Calm Seas or Tidal Waves

The Role of Writing Fellows Within the Writing Program and the Institution
Slides from Panel Presentations on the Role of Writing Fellows at CCCC, March 2009, in San Francisco
Presenters

- Carol Severino – University of Iowa
- Kathy Evertz – Carleton College
- Joan Mullin – Illinois State University
- Holly Huff Bruland – University of Hawaii Manoa

Respondent – Terry Myers Zawacki – George Mason University
Note:

- Not all of the presenters’ talks are represented in this powerpoint.
- Included are presentations by Pam Childers, Carol Severino, and Holly Bruland, who asked that an alternative presentation be included in this ppt, as she is publishing her talk elsewhere. Respondent Terry Zawacki’s remarks are noted at the end.
- Other talks are available from the presenters on request.
Chair’s Intro Remarks for Calm Seas or Tidal Waves

The Role of Writing Fellows Within the Writing Program and the Institution

Pamela B. Childers, Panel Chair
The McCallie School
What is a Writing Fellow?

- Peer writing tutor?
- Mentor?
- Assistant to teachers?
- Undergraduate or graduate student?
- Mediator between teacher and student?
- Connected to the writing center, WAC program, Honors program, or department of rhetoric and composition?
Writing Fellows
How to Navigate the Waters

Dept. of Rhetoric and Composition

Honors Program

Writing Center

Writing Across the Curriculum
How Can Such a Program Work in a Secondary School Writing Center?

### University of Iowa
- Similar application process to secondary one
- Class taken first semester similar to secondary program
- Some have set procedures (Ex-letters and comments to student writers) and set assignments
- Student-teacher interaction differs based on teacher’s knowledge of teaching writing
- Specific requirements for professors to participate
- Writing Fellows work with students taking specific undergraduate courses they may have had

### McCallie School
- Similar application process to university program
- Class taken first semester similar to university program
- Informal training and flexible procedure according to discipline
- Student-teacher interaction dependent upon teacher’s knowledge of teaching writing
- No specific requirements to participate, by invitation and scheduling availability
- Writing Fellows work with students in Middle as well Upper School who are taking courses they have had

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Comparison of Writing Fellows Programs

**George Mason University**
- Peer tutor→Writing Fellow
- Specific work with students in a particular course
- Work directly with professors
- Specific requirements for professors

**McCallie**
- Fellows take the course and serve concurrently
- Do not work with a specific course only
- Work indirectly with faculty
- Director facilitates conversations with faculty
- Pass/fail grade

*Selective program based on recommendations and interests*
- Work with students, teachers, other fellows
- Fellows have focused discussions about the writing process
- Clarify teachers’ goals
- Fellows do not give grades

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Sources of *Turbulence* in Writing Fellows Programs

Carol Severino, University of Iowa
Should We Calm the Seas,
OR Make More and Bigger Waves?
So many built-in sources of turbulence...

- So many different parties involved
- So many genres to disagree about
- So many potential logistical snafus
It’s a wonder we don’t all drown
Brown U. Template

Students submit drafts to their fellows two weeks before they are due to prof.

First week: Fellows write commenting letters

Second week: Fellows and students conference
So Many Parties:

• The Writing Fellows
The Writing Fellows: Vary by

- Year (first year—senior)
- Experience: Experienced (lead fellows) vs. New (Writing Theory and Practice course)
- Major
- Writing Styles and Preferences
- Degree of Patience with Peers and Professors
Commenting Mentors

- Rhetoric faculty and graduate student/writing center tutors who assist the fellows

  --with their commenting, helping them identify patterns in drafts.

  --helping them generate questions for the prof about his/her assignment and what are acceptable student responses to it.

  --by serving as advocates for fellows and liaisons between fellows and profs.
The Professors: Vary by

- Experience and confidence teaching with writing
- Discipline
- Writing Pedagogy (all over the map)
- Willingness to advocate the program to their students
First day of school kick-off reception
The Professors’ Students: Vary by

- Experience with the fellows program or with the writing center (being tutored)
- Openness to peer feedback, especially from a peer not in the class or in the major
- Motivation to engage in a writing process, to draft and revise
- Writing ability and experience (top 50% or 33%)
- Whether they are majors in the fellowed course area
So Many Genres

- The Writing Assignment
- The Students’ Papers
- The Fellows’ Commenting Letters
- The Fellows’ In-text Comments
The Writing Assignment

- A Series of Questions?
- A Thought-, Research, and Writing Process?
- A Grading Rubric?
- A List of Do’s and Don’t’s?
- An obvious TASK?
The Student’s Draft

- Does it respond to and fulfill the assignment?
- Is there a thesis?
- If so, is it an argumentative or road map thesis?
- Is there enough evidence to support the argument?
- Does the student lead in and out of quotes?
The Fellow’s Commenting Letter

- Does it address the individual student’s strengths and weaknesses, praising something the writer has done well?
- Does it build rapport with a peer-like tone?
- Does it primarily address issues of argument and development?
- Does it promise an agenda for the writing conference?
The Fellow’s In-Text Comments

- Are they selective or overwhelming? Is the fellow editing too much?

- Do the in-text comments give examples of issues raised in the commenting letter?
Writing Fellows Time Line:

WEEK 4: Fellows receive drafts, read them and start commenting. Meetings with commenting mentors and profs.

WEEK 5: Fellows return drafts with commenting letters and set up conferences with students and meet with them. Students revise.

WEEK 6: Students hand in two drafts and commenting letters to their professor who grades the final draft. (This cycle happens twice)
So many potential logistical snafus

• A few students may not hand in drafts on time or hand in a rushed (vs. rough) draft

• A few students may miss conference sign-up, miss conferences, or they
TIDAL WAVE SNAFUS

- Sometimes profs postpone due dates or shorten the time the fellows have to comment and conference OR
- They don’t enforce due dates.
What is a Commenting Mentor or Fellow to Do?

- Can’t make a bigger wave, must calm the seas.

- Writing Center Can-Do Attitude. We can solve this problem if we compromise, but each party might have to give up some convenience.
When to Calm the Seas?

- Usually-- for conflicts between fellows and profs over assignments, papers, comments, logistics

**WHY?**

We must build networks of professor advocates who have benefitted from the program (McCleod, 1998; Zawacki, 2008).
When to Make More Waves?

- In the fellows class or commenting meetings about fellows’ generic or teacherly commenting letters

- In rare instances when fellows are not fulfilling their responsibilities
And Always Make Waves in the Institutional High Seas

- Argue for more fellows, more years of funding, more resources for program.

- Program itself is a wave rippling through the U., encouraging best practices of drafting, feedback, and revision.
Trained, confident staff (all parties)

- Know when to Make more Waves or Calm the...
Like Sailing, Surfing, Rafting, and Boogie-Boarding, Fellowing is more fun and rewarding when we have some waves to ride.
Thank you for listening and thank you to Megan Knight and the Fellows!
The Dance Team and Megan, their commenting mentor
And special thanks to Megan Knight, Writing Fellows Assistant Director and Commenting
Trans/Per Forming First-Year Composition:

Teaming Mentors with Faculty in English 100

Jim Henry, Holly Brueland, and English 100 Instructors, Mentors, and Students

English Department Colloquium
March 20, 2008

http://www.english.hawaii.edu/mentors/
About the Graphics …

- Composition in the Public Eye
- Composition as a Field of Study
  - Perceiving Complexities in Composing
  - Linking Practice to Theory to Research
Some complexities …

- Writing in the academic culture of UHM differs significantly from the writing students did in high school.
- Conventions for writing vary from discipline to discipline and from genre to genre.
- Writing is not only a channel for communication but also a mode of meaning-making.
- Demands on a writer shift dramatically from situation to situation.
- Modern technology influences student writing in the tools students use to compose, in the resources they draw upon, and in the techno-discursive environments they inhabit.
- Writing will take many forms and present new challenges in students’ professional lives.
- Writing in a community of practitioners actually serves to help the writer become part of that community.
- Writing can further students’ goals of becoming scholarly researchers (as promised in our Strategic Plan) or can enable them to appreciate more fully “the Mānoa Experience.”
Practice

- Learning to Write Takes Practice
- The Practice of Teaching Composition Has an (Unfortunate) Legacy
  - Skills & Drills
  - One instructor per X students, in a hermetic classroom, writing “essays” on topics pre-determined by instructor, often graded on a deficit model, sometimes prizing demonstration over inquiry … …
Theory

- Theorizing this Legacy to Reframe Our Understandings of Complexities
  - Subjectivities
    - Psychological, Sociological, Cultural, etc.
  - Institutional Literacies
    - Place-based Composing
  - Performances
    - Mentors … Students … Instructors …

To see much more on theory:
http://www.ncte.org/cccc/
Research

- Mentors’ triple positioning as …
  - Practitioners
    - In classrooms and in individual conferences
  - Theorists
    - “Grounded theorists” wondering about students’ composing challenges & opportunities
  - Researchers
    - Collecting Data & Interpreting It
      - Fieldnotes
      - Logs
Conference Log Template

Mentor Conference Log

Student's Name: ____________________________  Mentor's Name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________  Location of Conference: ____________________________

Length of conference (in minutes): ____________________________  Conference #: ____________________________

When did this session come about, with respect to the writing assignment?  
☐ At the Beginning  ☐ In the Middle  ☐ Near the End  ☐ After initial grade

Was this an individual or group meeting?  
☐ Individual  ☐ Group: # of students ____________________________

Did you refer the student to any other campus resources?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

If yes, please specify the resource(s): ____________________________

Did the student follow up on your referral?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not Sure

What elements of the student's performance did your session address?  
☐ Preparing for writing conferences (with you or the instructor)
☐ Understanding the assignment's requirements
☐ Choosing (or modifying) a topic
☐ Generating ideas for the paper's content
☐ Finding outside sources
☐ Incorporating outside sources into a piece of writing
☐ Clarifying the paper's purpose and/or audience
☐ Organizing the paper more effectively (including transitions)
☐ Honing grammar, usage, and style
☐ Collaborating with classmates (addressing any peer-to-peer issues)
☐ Approaching the instructor with concerns, questions, requests
☐ Applying the instructor's comments for revision
☐ Developing confidence as a writer and college student
☐ Upholding class and/or university policies and expectations
☐ Understanding material that was covered in class
☐ Utilizing technology and university resources
☐ Acquiring skills in time management and personal organization
☐ Handling issues of college and personal life not directly related to the course
☐ Other(s): please specify ____________________________

How did you go about addressing these elements of the student's performance? (please elaborate in a few sentences) ____________________________

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*Note: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate information.*
Research Questions:

1. How will mentoring change student writers’ self-reported appreciation for writing and/or meta-cognitive ability to discuss their own writing?

2. How does mentoring enhance programmatic fulfillment of the following GenEd Hallmark for FW:

   Provide students with guided practice of writing processes--planning, drafting, critiquing, revising, and editing--making effective use of written and oral feedback from the faculty instructor and from peers.
Research Questions, cont’d:

3. How do mentors’ representations of students’ learning processes, one-on-one writing pedagogies, and institutional culture illustrate the complexities of student performance in composition?

4. In what ways do instructional faculty notice changes in student writing, student attitudes toward writing, and/or the classroom environment?
Long-term Research Question:

Will the mentoring initiative correlate positively with any of the following longitudinal factors?

- Performance in future WI courses
- Overall G.P.A.
- Graduation rates
- Retention
Welcome to the Center for the Study of College Student Retention (CSCSR).

The Center provides retention resources to individuals and educational institutions. Our aim is to provide researchers and practitioners with a comprehensive resource for finding information on college student retention and attrition. Please use the navigation at the top of the page to access information.

Featured News:

- Dr. Seidman’s book shown during his Fox News Live Weekend appearance and written about in the Washington Post is available. To view CONTENTS/ORDER
- Dr. Seidman’s book on minority student retention is available. For INFORMATION see the NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) review HERE
- Colleges don’t have to spend a lot of $ to help students persist. Find out HOW
- Put your logo/icon/banner with a link to your site on the Center. Affiliate agreements are also considered. Interested? Here’s HOW
- Grant writing assistance is now available. Information can be found HERE
- Visit our affiliates. Please use the navigation at the top of the page.
- There are 117 pages of retention references and over 1,000 retention discussion group members. To view/join please use the navigation at the top of the page.

We hope you will visit often and tell your friends and colleagues about the Center. In addition we also value your feedback so please feel free to contact us with any comments.
Fall 2007 Program Participants

English 100 sections with MA Writing Mentors: 15

Number of Students Involved: 272

Number of Conferences Attended: 985
- Average: 3.6 per student
- Range: 0-15 conferences

Total Time Spent in Conferences: 480 hours
- Average time in conferences per student: 105 minutes
- Average Length of Conference: 29 min
- Range: 3 to 115 minutes
Percentage of students attending varying numbers of total conferences

- 67% attended 0-2 conferences
- 33% attended 3-15 conferences

Bar chart showing:
- 33% attended 0-2 conferences
- 50% attended 3 to 5 conferences
- 14% attended 6 to 8 conferences
- 2% attended 9 to 15 conferences
### Mentor Conference Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's Name: Pseudo Nym</th>
<th>Mentor's Name: Pseudo Nym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: 10/23/07</td>
<td>Location of Conference: Sinclair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of conference (in minutes): 20</td>
<td>Conference #: (eg 1st, 2nd, 3rd): 6th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When** did this session come about, with respect to the writing assignment?
- [ ] At the Beginning
- [X] In the Middle
- [ ] Near the End
- [ ] After initial grade

**Was this an individual or group meeting?**
- [X] Individual
- [ ] Group: # of students?

Did you refer the student to any other campus resources:
- [ ] Yes
- [X] No

If yes, please specify the resource(s):

Did the student follow up on your referral:
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Not Sure

What elements of the student’s performance did your session address:
- [ ] Preparing for writing conferences (with you or the instructor)
- [ ] Understanding the assignment’s requirements
- [ ] Choosing (or modifying) a topic
- [X] Generating ideas for the paper’s content
- [ ] Finding outside sources
- [ ] Incorporating outside sources into a piece of writing
- [ ] Clarifying the paper’s purpose and/or audience
- [ ] Organizing the paper more effectively (including transitions)
- [ ] Honing grammar, usage, and style
- [ ] Collaborating with classmates (addressing any peer-to-peer issues)
- [ ] Approaching the instructor with concerns, questions, requests
- [ ] Applying the instructor’s comments for revision
- [ ] Developing confidence as a writer and college student
- [ ] Upholding class and/or university policies and expectations
- [ ] Understanding material that was covered in class
- [ ] Utilizing technology and university resources
- [ ] Acquiring skills in time management and personal organization
- [ ] Handling issues of college and personal life not directly related to the course
- [ ] Other(s): please specify

How did you go about addressing these elements of the student’s performance: (please elaborate in a few sentences)

[Name] had a bit of a hard time constructing her argument for the argumentative essay assignment and was not quite clear on how to integrate relevant outside sources into her paper. We basically just went through her paper and evaluated the strength of her argument's components. I suggested places where she could add evidence and then realized that she was having a hard time finding relevant sources, so we discussed tools she could use for her research.
Percentage of Conferences at Various Stages of Students' Writing Processes

- Beginning: 30%
- Middle: 31%
- Near End: 25%
- After Grade: 14%
Conference Topics

- Data derived from mentors’ conference logs
- Student comments derived from anonymous end-of-semester surveys
- Presented in top-10 David Letterman style...
10. Finding outside sources

"Aside from helping me with my writing, my mentor helped me learn how to use the library and its resources. After going to the library with her I got more comfortable with research because she taught me how to look up information."

"She showed me the library index sources like Academic Search Premier, which was very useful."
9. Handling issues of college and personal life not directly related to the course

“He was also there to give me information other than just in English. He helped me use and find sources around campus.”

“We discussed both English & how my other classes were going. He gave me a few helpful tips when it came to school in general.”

105/272 students or 39% of participants
8. Developing confidence as a writer and college student

“She always discourages my negative remarks and helps build my confidence in my writing. She allowed me to just be myself and open up to this whole college experience. She even... convinced me to stay focused and not lose my passion for school.”

“He helped me to better incorporate myself into my essay knowing of a fear of outside knowledge. He also helped in organizing my essays better. He also helped me to think on my own as an individual rather than others telling me what to do.”

125/ 272 students or 46% of participants
7. Honing grammar, usage, and style

“[My mentor] gives us help on grammar but also advice on how to make the paper the best it can be. She asks us how we’re doing and is very friendly.”

“He helped me proofread, correct spelling, grammar and word composition in many of my essays. He helped me further develop my rewrites.”

131/272 students or 48% of participants
6. Preparing for writing conferences

“I think that in our initial meeting together, the instructions were helpful to understanding how we both work.”

137/ 272 students or 50% of participants
5. Choosing (or modifying) a topic

“She helped us in the choosing of the topics for our essays—especially helped our research project group narrow down our topic for our paper.”

“Our mentor met with us when we needed help getting started on papers, either with a topic or putting ideas together.”

“She was very helpful in directing me when I was at a complete stand still.”

144/272 students or 53% of participants
4. Organizing the paper more effectively (including transitions)

“*She helped me refine my paper and clarify organization and thesis/topic sentences.*”

“*She helped me to organize my ideas & to outline my paper.*”

“*She was helpful in the organizing process of my papers.*”

“*Helped my organizational skills.*”

153/ 272 students or 56% of participants
3. Generating ideas for the paper’s content

“She helped me to...come up with ideas.”

“She helped me in getting ideas for my prewriting and also helped me critique my essays at the end of the semester.”

“I wasn’t very good at brainstorming and coming up with ideas and organization, but she helped me a great deal with that.”

159/ 272 students or 58% of participants
2. Clarifying the paper’s purpose and/or audience

“She helped me to figure out a purpose in a paper that I had just drafted.”

“I struggled to find a thesis for a particular essay and she guided me to find one.”

“Sometimes, my point was not clean so she helped me get rid of some things.”

164/272 students or 60% of participants
1. Understanding the assignment’s requirements

“[The mentor] helped me to understand the main question being asked, because sometimes it was worded strangely.”

“Getting a better understanding of what the purpose of the assignment is”

“My mentor helped to clarify what assignments required and gave advise when help was needed.”

“Helped me to understand the prompts even more.”

205/272 students or 75% of participants
Frequency of Conference Topics Addressed

Total students: 272
Question: How satisfied were you with...
End-of-semester Evaluations by Students

Percentage of “Very Satisfied” Responses Across Groups

Options: Very Unsatisfied, Unsatisfied, Neutral, Satisfied, Very Satisfied

Mentor: 51%
English 100: 30%
1st-Year Experience: 14%

Total Respondents: 219 students
**Question:** How did the quality of your learning experience in English 100 compare with the quality of your learning experience in your other courses?

**Response:** English 100 was...
Panelist Participation: Students

Please Share Your . . .

Perceptions, Experiences, Anecdotes, Feedback, Observations, Suggestions, Critiques, Words of Wisdom
End-of-semester Evaluations by Mentors

Question: How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the mentoring program?

Total respondents: 14 mentors
“I appreciated being in a position (as a graduate student) to help other students in the difficult transition to college life and college-level writing. I have had many students who have expressed their gratitude to me for simply making myself available to talk.”

“Many of my students expressed early in the semester that they felt ‘lost’ and "overwhelmed" at UH. They did not know where anything was or how anything worked. They felt a distance between themselves and everyone else. I directed them as best I could to the various activities and resources available to them, and I could see their confidence grow.”
Question to Mentors: This past semester, what did your English 100 students teach you?

“That each student learns at a different speed”

“That being 18 as a new freshman is hard”

“That they are smarter than I thought--they seem to actually appreciate our high expectations”

“How little I know--is that horrible to say? They challenged me to learn MORE.”
“I've definitely learned a lot about the politics of Hawai`i and the institutional context that we are in, which has been invaluable. I've also learned a lot about different personalities. I think, most of all, they've taught me about myself as a teacher/mentor.”
“There are times when you can't be completely descriptive, as opposed to prescriptive, because students do need to know the guidelines and expectations of University writing--something that you don't really arrive at ‘naturally’ or by getting [an] instructor's corrections on your paper.”
“That the simplest of tasks are at times the most difficult to comprehend—for a first year student. So, not to take for granted—not to assume that a student’s work is always based on their ability to perform, but rather that at times they need someone else to explain the assignment at hand, in a different way. To have patience is the key. Not to give in to a student who simply wants you to give them the ‘right answer,’ but to assist them in discovering that they can find the solution on their own.”
Panelist Participation: Mentors

Please Share Your . . .

Perceptions, Experiences, Anecdotes, Feedback, Observations, Suggestions, Critiques, Words of Wisdom
End-of-semester Evaluations by Instructors

Question: How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with the mentoring program?

Total Respondents: 14 instructors
“[Mentor’s name] was a tremendous help to me and to our students. I required students to meet with her at least once for every paper; for the most part all of them kept up. I noticed immediately that the quality of work was much higher than I was used to in 100 courses, and I can only attribute that to [name’s] mentoring.

Even the earliest summary papers were far superior to other years in the way the students identified the logic of arguments, rather than simply repeating in a general way what was ‘said.’”

-Joan Peters
“[Mentor’s name] was invaluable. She was pro-active in getting students to see her about their writing. She helped them brainstorm and gave just the right amount of feedback on the drafts. She was sincerely interested in each student's welfare in the class and in his/her college career. She got to know each student. Her assessments of their abilities and what was blocking their progress were quite accurate. . .

I was particularly appreciative that she picked up on the formation of a clique in the class. . .”

-Ruth Hsu
Panelist Participation: Instructors

Please Share Your . . .

Perceptions, Experiences, Anecdotes, Feedback, Observations, Suggestions, Critiques, Words of Wisdom
Acknowledgements

Mahalo nui loa to supporters of this initiative:

- UHM Office of the Chancellor
- Office of the Dean, College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature
- Department of English
- National Education Association

And to the Instructors, Mentors, and Students who have contributed to our presentation

More information?

Jim Henry, Director of Composition and Rhetoric (jmhenry@hawaii.edu), or
Holly Bruland, Research Assistant to the Director of Composition and Rhetoric
(hbruland@hawaii.edu)
For a semester and a half, the English department has been conducting a new initiative in teaching English 100: mentoring. Mentors are MA students in English (and in a few cases, advanced undergraduates) who have teamed with faculty to individualize instruction, meeting with the instructor before the semester to discuss the syllabus and course expectations. Then, building on "intake interviews" at the beginning of the semester, mentors meet frequently in individual conferences with students to coach them through challenges they face in first-year composition, documenting each meeting in standardized logs. Drawing on over a thousand such logs and other sources, we will report on this initiative from a variety of perspectives--mentor, instructor, student, and initiative coordinator—to analyze composition instruction in its performative dimensions: In this new discursive scene, how do students perform differently? What are the dimensions of mentor performance? How do instructional faculty interpret these performances, even as their own classroom performances are inevitably inflected? Lastly, what can such a triangulation of performances teach us about the complexities and opportunities of composing one’s way into UHM's institutional culture?
Remarks by panel respondent
Terry Myers Zawacki:

The following slides note the themes I heard recurring in the four presentations and in Pam Childers’ Chair introduction.

(Please forgive the ad hoc and often elliptical nature of the prose in these slides. I’ve simply transferred my notes to a powerpoint format rather than revising them for this medium.)
Theme One: Naming the program and the student participants

- Writing fellows—gender bias?
- Writing assistants
- Writing mentors
- Curriculum-based tutors
Theme Two: Challenges related to turbulence and calm seas

When the seas are calm, all is running smoothly with the program and the placements. Calm seas, however, are not typical. Program directors face challenges in their efforts to stay a steady course (or even stay afloat) amidst the turbulence. Challenges come from all sides—the teacher-mentor, the fellows, and students in the class. One big challenge is managing the flow of drafts that come to the fellow, particularly the number of drafts and the point in the semester at which they come.
Theme Three: Issues concerning the “in the middle” spaces occupied by the writing fellows/mentors/assistants and by the director of the program

- Issues for program director:
  - Making the most appropriate and beneficial (for all) placements
  - Managing expectations on all sides
  - Ascertaining and balancing goals of the mentoring teacher and the fellow
**Issues for fellows:**

- Who should the fellows be? In the major? Generalists? Upper-division/lower-division?
- What roles do they/should they play? Read at least one set of required drafts. See students for required sessions. Give in-class workshops on writing. Assist teacher with assignment design. Give teachers and students a language to talk about writing. In general, act as the voice in the middle between teacher and student.
- How do they need to be prepared to negotiate the teacher’s and the students’ expectations? The disciplinary expectations?
- What do they themselves gain? Rhetorical fluency. A chance to reflect on how writers write and themselves as writers (Severino’s “mentor letter”). Research experience if they are asked to document and reflect on the experience as a contribution to the writing fellows program. (Holly)
Theme Four: Measuring and Reporting Success

- For whom are we evaluating our programs and for what purpose(s)?
- What questions should we ask?
- How do we measure all the variables?
- How can we measure some of the “immeasurables” of the experience?
Theme Four, continued:

- **What counts as persuasive evidence? (For whom and for what purpose?)**
  - Statistical evidence from surveys and questionnaires, carefully gathered, documented, and analyzed (Joan and Carol)
  - Anecdotal, self-report data from teachers, students, and fellows (Kathy and Carol)
  - Ethnographic evidence gathered from a careful examination and analysis of multiple texts, including the “text” of the classroom itself (Holly)

- **Where does program funding come from and what do we need to report to keep/gain funding? (Holly—based on careful documentation of program results, funding was continued rather than being cut as had been planned)**
Theme Five: Writing “selves” into the culture—with “self” being the writer and the fellow as writer in/of the culture.

Thinking beyond the classroom, what are the larger activity systems in which the fellow, the mentor-teacher, the program director, and the students are operating? How are these “selves” constructed and being constructed by playing a part in the activity system of the writing fellows program?
Terry’s concluding observations:

Finally, whether calm seas or turbulent waters, we all find that sometimes the best we can do is to go with the flow, as I learned this semester when I placed a writing fellow, majoring in anthropology, with an anthropology professor. The professor decided that rather than engage his fellow in any of the agreed-upon practices for writing fellows, he would be a co-researcher with the fellow as they talked about how student writing evolved when they were given no written assignments, no criteria for success, and only oral in-class advice in response to questions they might have about how to proceed. After meeting with the prof and the fellow separately, I realized that I was not going to persuade the prof to change his mind or his practices, so I advised the fellow to play the role of anthropological observer and gatherer of evidence that the prof had asked of her. With close observation, fieldnotes, and patience, the fellow, together with the professor, was able to see what emerged in the students’ papers and in the follow-up discussion between fellow and professor given the variables I noted above. Based on their research, they wrote a collaborative research report. This placement proved to be a very interesting compromise, one based in anthropological methodology with the fellow acting as a co-researcher of the results of the professor’s practices and her own fellow interventions. The fellow has become so engaged in this line of inquiry that she plans to take an ethnography course with me in the fall to continue her research. The “flow,” then, can lead to some very interesting outcomes. But how to measure and assess these compromises?