



## WAC NEWS AND EVENTS

### Campus-wide Workshop

#### Time-Saving Techniques for Responding to Student Writing

Writing Across the Curriculum invites you to attend a campus-wide workshop on handling the paper load by responding efficiently and effectively. The workshop will cover topics such as using rubrics, portfolio response, the “minimal marking” technique for grammar and punctuation, lightening the paper load through low-stakes writing assignments, and how to use a “less is more” approach to responding. The workshop is open to all full and part-time faculty and teaching assistants.

**WHEN:**

12:00-1:15,

Wednesday, September 21

**WHERE:**

Foothill Suite, University Union

**TO RSVP,**

please contact Dan Melzer at [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu) or 278-6925.

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What is



## WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM?

The goal of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is to assist colleges, departments, and individual faculty with all aspects of reading and writing design and assessment. The WAC program, through funding from Academic Affairs, provides the following support:

- Campus-wide and departmental workshops
- Consultations for departments and individual faculty members on writing and reading design and assessment
- Annual Reading and Writing across the Curriculum Conference
- Summer faculty retreat for reading and writing pedagogy
- Campus-wide WAC newsletter twice each semester
- WAC website with reading and writing resources for faculty and students (<http://www.csus.edu/wac>)
- WAC library of books, articles, grading rubrics, and other handouts
- Thesis writing peer response groups and thesis/project workshops
- Faculty writing groups
- “Tutoring in the Disciplines” program for one-on-one student reading and writing support in the major

### WAC PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DATA (FALL 2003-PRESENT)

Number of Faculty Served	Number of Students Served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Campus-wide workshops and conferences:</i> 300 participants</li> <li>• <i>Departmental and college-wide workshops:</i> 150 participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Thesis writing workshops:</i> 170 attendees</li> <li>• <i>Classroom workshops and tutoring:</i> 220 students</li> </ul>
<b>Total number of faculty served: 450</b>	<b>Total number of students served: 390</b>

To find out more about the WAC program or to schedule a consultation, contact Dan Melzer, University Reading and Writing Coordinator, at [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu) or 278-6925.



## GOING BEYOND QUIZZES: Using WebCT to Stimulate Student Writing

By Kim Marquet, WAC Program Fellow



It's simple, but true: the more students practice writing, the more their writing skills will improve. As a panel of Sac State composition and communication studies instructors pointed out at a campus-wide WAC workshop last spring, you can help your students gain invaluable writing practice by incorporating a WebCT discussion board into your course. Discussion boards allow for asynchronous communication, meaning that students can log-on to WebCT at a time that is convenient for them and post a written response to a threaded discussion. Students (and instructors) can then read each message and post their own replies. With every post, student writing experience increases.

The benefits don't stop at just improving writing skills, though. A discussion board can help build a stronger sense of community in your classroom as all students (not just those who typically speak up in class) participate in discussions and share their ideas. Shy students can feel more comfortable posting online contributions, and all students benefit from the additional time spent in composing their responses, making their contributions often more thoughtful and thought-provoking.

Discussion boards work best when the writing is low-stakes. For example, you can grade on the check, check-plus or check-minus system, or just give credit for participation. Don't worry too much about grammar issues, and don't feel as if you need to respond to every post. You can thus ensure that students are preparing for class without your having to expend a significant amount of time grading papers or correcting quizzes.

### Ways To Use a WebCT Discussion Board:

- **Have students respond to reading assignments before class discussions.** By having students answer specific questions or just post their general responses, you can ensure that students have read the material and come to class prepared for discussion, and using the discussion board feature rather than the quiz function gives students valuable writing practice. Additionally, you can quickly peruse the discussion boards before class to see what direction a discussion is likely to take, or what material students are struggling with.
- **Extend discussions after class has ended.** Many students may want to continue talking after the bell rings; encouraging them to post their responses to the discussion board or a chat room can keep those discussions going.
- **Have students share their rough draft of papers with each other.** Students can often benefit from feedback from their peers during their writing process by posting and responding to each other's drafts. This process often helps to improve writing skills as students realize that they will be read and responded to by their peers.
- **Add a discussion element to a lecture course.** If you have a large class, class discussion can be difficult. By breaking your class into small groups and establishing a discussion board for each group, you can foster interchanges between students on important issues or problems you're teaching.

### Things to keep in mind when you use WebCT:

- **Make sure that all of your students will have computer access.** Those without computers at home can use computer labs on campus, but some may find it difficult to be on campus while the labs are open.
- **Plan time to monitor the discussion boards** and do jump in and respond to some students to let them know you are participating.

- **Add a "Netiquette" policy to your syllabus to avoid problems with "flaming" or other disrupting online behaviors.** Such policies outline explicitly how students are expected to act during discussions. For a sample policy, visit Sacramento State's Teaching and Learning Online Netiquette Guidelines at [http://www.csus.edu/uccs/training/online/communication/i\\_netiquette.htm](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/training/online/communication/i_netiquette.htm).

"I make it a requirement for students to post questions and observations about the reading to the discussion board, which sometimes helps quiet or shy students feel more comfortable sharing their ideas than in face-to-face discussions."

—Wendy Matlock, English

- **Anticipate extra time to set-up WebCT** and become comfortable using the system. Many instructors report that it took them a significant amount of time to add a WebCT component to their classrooms, especially if they used many of the features, but most say that the time was well spent. Sacramento State offers an excellent

support system for faculty interested in using WebCT. Start by visiting the Faculty Resources page at <http://www.csus.edu/uccs/webct/faculty/>, by scheduling an appointment with one of the WebCT support staff by phoning 278-7337, or by stopping by SQU 317 on any Friday afternoon (during the semester) from 1-4 pm for the Web-based courses open lab.

- **Set clear expectations for your students.** Will using the board be voluntary (perhaps for extra-credit) or mandatory? Will you require postings to be a certain length? Will students need to respond to each other? Letting students know your goals for the discussion boards will also help to

"I think it was useful for me to begin by offering WebCT as a way to earn extra credit. That required minimal participation and grading by me, but gave more than 25 percent of my students sufficient incentive to try it."

—Rebecca LaVally, Communication Studies



2nd Annual Sacramento State  
Reading & Writing Across  
the Curriculum Conference

CALL FOR  
PROPOSALS

The Writing Across the Curriculum program invites all full-time and part-time teachers, administrators, and staff to propose an individual presentation or panel for a half-day conference on successful approaches to reading and writing across disciplines.

**When:** Friday, February 17,  
2006, 10:00-3:00

**Where:** University Union  
Hinde Auditorium and  
Orchard and Forest  
Suites

**How to submit  
a proposal  
for the conference:**

To submit a proposal, send a 150-200 word abstract and title to [wac@csus.edu](mailto:wac@csus.edu). Please include your name and department (and names of other presenters for panel proposals).

The deadline to submit a proposal is December 1, 2005

**Proposal topics could include:**

- Effective writing assignments or approaches to student reading and writing
- Departmental initiatives and projects that have been successful at improving student reading and writing
- Using technology to improve reading and writing
- Research or theory relevant to reading and writing across the curriculum at Sacramento State
- Any other topics relevant to improving student literacy (including oral, visual, and information literacy)

Individual presenters will be given 15 minutes, and panel presentations will be given 45 minutes.

A conference program will be available in January at <http://www.csus.edu/wac/conference>.

**Questions  
about the conference?**  
Send an email to  
[wac@csus.edu](mailto:wac@csus.edu).



**ANNOUNCING A NEW PROGRAM**

sponsored by Writing Across the Curriculum



Faculty Writing Groups

Would you like some helpful feedback on an article or book you're working on? Would you like to connect with a group of faculty from your discipline who can help you draft a grant proposal? Can you use some feedback from fellow teachers on a new syllabus you're creating for next semester? If you'd like to meet with colleagues and receive feedback on your writing projects, join the WAC program's Faculty Writing Groups. The Faculty Writing Groups are organized by the University Reading and Writing Coordinator as a service for all Sacramento State full and part-time faculty.

Faculty Writing Groups are groups of 3-5 full or part-time faculty in the same college who meet regularly to give each other feedback on drafts of articles, conference presentations, book chapters, grant proposals, syllabi, RCA and Pedagogy Enhancement proposals, and other writing projects. The groups decide how often they meet and where they meet to discuss each other's writing. Faculty can participate for a semester, a year, or longer.

To join a Faculty Writing Group in your discipline, contact Dan Melzer at 278-6925 or [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu).

The goals

of the Faculty Writing Groups program are to:

- Create a community of writers who provide encouragement and feedback for full and part-time faculty working on writing projects.
- Help faculty with any type of writing project they are working on: articles, conference presentations, book chapters, grant proposals, syllabi, RCA and Pedagogy Enhancement proposals, etc.
- Provide motivation for faculty to write and to publish what they've written.
- Improve teaching and learning by providing an outlet for faculty to receive feedback on their syllabi, writing assignments, and other teaching materials.

## PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING THESIS-WRITING RESOURCES TO GRADUATE STUDENTS:

### Thesis Writing Workshop

Writing Across the Curriculum and Graduate Studies present a thesis-writing workshop for Sacramento State graduate students across disciplines. The workshop will cover issues such as:

- time and stress management
- the thesis writing process
- campus thesis writing resources
- library research

**When:** Friday, September 23, from 4:00-5:15

**Where:** Delta Suite, University Union

Students can RSVP by contacting Dan Melzer at [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu) or 278-6925.

### Thesis Writing Groups

#### What are Thesis Writing Groups?

Groups of 3-5 graduate students in the same department or college who meet regularly over the course of a semester to give each other feedback on theses or written projects. Writing Across the Curriculum organizes and assists the groups.

#### Why should students join a Thesis Writing Group?

Meeting regularly with a group and sharing their writing will keep students on schedule and give them helpful feedback from a peer audience.

#### How do I join a Thesis Writing Group?

Contact Dan Melzer, the University Reading and Writing Coordinator, at 278-6925, or send an email to [wac@csus.edu](mailto:wac@csus.edu).

“The thesis group was very helpful in providing feedback AND making sure that I stayed within a schedule for completing my work. Because writing at home is lonely, it was wonderful to have a group experience.”

—Communication Studies Graduate Student

“The group was extremely helpful in giving an opportunity for another set of eyes to look at my work...also, it’s just a good support network.”

—English Department grad student

## COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY WITH GIANTINK

If you are looking for a flexible way to contribute to the community and add to the community service section of your RTP file, please consider tutoring for a new Sacramento community tutoring program, GiantINK. GiantINK is a non-profit program being established by Sac State faculty and community leaders.

GiantINK provides support, instruction, and inspiration for students age 8-18 working on writing projects for school or for pleasure. Whether studying for a third grade spelling test, organizing a report on South American penguin species, or polishing up the next draft of a short story, poem, or comic book, a student working with GiantINK will have the opportunity to receive one-



on-one attention from someone committed to encouraging creative and academic growth.

Volunteer tutors commit to as many—or as few—hours as they feel comfortable committing to, and can choose the grade level they wish to work with. As GiantINK expands, we

will also be looking for faculty who can fulfill their volunteer service by leading community workshops on a variety of literacy topics (from writing plays to creating documentaries to writing college application essays).

If you would like to get involved with GiantINK, or if you have questions and ideas, please email us at [contact@giantink.org](mailto:contact@giantink.org).

## COLLEGIATE READERSHIP PROGRAM

For the past several months, Provost Ric Brown has been exploring the possibility of bringing a newspaper readership program to campus. The Collegiate Readership Program, managed by USA TODAY, provides students with access to a daily assortment of newspapers. At Sacramento State, the selection would include USA TODAY, the Sacramento Bee, and the New York Times, which will be delivered each weekday morning to displays located in various campus locations. Students may select one or more of the newspapers for their reading enjoyment or as required for their classes.

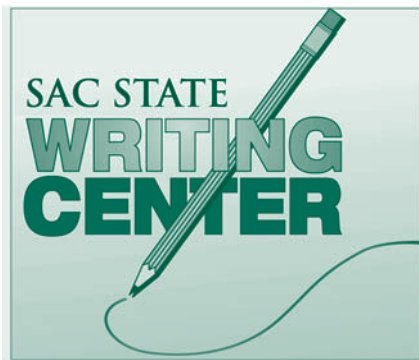
Part of the initial evaluation of The Collegiate Readership Program involves a month-long pilot program during which

time USA TODAY delivers all participating newspapers at no cost to the school. Many of you may have seen a faculty survey this summer asking whether you would make use of the readership program by requiring newspapers for your classes. This has been in preparation for the pilot program which will take place during the spring semester.

If you have any questions regarding the Collegiate Readership Program, please contact Karen Demski at (925) 998-3481 or [kdemski@usatoday.com](mailto:kdemski@usatoday.com). If you would like to include newspaper assignments in your classes this spring and you want assignment ideas, contact Dan Melzer, University Reading and Writing Coordinator, at [melzer@csus.edu](mailto:melzer@csus.edu) or 278-6925.



## A PAGE FROM THE WRITING CENTER



If you have any questions about the Writing Center you can contact Cheryl Smith, Writing Center Director, at [smithc@csus.edu](mailto:smithc@csus.edu).

Welcome new and returning staff and faculty! We at the Writing Center are looking forward to the new semester and working with a new batch of students from across disciplines.

### What is the Writing Center?

The Writing Center is a great resource on campus for all students, from freshmen to graduate students and for the student who loves to write as well as the student who avoids writing. We are a free tutoring service available to all students taking any class that utilizes writing. Many students falsely believe they must be enrolled in an English course to use the Writing Center. However, students who have a lab report, a history paper, or a speech can all use the Writing Center.

### What kind of help can students get at the Writing Center?

Our philosophy in the Writing Center is that all writing can improve with the help of trained student peers who offer friendly, yet critical, feedback. Because we view the writing process largely as a revision process, we usually cringe at the words “proof-reading” or “editing.” We can help students generate ideas, develop outlines, shape ideas, find their theses, develop their arguments, and improve their focus. While we will not neglect grammar in its entirety, these are the features we address last in a given essay.

Students who regularly attend tutoring sessions report that they find the Writing Center very helpful. Just being able to talk about their ideas out loud can help students improve their writing. We encourage you to tell your students about the Writing Center. You can also arrange to have a class tour by sending an email to [writingcenter@csus.edu](mailto:writingcenter@csus.edu).

### When is the Writing Center open?

We are open Monday-Thursday from 10am-6pm and Friday from 10am-1pm. We take appointments for individual tutoring starting the second week of school (9/6/05) and begin tutoring on the third week of school (9/12/05). Students can sign up anytime, but we encourage them to come in early in the semester to get the time that works best for their schedule.