Help us Create a University-wide Student Writing Guide

The Faculty Senate Subcommittee for Writing and Reading needs your help. As part of the recommendations approved by the Senate for improving student writing campus-wide, the Writing Subcommittee was charged with creating a student writing guide for Sacramento State. The Writing Subcommittee is working with McGraw-Hill to custom publish the student writing guide and companion website, to be available Fall 2008. We’re seeking contributions to the writing guide and website from full and part-time faculty across disciplines.

The Writing Subcommittee is looking for the following contributions:

- Examples of outstanding student essays from across disciplines
- Writing and reading assignments from across disciplines
- Writing rubrics and guidelines
- Advice for students about reading, writing, and researching in your discipline
- Any other materials focused on reading, writing, and researching that would be helpful to students

If you have materials or outstanding student essays to contribute, please contact Dan Melzer, University Reading and Writing Coordinator, at 278-6925 or melzer@csus.edu. The Writing Subcommittee is also looking for faculty who would be willing to be interviewed about the expectations for reading, writing, and researching in their discipline. Please let us know if you would be willing to be interviewed.

The Subcommittee for Writing and Reading appreciates your help with this project.
Please share the following list of resources with your students:

**Campus Reading and Writing Resources for Students**

**Learning Skills**
Offers a series of preparatory and college level reading and writing courses (LS 15: College Language Skills; LS 86: College Language Skills for Multilingual Students; LS 87: Basic Writing Skills for Multilingual Students; LS 85: Grammar for Multilingual Students; LS 60: Reading Speed & Efficiency) as well as workshops and adjuncts to GE classes. Offers a free placement test (the English Diagnostic Test) during the WPE sign-up period so that multilingual students can get extra time and a multilingual reading on the WPE.

For information contact the Learning Skills office in Lassen 2200, 278-6725.
EDT Coordinator: Shelagh Nugent
Learning Skills Department Chair: Professor Roberta Ching
Web site: http://www.csus.edu/learningskills

**Writing Programs**
Offers native speaker and multilingual sections of ENGL 1: Basic Writing Skills, a developmental writing course; ENGL A: College Composition, a required first-year writing course; and ENGL 20: College Composition II, a required sophomore writing course. For information contact the Writing Programs Office in CLV 109, 278-6409.
Writing Programs Coordinator: Dr. Amy Heckathorn

**Writing Center**
Offers free one-on-one writing tutoring and writing workshops for students in any discipline. For information contact the Writing Center in CLV 128, 278-6356.
Writing Center Coordinator: Dr. Cheryl Smith
Web site: http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter

**Writing Proficiency Examination/GWAR**
For information about signing up for the WPE, about a free WPE workshop, or about enrolling in English 109W or English 109M, contact the GWAR office in CLV 111, 278-6409.
GWAR Coordinator: Dr. Fiona Glade
Web site: http://www.csus.edu/wpe

Writing Across the Curriculum
Offers online student resources, thesis writing workshops and peer response groups, classroom presentations, and one-on-one writing tutoring support for participating colleges and departments (College of Health and Human Services, Civil Engineering, Public Policy and Administration, Sociology). For information contact Dan Melzer at 278-6925.
Web site: http://www.csus.edu/wac
Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator: Dr. Dan Melzer

Library
Offers online research portal; reference and consultation services; a plagiarism information website; Ask-a-Librarian email and live electronic help; instructional and bibliographic guides, services, and software; media center; interlibrary loan; library commons; distance and online education support; and reserve book room.
Web site: http://library.csus.edu

Books Available for Loan from the WAC Library

**Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom**
By John Bean
A practical, nuts-and-bolts guide to designing writing, reading, and critical thinking assignments and classroom activities in any disciplines. Chapters include designing problem-solving assignments, responding to student writing, helping students read difficult texts, and teaching research writing.

**Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment**
By Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Johnson Anderson
Advice for making grading more fair, time-efficient, and conducive to learning, with a focus on grading and responding to student writing. Chapters include making assignments worth grading, using grading to foster motivation, and making grading and responding more time-efficient.

**Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education**
By Barbara Walvoord
Step-by-step advice for making assessment more simple, cost-efficient, and useful to teachers and the institution. Special attention is paid to writing assessment and writing assessment rubrics.

To borrow one of these titles, contact Dan Melzer at melzer@csus.edu or 278-6925.
Tutoring vs. Proofreading

by Jeremy Trimble, Writing Center Associate Coordinator

There are two very distinct views of writing in college. One paradigm holds that writing is a matter of obedience to prescriptive patterns and rules that pertain to the microcosms of individual words and sentences; another approach is to see writing as a matter of sculpture and composition. Taken from this later approach, writing is about the long-term development and articulation of ideas.

Some instructors operate under the “rules” paradigm, and send their students to the Writing Center assuming that those tutors will correct or “fix” their papers. But writing tutors don’t help students with commas, semicolons and typos; they help them to become better writers, to be more self-aware of the choices every writer faces when composing an essay. Although writing often conjures up thoughts of grammar, spelling and editing, current writing instruction is not based on drills or memorization of rules. Despite these common misconceptions, tutors aren’t proofreaders; they’re not trained to go through a paper and correct errors. It’s understandable that many professors, especially those outside of English studies, can get frustrated with some of their students’ writing, but a formal study of mechanics is not the answer. Even if tutors were to pull out red pens and mark up the different mechanical errors on a student’s paper, there’s a good chance that wouldn’t help. It often happens that writers, especially those who struggle with writing, don’t transfer the suggestions correctly. Besides, this kind of approach doesn’t encourage critical thinking or any kind of thought process. Writing, like any subjective skill, requires practice. Tutors facilitate an environment where writers can practice and develop the skills that will enhance students’ ability to articulate and express their ideas on the page.

Before worrying about editing sentences, writers first need to worry about clarity, focus, structure, coherence, and consistency, the issues that affect a paper on a global level. Tutors help writers find the inconsistencies in their arguments, ideas that are off-topic, and most importantly, they help writers to clarify their ideas. Oftentimes students write without a self-conscious awareness of what they want to say; tutors assist writers as they develop their own thoughts and ideas into a cogent essay. Because most writing teachers focus on how writers think and develop, writing tutors are trained to see writing the same way.