

8 WAC and Faculty Career Patterns

WAC changed my life.

—Sociology, UC

Beyond looking at faculty's teaching philosophies, attitudes, and strategies, we examined our data for evidence about WAC's impact on faculty members' broader professional lives and career patterns.

WAC did not occur in a vacuum for our faculty. It was part of a rich mix of ongoing experiences and changes. Faculty journeys were marked by periods of rapid change and periods of fallow, periods of frustration and periods of exhilaration. The journeys they recounted were shaped by their own personalities—we had tortoises and hares, introverts and extroverts, optimists and pessimists. But mostly we just had *people* in all their complexity, all their variety. And WAC had been part of their journey.

We were especially struck by the fact that WAC took its place among a wide variety of other development experiences—a seminar in syllabus design, help from a spouse, a critical-thinking workshop, a discussion with colleagues, a team-teaching experience, a particularly meaningful encounter with a student, a graduate school experience vividly recalled. The WAC experience blended with all of these others. Sometimes our respondents could not exactly pin down whether a development had arisen from a WAC workshop. Once again, we were reminded that the boundaries of WAC are more distinct to us as WAC professionals than they were to the faculty we studied.

Amid this diversity, however, we identified six themes that occurred in faculty's career development relative to WAC. These themes are not mutually exclusive, and one individual's account may exhibit several themes.

This chapter briefly discusses and illustrates the six themes; it then presents a collection of faculty members' narratives that illustrate those themes.

1. The Road Not Taken

One path was for faculty to become increasingly involved in educational reform to which WAC was seen as peripheral. For example, in recent years, mathematicians at the University of Cincinnati have become heavily involved in the significant reforms their department is undertaking to make undergraduate education more interactive, collaborative, and effective, and to integrate technology such as the graphing calculator into students' learning. Both of the UC mathematicians we interviewed in 1994 credited WAC with having been, in a vague sense, an impetus for their interest in reform. But they also separated themselves from WAC in significant ways. They saw WAC as having been peripheral to this math reform, to their discipline, and sometimes to their respective teaching styles. One math faculty member said:

There are a number of discipline-specific reform movements in math. In this department, the revitalizing of our teaching by writing has been left behind by most of our faculty. We worry about things like cooperative learning, calculus reform, and the use of computers in the classroom. People who are thinking about education in math in this department are thinking about those things. But WAC was certainly what got us thinking about educational issues.

A variant of this theme is a UC faculty member who embraced as an old friend the WAC idea that, early in the process, learners need to be encouraged to express themselves freely. But he applied this notion almost entirely in the area of graphics, not writing, and he probably would have done so even without the WAC workshop, since this philosophy was well formulated before he attended. He has, however, continued to develop his "just let it flow, get it down" teaching methods in the graphics medium, in the face of skepticism from some of his departmental colleagues.

2. WAC on Hold

A second theme that occurs in faculty stories is the sense that some of the things faculty want to do are on hold, usually because of external circumstances—a child is born, the person becomes department head, illness intervenes.

Faculty had the sense that they could and would come back to the issues and try the strategies again at some future time when external constraints were lifted. One example is a faculty member who, after the workshop, became embroiled as head of his troubled department.

His interview reflected his sense of weariness and embattlement. At that time, his memory of the workshop was functioning as a kind of touchstone, a vision of the peaceful kingdom, held in his mind's eye, when turmoil in his department and college had made the society around him seem anything but peaceful. "It showed me there are still good people at UC," said another faculty member in a similar situation.

3. Embracing, Then Winnowing

A third theme in some stories is the faculty member showing initial enthusiasm and adopting many WAC ideas, then becoming overwhelmed by the workload, and refining and winnowing WAC strategies.

In some stories, this pattern of enthusiasm and winnowing becomes recursive. The faculty member realizes that each new teaching direction raises its own problems and that a teaching journey is composed of reiterated cycles. A TSU health sciences faculty member, for example, found that her initial enthusiastic embrace of WAC ideas and her subsequent paper-load problems spurred her on to a new stage in her journey.

In another professional preparation course, "Introduction to the Health Professions," I had students write responses to guest speakers, . . . their career goals, and reflections about their peer presentations. In all, I looked through and graded about twenty-five students' workbooks, each with more than forty pages, and critiqued the work. After three semesters of this, I was so delighted with their learning, but so frustrated with my workload, that I decided to investigate how to grade smarter. It became the topic for my 1988 sabbatical.

"I used to have my students write every day, but when the class grew to fifty people, it was simply too much to cope with."

—UC

"I haven't made the writer's group at all since my wife has been back teaching, and I've had to be home for the kids. So I'm out of the loop on that one."

—TSU

4. Little by Little

“WAC on hold” could, in the long run, blend into this next pattern, which we call “little by little.” What distinguishes it from WAC on hold is the sense, on the faculty member’s part, that she or he was making progress—slowly but surely. Sometimes the unevenness of progress was caused by external circumstances. Sometimes the limiting factors were personal working styles. Several faculty, especially those from Walvoord’s workshops at Whitworth, which emphasized extensive preliminary work to make an assignment effective, talked about their habits of “procrastination” or their serendipitous course-planning strategies as a barrier to the kind of prior planning they knew such assignments required. As one faculty member said candidly:

To be honest . . . I tend to procrastinate. And those ideas [about preparing effective assignments and stating explicit criteria for grading, as discussed in the workshop] require that you don’t procrastinate, but that you front-load your efforts. . . . When I have gotten around to doing it, I have been very glad and gotten all kinds of positive reinforcement. And when I haven’t gotten around to doing it, I feel like, “Oh, Help!” I mean, what am I going to do with this? . . . I think I’m making a little progress in terms of being deliberate about what I want to know from students, what I want to be able to see into their minds about, what I want them to learn—as opposed to, “How can I think of a thirty-point assignment that is good at this point in the term?”

5. The Road to Damascus

Some faculty members reflected the sense that WAC had been a significant turnaround for them. The sociologist whose multiple connections we explored on pages 68–71 (this volume) sees his transformation in this way:

I guess at first [when I went to the workshop] I was looking for some way to get away from the teaching style I had, which was pretty much a little bit of lecture and then large-group discussion. I was really frustrated with it. I just didn’t feel that the students were getting the sociological perspective that way. Some did, but some didn’t. And I was kind of flailing about trying to figure out how I could get their lives connected up with sociology. Now [after the workshop] I use a whole series of worksheets in all my courses. [He explains how the worksheets encourage the students to think critically and to

connect their lives to sociology. See pages 69–70, this volume.] I think the sociological perspective was always there for the better students, the ones who really clicked into sociology—the natural sociologists. I enjoy those students. But I enjoy far more the student who comes in and thinks, “What a jerky class. What a lark this is.” Those are the students I love to deal with. If I can just make them turn on to sociology, it’s amazing to watch. Before the workshop, I felt that my course wasn’t doing that well. I think it is now. I won’t ever return to that old path.

6. New Worlds

WAC had taken some faculty into realms they had not dared to enter before. The common thread in their stories was the sense that WAC had spurred them to reach out. Several TSU faculty had been involved in WAC for fifteen to eighteen years, and we had data about them across all those years. Here we present the accounts of two of those faculty members for whom WAC was a spur to “new worlds.”

Logarithmic Growth

—Virginia Johnson Anderson, Biology, TSU

Easily distracted by rustling palm trees, darting geckos, and beautiful island children drawn to laptop computers as moths to flames, I drafted my faculty story on a hotel patio in Tonga, an island paradise in the South Pacific. I splashed in turquoise-blue waters, saw black coral, ate sea cucumbers, photographed bat sanctuaries, frolicked with sea stars in offshore tide pools, and even danced the “Electric Slide” for the Queen of Tonga.

Yet, my most vivid Tongan memory is of eighteen U.S. Peace Corps volunteers engaged in a think-pair-share activity with their host country counterparts in what, to the best of anyone’s knowledge, was the first writing-across-the-curriculum workshop in the Kingdom of Tonga. After the WAC conference, the eleven science teachers, seven TESLs (Teachers of English as a Second Language), fifteen Tongan primary and secondary teachers, three Tongan principals, and three Peace Corps staff members enjoyed a barbecue beside the lagoon. As I watched them talking in the sunset, I could not help but wonder if any of their lives would be as profoundly changed by WAC as mine has been.

In 1981, I was teaching biology at Towson State University in Maryland. I was over forty, had ten-plus years of teaching experience, an assistant professorship, and best of all, tenure. I was known as a good teacher and committee member. I got along well with all my colleagues, even the most difficult ones, because I wasn’t a threat to anyone’s success. Like almost one-

third (eight out of twenty-four) TSU biology faculty members, I did not have the doctorate, though I did have some coursework toward it. Just three years earlier, the university provost had stated publicly for the first time that no one would be promoted in any rank without “an earned doctorate.”

Maybe I was a second-class academic, but I was a first-class mom! I was the stereotypical, devoted, single parent who served cookies and conversation to my two preteens after school, let the kids make bike trails in my front yard, and welcomed anyone for dinner who didn’t say “yuk.” I was not only a doting parent, I was a dating one, too. Slowly, in the course of three years, my Wednesday night commute to graduate school fifty miles away had been rewarded, then replaced, by romantic dinners and plans.

I would love to tell you that it was great insight on my part or great recruitment by the WAC movement that led me to the 1981–1982 Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum (BACWAC) Institute for College Teachers, but it wasn’t. I was thrilled-to-death pregnant! As fall classes started, I was looking for anything that offered released time, and the BACWAC project did that.

Barbara Walvoord, one of the BACWAC leaders, called to verify that I would be at the two-day kickoff retreat and offered to drive. Our conversation on the thirty-five-mile trip was exceptional. At the retreat itself, much of what the leaders were saying about writing being contextual seemed to make good sense, but I didn’t have a clue as to what their references to “genre” meant. We talked in small groups about several readings that were mailed out, but of course, I hadn’t read them. We worked in broad discipline groups on the first evening, but it was hard to relate anything to biology. Barbara’s focus session on the differences between successful and unsuccessful writers was excellent, but then another presenter read his paper to us word for word.

However, the context of the WAC retreat was “A+.” The leaders and participants were congenial; the food was excellent. I met people from my own university, like Fil Dowling, coordinator of the TSU advanced writing courses, and also people from other institutions. I left the two-day retreat looking forward to the next sessions.

We met again at Loyola College two weeks later, for a two-hour session—the first of eight. We all became active participants. One thing we did was to share our own writing in small groups. I never felt comfortable or rewarded in that activity, but others thought it was great. For me, the real excitement began when we started to discuss writing-to-learn activities. I loved adapting WAC ideas to biology! I felt like an educational craftsperson, an inventor. I asked students to keep journals of their learning, had them write practice final exam questions, invited them to react freely to viewing human fetuses in lab, had them interview one another about their progress on an assignment, stopped a lecture and had everyone write for five minutes contrasting today’s phylum with the previous Wednesday’s. With all this new focus, the biology topics on which I had routinely lectured for ten

years—prokaryotic cells, arthropods, glycolysis, DNA, RNA, ATP, mitosis, meiosis, dicotyledons—suddenly came to life again,

Speaking of life, my darling son Billy was born on February 4, 1982. He was bundled off to WAC workshops in March and April. I delivered the last ten “General Biology” lectures of the term with Billy sleeping, almost unnoticed, in a Snuggly™ on my back. That summer, Randy (15), Sherry (12), plus Cheney (16) and Jay (14), my “escalator children” (our family made up the phrase because they were much too wonderful to be called stepchildren), plus the baby and I spent most of our time at the swim club. While the older children swam and Billy slept peacefully under the umbrella, I began working on my dissertation . . . again (year nine at the University of Maryland).

This time, things were different. WAC had raised my self-esteem as a writer and researcher. Investigating the effect of kinetic structure and micrograph content on the ability of college biology students to read micrographs became a task, not a nemesis. Although I was busy getting a doctoral committee set up, compiling scanned electron micrographs, collecting research data, and teaching, I did not want to let go of my WAC support system. So I agreed to work on projects with Fil Dowling and Barbara Walvoord.

As the coordinator of the TSU advanced writing courses, Fil observed several of the discipline-based advanced writing courses in the fall of 1982. He selected my Biology 381, “Biological Literature.”

I loved having Fil visit! I got all the joys of colleague collaboration that we had had in WAC, and I didn’t even have to park at Loyola College. Support came to me. Fil brought handouts, readings, checklists, enthusiasm, questioning, and good research-based suggestions. He bolstered my confidence in grading; he gave me a great handout suggesting that teachers grade content first, organization second, and style third. He was a tremendous help in getting me to select a meaningful variety of writing assignments—he saved me from the term paper! By the end of that semester, the course assignments were well defined.

Before WAC, I told myself that students wrote poorly in their biology courses because they didn’t spend enough time doing it and/or they had not been adequately trained in English 101. Disabused of those myths, I wanted to know more about how and why students had difficulty writing in “Bio Lit.” Over coffee in October, Barbara and I decided to collaborate. We would examine how my upper-level biology students conducted and composed their original scientific research reports.

Little did we know that we had taken the first step in an eight-year journey. And a slow step at that. Having collected data from my class in 1983, we never even took the data out of the box until June 1984. No wonder—in the intervening year, I had finished my dissertation, ended my short but wonderfully “reproductive” marriage, defended my thesis, and received my doctorate. By July, we were listening to tapes, reading drafts, studying writers’ logs, and figuring out how my students conducted and composed original science

research. The fascinating things we learned led to two more years of data collection. Our collaboration became part of a “research merger”; it was integrated into a larger study with Walvoord and other WAC colleagues: Lucille McCarthy, John Breihan, Kim Sherman, and Sue Robison (1991).

As a biologist, I have spent many hours culturing one-celled protozoa. These fascinating life forms have three important stages in early development: inoculation, incubation, and logarithmic (log) growth. Since 1985, my professional life has been in the log-growth stage. Barbara invited me to do a small science part in several local presentations. Wow! I loved sharing my enthusiasm and techniques for writing-to-learn in science. The next thing I knew, she invited me to southern Maryland and then Pennsylvania. Within a year, I was doing WAC workshops on my own. To date, I have given nearly 100 WAC workshops at colleges, universities, and K–12 schools in the United States, Canada, and the Kingdom of Tonga. Barbara and I have co-authored papers for more than twenty national, regional, and local conferences in biology and composition.

I really believe that I learned to be a successful writer in WAC. I had not really understood the components of good writing. Now, I realize the strategic importance of identifying the audience in writing academic, scientific, and particularly grant-oriented prose. Since 1985, I’ve written three book chapters or sections, two juried journal articles, five faculty development grants, two faculty research grants, and five externally funded grants.

To me, faculty development is the sum total of all the processes that induce and/or enable faculty to “grow into” rather than “give up on” truly successful and satisfying academic careers. For all those who are concerned with faculty development—colleagues, department chairs, deans, provosts, presidents, and chancellors—here are some suggestions:

1. Offer all kinds of incentives—money, time, scheduling help—for faculty to try WAC and/or other promising faculty development projects because it doesn’t matter *why* people sign up to grow, just that they do. My motives were definitely self-serving, but look what happened.

2. Construct faculty development programs that meet more than once. Get them to commit to an opening session and then several more sessions later. Often, new ideas take a while to click. I wasn’t turned on to WAC ideas until I tried them in my class.

3. Design faculty development programs that can combat professional isolation. Teachers like myself, who are juggling family responsibilities or graduate work, become more and more isolated from professional thinking. We’re not socially isolated—I drank coffee with the gang in the biology lounge and had a Halloween party in my prep room—but we are professionally isolated. We may or may not go to good seminars, but we never have time to stay and talk to the speakers. We don’t network; we just work.

4. Insist on diversity. TSU's summer workshops had elementary, secondary, and university teachers solving problems together. Faculty who are just getting by need to see successful faculty up close. I was amazed in those early WAC meetings when one Ph.D. full professor praised my teaching technique; I'd never shared one with a professor.

5. Capitalize on different academic disciplinary viewpoints. WAC is successful because its whole is much greater than its parts. I vividly remember listening with Barbara to my students' think-aloud tapes and hearing biology students struggle for hours to write the introductions to their research reports. I said to Barbara, "Why would they try to write the introduction before they had ever done any research? I can't understand it?" She explained very matter-of-factly, "Students often mistake the order of format for the order of composition." Now that would have taken me several years of biology reports to figure out.

6. Recognize that WAC and other forms of innovative faculty development work far more effectively and holistically than are ever documented. WAC projects often measure their success only by how writing programs and/or skills have changed within a discipline. That is a conservative measure of WAC success. WAC gave me the teaching tools and leadership skills to develop several excellent classroom activities, workshops, and community programs related to TSU's Mainstreaming Women's Studies three-year FIPSE grant (another case illustrating that it doesn't matter *why* you go, but *that* you go to faculty development programs. The chair just said, "Do it").

As a result of rave reviews of a WAC workshop, I was asked by the head of the Office of Science of the Maryland State Department of Education to sponsor a funded workshop on hands-on science and writing for elementary teachers. That workshop precipitated a meeting in which I was asked to head up a new pilot elementary science in-service project. It became the prototype for the Urban Science Teaching Project, which was recently funded by the National Science Foundation. Since 1986, I have brought in more than \$400,000 in external grants to TSU.

In closing, my personal life is in log phase, too. I married Cliff and *finally* know what a happy marriage is. Randy is an appraiser and makes almost as much money as I do. Sherry is in graduate school, and darling Billy is in the seventh grade. Out of the eight of us who did not have doctorates in 1981, I am the only one who got a degree. Some have retired; most have been inundated with departmental work. All are still good teachers, but their salaries and their self-esteem suffer. Thank you, mentors, and thank you writing-across-the-curriculum colleagues—I doubt whether I would have made it without you.

Transforming a Career

—H. Fil Dowling Jr., English, TSU

Can a hardworking, gently introverted, limelight-shunning English professor undergo a major career transformation as a result of the writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement?

You bet. I know, because it happened to me!

Back in the spring of 1981, I had been at Towson State University (TSU) for fifteen years. I was a teacher, pure and simple. I had never aspired to be a scholar, and TSU prior to the 1980s had shown little interest in my becoming one. Originally a state teachers' college, TSU had always been dedicated to good undergraduate teaching. And that's what I was—a consistently good teacher, according to both student and peer evaluations. But though my reputation as an effective teacher and committee chair was known and respected within my department, I was virtually unknown to the campus at large. In fact, one of my colleagues, writing a promotion recommendation for me in the early 1980s, referred to me as "the best-kept secret in the English department."

What happened to change this situation? I was a tree that needed to grow more roots. The root influences I needed began to come in 1981, in the form of new approaches to teaching writing, with their firm commitment to writing in all disciplines. This root nourishment that I received not only revitalized my career but also enabled me to put out branches, in the form of WAC workshops and other activities, to other faculty at Towson. These branches in turn sprouted seeds—co-workers who developed into trees of their own, conveying WAC ideas to still more faculty. Roots, trees, branches, seeds, and new trees—these are the metaphors of my development as a TSU faculty member since 1981.

In terms of roots, chief among my exposures to WAC were the Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum (BACWAC) and the Maryland Writing Project. BACWAC is a unique group, founded by Barbara Walvoord and others, which brings together Baltimore-area teachers from all disciplines and from kindergarten through college for faculty development activities. The Maryland Writing Project was originally developed through BACWAC's sponsorship, and then it later absorbed BACWAC as one of its parts.

Having a sabbatical during 1981–1982 motivated me to enroll in the first annual Maryland Writing Project Summer Institute in July 1981, co-led by Barbara Walvoord, who became an important influence. At this institute, for the first time in my career, I was surrounded by teachers from elementary school through college, some of them not English teachers. For the first time, I read avidly in composition theory and in the practice of composition instruction, becoming acquainted with Britton, Emig, Murray, Flower, Sommers, Maimon, and other pioneers of the new rhetoric. For the first time,

I stood in front of a group of my peers to give a seventy-five-minute presentation on teaching writing. And for the first time, I became a member of a peer writing group—joining with three other Summer Institute participants, chosen at random, who hesitantly, and then with increasing confidence, shared pieces of our personal and professional writing with each other. Then, too, as I shared social occasions with these new colleagues at the Summer Institute, I found that despite being shy, I enjoyed their company and was stimulated by their thoughts about teaching and about life.

The following spring of 1982, I co-led a BACWAC workshop on teaching writing for college faculty in all disciplines, put together by Barbara Walvoord and two of her colleagues at Loyola College in Maryland.

I soon became involved in a number of BACWAC-run activities, and eventually became coordinator of BACWAC in the late 1980s. Also in 1982, I volunteered for and was chosen to assume a newly created position at Towson, coordinator of the Advanced Writing Course Program, our WAC program. An additional root influence was a 1984 two-week seminar I attended at Georgetown University entitled "Approaches to Teaching Writing." This seminar's leader, James Slevin, added to my insight into the WAC movement by introducing me to its more radical side: its potential to *transform* as well as improve the writing, and thinking, of faculty and students from various disciplines.

In what ways was the "tree" of my faculty career affected by its strengthened root system? I can think of at least ten (Figure 8.1 summarizes them), not all of which I need to describe here; but several do deserve details.

The main change in my teaching of writing, besides the fact that I began to use such now well-known and widely used approaches as "the writing process" and "peer-response groups," involved adapting the WAC concept of "writing-to-learn" to my literature classes. Abandoning the hoary but often futile "term paper," I developed instead a system centered on nongraded journal writing and classroom projects that focused on helping students develop key skills they needed to become more effective and responsive readers of literature. The sample classroom exercise included here (Figure 8.2) illustrates the methods I've developed. I use this exercise early in the semester to introduce students to the concepts of *observing* and *interpreting* literature. Through exercises such as this, students, including non-English majors, are intrigued to discover that they can make a number of significant observations about a piece of literature that they don't fully understand, which they can then use as the basis for better *interpretations* of the work than they believed themselves capable of.

All of my altered teaching methods resulted in less lecturing and more interaction between my students and me, and among themselves. In short, as a result of my WAC roots, the part of my career that involved teaching (which at one time had been the whole of my career) became more innovative, more exciting to me, and more genuinely helpful to students.

Main Exposure to WAC Theory and Practice

The Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum

The Maryland Writing Project (a branch of the National Writing Project)

Seminar in "Approaches to Teaching Writing" at Georgetown University

Results of Exposure to WAC

Coordinator of Towson State University's WAC Program, 1982–present

Chair of multidisciplinary committee that guides Towson State's Advanced Writing Course Program, 1977–present

Coordinator of the Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum, 1987–1990; Steering Committee, 1985–1993

Co-director of Institute on Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum for Baltimore-area college faculty, Spring 1982

Coordinator and Co-leader of two-day workshops for Towson State faculty on teaching WAC, 1984–present

Author of publications and conference papers on WAC and related subjects

Contributions of WAC to My Faculty Career

Changed methods of teaching writing

Changed use of writing in subject-discipline courses (literature)

Improved teaching (Towson State has mandatory student evaluation of teaching)

Improved assertiveness

Improved leadership ability

Improved public-speaking confidence

Improved visibility, on and off campus

Developed a body of publications, conference presentations, and workshops

Contributed significantly to "promotability"

Enabled other faculty at Towson State to develop *their* careers further through exposure to WAC

Figure 8.1. Summary of Fil Dowling's WAC-related career development.

Equally important to my career development were "intangible" effects of my exposure to WAC, such as increased assertiveness, leadership, and speaking confidence. In the fall of 1981, energized by the recent Maryland Writing Project Summer Institute and realizing the effective role I had played in it, I gathered the courage to ask Barbara Walvoord, out of the blue, if I could join as a co-leader the WAC workshop she was planning with two of her Loyola

Excerpt from a Story for Observations

[The following passage is from William Dean Howells's short story entitled "Editha." In this story, Editha and George are engaged. Editha, strong-willed and patriotic, has insisted that George, a pacifist, volunteer as a soldier in the Civil War, against his better judgment. In the passage below, Editha and George are saying goodbye before George leaves for the war.]

They strained each other in embraces that seemed as ineffective as their words, and he kissed her face with quick, hot breaths that were so unlike him, that made her feel as if she had lost her old lover and found a stranger in his place. The stranger said: "What a gorgeous flower you are, with your red hair, and your blue eyes that look black now, and your face with the color painted out by the white moonshine! Let me hold you under the chin, to see whether I love blood, you tiger-lily!" Then he laughed Gearson's laugh and released her, scared and giddy. Within her wilfulness she had been frightened by a sense of subtler force in him, and mystically mastered as she had never been before.

1. What *observations* can you make about the passage above? (Observations are a reading skill. When we read anything, we make observations about things in the work we are reading that help us *understand* what the work is saying. We also make observations about things in the work that we think are important in some way, even though we may not be sure exactly how or why they are important.)

2. After making observations about the passage, can you interpret what it implies to the reader about Editha and about George? (By *analyzing* the observations we make about something that we read, we can arrive at a fuller interpretation of their significance. To *analyze*, we examine in depth the individual observations we have made; how they relate to each other; and how they relate to the whole story or poem they come from [i.e., how they relate to the context].)

Figure 8.2. Fil Dowling's journal assignment.

College colleagues in the spring of 1982. When Barbara graciously consented, the future direction of my career suddenly became clear: I was to become (among other things) a WAC specialist. Although this 1982 workshop was just moderately successful, as only Barbara, among the four of us, had ever led a workshop before, it was a tremendous learning experience and gave me the confidence that I could organize and run WAC workshops of my own.

I was now ready to take on leadership roles that I had shied away from before. I generated ideas for, organized, and co-led a number of faculty development workshops in WAC at Towson State. (Almost all of the TSU faculty who contributed narratives and interviews for this book either attended or co-led, or both, one or more of those workshops.) I visited the classes of willing TSU faculty for four-week periods, consulting with them on student writing and new techniques for teaching it. I started a faculty

writing group at Towson. And by 1985, I was ready to assume some leadership roles off campus. I petitioned for and was accepted as head editor of the *Maryland English Journal* (an affiliate journal of NCTE), a position I held for five years. And in 1987, I put together and submitted my first proposal for a panel session—three papers by three different faculty—at the CCCC (Conference on College Composition and Communication). This became the first of a number of papers I have since given at CCCC, Penn State, and several other professional conferences.

It's worth noting that my proposing of panel groups for CCCC was a far cry from my earlier career backwardness when it came to public speaking—outside the safety of a classroom, that is. I'm amused to recall that when I gave my first sabbatical report in the late 1970s, before a small and admittedly *friendly* group of English department faculty, I begged my elderly parents to attend, for moral and, if necessary, even physical support! (The latter, fortunately, wasn't needed.) I faced each new type of public-speaking role as a distinct challenge. My first time leading a workshop at TSU, my first shakily delivered paper at CCCC, my first presentation at TSU's January Conference for Faculty, and my first time as solo conductor of an off-campus writing workshop (at a Canadian Council of Teachers of English conference in Vancouver in 1989) were all innovations in my career. But my WAC root influences had done their work well, and by the 1990s, I had become a veteran of public appearances.

Another result of my involvement in WAC was increased visibility. Before I became coordinator of Towson State's WAC program, I had little name recognition beyond the English department. But through my activities in that role, I met and interacted with a wealth of dynamic, interesting faculty. Just as one example, the Faculty Writers' Response Group I started for Towson State faculty in 1985 turned out to strengthen collegial ties and mutual respect just as much as it helped to strengthen faculty writing. Faculty in this writing group, as well as faculty in the WAC workshops I've given, frequently cite getting to know and interact with faculty in other departments as a major, positive result.

By this time my career tree had developed many branches—branches carrying WAC ideas and influences to my fellow faculty. Written evaluations by participants in the two-day WAC workshops I developed were highly enthusiastic and praiseworthy. Equally important, the workshops generated new leaders, new carriers of WAC ideas on campus. I promoted workshop participants to co-leaders of future workshops. I recruited them to serve on the Advanced Writing Course Subcommittee, which oversees the WAC course program at Towson State. I invited them to join my writing group for faculty, which not only encourages its members to generate and revise publishable writing, thus enhancing their careers, but also models WAC methods like peer-response groups, writing-to-learn, and the draft-and-revise process, which faculty can then import back into their own writing classrooms.

In short, as branches, various faculty development activities—sprung from the nourished tree of my career, they often developed seeds—interested and revitalized faculty, who then became flourishing trees of their own, in turn putting out branches to influence still other faculty on campus and beyond.

Of course, there were failures as well. I learned that no person and no set of ideas would have a positive effect on everybody. I recall the apathy from some members of my own English department that greeted my enthusiasm after I had taken the 1981 MWP institute. (Could “they”—K-12 teachers—really have anything to teach “us”?) And I remember vividly one of several faculty members outside of the English department who simply could not be reached. This person, whose department felt him to be unsuccessful at teaching writing, was enticed by them to enroll in the MWP institute in the mid-1980s, and at my urging he also attended several mini-workshops on WAC that I gave on school-day afternoons. Yet, when I made some invited visits to this faculty member’s writing class, I discovered that all of the new writing-instruction ideas that the teacher had been exposed to, and did use, served merely as a thin overlay on the traditional writing teacher’s attitude: “I tell you what to write; you write it; I tell you if it’s any good or not.”

I gradually realized that new trees would come only from faculty who were *self*-motivated: people who appropriated WAC ideas for their own purposes and in support of their own goals of faculty development. Many of these faculty have become “writing specialists” themselves, disseminating WAC ideas to other faculty in their own disciplines, at TSU at large, or through national workshops and conventions. Several of these people are the faculty whose stories you have read in this book. But there are others.

I think, for instance, of Linda Mahin, an English teacher who joined the Advanced Writing Course Subcommittee in the mid-1980s, co-led our first two-day WAC workshop in 1984, and then applied WAC ideas to her specialty area of business writing, becoming a recognized scholar and consultant in that field. I think of Linda Sweeting, in chemistry, whose first contact with WAC came when she joined the Faculty Writers’ Response Group in 1990 because she wanted to make her own writing more facile and more appropriate to varied audiences. Although originally opposed to having a writing course in chemistry because “scientists can’t teach writing,” Linda has since created her own WAC course, called “Ethics in the Sciences,” and also composed published pieces for both professional and general audiences. I think of Charlotte Exner, who, encouraged by the enthusiasm of her department chair about one of our two-day workshops, agreed to let me visit her writing course in occupational therapy, developed new teaching methods for it which she passed on to subsequent teachers of the course, and who, after she became department chair, encouraged several of her newer faculty to attend our later WAC workshops.

And I think of the entire nursing department at TSU (of all the unexpected departments to be strongly influenced by the winds of WAC!). After

dutifully, though not eagerly, developing its own writing course in the late 1970s to meet TSU's new general education requirements, the nursing staff fretted over how the course was working out. They consequently sent faculty to our two-day WAC workshops—eleven faculty in all, more than any other department. In 1986, they invited Virginia Anderson, who by then had become a science writing specialist, to consult with them as a department. Later, they called in more advisors on teaching writing in the health professions, including Joan McMahon. And one member of the nursing faculty joined first the faculty writing group and later, at my invitation, the Advanced Writing Course Subcommittee. Ultimately, the nursing department thought so deeply about WAC ideas and the writing of their nursing majors that their thinking progressed *beyond* Towson's requirements for a writing course. They are currently developing an innovative plan to sequence various levels of student writing experiences throughout their undergraduate program, instead of relying on a single, senior-level course to "fix the students' writing."

To conclude, two important results of WAC's influence on my faculty career are that it helped me become "promotable" and that it enabled me to make contributions to *other* faculty's career development. Briefly, about promotability: by the mid-1980s, when it became necessary at TSU for faculty up for promotion to have a significant record of scholarly productivity and publication, I had developed enough publications and papers, most of them centered on WAC, to meet that standard, and I was promoted to full professor in 1988. (Interestingly, these scholarly activities had no negative effects on my teaching performance; in fact, my student evaluations, which had always been good, became still higher throughout the 1980s and 1990s.) It wasn't only the scholarly production that made me promotable, but also the fact that my name was by then well known and respected around campus because of all the WAC-related activities I had sponsored. I was no longer "the best-kept secret in the English department."

However, even more important than the promotability, I'm most happy about the enabling role I've been able to play in the development of *other* faculty careers at Towson State. One faculty member's career development is important; but more important is the entire "life" of a university—its collective faculty. The impact of WAC on my faculty career firmly illustrates that WAC can be and has been a *major* influence on college faculty development in general. We at Towson State are the living, ever-growing, still-changing proof.