



WRITING

across the curriculum

NEWSLETTER

WAC NEWS & EVENTS

SEEKING FACULTY READERS

The success of the Writing Proficiency Examination program in evaluating the writing of about 12,000 students each year as part of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement relies on the participation of faculty from all departments in the University as paid readers. We're inviting all interested faculty to work with us scoring the WPE. Readers earn a minimum of \$210 for a full day of reading. Full training is provided.

For further information, or to sign up for training, please contact Fiona Glade, GVAR Coordinator, at fiona.glade@csus.edu.

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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 or (916) 278-6925.

The 2008 Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Development Retreat:

Teaching Writing Across Borders:

Responding to Cultural and Disciplinary Difference in the Classroom

Monday, August 25

9:00-4:00

Sacramento State Alumni Center


Writing Across the Curriculum invites full and part-time teachers to attend a free full-day retreat focused on improving student writing and critical thinking in any discipline. Join colleagues from across the curriculum for a day of sharing ideas and teaching strategies in an interactive workshop.

Facilitated by:

Dr. Vicki Tolar Burton
*Director, Writing Intensive
Curriculum Program
Oregon State University*

Topics:

- » Using informal writing-to-learn to improve critical thinking
- » Identifying and responding to students' writing strengths and weaknesses
- » Fostering student goal-setting
- » Understanding and responding to writing challenges of students whose first language is not English
- » "Change Five Things": Strategies for teaching students to revise and edit their writing

Dr. Tolar Burton directs a program with more than 125 upper-division Writing Intensive courses in 74 majors. She is also co-producer of the award-winning documentary, "Writing Across Borders," which will be shown and discussed during the workshop. Her articles have been published in *College English*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Rhetoric Review*, and numerous anthologies. 

To RSVP for the retreat, please contact Dan Melzer, University Reading and Writing Coordinator, at 278-6925 or melzer@csus.edu.

Changes to English 20 for Fall 2008

IN SPRING 2006, the Faculty Senate Subcommittee for Writing and Reading proposed a variety of changes to the Comprehensive Writing Program that were approved by the Senate and President Alexander Gonzalez. One of the approved changes is a revision of English 20, the sophomore composition course that is a requirement for all students. The Senate approved three major changes to English 20 that will be fully implemented in fall 2008: it will be a sophomore-level course, it will be a prerequisite for the Writing Intensive requirement, and it will have a writing-in-the-disciplines focus.

The first two changes to English 20 are an attempt to better sequence the Comprehensive Writing Program. Currently, English 20 is populated by a wide range of students, from freshman to graduating seniors. The new 30-unit prerequisite gives students a writing-intensive experience in their sophomore year that will help them make the transition to upper-division writing. Making English 20 a prerequisite for the Writing Intensive requirement will discourage students from putting off taking English 20 until they've nearly graduated.

The sequencing changes are important, but the biggest change to English 20 will be its focus. Currently, each English 20 has a central theme, and the theme is up to the discretion of the instructor. Although students get intensive writing and revising experiences and feedback from experienced writing teachers in the current version of English 20, the new English 20 will do a better job of helping students make the transition from an introduction to academic writing in English 1A to upper-division writing across disciplines. In the new English 20, students will analyze the "discourse" of a variety of disciplines and investigate the conventions of writing and researching in diverse academic contexts. The new English 20 course description reflects this focus on discourse analysis and writing in the disciplines:

ENGL020. College Composition II. An advanced writing course that builds upon the critical thinking, reading, and writing processes introduced in English 1A or 2. This class emphasizes rhetorical awareness by exploring reading and writing within diverse academic contexts with a focus on the situational nature of the standards, values, habits, conventions, and products of composition. Students will research and analyze different disciplinary genres, purposes, and audiences with the goals of understanding how to appropriately shape their writing for different readers and demonstrating this understanding through various written products. Writing requirement: a minimum of 5,000 words. Prerequisite: 30 units and a grade of C- or better in ENGL 001A or equivalent. 3 units.

Professor Amy Heckathorn, the English Department Writing Programs Coordinator, feels that "the shift in focus toward discourse analysis will uniquely enable students to transition more smoothly from first-year writing to the variety of upper-division writing situations they will experience." Professor Heckathorn feels that new English 20 will help students in a variety of ways:

English 20 will now lay a foundation of analytical skills that students can use to

be more successful in any writing situation. While the first-year course [English 1A] focuses on more general writing skills—writing processes, idea development and support, organizational strategies, etc.—this sophomore-level course will enable students to fine-tune their rhetorical analysis skills. They will learn and use a variety of tools to help them discover what constitutes “good writing” within different settings. Thus, they will gain the knowledge that good writing is always context-dependent, the ability to analyze different writing situations, and the skill to utilize various rhetorical strategies to meaningfully engage their audiences.

what ‘professional’ writing in the various fields actually looks like, along with examples of less formal writing in those fields, to understand the kinds of tools and formats available, and how to suit them to different rhetorical and professional situations.”

It’s important to emphasize that the new English 20 can’t, in one semester, turn students into expert writers in biology, history, engineering, business, etc. Although students who take English 20 at Sacramento State will enter their upper-division writing courses with the rhetorical awareness that different disciplines have different conventions and genres, it’s the responsibility of

Writing teachers who have been piloting the new English 20 this spring also feel that the new English 20 will better prepare students to make the transition to upper-division writing. Writing teacher Sylvia Morales

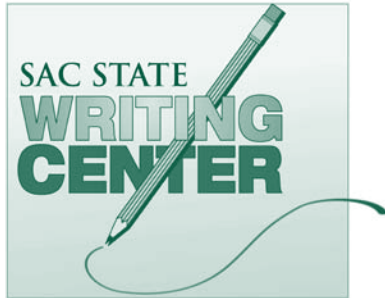
“The new English 20 gives students an opportunity to develop a sophisticated rhetorical awareness through their investigation of writing conventions across disciplines. By exploring different conventions, genres, styles, and the ways of writing and thinking in various fields of study, students practice the research, critical thinking, and writing skills they will use across the curriculum.”

—Sylvia Morales, Writing Teacher

says, “The new English 20 gives students an opportunity to develop a sophisticated rhetorical awareness through their investigation of writing conventions across disciplines. By exploring different conventions, genres, styles, and the ways of writing and thinking in various fields of study, students practice the research, critical thinking, and writing skills they will use across the curriculum.” Writing teacher Gloria Naylor says that in her pilot of the new English 20 “students get to see, often for the first time,

instructors across disciplines to teach students the ways of writing and researching in their disciplines. Longitudinal studies of students writing in college show that no single class or teacher can transform students into successful college writers in a single semester, but these studies also show that students will learn to write in college—and learn to write in their discipline—if they receive writing-intensive experiences and feedback on their writing throughout their college careers. **WAC**

A PAGE FROM THE WRITING CENTER



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Web site:

www.csus.edu/writingcenter

Why visit the Writing Center?!

Because... 80% of the Sacramento State faculty give writing assignments.

The best way to get help with the challenges of writing assignments is to spend time with a concerned, empathetic tutor in the relaxing environment of the remodeled Writing Center, located in **Calaveras Hall, Room 128**. More than 30 tutors are available to help students with the myriad of challenges we all face when tackling writing assignments.

Who can participate?

Students from all majors are welcome. The only requirement is that you are an enrolled student at Sacramento State.

Who are the tutors in the Writing Center?

The Writing Center staffs over 30 tutors from a variety of disciplines. Tutors are trained to assist students with their entire writing processes, such as brainstorming topic ideas, composing rough drafts, and putting the finishing touches on a polished essay. Whatever your writing challenge, the writing tutors are trained to help.

How does it work?

Make an appointment and show up!

The University Writing Center is open **M-W 9-6** and **TR 10-6**. Drop-in or make a weekly 30 minute to one hour appointment.

Talk about your writing problems.

Visit to discuss your writing challenges, whether they be how to begin, how to construct a thesis statement, how to write a summary, or how to incorporate MLA or APA style into essays. Tutors are here to help.

Why the process works—

Simply talking about your writing fears and/or the concerns you may have about a writing assignment with a fellow writer is a great way to improve your writing skills because writing in isolation limits possibilities, whereas writing in collaboration provides limitless possibilities. So, drop in or schedule a weekly appointment today! 