



## Teaching With Writing

Spring 2014\_print

### Teaching With Writing: The WIC Newsletter

Body

#### [Pre/Views](#)

Don't Forget to Write!

By Vicki Tolar Burton, WIC Director

This issue of Teaching With Writing richly displays many ways that OSU can celebrate our Culture of Writing. We asked Culture of Writing winners to share advice about good writing. Don't miss their [excellent responses](#). Also check out the [complete list of Culture of Writing Award winners](#), their amazing topics, and their nominating professors.

If you are kicking yourself for missing the spring WIC lunch seminars, you can read about two of those lively events and the great teaching ideas they revealed in articles [about peer review](#) and [teaching WIC online](#).

And believe it or not, the [fall WIC Faculty Seminar](#) (five Tuesdays, 3–5 pm, admittance by chair's nomination) is about half full before we have even advertised it. This is a great way to join the Culture of Writing at OSU with knowledge and collegiality.

To all who make the OSU Culture of Writing a growing reality, I want to say thank you. First thanks go to all the faculty who have taught WIC courses this year. With 150 WIC courses on the books, in any given year we are offering WIC courses to about 25% of the OSU undergraduates. I am grateful for your dedication and determination to help your students learn to write in their majors.

Thanks to all who presented at the WIC spring lunch seminars: Anne-Marie Deitering and Hannah Rempel of the Valley Library on Curiosity-Based Research, Tracy Ann Robinson (MIME) and Tim Jensen (School of Writing, Literature, and Film) on Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting for Writers, Ehren Pflugfelder and Sara Jameson (School of Writing, Literature, and Film), Dennis Bennett (Writing Center), and Celeste King (INTO) on Peer Review for Writers, and Kryn Freehling-Burton (Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies), Scott Heppell (Fisheries & Wildlife), Penny Diebel (Agriculture Sciences), and Shannon Riggs (E-Campus) on Teaching WIC Online.

Next, I want to thank Summer Wimberly, this year's WIC GTA, whose grace and attention to detail and follow-through have made all things WIC run smoothly and my life better. Summer especially shines at event planning—including dealing with a certain Monroe Road pizza establishment when they fail to deliver for a WIC event. We had two outstanding WIC interns this year, Chad Iwertz, who was a great help with the seminar during fall term, and Jillian Clark, who interned both winter and spring. Jillian and Summer broke new ground as they not only reviewed all the WIC courses undergoing Bacc Core Category Review but also analyzed the results and gave them to me in shiny tables and graphs. As always, thanks to Jeanna Towns for her help with the budget and other mystical things administrative.

Thank you, finally, to Kevin Gable (Chair) and the Baccalaureate Core Committee for the inaugural assessment of WIC courses—this year comprising the Colleges of Agricultural Sciences, Business, and Public Health and Human Sciences. I will be sharing some of the findings with you next fall, once the BCC's work is concluded.

Happy summer to all, and don't forget to write!

#### [Writing Advice from Culture of Writing Awardees](#)

By WIC Staff

The 2014 cohort of WIC Culture of Writing Awardees were asked to provide advice to fellow students on writing. Here is what they had to say:

"Have an emotional investment in the topic. After that, cut out unnecessary words."—Anne Dennon,



## School of Writing, Literature, and Film

“Read your writing when you think you’re finished! Does your sentence length vary? Did you use the same adjective/verb/adverb in two consecutive sentences? Make sure everything flows nicely and don’t be afraid to ask for critical feedback from another writer you trust.”—Kevin Marks, College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

“Create a good setting, work hard, ask for assistance, and be humble when other people offer their advice.” —Jacob Kollen, Crop and Soil Science

“Good writing is achieved through editing. An initial draft should be developed without expectations of producing a perfect document; achieving a final document will be executed through multiple drafts which will incorporate numerous edits, both small and large.” —Josh Hille, Mechanical Engineering

“Writing is both a science and an art. From the framework of grammar and punctuation, through the nuances of style and form, an idea can be transferred between minds. The better you write, the more accurately your ideas are represented. Be concise. Avoid colloquialisms. Raise your diction. Read often. Write often.” —Emily Mangan, Animal and Rangeland Sciences

“Start well before the deadline and have one person who is experienced and whom you trust to read over the piece and offer revisions. Also, talk to that person in depth about what you are trying to communicate and make sure it is as clear and concise as possible.” —Cory Gerlach, BioResource Research

“Make sure every word has a reason to be included. Editing your work to be concise while still communicating effectively is essential.” —Jay Stevenson, School of Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering

“Proofread your paper multiple times and have others read your paper as well for further feedback.” —Madison Bertoch, Chemical Engineering

“The first time you write something, it won’t be what you envisioned. Revise your writing to where it becomes acceptable.” —Zach Moeller, History, Philosophy, and Religion

“As with many activities in life, the craft of writing can be improved through practice. I believe, however, that being a good writer extends beyond the simple act of practicing. Writers who are truly passionate about their work will see the most success, both in terms of personal satisfaction and external reception, as that passion is a near-tangible quality that resonates with audiences. In order to be good at something, you must first enjoy what you do.”—Alyssa Hughes, Graphic Design

“Break down your long writing papers into pieces and then look at each piece as a separate paper. By doing this you instinctively create chapters within your writing that, with good transitions, will allow your reader clarity of thought.”

—Jonathan Beskow, Sociology



### Peer Review and Challenging Students to Leave Their Comfort Zone

By Summer Wimberly, WIC GTA

This year the WIC Lunch Series hosted four spring seminar discussions. The topics included: Student Self-Assessment and Goal Setting, Teaching WIC Online, Curiosity Based Learning and Peer Review. Each discussion was lively, robust, and informative.

In the peer review discussion, one theme stood out among the rest: student resistance. Panelist and Assistant Director of the Center for Writing and Learning, Dennis Bennett said of peer review “students resist until they can no longer resist.” But why? A major reason students resist is because peer review asks them to leave their comfort zone. To help students get out of their comfort zone as well as provide useful feedback for their peers, Bennett says structured peer review is an ideal model. Structured peer review helps guide students in the feedback they provide and can give them specific areas of content to focus on.



When Ehren Pflugfelder, Assistant Professor in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, assigns peer review on shorter assignments (600 words or less), he utilizes a round robin style of review. Students leave a copy of the assignment on a desk and then move around the class to comment anonymously on each other’s papers. Students spend a few minutes on each paper, providing quick feedback and then, towards the end of the reviewing session (or in a later class), students sit down and provide more robust feedback for a single assignment. With this method students can quickly overcome discomfort because the feedback they provide is both anonymous and brief. Another perk of this kind of peer review is that it can be performed using hardcopies of a paper or electronic copies. If students bring a laptop or are working in a computer lab, then comments can be made using sticky notes in Adobe Acrobat or the review function in

Microsoft Word.

While Pflugfelder's peer review model is face-to-face feedback, Sara Jameson, Senior Instructor in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, provided a method of doing peer review completely online. This option is excellent for instructors who value peer feedback, but struggle with finding sufficient class time to do it. In this online version of peer review, a discussion board is created for the assignments and students are asked to upload their assignments via the "create thread" button by a certain date and time. Once uploaded, students are asked to provide feedback on a first-come, first-serve basis, but also being aware of papers that haven't received many (or any) reviews. That is, if one paper has three reviews and another has zero, choose to review the paper with zero reviews. Because papers are uploaded on discussion board, it is easy for students to see the drop down list of reviews. Another perk of this method is that students can look at all of their peer's work and see how they are engaging with the assignment and class.

An important element of both of these types of peer review is that they are structured. Both Ehren Pflugfelder and Sara Jameson provide peer review forms. (A link to these forms is included below.) Using such forms provides students with guidance that leads them away from providing insubstantial feedback. Such forms can also help give students a stronger understanding of assignment goals, structure, and criteria. While this more complete understanding of an assignment is important for all students, it is especially beneficial for English Language Learner (ELL) students. Sara Jameson noted that she particularly liked peer review workshop online because it allowed ELL students more time to read the posts and more time to respond. Celeste King, Associate Program Manager at INTO, notes that "when peer review is slowed down and the pressure is taken off, it empowers students." King, who uses peer review with graduate students at INTO, is a strong advocate of peer review for the ways it supports ELL students' learning. She describes peer review as "a point where international students can shift from their culture, and start meeting the standards of OSU/American academic culture." Thus, peer review can be a critical way to help ELL students bolster their understanding of writing in the class as well as in the larger context of writing at an US university.

Together these different approaches can help students, domestic and international, engage more critically with their own writing as well as provide ways to critically interpret and evaluate the writing of their peers. In addition to the approaches listed above, below are a few more tips (from panelists and event attendees) for making peer review as successful as possible.

- » Conference with students based on a draft—they take it more seriously
- » Have students peer review on final drafts, then they can use that feedback on later writing assignments
- » Loss of points—if students submit an insubstantial draft, they could not be allowed to peer review or have their draft reviewed and thereby lose points

Handouts from this event are available [here](#).

### Teaching Writing Online: Writing to Learn Outside the Classroom

By Jillian Clark, WIC Intern

A topic requested by faculty was teaching WIC—and other writing classes—online. Many faculty during the Fall Seminar sought different answers to the same question: How do I transfer this concept out of the classroom and on to the internet? The Spring Lunch Series sought the advice of Kryn Freehling-Burton, Penny Diebel, Scott Heppell, and Shannon Riggs to discuss the rewards and challenges of the online writing classroom.

The rewards, as discussed by the entire panel, are very clear. Writing to learn activities are readily adaptable to online platforms, such as Blackboard or the new Canvas system under review by the university. Discussion forums, wikis, and journal entries are all tools readily available to meet the needs of the course. Online writing classes can utilize tools like blogs and social media, which aren't just simulating pen-to-paper writing but form the platforms for disciplinary and professional writing in the digital age. As panelist Kryn Freehling-Burton described, all interactions between students and between teacher and student are written. Students' writing skills improve dramatically over the course of the term, and the students have a record of all the ideas generated, offering more opportunities to build upon others' ideas. The process of writing becomes explicit in an online setting.



At the same time, student interactions can prove difficult online, without the personal interactions of the classroom, but a little preparation can go a long way. Panelist Scott Heppell posts a statement on his course site that is required to be read and "signed" by all students, outlining ground rules for appropriate online interaction and holding the students accountable for their presence in the course. He then scores discussion forums using a sliding scale: 7 points for posting; 8 points for posting "something intelligent;" 9 points for writing a comment on someone else's post; and 10 points for posting something that provokes a response from other students. This encourages thoughtful interaction, and because online classes in some departments are smaller than face-to-face classes, students generate genuine relationships with their peers. The asynchronistic time frame, each student working at his or her own pace, gives students the opportunity to prepare and participate of their own accord, often generating better discussions than forced group work in face-to-face classrooms.

Another challenge discussed was plagiarism. Panelists and attendees of the lunch seminar expressed

mixed feelings about the issue of plagiarism in online coursework. There are many ways online writing courses help prevent plagiarism. OSU librarians are available to contribute to the course and can provide research guides tailored to a course, suggesting databases and providing citation guidance. All coursework is submitted online, which provides ample opportunities to compare students' drafts and, as panelist Penny Diebel notes, cuts down on lost papers. OSU also supports SafeAssign, a citation aid and plagiarism database which can alert students to passages in their writing that are cited incorrectly or that follow the author's words too closely. However, Heppell has found that plagiarism is more frequent in online courses, perhaps due to a perceived anonymity. Some panelists felt that SafeAssign can be a crutch and that students misinterpret SafeAssign as the "be all, end all" of documentation feedback, superseding the instructor.

Beyond plagiarism alerting tools, there are a significant number of other online tools that writing instructors can utilize throughout the entire writing process. Panelist Shannon Riggs laid out a number of these tools supporting the writing process from practice from invention to revision. Brainstorming tools include mind maps and webbing exercises almost identical to the pen and paper techniques favored by traditional teachers. These sites include:

- » Mindmeister.com
- » mywebspiration.com
- » bubbl.us
- » spiderscribe.com
- » popplet.com

Drafting tools, which can show students the process of collaborative writing and the growth of their writing, include:

- » Track changes
- » Google docs
- » File sharing in Blackboard
- » Small Group discussion boards

OSU's current Blackboard system supports built-in, customizable rubrics, which clearly set assignment expectations, allow for grading in depth, and can make grading faster and more consistent. Instructors can also use lesser known tools to provide new forms of feedback. Text expansion software lets an instructor insert a pre-established comment—such as an explanation of a comma splice—into a document. Voice feedback tools allow instructors to give verbal feedback and record their impressions on a screen. Riggs' suggested tools include:

- » Shortkeys
- » Jing
- » Screencastomatic.com

Attendees were asked to describe the most useful elements of the seminar, and many cited the discussion on SafeAssign and the Web 2.0 tools as important information to carry into future courses. Participants will be able to build on the multifaceted perspectives of the panel as they move toward increasing online student enrollment.

Handouts from this lunch are available [here](#).

### Culture of Writing Award Winners

By WIC Staff

Through the annual Culture of Writing Award, WIC and participating units and schools foster a commitment to excellence in undergraduate student writing and recognize the value of writing across the disciplines. Participation in the Culture of Writing Award has thrived since 2006 as students earn recognition and cash awards through either individual or team writing projects. This year, participation continues to be strong with early results showing 16 awardees. WIC would like to thank all participating units for their continued desire to recognize and reward outstanding student writing. Congratulations to this year's award winners!



	Student Name	Title of Winning Paper	Department	Nominating Professor
1	Stefanie L. Baker	"Ion Exchange System for Strontium Removal"	Chemical Engineering	Philip Harding
2	Preston Pallente			
3	Madison Bertoch			
4	Zachary Moeller	"The Peach Platform: How Democrats Lost the	History	Christopher Nichols (on behalf of Stacey Smith)

		1864 Election”		
5	Cory V. Gerlach	“Mono-substituted isopropylated triaryl phosphate, a major component of Firemaster 550, is an AHR agonist that exhibits AHR-independent cardiotoxicity in zebrafish”	BioResource Research	Katherine G. Field
6	Alysa Hughes	“Pathways to Success: The Impact of Narrative Branding Campaigns”	Graphic Design	Andrea Marks
7	Jonathan Beskow	“The Effect of Deviance on Solidarity”	Sociology	Breandan Jennings
8	Alexandria Mikesell	“The common skate: an unexpected degree of genetic diversity”	Fisheries and Wildlife	Brian Sidlauskas
9	Kevin C. Marks	“Affable Akutan-History and Hazards”	College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences	Anita Grunder
10	Joshua D. Hille	“Unified Medical Instrument Prototype Hardware (project sponsored by UMI)”	School of Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering	Javier Calvo, John Parmigiani, and Tracy Ann Robinson
11	Christopher R. Nesler			
12	Jay B. Stevenson			
13	Jacob K. Kollen	“Phosphate Rocks!”	Crop and Soil Science	Jennifer Parke
14	Annie H. Kersting	“Imperialism for Breakfast”	Crop and Soil Science/ Environmental Science	Jennifer Parke
15	Emily Mangan	“On the Ethics of Protein Production in Transgenic Animals”	Animal and Rangeland Sciences	Giovanna Rosenlicht and Claudia Ingham
16	Anne Dennon	“Social Perfection: Lifestyle Blogs as (Non) Evolved Utopias”	School of Writing, Literature, and Film	Rebecca Olson
17	Taylor M. Nowlin	“Pathogenic bacterial species detected on raw alfalfa sprouts”	Microbiology	Walt Ream
18	Courtney Hollingsworth	“Dialectical Behavior Therapy: Adaptations and Effectiveness in Treating Various Populations”	Psychological Science	David Kerr
19	Abigail Sage	“Estimating Density of a Black Bear Population in Northeastern	University Honors College	Clint Epps

		Oregon Using Dogs and Genetic Mark-Recapture Techniques"		
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For advice on on good writing from the winners, click [here](#).

[Fall 2014 WIC Faculty Seminar Call for Participants](#)  
by WIC Staff

The Fall 2014 WIC Faculty Seminar is just around the corner. Faculty interested in participating should ask their unit heads to email a nomination to WIC director Vicki Tolar Burton at [vicki.tolarburton@oregonstate.edu](mailto:vicki.tolarburton@oregonstate.edu).

The seminar, for both faculty teaching WIC courses and faculty using writing in non-WIC courses, focuses on learning best practices for teaching writing across the disciplines. Upon completing the five-session seminar, participating faculty receive a modest honorarium. Held on five consecutive Tuesdays, seminar dates are listed below:

- » October 14
- » October 21
- » October 28
- » November 4
- » November 11

\*All seminars are conducted 3–5pm, Milam 215.

Register as soon as possible—seminar spots are filling up quickly!



## CONTACT INFO

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