiute, 1983) began to appear.

Kenneth Bruffee’s (1984) review essay, “Collaborative Learning and the ‘Conversation of Mankind,’” combined with Fred Kemp’s (1987) scheme, which reorganized instructional software into current-traditional, expressive, cognitive, and social categories, to open up a different approach to the use of electronic tools in the teaching of writing based on the interpersonal or networked function of computer technology, by way of email and bulletin boards (Hawisher, 1994). Sometime during this decade, “computer-aided” came to mean “net-

worked” or “wired” in the context of the composition classroom. The realization that computer technology could sponsor a socially interactive and collaborative environment, virtually freed from the constraints of geographic proximity, within which students could come to more authentic meanings through social negotiation flourished within the field (Duin & Hansen, 1994). The work of Clifford Geertz, Mikhail Bakhtin, Thomas Kuhn, and Richard Rorty now figured prominently in discussions of electronic communities of learning, largely by way of Bruffee. The advent of the World Wide Web and its accessible programming language, Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), dramatically fueled the nascent ECAC movement by offering students concrete and creative fora for electronic participation beyond the emerging modes of email, newsgroups, and bulletin boards. Early studies were patently optimistic: Schrum (1988) characterized the new interaction among networked students as purposeful and motivating, a point shared by Mageau (1990). In their study of an electronic discussion list set up to aid students’ understandings of class readings, Cooper and Selfe (1990) found that students resisted what they perceives as academic roles and instead inhabited more personal roles as they engaged and discussed the texts, thereby becoming more active and more responsible for their understanding. The element of anonymity and lack of face-to-face interaction eliminated the potential for age, gender, race, or social status discrimination, according to Cooper and Selfe, and enabled the sharing of ideas rather than the confronting of personalities to become the centerpiece of the electronic classroom. In “They Became What They Beheld,” Stuart Moulthrop and Nancy Kaplan (1994) explore the value of hypertextuality in literature, characterizing the new medium as an “evolutionary outgrowth of late-modern textuality” (p. 221). Through its open-endedness, hypertextuality encourages new ways of affiliating and interacting with the text, often sponsoring renewed interest and active student participation, as well as new ways of conceptualizing reader-writer relationships as well as the concept of authorship.

By the 1990s, however, many teachers, practitioners, and scholars were turning a critical eye toward this latest revolution in educational technology. In “The Effect of Hypertext on Processes of Reading and Writing,” Davida Charney (1994) cautions that hypertextuality may actually impede learning owing to its disruptive process and loose structure, which places the burden of organization upon the reader.

Also critical is Paul LeBlanc (1994) who laments the fundamental inequity in quality of and access to computer technology across school districts. While some schools embody the vision of computer-enhanced literacy learning by equipping students with high-performance computers connected through high-speed networks and supported by trained technical staffs, the majority of schools LeBlanc visited offered dilapidated computer environments, often the result of ill-preparedness on the part of administration. The “dazzling simulation and critical skills programs” available in the expensive labs, combined with the successful social interaction over high-speed networks, stood in sharp and painful contrast to the more common and less-expensive classroom scenarios in which several children were required to share a single computer running drill-and-practice routines and meager word processing capabilities (p. 25). In many cases, schools simply did not budget for network technology, and in at least one case, notes LeBlanc (1994, p. 25), two new Apple computers sat under dustcovers in the back of a classroom because the administrator did not budget for software or peripherals. One of the most palpable benefits of ECAC, as Betsy Bowen (1994, p. 118) notes, has been the introduction of an authentic audience, in the form of students’ virtual peers, thereby decreasing the commonly criticized artificiality of the composition classroom. But for LeBlanc and others like him, the question becomes: For whom?

In recent years, the ECAC movement has begun to fulfill its vision by expanding beyond the walls of the composition classroom. According to Muriel Harris (1998), ECAC has played a large role in transforming traditional writing centers into online writing labs (OWL) but in ways that we might not expect. Initially, writing centers frequently offered email tutoring as a progressive way to meet student needs, and more recently centers have experimented with online Multi-user dimension, Object Oriented environments (MOO) as a means by which to meet and exchange rough drafts of papers with students in a flexible and constructive setting. Yet, according to Harris, neither email nor MOOs successfully gained student participation. Owing to its asynchronous interaction, email lacked real-time interaction and results, two hot commodities on college campus; students prefer walking into a physical writing center and receiving immediate feedback on a first-come, first-served basis. Although MOOs offer a synchronous or real-time environment, current technological limitations in

terms of bandwidth and processor speed often limit the sharable data to text-based interactions. As a result, much of the visual and auditory interaction requisite for successful student-tutor sessions is lost or, even with state-of-the-art technology, disruptive. Ironically, one of the most successful ways in which computer technology has enhanced the writing center is not through distance education but by complementing the traditional, face-to-face interactions between students and tutors. With the aid of the World Wide Web, online search engines, online library catalogs, and CD-ROM-based periodical indexes, tutors are able to assist writers more fully throughout the writing process, especially common prewriting activities. Tutors are able to assist writers in what Irene Clark calls "information literacy" skills, or the "ability to access, retrieve, evaluate, and integrate information from a variety of electronically generated resources" (qtd. in Harris, 1998, p. 5). Face-to-face, local interactions aside, the ECAC movement has also been successful in another area: providing students, teachers, administrators, and professionals around the world with up-to-date writing handouts by way of the World Wide Web. According to Harris (1998), this is one of the most popular aspects of many online writing centers.