Writing Intensive Courses and WAC

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I n its nearly thirty-year presence on the U.S. higher education scene, one shape that writing across the curriculum has assumed is the writing intensive (WI) course requirement. In some settings, this curricular-driven form of WAC has proved itself, in the words of Ed White, an "unimagined fiasco" (*Teaching* 161). In other settings, it has worked as an enlightened, if challenging, solution to moving writing instruction beyond the English department. Many institutions have adopted WI, or writing enhanced (WE), or writing in the major (M) designations for courses in which faculty in a variety of disciplines use writing in a variety of ways.

This chapter identifies typical characteristics of WI courses, examines the pros and cons of using the WI or similar designation, describes selected aspects of programs employing WI designations, and highlights factors that appear to make such programs successful. The chapter then examines in more depth how one institution—the University of Missouri, a Research I, land-grant university—has successfully employed writing intensive courses since 1984 by tying the requirement to four campus missions: undergraduate education, graduate education, faculty development, and research. Cautionary comments for those programs considering adopting the WI designation as their campuses move into the twenty-first century are stressed throughout. The chapter concludes with an exploration of new directions that WI courses could take as institutions continue to meet U.S. higher education needs.

Defining Writing Intensive Course Requirements

Experienced WAC practitioners know that for WAC programs to be successful they must be institutionally specific. That is to say, WAC programs must be locally designed to fit within a given institution's particular context. Similarly, WI course requirements should be defined within the local context to ensure the best possible chance for success. The language that defines course requirements at a comprehensive research university may not work at a small liberal arts college or in a large, multicampus, two-year college system. Despite variations in language, however, the guidelines for WI courses at most institutions are surprisingly similar. Farris and Smith provide an excellent overview of features that typify WI courses, paraphrased and summarized here:

1. Class size or instructor-to-student ratio: Most guidelines call for a maximum enrollment of fifteen to twenty-five students; in larger-enrollment classes, teaching assistants may be provided to reduce the instructor's workload.

2. Who teaches: Many guidelines require that WI courses be taught by faculty rather than teaching assistants.

3. Required number of papers or words: Some guidelines specify a page or word count, which may include a combination of formal and informal writing, in-class and out-of-class writing, and a variety of genres; some guidelines specify the number of formal papers that must be written.

4. Revision: Some guidelines specify how many papers must undergo a complete revision process; some indicate who will read drafts (instructor, peers, teaching assistants); some specify that feedback and revision go beyond correcting surface errors to include substantive rethinking.

5. How writing will affect final grade: Some guidelines stipulate or recommend that grades from writing make up a certain percentage of the course grade; not always easily negotiated, these percentages can vary widely from, say, 20 percent to 70 percent or more.

6. Types of assignments: Guidelines may require or recommend that writing be distributed throughout the course rather than

concentrated in a term paper; some specify particular tasks, e.g., summary, analysis, source integration; some call for assignments typical to the discipline of the course or for controversies in the discipline to be addressed.

7. Assignment-related instruction and evaluation of papers: Some guidelines may suggest, require, or provide teaching techniques such as collaborative work, directed lessons on research techniques, checklists for feedback, and minimal marking.

8. Support services: Some guidelines suggest or require that WI instructors attend workshops or consult with WAC staff, or that their students use a particular writing center for tutoring (Farris and Smith 73–74)

The characteristic that is probably most variable among programs is the amount of writing required. Actually, many WAC directors find page- or word-count stipulations one of the least intrinsically relevant aspects of their programs, but they acknowledge the need to provide them so that faculty and students have some common sense of scope. More meaningful to WI course quality are the frequency of writing, the usefulness of instructor feedback, the opportunity for revision, and, most important, the design of the writing assignments and their "fit" with the pedagogical aims of the course. Usually, WI courses will include some combination of both writing-to-learn and writing-to-communicate assignments, although the balance of these will vary based on instructor preference, course goals, and the course's place in the curriculum, e.g., lower division, upper division, for majors only, for general education purposes. Typically, traditional term papers are discouraged unless they are assigned in sequenced segments with teacher feedback and revision incorporated.

The more astute programmatic guidelines are couched in diplomatic language, allow for flexibility among disciplines, and account for individual instructors' teaching preferences. In most universities, oversight committees responsible for vetting WI courses have little finite authority; moreover, they recognize the perils of constituting themselves as the campus "WI police." Instead, most programs are interested in overall pedagogical change. Susan McLeod, in sharing an anecdote on how WAC had changed one teacher's life, concluded by noting that:

his enthusiasm, many years after his first encounter with WAC, shows what I think is the most important thing about WAC—it is really not about writing, but about teaching and learning. Once faculty change their pedagogies and see the effect that change has on their classes, they can't go back to the lecture mode. . . . That's what introduces a culture of writing on campus—faculty change.

One example of the incorporation of diplomatic language and room for flexibility appears in the definition of WI courses at the University of Rhode Island. URI's guidelines call for a number of the features Farris and Smith mention. But URI further suggests that "if possible," WI courses should include (for example) peer review and collaborative writing, and that "if possible," upper-division WI courses should include a variety of professional writing assignments, such as patient charts, client reports, case studies, lab reports, research reviews, and so on. The WI guidelines at Missouri Western State College blend prescriptiveness with flexibility. In MWSC's ten itemized points, directive statements (as in "major assignments *will* be broken down into stages") are balanced with an almost identical number of optional statements ("peer involvement *could* be used") (my emphasis).[1]

The WI guidelines at George Mason University were derived from a survey of fifty-three WI programs in existence at the time George Mason started its program. A report of that research by John Latona appears in the *Composition Chronicle*. George Mason's WI guidelines can be found at http://www.gmu.edu/departments/wac/wacrec.htm. This site also provides links to numerous other WAC programs with additional WI guideline variations. Several other Web sites are worth noting for their access to WI definitions. The University of Hawaii at Manoa lists its WI criteria at http://mwp01.mwp.hawaii.edu. A fine resource is the extensive WAC Clearinghouse Web site maintained at Colorado State: http://aw.colostate.edu/resource_list.htm. Finally, the WPA-L archives are a rich resource for virtually all issues having to do with writing programs, including WI descriptions. The archive address is http://lists.asu.edu/archives/wpa-l.html. Each subdirectory in the archive is searchable by subject; simply type "writing intensive courses" at the prompt. (To subscribe to the list itself, send a

message to listserv@lists.asu.edu; in the message, type <subscribe WPA-L your name>.)

The Case against WI Labels and Curricular Requirements

There are sound arguments against adopting WI designations and solid reasons for institutions to avoid moving to a WAC program that is driven by a curricular requirement. The overarching rationale is that writing—instruction, assignments, assessment—should be embedded in all course work, not isolated or marginalized in a reduced number of "marked" classes. WAC theory, in other words, not to mention the ideals undergirding liberal education, militate against this kind of system. Veteran WAC advocate and practitioner John Bean noted some years ago that faculty at his institution, Seattle University, made a conscious decision to forego a WI requirement by committing to the integration of some writing into all courses. Other institutions, too, successfully practice WAC by means of the "infusion" model without a WI requirement; St. Lawrence University comes to mind, along with many smaller liberal arts colleges.

WAC literature and lore are replete with stories of WI disasters. Lively debates ensue on WPA-L whenever a new correspondent innocently poses the question, "My school is considering adopting a WI requirement. Please describe your institution's WI criteria." Usually such queries focus on the characteristics that define a WI course rather than on the factors necessary to ensure the success of such a requirement. Veteran writing program reviewer and founder of the National Council of Writing Program Administrators' Consultant/Evaluator Service, Ed White is one of the most vocal opponents of WI courses: "I've said it before and I'll repeat it briefly again: I don't like writing intensive courses . . . . [T]hey usually (though not always) wind up as a fraud after a few years. . . . Beware of easy and faddish solutions to basic problems" ("Re: Descriptions"). His short article "The Damage of Innovations Set Adrift" has served as a caution to faculty and administrators for more than ten years. He presents a fuller, more balanced view in *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, concluding that

"universities that take writing seriously . . . can make a writing-intensive program work successfully. But no one should minimize either the difficulty or the expense involved over the long term" (164).

Among the arguments against WI designations are these: Budget-wary administrators often view them as a cheap, easy fix to students' writing "problems." Promised support doesn't materialize, or, as budget cuts become necessary, WI courses are easy targets. One recent horror story reported on the Writing Program Administrators' listserv involved administratively mandated WI classes with no resources, no WAC director, no budget, no programmatic support, no criteria for designating WI classes, and no faculty workshops. After unsuccessfully attempting to educate administrators about the basic needs for imbuing the WI courses with minimal rigor and integrity, writing faculty (all tenured) resigned as a group from the general education reform committee. In some scenarios, students progress through the curriculum, taking the requisite number of WI courses, without even understanding what "WI" refers to. In others, the requirement is regularly waived so as not to prevent students from graduating, thereby turning the "requirement" into a campus joke. In the worst scenarios, non-WI faculty quit using writing in their courses because "the WI classes are doing this now and we don't have to." Students complain when writing is assigned in non-WI courses. The net effect can be less writing in the curriculum than before the WI requirement took effect.

Not least, it is hard to make WI programs work. In some institutions, WI teaching assignments are often given to the worst, or youngest, teachers. The least attractive or inappropriate courses are made to carry the WI designation. Enrollment management is difficult. Curricula are not well thought out. Assessment is difficult or not done at all. Faculty in the disciplines are not sufficiently prepared to offer WI courses and are not supported, either during the teaching process or at tenure and promotion time. Faculty find that certain criteria, especially eliciting meaningful revision and providing feedback on student papers, are daunting. Larger institutions, particularly those with research missions and/or uncooperative registration offices, find the logistics a

hassle. Committees overseeing the requirement find it difficult to strike a balance between enforcement and support—if they are too tentative about course integrity, faculty are not invested in the process and the program lacks substance; if they are too strident, faculty resist what they perceive to be interference in their academic freedom. As David Russell puts it, "On an *institutional* basis, WAC exists [and, many would argue, WI courses] in a structure that fundamentally resists it" (295).

The Case for WI Labels and Curricular Requirements

Even as the arguments against WI course requirements are made, an equally vocal contingent proclaims virtually the opposite. Proponents claim that WI requirements, when properly implemented, can cause faculty to realize the importance of writing, feedback, revision, well-designed assignments, and thoughtfully constructed assessment in the curriculum. The WI requirement, and the supporting apparatus that accompanies it (e.g., faculty workshops, consultation with WAC personnel, informal meetings of WI teachers to discuss problems and results), can serve as a catalyst for more writing across the curriculum in all courses, whether WI or not. Faculty on the whole can become better informed not only about writing but also about teaching and learning issues more broadly defined (e.g., peer review, collaborative learning, group projects). Institutions often use the WI designation as a rationale for reducing class size, making it possible for instructors to pay more attention to student writing.

Writing program personnel at various institutions report that the WI influence has "bubbled up" to the graduate level, that talk about the importance of writing to learning has turned up in unexpected campus committee meetings, and that once faculty have experienced success in their WI teaching, they can't "go back" to their previous methodologies. Others report that WI requirements begun at the general education level have positively influenced writing in the major. Still others go so far as to report a "culture change" on their campuses in which interest in and excitement about writing exist where they did not before. In con-

trast to the infusion model (no formal WI requirement, where all faculty agree to carry the load), a formal structural model of WI requirements can make this work visible to a wider audience. With WI courses flagged in the schedule and on student transcripts, students, faculty, administrators, and employers can be more attuned to specific measures in place at an institution, who is contributing to it, how many such courses students are taking, and so on. In sum, the WI course requirement (as with WAC in general) has served as a powerful vehicle for expanding attention to student writing as well as for conducting faculty development.

Selected Successful WI Programs

Writing intensive programs come in a multitude of configurations. The following range of examples is not intended to be inclusive, nor descriptive of any school's complete requirement, nor representative of what may work at another institution. It is intended to illustrate how a variety of institutions have creatively enacted different aspects of the WI requirement to fit their specific institutional needs. (These examples come from comments posted on WPA-L, [2] as well as from my own observation as a consultant. See also Toby Fulwiler and Art Young's *Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum* for further examples.)

- ◆ The University of Hawaii at Manoa requires five WI classes for graduation. Nonstipend faculty workshops are offered but not required; a newsletter and specifically chosen resource materials are sent to participating faculty.

- ◆ Eastern Connecticut State University has avoided faculty resistance to teaching WI courses by keeping class size small compared to non-WI courses.

- ◆ Southern Connecticut State University has taken a slow, thoughtfully deliberate approach to its newly revitalized "L" (for "literacy") course requirement. Among other SCSU programmatic aspects, faculty who successfully teach L courses three times will receive overload credits that factor into their workload assignments.

◆ Youngstown State University recently recommended that its upper-division, multisection general education courses be available in both WI and non-WI versions.

◆ The University of Rhode Island is attempting to create a culture for writing that transcends individual WI faculty by focusing on departments. Incentives being considered include direct departmental support for developing new WI courses, recognizing student writing achievement, and sending graduate teaching assistants to workshops. Perhaps most intriguing, URI is attempting to increase the profile, for program review purposes, of those departments that have developed a writing culture.

◆ Even though it doesn't have a structured WAC program, Tidewater Community College nonetheless has many WI classes, and half of the faculty have attended workshops conducted by writing center staff. Donna Reiss, coordinator of online learning, whose chapter with Art Young on electronic communication across the curriculum (ECAC) appears in this volume (Chapter 3), believes that new technologies have opened up new opportunities in the intersecting fields of WI, WAC, and ECAC: "Many of the instructional approaches that use WAC with communications technology began in writing classes, and many writing teachers have become leaders in instructional technologies for entire colleges" ("Comment" 722).

◆ Ohio State's second-year WI course requirement is taught in numerous departments across campus, but each carries the same course number. More information on these courses is available at www.ohio-state.edu through the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing Web page.

◆ Western Washington University has eliminated its rising junior exam and is replacing its previously required WI course with a requirement for six writing "units" or "points." Courses that offer writing instruction will carry from one to three points; students need to accrue six points for graduation.

◆ At Muhlenberg College, in conjunction with their department heads, faculty determine whether a course will be WI in a given semester. A proposal is submitted the first time a course is offered to the Writing Committee to ensure that no one is unwillingly teaching a WI course.

◆ At the University of Missouri–Rolla, each course is reviewed each semester it's taught by each faculty member who teaches it, thereby ensuring oversight for course quality.

- At Washington State University, the All-University Writing Committee decided to focus its writing intensive courses at the upper-division level, calling them "writing in the major" courses and designing them to accommodate a variety of disciplinary approaches. The focus is on preprofessional writing tasks for students in the disciplines.

What Makes WI Courses Work?

The factors listed below, commonly cited by WAC directors and practitioners from both successful and not-so-successful WI initiatives, can help account for why some programs thrive while others languish or perish. Although it is impossible to claim that WI programs featuring all or most of these characteristics will ensure a robust program, nonetheless some combination of most of these does tend to predict a positive outcome.

1. *Strong faculty ownership of the WI system:* Such characteristics as a faculty-initiated course requirement, faculty peer review of WI course proposals, and faculty-established policies regarding WI criteria, workshop attendance, and faculty development activities seem essential.

2. *Strong philosophical and fiscal support from institutional administrators, coupled with their willingness to avoid micromanagement:* WI programs require influential officers who understand the principles behind WI courses and who can advocate consistently for them at high levels of institutional decision making. Administrators must also take an active role in securing resources to provide adequate staff support (trained WAC personnel to work with WI faculty), faculty development (funding for workshops, materials, and stipends for attendees), and graduate teaching assistants, if necessary (to assist faculty in dealing with the increased paper load). At the same time, if administrators get involved with the day-to-day management of the program, faculty will perceive a top-down approach that unnecessarily interferes with their work. Maintaining a healthy balance is critical.

3. *One and two above, in combination:* Neither of these two factors alone will allow for a truly successful WI program. If either group is unwilling or uninterested, the project is probably doomed to fail, sooner rather than later. Hearkening back to Fullan and Miles's Lesson Six in "Eight Basic Lessons for the New Paradigm of Change" summarized by McLeod and Miraglia in Chapter 1, both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary.

4. *Symbiosis with other institutional programs/missions:* It's likely that the more cooperation and links a WI program has with other initiatives the better, assuming that WI program leaders keep the WI focus in balance. Conscientious integration with the campus mission statement, writing center, service learning, other campus teaching and learning programs, campus assessment activities, technology, general education, graduate programs (by employing graduate students in the disciplines to assist with WI courses), and so on go a long way toward creating a curricular requirement that is tightly woven into the institutional fabric.

5. *A reward structure that values teaching:* This is one of the thorniest issues for many campuses to deal with, especially large research universities. Faculty need to perceive that their work is valued by their peers, departments, institutions, and disciplines. For the vast majority who undertake teaching in a WI format, the workload does increase. All too often, rewards for research are easier to attain than rewards for teaching. Some WI program directors may have few incentives to offer except the indirect programmatic support they can provide to WI teachers, coupled with the intrinsic satisfaction faculty typically derive from WI teaching (through students' engagement with topics, livelier class discussions, knowledge that students are thinking more critically about content, observing improved papers). Change may be on the horizon thanks to the aid of sources such as Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* and Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff's *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Pro-*

fessoriate, as well as the Boyer Report, *Reinventing Under-graduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities.* But WI leaders should be aware that faculty members' perception of little or no reward for their increased effort may be a major roadblock to WI success.

6. *Knowledgeable, diplomatic WAC program personnel:* Faculty in the disciplines need access to well-informed specialists when they are designing writing assignments and grading criteria. More often than not, they also need help coordinating the writing with course goals and objectives and with their individual teaching styles. A dedicated and well-meaning—but not professionally schooled—faculty committee is not prepared to perform this function. As one savvy dean put it in a recent conversation, "WAC programs and WI courses don't run by committee; they need somebody who knows what's going on and who worries about them all day every day." At the same time, because WI course development intersects so thoroughly with faculty development, WAC personnel must have the interpersonal skills to work with sensitive faculty egos and personalities.

7. *Regular internal assessment procedures combined with periodic external program review:* These may be two of the most overlooked and under-attended-to features of a strong WI system. Yet having them in place will allow inevitable questions to be addressed. Most administrators and, increasingly, governmental agencies want evidence that academic programs are "working" so they can demonstrate "accountability" to their constituents. The old assessment adage "multiple measures, over time" is an excellent starting place for WI programs (see Condon, Chapter 2, this volume).

8. *A low student-to-WI-instructor ratio, along with TA help if necessary:* If writing is to be meaningful and teachers are to give feedback that leads to revision, large-enrollment WI classes cannot be effective. Successful programs manage to

hold enrollment to somewhere between fifteen and twenty-five students. When enrollment compromises must be made, graduate teaching assistants are necessary to alleviate a portion of the faculty marking and feedback burden, although care must be taken to ensure that overall responsibility remains in faculty's hands.

9. *Integration of WI assignments with course goals and instructor's pedagogical methods:* Ideally, this characteristic should be at the top of the list. The purpose of integrating writing into disciplinary-based courses, after all, is to enhance students' understanding of critical content in the subject-matter area. If the writing does not serve course goals or is at odds with the teacher's "style," it risks being a mere add-on for the sake of labeling the requisite number of WI courses. Realistically, though, without the characteristics above (1–8) firmly in place, even a WI program that features finely tuned, well-integrated assignments will probably be short-lived.

10. *Flexible but sound WI criteria:* A corollary to well-integrated assignments is rigorous yet flexible criteria for creating and evaluating WI courses. It is a challenge to establish overall programmatic and course integrity while allowing sufficient leeway for disparate disciplines to arrive at appropriate writing practices. Examples of how the University of Missouri addresses this issue are given in the following section.

11. *Patience and vigilance:* When all is said and done, WAC, especially in the form of WI courses, "attempts to reform pedagogy more than curriculum. . . . It asks for a fundamental commitment to a radically different way of teaching, a way that requires personal sacrifices, given the structure of American education, and offers personal rather than institutional rewards" (Russell 295). These commitments grow slowly and reforms take time. WI leaders must be simultaneously patient and perseverant while programs evolve.

The University of Missouri–Columbia's WI Requirement: One Institution's Story

As on numerous other campuses, MU's WI requirement was born of a faculty perception that student writing needed more attention than it was getting. At the faculty's request, the dean and provost jointly convened an interdisciplinary Task Force on English Composition, chaired by English professor Winifred Horner, charged with reviewing the status of composition on campus and making recommendations. A year's worth of study later, the task force's 1984 report became the founding document for MU's WAC program, a program that included, among other components, the establishment of a WI requirement for all undergraduates as a condition of graduation. An eighteen-faculty-member interdisciplinary Campus Writing Board was constituted, a full-time director was hired to oversee the new Campus Writing Program, and a three-year pilot phase began.

The task force report also recommended that the program and its director be accountable to three sectors of the university: (1) the provost, because this office funds the program and because the program must be recognized as a campuswide endeavor; (2) the dean of the College of Arts and Science, because this college generates about half of all WI courses and because writing instruction is naturally situated in the liberal arts; and (3) the Campus Writing Board, because academic policy should rest in the hands of faculty. Although the three-way reporting appears cumbersome in description or on an organizational flowchart, in reality it works remarkably well. Both the dean's and the provost's offices are in positions to advocate for the program when necessary, but all decision making is done by faculty. In its fifteen-year existence, the program has reported to five provosts and three deans, all of whom have championed the WI cause. Board members, who serve three-year rolling terms, are jointly appointed by the provost and dean based on suggestions from Campus Writing Program staff. The board has come to be known as one of the most proactive faculty committees on campus. The program, as distinct from the board, consists of five full-time staff members (two of whom hold faculty appointments in English), ten part-

time graduate student tutors (all from different disciplines), and a group of one hundred or so ever-changing graduate teaching assistants who work with the faculty teaching WI courses (so that a 20:1 student-to-teacher ratio is maintained).

The three-year pilot phase was critical for WI faculty, board members, and program staff in determining new policies and procedures and in allowing everyone time to experiment with WAC principles. The formal one-course WI graduation require-ment did not become effective until 1988. The program then spent five-and-a-half years honing this requirement before moving to a two-course WI graduation requirement in 1993. MU's writing requirement for all students, then, is one semester of first-year composition, followed by two WI courses, one anywhere in the curriculum and one in the major at the upper-division level. This slow, thoughtful, deliberate progression is one key to the program's longevity. Participants had ample time to solve the in-evitable problems; they conscientiously did not assume they could do a lot quickly—a common error of many WI initiatives.

The first board, with the guidance of founding director Doug Hunt, drafted MU's *Guidelines for WI Courses*, a document that has stood the test of time but that has also undergone some care-ful revision over the years. MU's guidelines incorporate all of the features identified by Farris and Smith summarized earlier in this chapter, albeit in somewhat different order and with somewhat different emphasis:

1. WI courses should be designed and taught by faculty members at a 20:1 student-to-faculty ratio. This recommendation precludes consideration of graduate students as primary instructors.

2. Each course should include multiple assignments that are com-plex enough to require substantive revision for most students. Students should submit a draft of other preliminary writing, con-sider responses from a teacher (and, whenever possible, from other students), revise, and finally edit. The final versions of these assignments should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).

3. Writing for the entire course should total at least 5,000 words (twenty pages). This writing may take many forms and includes the drafts of preliminary writing and final versions of the assign-ments in guideline 2.

4. Each course should include at least one revised writing assignment addressing a question for which there is more than one acceptable interpretation, explanation, analysis, or evaluation.

5. Writing for the course should be distributed throughout the semester rather than concentrated at the end.

6. Written assignments should be a major component of the course grade.

7. Faculty members may use graduate teaching assistants to bring the student-to-faculty ratio down to a manageable level.

8. In classes employing graduate teaching assistants, professors should remain firmly in control not only of the writing assignments, but also of the grading and marking of papers.

A preamble to the guidelines sets forth the program's philosophy, and each of the guidelines is accompanied by a paragraph of explanatory text that anticipates questions faculty may have in preparing a WI course proposal. These sentences in italic immediately precede the eight points: *"The guidelines below are not inflexible, but they give applicants a picture of the sort of course the Board envisages. Alternative means to the same end will certainly be considered."* Although these words are intended as a specific invitation for faculty to creatively alter the guidelines to meet the needs of their discipline or their teaching style as long as they stay within the spirit of the document, few actually take advantage of it. In fact, Campus Writing Program (CWP) staff call this invitation to faculty awareness more often than faculty use it on their own.

Guidelines 1 and 4 have been revised from the original version. In guideline 1, the clarification that "this recommendation precludes consideration of graduate students as primary instructors" was added shortly after the second WI course requirement became effective. Although faculty had always been the only instructors allowed to teach WI courses, pressure to offer nearly double the number of WI courses created a wave of WI course proposals, presented for the first time with graduate students listed as the instructors of record. The Campus Writing Board allowed only a few exceptions to the longtime policy in order to enable departments to meet their short-term obligations for WI courses

for their majors, but sent out notice with this new language advising that the long-standing policy would be enforced. At the same time, the provost and dean were able to remind colleges and departments that the faculty "rule" was important by asking that Request to Hire New Faculty forms show how departments would use their new hires to help meet departmental WI teaching obligations.

Guideline 4 originally read, "Each course should include at least one revised writing assignment addressing a question *about which reasonable people can disagree.*" When the second WI requirement—calling for an upper-division course in each major—became effective, the board began to get complaints from faculty that students in the sciences are not prepared to challenge the axioms of the discipline or take a stand on unsettled issues. Still, board members believed that even science students should tackle "live" questions in their academic disciplines, and the present language was drafted by Marty Patton, CWP consultant to WI courses in the natural and applied sciences. The new language still requires occasional explanation, but it is language that the science faculty can understand and live with.

In 1992, in preparation for instituting the second WI course, CWP undertook its first comprehensive program evaluation, which consisted of a year-long self-study and culminated in an external review by the WPA's Consultant/Evaluator Service. (For an explanation of the project's social constructivist theory, data collection methodology, and outcomes, see Townsend.) During the process of articulating program goals for ourselves and our reviewers, it became clear that a number of CWP's activities coincided with a newly developed university mission statement. We began framing our work by calling overt attention to these correspondences, and over time we have come to realize that the framework has helped others better understand what we do. A new provost, a new dean, a new member of the Board of Curators, newcomers to the Campus Writing Board, and others outside the university have commented that the fact that we have articulated our work by referencing MU's mission statement has allowed them to get a fuller picture of this WAC program that is organized around WI courses.

Of the multiple missions in MU's formal statement, the four we link to are undergraduate education, graduate education, faculty development, and research.

1. Undergraduate education is the starting point. Our primary responsibility is ensuring that academically rigorous WI courses are available for all students in both general education and the majors. Quoted here at some length is an e-mail recently sent to MU Mechanical and Aerospace Engineer Professor Aaron Krawitz by a student who had taken his WI course. Krawitz is known for his attention to both the conceptual and the technical aspects of student writing assignments. The student's remarks are not unusual feedback for WI faculty to receive:

> I wanted to write and let you know about my experience this summer and the effect of your composite materials class. I am working for a very large law firm's patent department. I have been reading and editing as well as assisting in the drafting of patent applications and amendments. Your composite materials class has been a huge factor in my ability to do this effectively. The patent attorneys have been amazed at how many mistakes I have been finding in their applications. These applications are highly technical and require thorough and careful editing before they are sent to the U.S. Patent Office. Having the experience of carefully writing and revising technical papers in your composites class was, I think, a huge help. I just wanted to let you know. Thanks. (Wiegmann)

Direct support for students enrolled in WI classes is provided by CWP's WI tutorial service. Students may schedule a fifty-minute one-on-one appointment with a graduate student in our writing center. Typically, these graduate students have served as WI TAs in their disciplines; taught classes of their own in that discipline; met with the instructors of the WI courses for whom they are tutoring; read the course texts; and seen the syllabus, assignment, and grading criteria before the student comes in. CWP offers two- or three-day faculty workshops each semester for new WI faculty, offers unlimited follow-up consultation to WI faculty, and coordinates all logistics with Registration personnel to ensure timely listing of WI courses in the schedule. A workshop feature

popular with faculty is our giving each participant a copy of John Bean's excellent *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom.*

2. Graduate education is a vital part of MU's life as a Research I institution. We now make greater efforts to ensure that when graduate teaching assistants work with WI faculty or in CWP's tutoring center, they know they are receiving valuable professional preparation for their future careers. Quoted here, again at some length, is an illustration we use often, one that speaks volumes in helping many of MU's constituents understand why the WI requirement benefits graduate students as well as undergraduates. After earning his master's degree and securing a highly desirable position in his field, one student wrote:

> As a former Journalism WI TA of—was it six semesters?—and WI tutor of three semesters [I am] overcome by a need to [acknowledge] how I got to where I am not just with the *help* of my work with CWP, but *because* of it. . . . My approach to [my new position as assistant editor of *Aramco World* magazine] can be traced directly to training received not so much in a newsroom but as a WI TA. It was as a TA that I learned, most of the time without knowing it, how to be an editor.
>
> Part of my interview process was to test-edit an article. Later, after I was hired, I was told that I was the only candidate who, upon receiving the article, asked the Editor what *kind* of editing he wanted. To me it was a logical question, straight out of starting a new WI class: What kind of marking do we do? . . . The result was impressive enough to get me the job; the techniques are now the ones I apply every day with professional writers. As a WI TA, I learned not just how something "should" read or look, but how to bring out the best in a writer, and how to articulate my criticisms and questions. (Doughty)

3. WAC has long been recognized as an effective faculty development tool by those working within the movement. But some institutions are reluctant to highlight this aspect, preferring to focus mainly on WAC's relationship to student writing. But when MU's mission statement specifically mentioned offering faculty continuing opportunities to develop their expertise, we thought it appro-

priate to acknowledge this link as well. CWP workshops and discussions explore the connections between writing, critical thinking, and problem solving. They don't focus so much on improving teaching as they do on understanding learning. Workshop attendees are offered a small stipend, and we have documented that even those participants who do not subsequently offer a formal WI course nonetheless use writing in their courses in more thoughtful ways. CWP's newsletter *The Writery* features articles on exemplary WI teachers and the innovative ways they teach WI classes. (All *Writery* issues are available online at http://cwp. missouri.edu; a slightly expanded explanation of CWP's links to MU's missions appears in Vol. 1, No. 1.) Thinking about the discipline-specific nature of knowledge has led many faculty to note that WI teaching has opened up new ways of approaching their own scholarship. Many Campus Writing Board members, too, comment that their three-year term on the board teaches them more than they could have imagined. In reviewing hundreds of WI course proposals, they read and evaluate a range of teaching ideas and WI assignments that inevitably cause them to reflect on their own practices. Even serving on the campus committee that prepared us for our WPA external review proved to be a learning experience for one non-WI faculty member. Journalism professor Steve Weinberg documented his and others' changes in attitude toward WI courses in "Overcoming Skepticism about 'Writing Across the Curriculum.'"

4. Befitting MU's Research I designation, CWP conducts and encourages a variety of projects related to WI teaching. Teams of WI faculty have presented their work at the two most recent national Writing Across the Curriculum conferences. The first team—a nurse, a mechanical and aerospace engineer, and a wildlife expert—saw their piece published in *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* (October 1998) and the second—an architect, a Romance languages teacher, and an English teacher—have an article in progress. WI faculty are regular presenters at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and numerous others have published essays in their respective disciplinary-based journals. CWP staff projects include examining what works—and what doesn't—in specific courses, as well

as consulting for other institutions on WI course development, integrating writing into general education, and using WI assignments in community learning courses. And an earlier research project, conducted at MU, led to a more enlightened form of research at Indiana University. In "Adventures in the WAC Assessment Trade: Reconsidering the Link between Research and Consultation," Raymond Smith and Christine Farris describe their attempts to determine the effect of WI courses on students' writing and critical thinking. They maintain that the results of their work "will have immediate and long-lasting consequences for pedagogy on our campus and are born of our questions about the researcher-subject relationship; specifically, whose needs drive the inquiry: those of WAC programs, composition specialists, or faculty members teaching WI courses?" (174).

Lest the CWP/mission statement framework and the relative vigor of MU's WI requirement convey too rosy a picture, we reinvoke Ed White's caution that "no one should minimize either the difficulties or the expense involved over the long term" (*Teaching* 164). Like virtually every other institution, MU faces budgetary quandaries that have no simple solutions. Our resources for providing WI TAs to the burgeoning number of WI classes are strained. Pressure to win grants and publish research increases yearly, taxing faculty's ability to develop new WI courses. The percentage of "nonregular" faculty rises each year, making it difficult for the board to enforce its policy of WI classes being taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty only. More and more students transfer into MU and submit requests to waive one of the two required WI courses, causing the board to revisit its long-standing policy of requiring both WI courses to be taken on campus. Similarly, more students are completing an international study component and requesting that one of the two WI courses be satisfied through study abroad. We should be doing much more with assessment. We would like to strengthen WI TA training more than we have. We need a solution to the reward problem, and we need to be constantly vigilant for faculty burnout. Obviously, we hope that the fifteen-year history of WI teaching on our campus will continue. We enjoy strong support from faculty, administrators, members of the Board of Curators, and even stu-

dents. But future success depends on visionary thinking, creative problem solving, as well as all the goodwill we can muster from our constituents.

New Directions for WI Courses

In "The Future of WAC," Barbara Walvoord indicates challenges she believes WAC—and by extension, I would argue, WI courses—faces: "to change, to set goals, to address macro issues, to re-think old answers to micro issues, to deal with assessment" (74). As McLeod and Miraglia point out in Chapter 1, given its aim of pedagogical change, WAC is notoriously good at aligning itself with ongoing developments in academe. I elaborate here on two areas in which I believe WI courses could have significant impact.

One concerns the issue of students from varied language and cultural backgrounds and their mastery of academic discourse. WAC personnel are far more likely than WI faculty in the disciplines to be aware of policy statements on language put forward by groups such as CCCC and NCTE. WAC personnel can, through their consultation with WI faculty, create greater awareness and sensitivity that can then translate into action in the classroom in the form of, say, innovative assignments and less judgmental thinking about "error." As Geneva Smitherman notes in her historical review of CCCC's advocacy for students on the linguistic margins, "What we are witnessing [now] . . . is a developing sociolinguistic sophistication and political maturity about language rights issues" (369). Faculty in the disciplines will not be knowledgeable about the CCCC National Language Policy, but WAC personnel can be. Moreover, as professionals in the field, we have an obligation to understand and promote the intent behind such statements. Smitherman continues,

> The National Language Policy stresses the need not just for marginalized Americans but all Americans to be bi- or multilingual in order to be prepared for citizenship in a global, multicultural society. More than a policy for students of one particular color or class, this policy recognizes that the ability to speak many tongues is a necessity for everybody. (369)

WI teaching provides one avenue for faculty in the disciplines not only to become more attuned to language issues generally, but also to practice them as part of their new WI teaching repertoires (see Villanueva, Chapter 7, this volume).

The second area is assessment. After more than a decade of national attention to assessment, particularly on the part of legislative bodies calling for "accountability" of one kind or another, groups around the country are beginning to protest (Bayles). Parents, students, faculty, and even school administrators are beginning to vocalize their opposition to what Robert Tierney, director of Ohio State's School of Teaching and Learning, calls "proficiency test madness" (Bayles 10a). No matter how effective these individual and organized protests may be in the long run, however, educators will still have to propose acceptable alternatives to the standardized tests now so prevalent on our educational scene. One answer, of course, is writing in WI courses. Many institutions, MU among them, require WI classes in both general education and major field courses. Writing from either curriculum could be used as a means of determining student achievement and programmatic effectiveness. Alternatively, writing from both curricula could be combined to serve as exit documentation of student proficiency. Admittedly, developing such portfolio systems would require expert guidance, resources, and time not associated with standardized testing. But the findings, not to mention what faculty would learn in the process, could provide a healthy counterbalance to the prevailing test madness. Using writing from WI courses could offer a genuine method that allows the research to feed back into the teaching and learning loop (see Condon, Chapter 2, this volume).

James Kinneavy concluded in an essay on WAC,

> The fact remains that the jury is out on writing across the curriculum. . . . Further cases must be brought to the courts to test the movement. At the present, the promise seems most favorable—writing across the curriculum may be the best academic response to the literacy crisis in English-speaking countries, though it cannot be a total social response. (377)

This summation, though now some thirteen years old, may be a fitting one for WI courses within the WAC movement as well.

WI courses are not without controversy. But in numerous places they have also proved an effective means indeed for enhancing undergraduate and graduate education, faculty development, and research. WI courses cannot be a complete response to any educational mission, but they can provide a significant contribution to an overall educational plan.

Notes

1. These guidelines may be found online in the WPA-L Archives, http://lists.asu.edu/archives/wpa-l.html, in posts by Linda Shamoon (University of Rhode Island, 8/5/97) and by Elizabeth Sawin (Missouri Western, 7/15/98).

2. These posts may be found in the WPA-L Archives, http://lists.asu.edu/archives/wpa-l.html. The dates for the posts are, respectively, 1/31/97, 3/27/97, 10/30/97, 12/2/98, 1/28/99, and 1/31/99.

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