



the WORD

NEWSLETTER FROM WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC) PROGRAM

IN THIS ISSUE:

CETL Workshop:
Rethinking
undergraduate research

WI Courses
Survey Results

WAC Fellows Special
Projects

**WAC EVENTS
SPRING 2014**

CETL WORKSHOP:

**Rethinking
Undergraduate
Research:
Strategies for
Creating Effective
Assignments**

**March 27, 2014
Thursday
12:00-1:45
Room: AC 4EA1**

Writing Fellows are designing a CETL workshop for faculty about teaching students how to conduct effective research.

**PLAGIARISM
WORKSHOP:
A WAC Approach to
Academic Integrity**

**April 10, 2014
Thursday
12:00- 1:50
Room: 3A04**

Writing Fellow, Kevin Moran is designing a workshop on Plagiarism.

Preparing for Student Research Day? Join our CETL Workshop on March 27

Rethinking Undergraduate Research: Strategies for Creating Effective Assignments

What do we really mean by 'research' at the undergraduate level? What are the skills that students need to succeed in writing college-level research papers in their discipline and how can faculty best teach these skills? How can we convey research as an activity requiring discipline-specific critical thinking, as opposed to just "finding stuff" and tying it superficially together?

This workshop will cover;

- strategies for creating scaffolded research assignments and rubrics
- tools for teaching processes including defining a topic, finding sources, working with complex texts, and supporting argumentation.



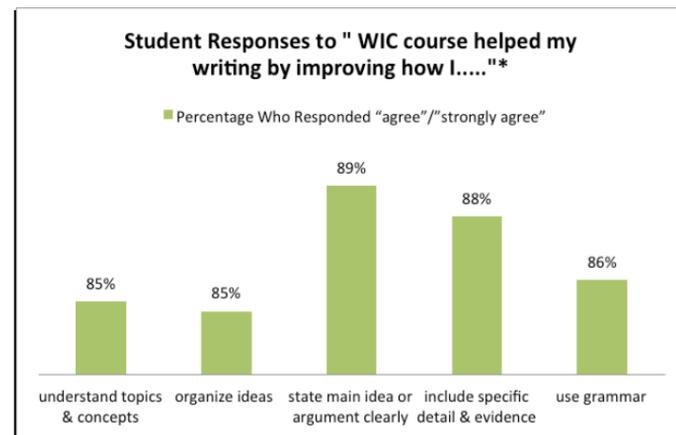
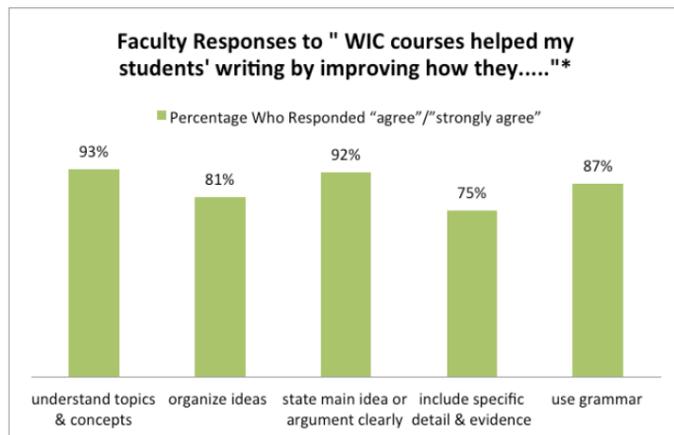
A Report on 2012-2013 Writing Intensive Courses Survey Results

By: Hilal Erkovan

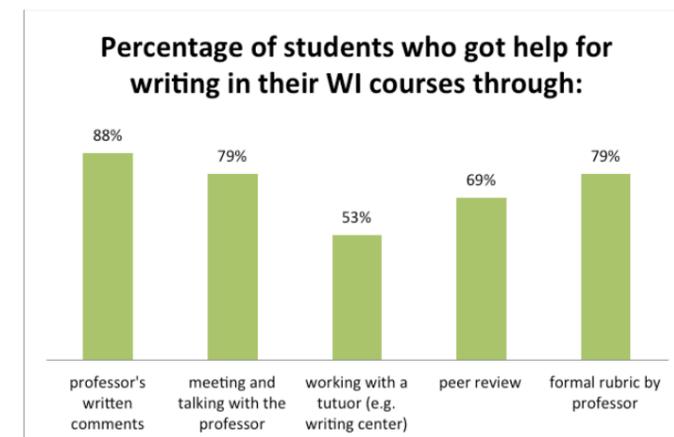
During the 2012-2013 academic year a survey was distributed to the Writing Intensive classes (WIC). Nineteen professors and 269 students participated in a 34-question survey.

Results:

- One of the sections asked the participants whether participating in WIC improved various writing-related skills and abilities. The majority of the students and professors stated that WIC courses were effective in making students better writers. The figures below present the summary of results, for the faculty and students, respectively.



- 89% of students reported they would recommend a WIC to a friend. 93% of the professors said that they would recommend their colleagues to consider developing and teaching a WIC.
- When we look at the characteristics of the writing assignments it was reported that eight out of nineteen courses had 6 or more graded writing assignments throughout the course. The length of the writing assignments however showed variety as they ranged from 1-2 pages to 10 or more pages.



- A majority of the faculty (13 out of 19) reported that they worked with a WAC Writing Fellow. Among those who worked with a WAC writing fellow 88% stated that they agree/strongly agree that they found the collaboration with the fellow successful and they would consider developing other WIC.

- Students were also asked which methods/strategies they used to get help on their WI writing assignments. The figure on the left presents the results on this question.



Professor Shereen Inayatulla

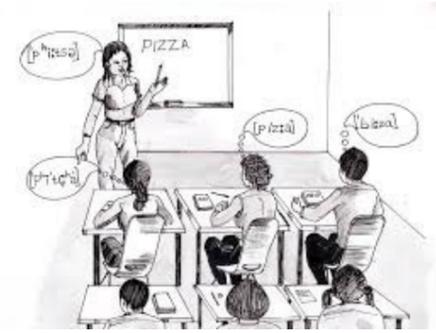
Assistant Professor of English & Writing Fellows Coordinator

I am pleased to be returning to the position of Writing Fellows Coordinator at York College this spring. In addition to the campus-wide events we have planned over the next few months, our six Writing Fellows are keen to collaborate with faculty, adjunct instructors, and GTFs on a range of projects. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to work with a Fellow on designing writing assignments and/or offering workshops for students on effective writing practices. I can be reached via email at sinayatulla@york.cuny.edu or extension 5187. We look forward to working with you.

Infosheets for Multilingual Learners

By: Nazik Dinçtopal-Deniz, Hallie Scott, Debby Su

This special project, to be conducted by Writing Fellows Nazik Dinçtopal-Deniz, Hallie Scott and Debby Su, will focus on improving multilingual learners' Writing in the Disciplines and Across the Curriculum. The aim is to increase awareness about the needs and experiences of multilingual learners in college writing and provide guidance in their academic writing. During our Writing Center tutor training workshop in October 2013, we discussed how to provide more guidance for their tutoring sessions with multilingual learners. Combining this need with one of the projects that we are currently working on, namely, Discipline and Assignment Specific Tutoring Tools (DATTs, a.k.a., infosheets or Guided Paper Starters (GPS)), we are setting out to create infosheets that are available to Writing Center tutors and multilingual learners. We will construct two kinds of infosheets, one for Writing Center tutors and another for multilingual learners.



- The infosheets to be designed for Writing Center tutors will focus on fostering supportive feedback and promote learning as well as language acquisition.
- The infosheets to be designed for multilingual learners will focus on helping multilingual learners in their academic writing without being hindered by language skills.

With this project, we intend to contribute to bridging the gap and initiate a dialogue on the linguistic and cultural diversity on college writing by creating awareness among Writing Center tutors and providing tailored guidance to multilingual learners.

A WAC Approach to Academic Integrity

By: Kevin Moran

Kevin Moran, one of the Writing Fellows at York College, is running a campus seminar on Academic Integrity (AI) on April 10th. Stemming from several interesting discussions at the Professor 101 series offered to new faculty members, Kevin decided it would be a good idea to present on the application of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) principles to tackling the thorny issue of AI. WAC pedagogy, with its focus on writing in all disciplines at all levels, is uniquely poised to offer insight and develop initiatives on this problem, and to ensure that talking about AI is an opportunity to advance student learning, rather than simply proscription and punishment. But what is the WAC approach to AI?

Basic WAC pedagogy – the integration of writing into the learning process, the step-by-step approach to the research and composition process and the feedback/revision loops this involves, in itself mitigates the chances of AI among students. Providing clear writing structure, opportunities, and oversight, allows instructors to identify and address AI in early stages of the writing process, it also reduces the temptation for students to shortcut their writing production when faced with intimidating '10 page' final papers at the end of the semester.

This workshop will move beyond understanding of breaches in AI as a form of moral dishonesty and a reflection of the students' cynical disengagement from the learning process. We will consider the ways in which such conceptions of AI engender an adversarial relationship between instructor and student. Following WAC principles, we conceive of academic dishonesty as the result of a 'frustrated' learning process: frustrated as in incompletely realized, but also frustrating as from the students' perspective they are being asked to undertake a writing project for which they feel unprepared. In this sense both student and instructor are responsible for the plagiarized product – perhaps in recognizing this, instructors will view violations of AI as more an instance of instructional, rather than moral, breakdown.

For example, this workshop will highlight the tension students face in their academic writing acquisition: "Show you have done your research BUT write something new and original, improve your English by mimicking what you read BUT use your own words and voice." Attendees will consider how to better guide students through this complex and understandably precarious process.

In short, the WAC approach to AI seeks to facilitate students' entry into disciplinary conventions and accompanying writing products, to make the tensions and

ambiguities inherent in the writing process the objects of explicit instruction and support. Leaving such issues to the implicit and apprehending their mishandling post-factum is a recipe for frustration, both in terms of student learning and the important relationship of trust that is at the heart of a humanistic approach to learning.

These and other issues (such as AI procedures at York) will be discussed at the upcoming AI seminar, which is open to all faculty on April 10th.



A Guide on Common Core Standards for Literacy Integration Across the Curriculum

By: Annabel D'Souza

This semester, Writing Fellow Annabel D'Souza will develop a guiding document for York faculty that will assist faculty members with an understanding of emergent changes in national instruction around writing so as to improve approaches to teaching and learning with future York students who would have experienced these national shifts. This document will,

- describe current national policy around literacy and Writing Across the Curriculum through emergent Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for K-12 education,
- explore and highlight CCSS aligned best practices, tools and strategies for improving writing pedagogy across subject areas, and
- increase York faculty understanding of writing pedagogy, policy changes and secondary to post-secondary shifts in the implementation of literacy strategies.

The document will be available on the WAC website in the near future.

