Since faculty development is the mainstay of a writing across the curriculum program, how do we provide long-term follow-up to the first workshop?

Beyond the First Workshop: What Else Can You Do to Help Faculty?

Margot Soven

Great moments in education are often heralded by significant grants, conferences, or publications. The writing across the curriculum movement is no exception. Most people in the field would agree that Elaine Maimon's six-week faculty seminar funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977 marked the beginning of writing across the curriculum as a national movement. The Beaver College workshop became the prototype for training faculty to use writing more purposefully in their classes.

Workshops based on the Beaver College model stressed the following principles:
- Writing is a powerful mode of learning
- Writing should be viewed as a process
- Writing assignments should be tailored to course objectives
- Students should write for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Collaboration and peer review should be a part of the writing process.

Perhaps most important of all, the early workshops made the point that we're all in this together. Students must have appropriate writing

experiences in *all* their classes if they are to become good writers who are able to appreciate the value of writing as an aid to learning.

Early writing-across-the-curriculum pioneers fashioned a package to demonstrate to faculty how these principles could become a reality in their classrooms. Many of our colleagues, eager for alternatives to the drab, if not downright poor, writing they were receiving from students, joined us—perhaps there was something new under the sun! They seemed pleased, excited, even rejuvenated by our workshops, and, thus energized, they returned to their classes to implement the new methodologies.

What has happened since that first outpouring of enthusiasm? The answer to this question is not fully documented, but we do have some clues from our own anecdotal experiences and from studies on the effects of these workshops (see Chapter Seven in this volume). Review of faculty attitudes indicates that, especially during the first years of a WAC program, many instructors do, in fact, implement new assignments and experiment with techniques such as requiring journal writing, giving writing assignments in stages, and conducting peer review sessions.

Now that many WAC programs are ten years old, however, we need to ask if we can sustain these gains in the face of some of the following obstacles: Perhaps student writing hasn't improved as much as we or other faculty might like. Perhaps assignments that have been in use for several semesters have begun to seem less challenging. Perhaps other concerns on campus, such as revising the curriculum, examining accountability and assessment, improving computer literacy, or developing freshman experience programs, now demand more faculty attention. In other words, perhaps "ideas that seemed bright and shiny in the workshop light have dimmed considerably after a year or two . . . due to increased teaching loads, larger classes, administrative responsibilities, lack of collegial support, pressures to research, publish, write grants, and the like" (Fulwiler, 1984, p. 119).

If the grant to Beaver College inaugurated the "first stage" of WAC, Fulwiler's (1984) article, "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work?," brought it to a close. Fulwiler summed up what he believes are the successes of the eight-year program at Michigan Technological University, but, even more important, he underscored the challenges we all face if we want to keep WAC alive now that the honeymoon is over. He left us with two important questions, both of which WAC directors should ponder carefully: (1) How are we to find enough energy to provide long-term follow-up in WAC programs, and (2) how do we in fact help teachers to translate what happened in the WAC workshop to their own classes on a long-term basis?

Many schools are confronting the challenges of long-term change, and, as Fulwiler points out in Chapter Seven, the number of permutations for accomplishing this change are as numerous as the number of

schools with viable, healthy WAC programs. All of them, however, illustrate the following principle: A WAC program must evolve intellectually and programatically if it is to survive. Simply continuing to offer the basic workshop, followed by brown-bag lunches, is not enough.

Many of the WAC programs discussed in this chapter have initiated curriculum change, program evaluation, and collaborative research, but, because these areas are reviewed elsewhere in this volume, I will concentrate here only on the following facets of second-stage WAC programs: new workshops and symposia, collaborative teaching and coauthoring, and opportunities for student involvement. These activities are illustrated by practical examples and by a brief account of how one school, La Salle University, moved from the first to the second stage of its writing across the curriculum program.

Second-Stage Workshops and Symposia

There are many possible formats and topics for second-stage workshops. Some focus on subjects covered in the first workshop, but, in contrast to the basic workshop's discussion of practical teaching strategies, these follow-up workshops are often more theoretically oriented. For example, a first workshop may have concentrated on methods of using writing to enhance thinking skills; the corresponding advanced workshop might explore conflicting conceptions of the meaning of "critical thinking." (This topic is a favorite in second-stage workshops in part because the University of Chicago's very successful series of conferences on writing and higher-order reasoning has had a significant impact on WAC training.) In addition, the advanced workshop often draws extensively for its subject matter on knowledge from many disciplines (such as psychology, sociology, and biology), as well as on theories of rhetoric and composition.

At Spelman College in Atlanta, the ten-year-old WAC program shifted its emphasis to critical thinking two years ago. Since 1986 instructors have been experimenting with special techniques for using writing to stimulate analytical modes of thought. They use standardized learning inventories to evaluate the results. In addition, six instructors have worked intensively with Jacqueline Jones Royster, the WAC coordinator, to develop methods of examining teaching practices. At their summer workshop, entitled "The Teaching and Learning Environment," they describe the results of student inventories as well as analyze their own observations.

The discussion in second-stage workshops typically moves beyond writing to other instructional components, such as lecture style, class discussion, and exams. This happens in a structured way at George Mason University, Virginia, where workshops now cover all language arts skill areas, and at Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, where

WAC has evolved into a schoolwide institute on teaching methods and issues. Recently thirty faculty members met for what were billed as two "Bloomsdays" to discuss Allan Bloom's (1987) *The Closing of the American Mind.*

Social constructionist theories of knowledge (popularized in the work of Bruffee [1986], Bartholomae [1985], Bizzell [1978], and others) and their attending pedagogies, such as collaborative learning and taxonomic analysis of discipline-specific writing, are also a popular basis for a deeper understanding of first-workshop topics. Mary Ann Aschaur (personal communication, May 1988) coordinator of the WAC program at Santa Clara University, California, says that "such a theme will tap seminar material—and also consider new applications of it." She adds, commenting on other anticipated benefits of the second workshop, "We suspect that a workshop that builds on the experience of participants, that renews budding alliances and suggests research projects and articles will prove useful and interesting to everyone."

Another example is La Salle University's new workshop "Critical Thinking, Writing, and the Major," which explores the theoretical and practical dimensions of critical thinking common to all disciplines as well as provides a review of discipline-specific modes of inquiry. After examining the professional literature in their fields and their current writing assignments, faculty are introduced to new approaches for designing assignments based on James Kinneavy's (1971) theories of exploratory and argumentative writing.

While most second-stage workshops are designed for an interdisciplinary audience, some are directed at new or special constituencies, such as administrators or individual department faculties. Patricia Bizzell at the College of the Holy Cross, Massachusetts, conducts a series of department workshops on discipline-specific uses of language. Individual departments use what they learn in the workshops to help solve curricular problems. For example, the religion department elected to use journals to help students reflect on personal attitudes that seem to impede learning. The history department uses Bizzell's workshops to clarify the role of the research paper in introductory courses, an issue about which their faculty had disagreed in the past.

Second-stage workshops are also used for training faculty consultants. These workshops can be very nondirective. As Toby Fulwiler (personal communication, May 1988) says, "I open the door and plug in the coffee at the advanced workshop, and the participants take it from there. We critique their presentations and give them tips for shaping their talks for different audiences." At the University of Vermont, faculty from many disciplines who complete the advanced workshop give their own in-house and outside workshops, thereby assuming a leadership role, an important facet of second-stage programs.

Faculty writing workshops, in which faculty either share their current writing in progress or experiment with WAC-recommended writing techniques (such as prewriting, drafting, and revising strategies), are an important component of some WAC programs. A unique variation of the faculty writing workshop is the one at Radford University in Virginia. Faculty who have been granted course reductions to implement new writing assignments come together in groups of four to write about their experiences during a weeklong summer workshop. They write from logs and journals kept during the semester, sharing drafts as they work. Students often join in this process as well. Several essays written during this workshop have been published in professional journals.

In addition to formal workshops, many schools are increasing the number of informal short meetings held during the class day. The purpose of these meetings varies. William Paterson College, New Jersey, schedules three "Writing Roundtables" each semester. These are regular meetings of faculty, administrators, and students "interested in writing, particularly writing generated in the classroom" (Donna Perry, WAC coordinator, personal communication, May 1988). Topics for the spring 1988 series included: "Innovative Assignments That Work," "Collaborative Learning in Action," and "Getting Published: Book Reviews and Fiction."

Elisabeth Latosi-Sawin (personal communication, May 1988) of Missouri Western State College is one of many WAC directors who underscores the importance of using a variety of formats for WAC meetings. She says, "Considerable variety in mode of delivery helps a program maintain interest and model the kind of teaching strategies that will foster critical thinking in the classroom." Her program includes group meetings of faculty experimenting with new writing techniques, panel discussions on such topics as computers and composing, book review sessions (recently, Lev Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*, 1962, and Barbara Walvoord's *Helping Students Write Well*, 1982) and formal faculty debates on such topics as "Is the WAC Movement a Threat to Quality Instruction in the Sciences?"

Collaborative Teaching and Coauthoring

There are many modes of possible collaboration between the English department faculty and faculty in other disciplines. At De Paul University, Illinois, the freshman writing course is linked to a freshman course in world civilizations. Writing topics are related to the civilizations component, and problem-solving strategies introduced in freshman composition are reinforced in the world civilizations course. Each faculty team reports on their collaborative efforts at end-of-semester meetings. These teams have written a textbook, *Rhetoric and Civilization* (Kroker and Fahren-

bach, 1988), for the course that combines the history material with chapters on the composing process.

Other examples of coauthoring include *Writing in the Arts and Sciences* and *Readings in the Arts and Sciences*, by Elaine Maimon and several of her colleagues at Beaver College (Maimon and others, 1984a, 1984b) and the *Writer's Guide* (Biddle, 1987), series by Toby Fulwiler and his colleagues at the University of Vermont. In-house publications, often involving many authors, are proliferating and include: *On Writing Well*, William Paterson College; *Write to Learn*, La Salle University; *Improving Student Writing: A Guide for Faculty in All Disciplines*, California State Polytechnic University; *Essays Across the Curriculum*, University of Maine.

Although WAC newsletters are typically edited by the WAC coordinator, faculty from other disciplines often contribute descriptions of their work. These publications, in addition to stimulating faculty exchange, help keep WAC visible on campus. *Literacy Across the Curriculum* (Dawson Community College), *Writ/Talk* (Queensborough Community College), *Writing Across the Curriculum,* (Southern College of Technology), and *Crosscut* (California State University, San Bernardino) are just a few of the many WAC newsletters.

New Roles for Students

Perhaps one of the most powerful ways to sustain a WAC program is to involve students in the teaching process. Programs for writing fellows, modeled on the undergraduate tutoring program developed by Tori Haring-Smith at Brown University, Rhode Island, provide support for faculty implementing new methods of using writing in their classes. Writing fellows—or writing assistants, as they are called at the University of Pennsylvania—are assigned to individual classes to read students' drafts. Besides helping students write better, these programs provide an opportunity for instructors to discuss their writing assignments with an interested student who is studying theories and methods of composition. Instructors may modify an assignment after reviewing it with a writing fellow or may gain new insights into their students' drafts after reviewing the writing fellow's comments. Western Washington University and La Salle University are among those that have incorporated programs for writing fellows into existing WAC programs.

Other Second-Stage Activities

Publicizing the WAC program and the importance of good writing is a meaningful second-stage activity. "Across the University" essay contests help to remind faculty in all disciplines to motivate students to write

well. At La Salle, the winners of the essay-writing contest see their work published in an annual booklet entitled *Writing Across All Disciplines: Student Essays;* they also receive a $50 prize. Many schools have developed slick brochures describing both the school's writing program and faculty seminars; good examples are those from the University of Colorado and the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

Two second-stage programs, one at Pima Community College, Tucson, the other at Western Washington University, deserve special mention for their imaginative approach to second-stage WAC programming. At Pima, instructors collaborate with leaders from business and industry to develop units in writing instruction for all disciplines. The goal is to make students realize the importance of writing in the professional world. Recently a bank president gave a lesson on the connections between writing interpretive papers about Chaucer and interpreting problems in banking. At Western Washington, an interdisciplinary group of faculty grades the junior-level writing test, giving these faculty members an excellent opportunity to exchange views on what constitutes good writing—a discussion that continues after the exam is over, according to Barbara Sylvester, program coordinator.

The La Salle University Program

How does a school know that it's about to enter the second stage of WAC? One sign is the number of faculty who have participated in the basic workshop. By the beginning of 1986, more than 30 percent of La Salle's faculty had completed the summer workshop, and more than half had attended some form of faculty seminar on writing. Another sign is longevity. We knew we had reached middle age when we began to experience the familiar signs of that somewhat unenviable period: an uneasy feeling that we were growing familiar, perhaps even outdated, a sense that it was time to "take stock" and then to take action.

On the plus side, faculty were asking for a new summer workshop. Daylong follow-up seminars with outside speakers were successful but did not meet all the perceived needs. One colleague who had attended one of the first summer workshops asked permission to enroll again; she felt rusty, she said, and needed to "recharge."

La Salle's writing across the curriculum midlife crisis is past, and we have emerged from it unscathed, perhaps better than we ever were. In addition to changes in the program referred to earlier in this chapter, the school has recently approved a writing emphasis course requirement. Summer workshops will be used to train faculty to prepare the new courses. Of course, we continue to offer the basic workshop for new faculty.

Conclusion

There is no reason for writing across the curriculum to disappear; it is not an educational fad. As James Kinneavy (1971) reminds us, since antiquity we have acknowledged the centrality of rhetoric in the university. The writing across the curriculum movement has served to unify the faculty and to focus attention on matters beyond pedagogical practices related to writing, such as what constitutes literacy and what we mean by informed teaching in general. What we do to help faculty "beyond the first workshop" depends not only on our alertness to faculty interest in assigning and responding to student writing but also on our willingness to permit the concept of writing across the curriculum to embrace these broader issues.

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