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no doubt to return in 20 years as the brain child of a new generation of academics who thought they had discovered a new idea?

Now in its 10th year, La Salle's WAC program shows no signs of going under. New faculty seem eager to enroll in our basic workshop. Last summer we conducted our third follow-up workshop: "Critical Thinking and Writing in Advanced Courses." A recently approved writing-emphasis course requirement went into effect in 1990-91, and our Writing Fellows Program is expanding: We have 25 student tutors and more faculty requests for them than we can handle. The fifth edition of student essays written in response to our annual across-the-disciplines writing contest is ready for distribution, and our faculty manual, *Write to Learn* is being revised. The biology department has just completed a set of student materials to augment department workshops on writing, and three essays on writing, co-authored by faculty, have recently been published (Morocco and Soven, Simon and Soven, Soven and Sullivan).

But La Salle is by no means unique. The continuous, vigorous growth of WAC programs as they approach the end of their first decade is surprisingly common. Fifteen years after the faculty seminar at Beaver College, which marked the beginning of writing across the curriculum as a national movement, many programs begun during the late seventies and early eighties are remarkably healthy. Several of those described in this text and many of the programs reported on in Fulwiler and Young's *Programs that Work* (e.g., Beaver College, Robert Morris College, and Michigan Technological University) exemplify the staying power of WAC.

Does all this mean that writing across the curriculum (and its administrators) can look forward to growing old gracefully? Should we relax and settle back and assume that writing across the curriculum is a permanent campus institution? History would suggest otherwise. As David Russell points out, "cross curricula writing instruction has never made a permanent impact on academia. . . . Like other educational reform movements, cross curricula writing instruction was accepted in principle. 'Every teacher should teach writing' is one of the oldest saws in American academia, but, in practice reforms were absorbed and transmuted by the system they resisted" (53). We learn from the past that programs which challenged traditional departmental structures and the deeply

ingrained assumption that writing is a generalizable skill taught by the English department did not survive. James Kinneavy, who has written extensively on the subject, says it's really too soon to judge the effectiveness of WAC as an educational movement, too early to decide if WAC is "actually a serious attempt to integrate language fully into the curriculum" (375).

However, Kinneavy and Russell do agree that writing across the curriculum enjoys a measure of enthusiastic support from both faculty and administrators unprecedented for programs that cross disciplinary lines. Some of the reasons for that support, described in this text and in numerous essays, are reflected in workshop evaluations such as these:

> Mathmatics Department: The writing project workshop for me was an enlightening experience. Before the workshop, I had never considered using writing assignments as a learning tool in mathematics and physics. Past writing assignments I had given were extra-credit papers, usually on some historical topic, that were designed for those students whose test performance in mathematics were clearly not consistent with their understanding of the material. These assignments were much too loosely defined, however, with the result that most papers were just poor rewrites of encyclopedic accounts. I have much more appreciation now for the care that must go into the assignment. More importantly, I can now envision ways in which writing assignments can be used within the body of the course itself to bolster conceptual understanding of the material.
>
> I was fascinated with the idea of peer review. Coming from a discipline that relies almost exclusively on co-authoring and critiques of colleagues, I would definitely try and institute this. I would sign up for a second workshop on collaborative learning.
>
> The discussion of evaluation of student writing nicely pointed out problems in grading I had never considered. In particular the inefficacy of a large number of comments on a finished paper makes a great deal of sense. For my own future purposes, I would probably go with a rough draft type of assignment that would have significant comments, followed by a chance to act on the comments (DeDio).
>
> Management Department: Prior to attending the workshop, I expected an emphasis on grammar and spelling. I now realize how pointless that would have been.

> The workshop was a very good learning experience for me. More importantly, it was very stimulating. It made me think about writing as I haven't thought about writing since Freshman Composition.
>
> This kind of workshop requires us to become students again. I think this is very important for me to help me remember the frustration of being taught in a language which I didn't understand. I feel that the need to examine the pedagogy of teaching for me is essential. Too much of my professional experience was "bottom line" oriented. There was very little emphasis on growth (Gauss).

These instructors' remarks, typical of responses from faculty in all disciplines and from institutions of all sorts, underscore the powerful progression of the "first-phase" WAC experience. Faculty come to workshops or request peer tutors because they are concerned about poor student writing, and frustrated by their inability to help. They learn new methods for designing assignments and responding to student papers. But then, the workshop addresses the unexpected, inviting faculty to question long-held assumptions about the function of writing in their classes and the nature of writing in their disciplines. And, as several of our authors have stated, the workshop stimulates faculty to reflect about teaching and renew contact with colleagues. The major value of WAC may very well be, as Fulwiler says, that it "reminds some people why they became college teachers in the first place—before they retreated to separate buildings, isolated offices and competitive research" ("How Well" 121).

Similarly, peer tutoring programs exceed faculty expectations. Initially instructors requesting a peer tutor have a modest objective—a set of papers free from egregious grammatical and spelling errors. Instead they discover they have acquired a collaborator, a partner whose influence extends beyond helping students improve their essays. The peer tutor, trained to question and to encourage students to consider reformulating ideas during the revision process, often changes students' attitudes toward the writing and motivates the faculty sponsor to rethink writing assignments and adopt new methods of responding to student papers.

WHAT NEXT?

To sustain the level of faculty enthusiasm typical of the early stages of a program may be impossible; the epiphany-like effect of new beginnings is hard to replicate. Even to keep a WAC program going in these times of proliferating demands on the college instructor may seem difficult. The challenge facing the WAC administrator who has successfully launched a program is not an easy one. But, as many WAC programs have demonstrated, once faculty have been initiated to WAC, they can be expected to show continued curiosity and commitment—curiosity about new theories and methods of writing instruction and commitment to helping students learn the power of written expression.

The primary task remains the same as it was during the initial phase of the program—to address college teachers' stated needs while introducing fresh areas of inquiry about language. This can mean considering an issue handled in the first workshop in greater depth, for example, focusing second-stage workshops on writing in core courses (see Thaiss, this volume) or writing in advanced courses in the major. These "advanced" workshops can be more theoretically oriented, in contrast to the basic workshop's focus on practical teaching strategies.

Using my own institution as an example once more, the second-stage workshop at La Salle combines several of these goals. The university was in the process of strengthening the program in the major at the same time that faculty concern about students' thinking skills was increasing. We saw the need for a workshop on writing in upper-division courses considered in the context of three contemporary views of critical thinking, e.g., the cognitive, the social-constructionist, and the classical-rhetorical perspectives. Faculty response to this workshop has been positive, although sometimes less ebullient than to the first workshop, and more reflective. As one instructor said, "The workshop was more work than last year. I mean more mental work."

Breaking new ground is always exhilarating, but the WAC director must also consolidate gains if the program is to survive.

Although the benefits of writing as a tool for learning may be obvious to instructors, working with writing takes time, and faculty frustration often resurfaces as students' writing skills do not seem to improve appreciably. Where the faculty training model has been the cornerstone of the program, developing peer tutoring programs or starting a writing center are often the next steps. Both Muriel Harris and Tory Haring-Smith (this volume) underscore the effectiveness of involving students in the writing across the curriculum program. Writing fellows programs and writing centers provide faculty with support, while encouraging faculty and students from all disciplines and levels of capability to feel like members of a community of writers.

It seems that even when the WAC program has been focused on students helping students, as is often the case at major research universities, rather than focused on faculty training, at least some attempt should be made to involve faculty in a dialogue about writing. David Russell does observe that the *shifting responsibility model* of writing instruction based on peer assistance has a better survival rate than the *sharing responsibility model* based on faculty effort (67); however, without some sense of faculty consensus, WAC efforts could be endangered. At schools where the faculty workshop is not really feasible, the freshman interdisciplinary writing course (such as the one at Yale) or collaborative writing courses (such as those at the University of Pennsylvania) are possible approaches for engaging faculty involvement in writing.

Sustaining the writing across the curriculum program also requires reporting its successes and maintaining its visibility. Administrators need to be reminded of what the WAC administrator knows—that something very positive is happening. Documentation in the form of faculty and student surveys is often persuasive. Toby Fulwiler's "Evaluating Writing Across the Curriculum Programs" is an excellent introduction to evaluation methods. Faculty newsletters, student essay contests, and brochures for the admissions office are effective means for communicating and celebrating the benefits of the writing across the curriculum program.

The more ambitious objective of consolidating gains through curriculum revision (such as writing emphasis courses) should be approached with caution. As several of our authors remind us, these courses can imply that responsibility for writing instruction has once more become compartmentalized. However, if writing

emphasis courses have special objectives, such as instruction in a particular kind of disciplinary writing, this is less apt to happen. Guidelines for such courses should move beyond page number requirements and statements like "students will have the opportunity to plan and revise."

WHAT ARE THE ROADBLOCKS TO WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM?

What are the possible dangers to WAC if so many positive things are happening? Cynical faculty members who have long ago given up on students and ignore all campuswide efforts to improve teaching? Colleagues in the English department who continue to rehearse old gripes ("Faculty in other departments will never assign enough writing or grade papers properly")? Administrators seeking to cut costs? Yes, each of these groups can pose threats to the WAC program.

But another danger, potentially more serious, is program innovation itself. In "The Danger of Innovations Set Adrift" Edward White describes a series of writing program innovations at different schools, each representing "some strenuous exponents of academic virtue, of energy, of willingness to take risks to achieve worthy ends" that resulted in nothing short of disaster (3). "They [innovations] can be strong forces for ill as well as for good" (5). In each case (the implementation of writing-intensive courses, the expansion of peer tutoring services, the design of a portfolio system for evaluating student writing, the inauguration of a graduation writing test), the cause of failure was imagining that ideas that work well at one institution can be transported to another without considerable attention to the substructures in place at the "model" school. These substructures often involve the availability of human and financial resources, and in the case of the graduation writing test, the careful development of goals. (The most common problem associated with the development of assessment programs is the replacement of goals by means. Beware of proficiency exams as instruments for evaluating writing across the curriculum programs. Instead of strengthening a writing program, they may in fact weaken it, as standards for passing the exam drop to a pragmatic level. What is to be done with the

students that fail?) Writing across the curriculum administrators must be clear about their objectives for launching innovation and confident they have secured the necessary resources for an expanded WAC program.

Last, perhaps the most insidious threat to WAC is what David Russell calls the "myth of transience," "the convenient illusion that some new program will cure poor student writing, that there is a single pedagogical solution to complex structural issues" (66). Faculty must be constantly reminded that writing is not a generic skill; the development of writing abilities in different disciplines is a slow process we have only begun to understand. Assigning and responding to writing involves complex understandings about students' capacities and the conventions of and purposes for writing in each discipline. Barbara Walvoord aptly states (this volume), the argument for a permanent commitment to WAC:

> WAC helps people grow. We could have WAC workshops for faculty on every campus every year until the end of the world, because teachers always can be helped by dialogue with colleagues; always need to keep up with new research and theory about writing, thinking, and learning; and always need help in observing and learning what methods will work best in their own classrooms.

We hope the suggestions offered in this text will put the myth of transience to rest. However, once hard-won faculty and administrative support are in place, and programs are launched, it is the writing across the curriculum director who will ultimately be the deciding factor. The hidden danger to writing across the curriculum may not be faculty burnout but writing administrator burnout; the cure is the mutual support and encouragement writing program administrators provide for one another. We present this text in that spirit and look forward to you, our readership, participating in the writing across the curriculum community.

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