Why We Write

We live in an exciting time for writing. Everywhere we look, interact, observe, notice, there is writing occurring. Weblogs, wikis, Twitter, Facebook, RSS feeds, newscasts, we cannot keep up with the amount of writing we encounter on a daily basis. Yet education still struggles to understand why and how the students we work with are engaging with these types of writing. To paraphrase Bob Dylan, “Something is happening, and we don’t know what it is.”

We have to consider the “why” as much as the “how” when we teach writing intensive courses. Why would someone write the way we are asking students to write? Does anyone write the kinds of assignments we request? Why would I, the person designing the assignment, do this type of writing? If I resist change, why do I do so?

Our assignments do not need to mirror the writing we encounter online, for instance. But we should stop and think about how we teach writing; i.e., if our pedagogy completely clashes with the kinds of writing students are exposed to elsewhere.

CWP Workshops

Every semester, the CWP hosts a number of brown bag talks and workshops for faculty. Please visit https://etapps.missouri.edu/cwp/event for updated information on events.
Critical Thinking

The New York Times publishes an article on critical thinking in business schools. But how new is critical thinking and what does it mean?

On January 9, 2010, The New York Times ran an article entitled, “Multicultural Critical Theory: At B-School?” The article focuses on business schools that are applying critical thinking to teaching. As the article’s author writes: “Learning how to think critically — how to imaginatively frame questions and consider multiple perspectives — has historically been associated with a liberal arts education, not a business school curriculum, so this change represents something of a tectonic shift for business school leaders.”

Few people in the business world would likely argue that they haven’t been imaginatively framing questions and considering multiple perspectives for some time. Still, as teachers of writing, we can push the concept slightly further – what perspectives would we count as “multiple” in a classroom situation? The cultural perspective is an obvious addition. But we should also consider the various forms of persuasion we encounter (in advertising, packaging, affective gestures, etc.), we should consider the role popular culture plays in thinking, we should draw from what we have expertise knowledge in, we should understand the ways new media affect notions of communication, we should consider the role space plays in writing, and so on. In other words, we may not yet be using “multiple” in its fullest context. And neither, it would follow, are we teaching students to employ multiple perspectives in their writing.

The same is true for non-business school courses. The college of liberal arts doesn’t need to denounce the business school; the business school doesn’t need to consider the liberal arts as irrelevant. In other words, any writing situation – whether in business school, the liberal arts, or elsewhere in the curriculum - should be exploring a networked approach (which a multi-perspective critical thinking might be) rather than a narrow taxonomic focus of one’s disciplinary knowledge (which, in reality, is never such a narrow focus; disciplines always borrow from other disciplines).

Critical thinking often is confused by teachers as being a process of “opening up” students’ eyes to various forces that are at play in a communicative act. A better approach would be to broaden writers’ contact with multiple perspectives, experiences, and disciplinary thinking as each might inform one’s own area of study. In a writing course, this would mean changing our approach to assignment design.

We offer in this issue of e-WAC some examples of a multiple perspective critical thinking pedagogy, of the role the one student course plays on our campus, and of the resistance some faculty feel towards writing.

If you have ideas regarding critical thinking and teaching, please consider proposing a talk at the CWP. We’d love to hear your take on these issues.
When we talk about writers engaging with multiple perspectives in order to better understand a given situation or issue they are writing about, we might as well be talking about social media.

Social media, or Web 2.0, is a term associated with the various online applications that typically rely on user interaction. Blogs, wikis, Twitter, and Facebook are some of the better known applications that use Web 2.0 logics to function. Most handheld devices and phones, too, employ social media as do many applications adopted by various businesses interested in fostering connections internally and with customers.

A website like YouTube, for instance, is notable for allowing anyone to post videos of themselves and family. YouTube grants immediate access to an online space and provides a way for users to share information with a wide audience. YouTube, however, also allows readers and writers the ability to navigate multiple perspectives within one page. The image to the right offers an example.
On YouTube, one can record something (almost every digital camera and computer today comes with a built-in video camera), upload it, and share it. The videos can be annotated and viewers can leave comments. On a side bar of every page displaying a video, the site displays a “More From” option (more from whoever uploaded the video) and a Related Video option (videos the YouTube software associates with the one you are watching). Users also can share the video with Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace accounts, mark it as a favorite (i.e., create an internal bookmark on the YouTube system), jump to some feature videos that are displayed on the page as well, or even subscribe to the uploader/author of the video’s “channel.” In sum, there is quite a lot of connected/networked activity to navigate and trace on a site that also lets people record their cats playing with yarn or looking cute.

This activity can account for a number of perspectives. In a given classroom, students wouldn’t have to make videos for this model to be applicable (though they could do so). Instead, instructors could think about how to teach students to navigate various perspectives while composing:

- Authorial positions
- Other responses
- Related work (work that is relevant in direct and indirect ways from a variety of areas of study)
- Shared ideas

An example might help better clarify this process. A business student, for instance, writing a case study of a specific manufacturer might follow the model for multiple perspectives (as it can be learned from social media, like YouTube). In this example, the student studies:

- Writings by multiple authors in the business: memos, reports, email exchanges, internal studies.
- Writings done in response to those authors (they may be in the same genre).
- Writings done that relate to such work (newspaper stories, external reports, market information, advertisements by the company, a TV business show discussing the company).
- Transcripts from other writers studying the same issue, email exchanges among writers studying same issue, message board discussions among writers studying same issue, etc.

Out of all of these perspectives, the student who writes the case study will find various patterns, patterns that would not be obvious from the student’s initial, singular perspective, or by studying one of the singular perspectives above. These patterns allow the student insight that singular perspectives do not. They also allow the student to build off the patterns and produce new work related to the initial idea.

In other words, the end result of a multi-perspective pedagogy is student production. Assessment, in this case, would not be based on what a student has memorized or related in an exam, but instead would be based on how well the student used a multi-perspective approach to produce new ideas.
The WI Experience Done Solo

By Catherine Chmiddling

MU’s Graduation and General Education requirements for Writing Intensive credit stipulate that students must have a minimum of one course each (for a minimum of 6 credits total) of Writing Intensive instruction in the major (the “upper division” requirement) and anywhere in the curriculum (the “lower division” requirement). In the great majority of cases, students meet these requirements through traditional courses which bear the WI component of out-of-class writing and revision. However, there are a few students every semester who, through departmental recommendation, logistic necessity, or some other reason, complete one WI requirement through an individualized WI experience.

Over the past two years, Campus Writing Board members have expressed questions about the various individual-experience WI courses which appear on virtually every list of courses being offered for consideration of the WI flag. Those questions and the research I conducted to provide answers have prompted me to pool the history and progression of single-student WI courses into a cohesive overview.

In response to questions from Writing Board members regarding single-student special-arrangement classes, I conducted a search of Campus Writing Board records on 1-student WI courses. I identified 4 types of single-student experiences: the special arrangement “Problems” course, senior/honors theses and senior projects, specially arranged WI-sections of concurrent non-WI courses, and General/Interdisciplinary Studies Readings/Capstone courses.

Background on the WI Honors Thesis Option

In October 1997, the Campus Writing Board addressed the possibility of approving an honors thesis as Writing Intensive, in response to student requests to submit honors theses in lieu of the upper division WI requirement.

In April 1998, the Writing Board approved a 3-year pilot in which students and thesis-mentors could propose an honors thesis for WI status to meet a student’s in-major WI requirement. At the same time, the Board created the WI Honors Thesis Guidelines which are still in use today (http://cwp.missouri.edu/?page_id=20).

The trial-approval was to be limited to students who had already completed the lower-division WI requirement, and each proposal was to be reviewed and voted-on individually (as is done with the regular WI courses). The Board further agreed to delay consideration of similar provisions, such as a WI senior (non-honors) thesis, until after the end of the trial period for WI honors theses.

One point of discussion during the Board’s original consideration of the WI honors thesis was the issue that students, rather than faculty, generally devise thesis topics. The Board concluded that students’ selection of thesis topics would not impede faculty mentoring and supervising theses. Another issue of discussion was that a WI honors thesis option might encourage faculty not currently involved in Writing Intensive courses to teach WI after having mentored a WI honors thesis. While the WI-component of revision would be difficult to document for an honors thesis, allowing a WI option would provide more WI availability for departments which have difficulty offering sufficient WI courses for majors and might enable academic advisors to encourage more students to pursue an honors thesis experience.
The 1998 Writing Board stressed that proposed WI honors theses should be “unusual and exceptional” to warrant WI approval, with sound reasons for the student not completing a second traditional WI course.

In 2001, the 3-year WI Honors Thesis pilot was completed with less than 10 finished thesis cases over the period. While faculty oversight, credit hours per experience, and student circumstances were found to vary by department, the cases approved during the pilot period were too few to formulate a distinctive pattern of credit hours and student circumstances. It was recommended that regularizing the WI Honors Thesis to 3 credit hours would strengthen the option, and that requirement is now part of the WI Honors Thesis Guidelines. The Writing Board voted to continue the WI Honors Thesis as a viable WI-credit option.

**Special Arrangement Courses and Sections**

The special arrangement and WI-section formats of single-student WI courses have been approved since at least 1999 without pilot trials, though there has been occasional mention in past Writing Board minutes of confirming that the creation of a special course or section was necessary and that the student in question could not satisfy the WI requirement with an existing course. CWP records indicate that courses with appropriate WI characteristics have been approved as necessary when student circumstances would result in the WI requirement delaying degree completion.

**General/Interdisciplinary Courses**

While MU Special Degree students able to enroll in daytime on-campus courses are directed toward traditional multi-student WI courses, the single-student WI option General Studies 4960 has been one of the few means for evening and distance students to meet the WI requirements. Over the 2006 and 2007 academic years the Writing Board and Special Degree Programs conducted a pilot to test the use of a template course format (“Casting the Net”) for General Studies 4960. At the end of the pilot period (Spring 2008), the Board voted to discontinue requirement of the template in favor of using the standard WI Proposal form with the template as a suggested guide, and to encourage faculty-driven variety in GS 4960 course formats. CWP has been working with faculty and CDIS administrators to create more WI course options for distance students.

**Data & Interpretation**

I surveyed CWP electronic records of courses with single-student enrollment for academic years 1999/2000 through 2009/2010 [see table below]. General Studies 4960 and WI Honors Thesis proposals were sometimes received in hardcopy-only until approximately 2007 and so I estimate that complete figures for those categories began at that time. The number of special arrangement courses and WI sections appears to have been consistent over the ten-year period, averaging approximately 1.5 courses per semester for the former and 1.3 per semester for the latter. Average numbers of GS 4960 and WI Honors Thesis courses over the period of known electronic submissions (2007-2010) are approximately 5.13 and 7.0 courses per semester, respectively. The peak in WI Honors Theses of 18 courses in Spring 2008 is due to individual submissions of individual WI Honors Theses for English department Honors seniors that semester. The department has since altered its two-semester WI Honors Thesis sequence to have the first semester multi-student Honors Senior Seminar designated as the WI component for most students, rather than the individual second semester thesis projects.

A graph of the four categories of 1-student WI courses indicates that special arrangement courses and WI sections have remained relatively constant from Fall 1999 to Spring 2010 [see graph below].
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<th>Special arrangement</th>
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*averages and percentages calculated for years 2007-2010
The number of GS 4960 and Honors Thesis WI courses have varied more than the other two types of single-student WI courses over the period from 2007 to 2010 but still satisfy the WI requirement for only a small fraction of the total WI students in a given

Since first proposed, single-student courses have persistently prompted questions regarding the rationales for and oversight of them. Writing Board members have regularly expressed their hopes that single-student courses not be used to avoid a traditional WI course, but rather that they be used sparingly as circumstances dictate in order to provide a better WI experience than would a traditional WI course. While single-enrollment WI courses occur virtually every semester, I could not find any indication of increased use or misuse. The Writing Board has historically envisioned single-student courses as personalized solutions to individual students’ specific educational needs and course scheduling difficulties, and this appears to be the manner is which they continue to be used by departments.
In 1989, when the University of Missouri (MU) adopted its first campus-wide general education program, the Campus Writing Program (CWP) was already well established and requiring one “writing intensive” (WI) course for all students. At this time, however, there also existed a plan to transition from one WI requirement (3 credit hours) to two WI requirements (6 credit hours). To make this change in a manner best suited for student learning and faculty engagement, MU faculty and administrators conducted a year-long self-study, an internal review, and an external review. Journalism Professor Steve Weinberg served on the internal review team, and in 1993 The Chronicle of Higher Education published his article on the review team’s findings titled “Overcoming Skepticism about ‘Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)’. "Weinberg’s reference to “skepticism” reflects the stances many university faculty have taken throughout the history of the WAC movement, which theorizes that if writing is included across all disciplinary courses, students will learn content at a deeper, more meaningful level while they also improve their writing skills, especially in relation to the demands of their majors. Even though such theoretical underpinnings suggest solid pedagogy, however, faculty skepticism about incorporating “writing-to-learn” and “learning-to-write” strategies into the classroom often translates into overt “resistance” and refusal to teach such classes. The question becomes, then: Why would any faculty member resist the chance to enrich students’ learning opportunities by incorporating writing into the classroom? Answers to this question are many and varied, and stem from misunderstandings, poor communication, unrealistic expectations, characteristics of individual university cultures, and other complex issues. To understand the importance of working through these issues, we need to take a look at the history of WAC’s presence on our campuses, its value and solid grounding in student-centered learning.

Faculty Resistance to Writing Intensive Courses: Reasons and Results

By Bonnie Selting

WAC Origins

The idea of using writing to teach is fairly new to this country’s educational system. Although attempts were made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to teach disciplinary writing skills outside of English Departments, combining “writing to learn” (content) and “learning to write” started to take hold in the 1960’s. James Britton and Nancy Martin, two British educators, examined educational practices in light of the linguistic theories of Edward Sapir, Suzanne Langer, and Lev Vygotsky. These theorists asserted that—in Sapir’s words—“The purely communicative aspect of language has been exaggerated . . . language is primarily a vocal actualization of the tendency to see realities symbolically.” In other words, for Sapir, et. al., language is far more than just a system of signs we manipulate to achieve certain ends. It is the medium with which we construct our symbolic representation of who we are and of the world around us. In other words, it is with language that we make meaning, by which we learn.

Educators in a newly forming post-secondary discipline called “Rhetoric and Composition,” and others saw Britton’s and Martin’s work as demonstrating the power that writing can have for helping us give meaning to what we learn, for creating deeper learning opportunities and better engagement in the learning process. Along with hundreds of research studies showing that in order for students to write more skillfully they must write more often, these writing-to-learn theories took hold in several universities in the late 1970’s, and throughout the 80’s and a Writing Across the Curriculum movement was born. The problem was, and still is today, that for the university faculty teaching in disciplines that do not valorize writing and Language Arts, these theories are not as significant as teaching the content of their discipline. Why would busy academics from geography, mathematics, chemistry, agriculture—from hard sciences to humanities and social sciences—be expected to incorporate writing and revision assignments into their classes? They already must conduct research, teach, get tenured, and offer service to their institution; they are also attuned to a pedagogy that involves lecturing, objective testing, experimenting in laboratories, and memorizing formulas. Consequently, faculty who have not been a part of writing across the curriculum initiatives (and even some who have) find themselves caught-up in complex, irritating demands made on their time for several justifiable reasons.
• Too much time, including revision time, will be taken reading, grading, and commenting on papers.
• If goals for writing are to be met, then goals for covering a certain amount of content are jeopardized.
• “I’m not a writing teacher.” Instructors across the disciplines do not feel qualified for, or confident in, teaching writing.

Nevertheless, university faculty and administrators across the country are increasingly working to initiate WAC Programs into their curriculums as they come to understand the part writing can play in helping students learn at a meaningful level. In light of these initiatives, many WAC theorists and practitioners have researched both the causes and consequences of faculty resistance and determined that if we slant these attitudes toward the positive, we can benefit the future of WAC. After all, resistance is the core of the WAC movement itself. The exigence for developing writing across the curriculum programs stemmed from a profound resistance to the status quo and desire to improve education at the post secondary level, just as a skeptical faculty member’s “justifiable reasons” can work to improve WAC.

Justifiable “Reason” #1
Time Demands

Incorporating more writing into courses does, indeed, mean that instructors will be spending more time on that course than s/he would if lectures and objective tests were the only teaching tools used. Designing assignments, designing rubrics, reading and commenting on first—sometimes second, third, etc.—drafts of papers, and helping students improve lower order skills like punctuation and grammar can erode a lot of time that university instructors think would be better spent lecturing, researching, and writing. Furthermore, most universities do not include teaching writing intensive courses in their criteria for tenure; rarely would anyone receive extra compensation for it; and it only minimally contributes to the value of a curriculum vitae.

The good news is, however, that WAC researchers have been able to demonstrate—through classroom observation, teacher interviews, surveys, and questionnaires—a critically important side effect of using writing-to-learn, and that is faculty enthusiasm, renewal of the teaching spirit, and engagement. It is not always time consuming drudgery to incorporate writing assignments into classes. When WAC principles were initiated at the University of Missouri in the early 1980’s, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Milton Glick, wrote “Writing Across the Curriculum: A Dean’s Perspective” for the journal WPA: Writing Program Administration. Reflecting on the affects of the newly formed Campus Writing Program, Glick says:

The Campus Writing Program has persuaded faculty from more than thirty departments to redesign their courses to fit [writing-to-learn] criteria because the program quickly established itself as something more than an effort to improve writing. It has become, for many, a beacon for a renaissance of responsible teaching and of the excitement of demanding high-quality activities from students. . . . It is worthwhile discussing the relationship of the efforts to improve student writing and learning to the more general issue of faculty morale. Faculty burn-out and low self-esteem are important topics in the higher education community [but] . . . most faculty who are committed to the Campus Writing Program have regained some of the lost spirit and are anxious to share their new-found vision with colleagues.

It is important to note that time considerations can work in different ways. Faculty who resist incorporating WAC principles into their classes because of the excessive amount of time it takes are justified in doing so. But if they come to see how rewarding, fruitful, and energizing that time can be, writing intensive courses become positive experiences rather than drudgery. Attitudes on both sides can and do change with solid grounding in the major WAC theories and efforts toward the collegiality.

More good news is that through the years educators have devised effective writing-to-learn strategies that do not consume enormous amounts of time. Some of these strategies are not designed specifically for writing intensive courses. Rather, they are meant to promote better interaction between students and course material for the growing number of large enrollment courses. It is a notoriously difficult process for teachers to achieve genuine student engagement from large numbers of students, so writing strategies fit with goals of writing-to-learn and learning-to-write initiatives. The following suggestions are only a few of the many ways writing can be used for learning without being so time consuming that faculty will resist using it at all. Two of the guiding principles for these methods are: 1) NO grading 2) They are done DURING class.

Think-Pair-Share: A problem is posed. Students think about it alone in writing for five minutes or less, then pair up to discuss their views. The pairs share their conclusions with the rest of the class.
Trade a Problem: Divide the class into teams and have each team construct review questions. Each question is written on an index card (each team can have a different color). The answer to each question is written on the back of the card. The teams then trade cards. Without looking at the answers, one member of the team reads each question. The team decides by consensus on an answer. If the team’s answer does not agree with the original answer, they should add their answer on the back of the card as an alternative. Cards continue to be traded. The teacher may then want to conduct a whole-class discussion on the questions with more than one answer.

Jigsaw: Choose learning material that can be divided into parts, like an experiment list, or several articles on a similar topic. Divide students into groups equaling the number of parts. Ask each group to read, discuss, and learn the material. Next, form jigsaw learning groups composed of one member from each of the initial groups. Each new group will contain an expert on each part of the material, so that together the group will learn all of the material. Reconvene the class to go over the material. You may also ask the jigsaw groups to answer questions based on their accumulated knowledge.

Minute Paper: Pause after 15 minutes of class and ask students to take a minute to write a two-sentence summary of what he or she has learned so far. Depending on how much time you want to devote to this, the students could pair up and help each other for better understand the material for a few minutes or a few could report to the class. Collect writings for quick reads (either instructor, TA’s, or both), no grading but brief comments OK.

End of Class Query: In the last three minutes of class ask the students to write out (anonymously) two things they learned and what questions remain.

Concept Map: Divide the class into groups and give each group a pen and a large piece of paper or a transparency. Each group should write down the topic being studied in the center of the paper inside a circle or rectangle, then place key examples or related concepts inside smaller shapes and connect them to the main topic. There are many possible models of the relationship among concepts, i.e. chains, spiders, or more complicated ones.

Guided Lecture: A half-class lecture with no note taking, followed by a short period of individual student recall, both oral conversations and writing, in turn followed by small-group activity -- reconstruction of the lecture with instructor assistance.

Justifiable “Reason” #2
Jeopardizing Content Coverage

Often, faculty resist incorporating writing into their teaching because of the revision requirement. At MU and other large Writing Programs, courses designated as Writing Intensive must allow student writers a certain amount of revision opportunities. Revision, say most composition scholars, is writing. For a student—or any writer—to become more skillful, that writer must have readers, feedback, and opportunities to reflect and re-think their work. These opportunities, however, also mean more papers to read and less “moving along” through a textbook or preset amount of required content. For example, an MU history professor states,

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Hopefully, I assign a lot of writing in my upper division classes as a way to ensure that students are doing the reading and engaging with the reading, as a way to measure what they have learned, and as a way to enable them to pursue their own projects. Thus most of that writing is related to course content—are they learning, are they able to take what they’ve learned from readings and class discussions and analyze it on their own, are they able to take that information and apply it to their own research. If I were to have students revise papers, then (a) they would be working on material long after we had moved beyond it in the course and (b) I would not be able to assign as many assignments on different topics and would not be able to have as many opportunities to measure what they have learned as far as content goes.
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(Dr. Catherine Rymph) (emphasis added)

Revising the same piece of writing and seeing it as one continual project, which is often the case, can deter faculty from fulfilling goals for content coverage. But if we complicate the problem and see writing as actually enhancing the learning of content, then we may look at our
opportunities for feedback and evaluation.

Also, because many writing intensive classes are discipline specific, students are often able to acquire the ability to see how writing fits with their chosen careers, how it prompts them to think through the problems of their discipline and thus, its content. For example, Aaron Krawitz, Professor Emeritus in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and a long time supporter of writing intensive courses, merges content coverage with learning when he talks about “why” engineers should be using this strategy. He says:

*I believe the best approach to addressing engineering’s resistance to WAC is to reinforce the idea that professional development for student engineers is enhanced by WI assignments. As a profession, engineering requires critical, independent thinking and effective communication. Employers strongly support the development of these skills in prospective employees. The syllabus for my WI course includes the statement, “Engineers are called upon to present ideas, arguments, and analyses in verbal and written forms. In your jobs, you will write memoranda, reports, planning documents, justifications, etc. Because of the technical nature of engineering, and the financial and legal consequences of your work, you will probably be asked to present more ideas in writing (and verbally) than most graduates of our campus. Conventional classroom assignments do not represent the real world. Your boss won’t give you quizzes, problem sets, or exams. You will deal with open-ended problems and issues. You will deal with situations which require higher-level critical thinking, not a ‘plug and chug’ approach.” My students don’t find it a hard sell.*

Clearly, writing to learn course content helps students to learn. This pedagogy also promotes learning to communicate in their disciplines; learning to think more critically about content; learning how to analyze, summarize, and synthesize, all essential writing and thinking tasks. On the other hand, memorizing content has value for intellectual discipline; copious amounts of writing even without revision opportunities are still worthwhile; mandates to “cover” specified amounts of content must be followed; and new information consistently delivered within the context of higher education (i.e., a lecture) can contribute to students’ own knowledge production. The need here is to devise strategies incorporating the “good” things in each pedagogy, such as

- Having students team-produce their own course book for which they can specialize in one topic yet must be acquainted with all course topics.
- Requiring e-portfolios in which students put all of their work, including tests if possible—ideally throughout their college careers
- Assigning the kind of writing that gives purpose to course content.

I’m Not a Writing Teacher

Writing is not disciplinary specific. We may write more in some disciplines than in others, but everybody writes. And if everybody does not write in hard copy text much of the time, they use some sort of media to accomplish the same goals as they do in hardcopy: fulfilling an obligation to an audience for a particular purpose (from hard copy memo’s, reports, proposals to Power Points to videos). To teach in a “writing-to-learn” context, then, is to look at how it actually functions in both specific disciplines and generalized usage, and here is where a Campus Writing Program comes in. Like all campus-wide writing programs, MU’s CWP evoked a skepticism that rippled through faculty ranks. According to Weinberg, many faculty who attended the first intensive-writing workshop fell into two groups. Members of both groups were initially somewhat skeptical of the need for the workshop, but most were highly supportive by the end of the second day.” The “support” came from realizing that, rather than being an “administrative distraction,” writing intensive courses were pathways to learning and collaboration among faculty. Their beliefs in the efficacy of this movement began to revolve around “having support groups of colleagues and having access to experts who could share with them ways to improve their use of writing.” (Weinberg)

In many ways, the writing workshops given by CWP on various writing issues are the real solutions to problems with faculty resistance. Non-language-oriented faculty “teach” writing as they teach their disciplinary content. Obviously, when someone gets training in an unfamiliar area, that person will feel less threatened and more able. But the important issues for resistant faculty to understand are that

- Writing belongs to everyone.
- Grammatical issues are not indicative of student or faculty ineptitude; in fact, these “lower order” issues can be the least important evidence of successful or unsuccessful writing.
- Mastering assignment design and assessment of students’ writing takes both disciplinary and communication knowledge, not necessarily the sort of Language Art expertise that always knows where to put commas, recognize fragments, or write sentences that “sing.”

WAC proponents, then, can look at faculty resistance to designing and teaching writing intensive courses as teaching moments and professional challenges for “justifiable reasons.” Meeting those challenges can enlighten proponents’ views of how to strengthen writing-to-learn and learning-to-write initiatives and serve both colleagues and students effectively in their pursuit of knowledge.
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WITS Tutors Needed

Dr. Rachel Harper, Director of the Writing Center, is currently interviewing prospective WI tutors for the 2010-11 school year. The deadline for applications is May 1st. For a quarter-time GTA appointment (10 hrs/week), the Writing Center can offer 0.25% FTE toward a tuition waiver. Interested graduate students can apply online at https://writery.missouri.edu/graduate_students/become_a_wi_tutor.html