

TEACHING WITH WRITING

THE OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING INTENSIVE CURRICULUM (WIC)

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Women Studies turns to the web

Susan Shaw

Women Studies Director

Teachers in Women Studies at OSU aren't exactly luddites, but, on the whole, their knowledge of technology is somewhat limited. On the other hand, students are more and more savvy, and more and more interested in technology, especially web-based technologies. A Writing Intensive Curriculum grant allowed Women Studies to offer a workshop on "Teaching Writing with Technology" for instructors and teaching assistants.

Led by e-campus technophile Dianna Fisher, the workshop gave Women Studies teachers hands-on experience in creating blogs and wikis and suggested ways teachers could use these to help students learn to write better. Women Studies Director Su-



Photo courtesy of Susan Shaw

From right, Elle Bublitz, Emily Wingard, Michelle Marie, November Papaleo, and Faiza al-Saaidi learn to develop blogs and wikis.

san Shaw, a complete blog novice, took what she learned in the workshop and developed a blog requirement for her Spring 2008 honors class, WS 399 The Wom-

en of Law and Order. This course uses episodes of the popular crime drama (and its spin-off Law and Order: SVU) as jump-

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Pre/Views: International trends in writing



Vicki Tolar Burton

WIC Director

Just back from the International Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) conference, I want to share some trends and raise some questions. Keynoter Susan McLeod, U. C. Santa Barbara, and other speakers as well, reflected on the direction of

WAC in the twenty-first century:

- Departmental assessments of writing are examining how student writing can be improved at all course levels of the major. What might this trend mean for OSU departments?

- Just as electronic media are changing the way scholars do research, media are also changing the way students do research. How can our writing assignments best reflect these changes so that students are information-literate?

- The Bologna Agreement is increasing transnational higher education across Europe, resulting in a growing WAC movement there and around the world. How will the rise of World Eng-

lishes affect writing on our campus?

These are trends and questions I will be thinking about while on sabbatical 2008-2009. I hope you will give them some thought as well. When I get back, we'll talk.

While I am on sabbatical, Lisa Ede will be acting WIC director, with the able assistance of WIC GTA Travis Margoni. There will be no WIC seminar next year, but there will be lunch events from time to time. The Ede-Margoni team will provide support for WIC course development and will review courses that come through the approval system. I am grateful to both of them for

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About Teaching with Writing

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Teaching with Writing is the newsletter of the Oregon State University Writing Intensive Curriculum Program. As part of the Baccalaureate Core, all OSU students are required to take an upper-division writing intensive course in their major.

The content of WIC courses ranges from Bioengineering Design to the History of Photography. While subject matter differs by department, all WIC courses share certain commonalities defined by the Faculty Senate:

- Informal ungraded or minimally graded writing is used as a mode of learning the content material.
- Students are introduced to conventions and practices of writing in their discipline and use of borrowed information.
- Students complete at least 5,000 words of writing, of which at least 2,000 words are polished, formal assignments that have been revised.
- Students are guided through the whole process, receive feedback on drafts, and have opportunities to revise.

For complete information on WIC guidelines, visit the WIC website at:

<<<http://wic.oregonstate.edu>>>

WIC Grant Awarded

A WIC Department Development Grant has been awarded to the British Literature Group of the OSU English Department (Tara Williams, proposer) to develop new writing intensive genre courses (poetry, drama, and prose) at the 300 level. These courses will bridge the gap between literature courses at the 200 and 400 levels by increasing students' rhetorical knowledge of literature and improving their competence in using the conventions of the field.

Women Studies' turns to the web

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ing off places to talk about feminist issues. Real life "law and order women" who work in the criminal justice system (the sheriff, a former deputy DA, the state medical examiner, a local judge, a retired police lieutenant, a deputy sheriff, a defense attorney, a journalist involved in the Innocence Project, and a victim's advocate) also visit the course to provide their perspectives on the issues. Shaw uses the blog site as a means of writing-to-learn, and students blog about the episodes and issues discussed in class. To read the blog, go to www.lawandorderwomen.blogspot.com. Women Studies professor Patti Watkins is developing a blog for her Women, Weight, & Eating Disorders course, "Body Acceptance & Self Esteem Camp."

The WIC grant also provided workshop participants with two books: Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj's *The Elements of Teaching Writing: A Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines*, and Will Richardson's *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms*. While Women Studies teachers doubt that blogging will dramatically improve students' writing skills overnight, they hope that by utilizing a popular form of technology, they can encourage their students to become more comfortable writing and to become more aware of the audience(s) for their writing. Blogs and wikis may well become a helpful supplement to traditional forms of writing employed in Women Studies courses.

Fall 2007 WIC Faculty Seminar Participants

We would like to thank the fall seminar participants for their commitment to the WIC Program and for their dedication to the teaching of writing across the curriculum.

Chris Bowman

Liberal Studies

Pam Cytrynbaum

Dept. of New Media Communication

Anna Marie Gosser

College of Education

Mark Hoffman

Dept. of Nutrition & Exercise Science

Bruce Johnson

Dept. of Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering

Cassie Minot

Dept. of Nutrition & Exercise Science

Jim Moran

College of Business

Niki Schulz

Dept. of Civil and Construction Engineering

Michele Swift

College of Business

Pre/Views

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making my sabbatical possible.

I want especially to thank Travis for his outstanding contribution to WIC this year as the GTA. He has supported all phases of the program with energy and professionalism. His prior experience as editor of the student newspaper at Northern Michigan University

has brought new expertise to *Teaching With Writing*. Thanks also to WIC office assistant Jeanna Towns, and congratulations to her as she receives the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from OSU next week.

Finally, thanks to all the WIC faculty and WIC Board members who have devoted energy and imagination to improving student writing at OSU this year.

Trendspotting: student errors, part 2

Travis Margoni
WIC GTA

In 2005 and 2006, Andrea A. Lunsford, the Director of Rhetoric and Writing at Stanford, and Karen Lunsford, an associate professor of English at UC Santa Barbara, collected samples from first-year composition students and updated the 1986 research that led to a list of the 20 Most Common Errors made in composition courses, which was published in 1988.

In the Winter issue of *Teaching With Writing*, we published ten of the updated 20 Most Common Errors. This article explores the remaining ten errors identified by Lunsford and Lunsford.

The eleventh most common error is *Missing comma with a nonrestrictive element*. A nonrestrictive element is a phrase within a sentence that is not essential to the basic meaning of the sentence; these phrases should be separated by commas. For example: *Mark, who was confused by his test score, went to speak with the professor.*

The twelfth most common error is *Unnecessary shift in verb tense*. This can take place within a single sentence or over the course of several sentences. Here is an example of an incorrect shift within a sentence: *Mark thought the grammar test was simple, until he sees his score.* In this case, *sees* should be replaced with *saw*.

Incorrect sentence construction is reflected in several errors throughout the list, and the thirteenth most common error points to another mistake students may make when expanding sentence patterns: *Missing comma in a compound sentence*. A compound sentence is one that includes two or more independent clauses (complete sentences on their own) joined by a coordinating conjunction like *and*, *but*, *so*, or *nor*. Typically, in a correct compound sentence, a comma must be placed before the conjunction: *The students were sleepy when class began Monday morning, but the instructor's enthusiasm for grammar helped to arouse their interest.*

The fourteenth most common error is *Unnecessary or missing apostrophe (including its/it's confusion)*. Often, this error occurs when students fail to consider or under-

stand rules for the apostrophe as they relate to plural or possessive words. This can be further complicated when the plural possessive case is required. Here is an example of a correct use of the plural possessive form: *The instructor was pleased with her students' performance on the test.*

Returning to mistakes in sentence construction, the fifteenth most common error is *Fused (run-on) sentence*. This occurs when two independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined without appropriate punctuation or words to combine them in a proper way: *The student didn't know where the mistake was on his paper he thought it was error-free.* Between *paper* and *he*, a period or a semi-colon should be inserted, or use a comma and appropriate conjunction such as *and* or *but*.

Merely placing a comma between *paper* and *he* in the previous example would create the sixteenth most common error, the *comma splice*. A comma splice occurs when two separate clauses that could stand alone as complete sentences are separated with a comma. In some cases, placing a comma and a conjunction can correct the mistake. Often, simply placing a period between the two clauses is the best option. Adding a semicolon is a third possible solution.

Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement is the seventeenth most common error. An antecedent is a word replaced by a pronoun, and a typical mistake of this kind might read like this: *Every student must provide their own pencil for the test.* A corrected version of this sentence would read: *Every student must provide a pencil for the test.*

The eighteenth most common error is *Poorly integrated quotation*. A quotation can be poorly used when a student fails to transition into a quotation, uses a quote to repeat what had previously been paraphrased, or when a student strings together quotes from multiple sources within one paragraph.

Unnecessary or missing hyphen is the nineteenth most common error. Writers should hyphenate a compound adjective preceding the word it modifies. Here is an example of correct hyphen usage: *The instructor assigns field projects, requiring that students record real-world experiences.* Students may over-

Common Errors

11. Missing comma with a nonrestrictive element
12. Unnecessary shift in verb tense
13. Missing comma in a compound sentence
14. Unnecessary or missing apostrophe
15. Fused (run-on) sentence
16. Comma splice
17. Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement
18. Poorly integrated quotation
19. Unnecessary or missing hyphen
20. Sentence fragment

look the suspended hyphen: *Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writing assignments were much different than those assigned today.*

The twentieth and final error listed by Lunsford and Lunsford is the *sentence fragment*. For example, an error occurs when a subordinate clause is separated by a period from the sentence it modifies. *The students did well on the test. When they became familiar with the professor's format.*

To read the first half of this article in the Winter issue of *Teaching With Writing*, visit the WIC website, and remind students that information on the most common errors can be found at <http://wic.oregonstate.edu>.

Grant helps develop writing in sociology

Michelle Inderbitzin

**Associate Professor, Department of
Sociology**

WIC Grant and AAC&U Conference: The Student as Scholar

Last year, I received a WIC Department Development Grant in order to develop a pilot program to strengthen sociology students' skills as researchers and writers, and to facilitate new collaborative relationships between faculty members and undergraduate students. Funds from the grant allowed me to attend the Association of American Colleges and Universities conference on "The Student as Scholar: Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice" and the pre-conference workshop on "Sustainable Models of Student-Faculty Collaboration" in April 2007. I hoped to go learn as much as possible at the conference and then to share those ideas and models with the Department of Sociology and Oregon State University. My goal was to put these new ideas into practice by helping to build a collaborative community of researchers and scholars within my department and college. This seems to be an especially important and useful task for those of us in the liberal arts working with strong undergraduates but no disciplinary graduate programs.

In doing some independent research, I had found the information for this AAC&U conference online, and I applied to go on my own. I was pleasantly surprised, then, to find a number of other OSU faculty attended the same conference. The interest in developing more research opportunities for undergraduate students seems to be particularly strong in the College of Liberal

Arts and in Health and Human Sciences.

Outcomes

Perhaps the most visible outcome from the conference was a workshop that attendees put on for the College of Liberal Arts, "Engaged Learning: Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creativity in the Social Justice Classroom." In February 2008, Susan Shaw, Becky Warner, Loren Chavarria, Barbara Mason and I presented examples from our own experiences and led a discussion on how faculty members in the arts, humanities, and social sciences can utilize undergraduate research, scholarship, and creativity to enhance student engagement in social justice issues.

Participants in the conference were eligible to apply for one of five \$2,000 grants to support undergraduate research, scholarship, and creativity in CLA social justice courses. While funded applications have not yet been announced, there were a number of strong applications which suggests that faculty in the liberal arts have vivid and specific ideas for incorporating research opportunities into undergraduate education at OSU.

Since attending the AAC&U conference, I have built funding for undergraduate research assistants into my other grant applications, and I will be working with 4-5 undergraduate student collaborators on projects next year. I plan to facilitate periodic meetings with students working on research with other faculty members in the sociology department in order to facilitate the sharing of ideas, experiences, and perspectives. I anticipate that we will keep moving toward a departmental community and culture that values undergradu-



Photo courtesy of Michelle Inderbitzin

From left, Courtney Shrifter, professor Michelle Inderbitzin, Heather Boyd, Erin Wilson, and Nick Malos attended the Association of American Colleges and University conference in 2007.

ate research, invites students into the process, and builds a strong research and writing component into our curriculum and educational opportunities.

Students seem to really appreciate the chance to stretch their educational horizons through involvement in research and professional development. This spring we had 14 undergraduate students attend the annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association in Portland. Half of these students presented their original research and experiences to a professional audience; the others attended a number of panels and presentations and got a clear sense of the real breadth of possibilities for sociological research and careers in the discipline. Many of them expressed an interest in presenting their own research at next year's meeting in San Diego.

Perhaps the most important thing I took away from the "The Student as Scholar" conference is a sense of possibility. Undergraduate students are involved in and accomplishing amazing things at universities all over the country. Oregon State University students will certainly make their own mark if given the opportunity, training, and encouragement. I am excited to continue the effort to engage our students in work outside of the classroom and to further build a culture of undergraduate research and scholarship.

Resources

Presentations, and reports from the AAC&U conference, "The Student as Scholar: Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice," are available online at: http://www.aacu.org/meetings/undergraduate_research/index.cfm



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