



Writing Across Curriculum

Roger Graves

Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

University of Alberta



<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>



Who am I?



[U of A](#)

[Centre 4 Writers](#)

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Selected Recent Presentations

[Anglo-Canadian Contexts for Writing](#)
IUFM Poitou-Charentes, November 12, 2008

[Write your future: Arts Career Day](#)
University of Alberta, November 1, 2008

[The Shift to Visuals and Visual Design in Writing Instruction](#)
Grant MacEwen College, October 27, 2008

[Teaching Writing: A Primer for Graduate Students](#)
University of Alberta, October 21, 2008

[Top Ten Ways to Improve Your Writing](#)
University of Alberta, October 14, 2008

[Marking Essays: Designing Rubrics that Work](#)
University of Alberta, October 3, 2008

[The Power of Persuasion](#)
University of Alberta, September 10 and 30, 2008

[Huron University College/University of Western Ontario Writing Project: Writing through the curriculum](#)
Wilfrid Laurier University, August 27, 2008

I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of four books and 29 articles, including *Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities*. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Literacy (CASLL/Inkshed).

Books

A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication
With Heather Graves. Peterborough: Broadview, 2007.



The Brief Genesis Handbook, Canadian Edition



Writing Initiatives @ U of A

Three new ways to improve student writing:

- ▣ Centre for Writers
- ▣ Writing Studies courses
- ▣ Writing Across the Curriculum





Centre for Writers



Writing Initiatives
University of Alberta



Centre for Writers

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Welcome to Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization an idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

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Publications:



A Strategic Guide To
Technical Communication
By Heather Graves
And Roger Graves
Broadview Press
2007

<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>



C4W



Over 1100 students this fall

Building a comprehensive website

Work with graduate students as well as undergraduates

Free to students





Writing Studies



Writing Studies Mission Statement

The proposed program in Writing Studies at the University of Alberta will offer courses and undergraduate and graduate degrees in Writing Studies, support innovative research in the field of Writing Studies, and provide an intellectual home for faculty and students who serve the university-wide writing initiatives.

An interdisciplinary Writing Studies Program is in development as it goes through the extensive U of A proposal and consultation process.

Writing Studies courses are brand new to the University of Alberta.

Click on the links below for more information on our new course offerings:

[**Writing Studies 101: Exploring Writing**](#)

[**INT D 325: Introduction to Writing Centre Practice**](#)



New Course: WRS 500

WRS 500 Academic Writing in Science

Offered by Heather Graves (Fall, 2009)

This class will focus on teaching graduate students about academic writing in the sciences, with the goal of helping them to improve their ability to construct clear, concise, and well-supported arguments in the documents that they write as part of or associated with their degree programs.





Writing Across the Curriculum

Me working with you to increase the ability of your students to write well

- Writing assignments in courses (formal, graded writing)
- Writing to learn (informal writing)
- Writing in the disciplines (special rules for writing in your academic area)
- Writing intensive courses (curriculum designation)





Writing Across the Curriculum

- writing-to-learn activities are short, impromptu or otherwise informal writing tasks that help students think through key concepts or ideas presented in a course
- Based on learning to write research in 1960s-1970s in US/UK
- First programs emerged in 1980s



The WAC Clearinghouse, <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/>



WAC Philosophy



- that writing is the responsibility of the entire academic community,
- that writing must be integrated across departmental boundaries,
- that writing instruction must be
- that writing promotes learning
- that only by practicing the conventions of an academic discipline will students begin to communicate effectively within that discipline.



WAC: Writing and learning

- writing plays an indispensable role in developing critical thinking skills, learning discipline-specific content, and understanding and building competence in the modes of inquiry and dissemination specific to various disciplines and professions

Georgia State WAC Program,

http://wac.gsu.edu/content/introduction/what_is_wac.shtml





WAC and Student Engagement

- **student engagement** with the subject matter being taught **increases significantly** when they are more frequently asked to write about that subject, particularly in courses in their junior and senior years.

Richard J. Light. "Writing and Students' Engagement " *Peer Review* 6.1 (Fall 2003): 28-31.





WAC and writing assignments

- Tie the writing task to specific pedagogical goals.
- Note rhetorical aspects of the task, i.e., audience, purpose, writing situation.
- Make all elements of the task clear.
- Include grading criteria on the assignment sheet.
- Break down the task into manageable steps.

<http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop10a.cfm>





Strategies for effective assignments

- Overview
- Group instructions into chunks
- Step-by-step
- Clarify key points
- Include alternatives or substitutions
- Tips, warnings, cautions
- Troubleshooting
- Adapt to reader's level
- Use imperative
- Define terms
- Use logical order
- Maintain uniform tone





Writing to learn assignments

- The reading journal
- Generic and focused summaries
- Annotations
- Response papers
- Synthesis papers
- The discussion starter
- Focusing a discussion
- The learning log
- Analyzing the process
- Problem statement
- Solving real problems
- Pre-test warm-ups
- Using Cases
- Letters
- What counts as a fact?
- Believing and doubting game
- Analysis of events
- Project notebooks
- The writing journal





WAC and writing in the disciplines?

Writing in the disciplines focuses on instructing students in the language conventions of a discipline as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline

Problem? Human ecology students write from diverse disciplinary perspectives. How do they know which perspective to adopt for a particular assignment?





WAC: Writing Intensive courses

- WI courses incorporate revised assignments, sequenced assignments, peer review, and student assistance from a writing consultant. [Georgia State]





Writing Intensive courses at Simon Fraser

- A writing-intensive course is one in which writing is used as a tool for learning and developing understanding of subject matter and is taught as a means of communication in discipline-specific ways. Students are shown, rather than simply told, how to write in the **genres** most valued in the discipline and are given opportunities to use skilled feedback in the **revision** and **rewriting** of major papers.



<http://www.lidc.sfu.ca/teaching/writing/resources/W-CourseCriteria.php>



Genres in Human Ecology

- What do students write in Human Ecology courses?
- Why do they write them? To explore ideas? To be evaluated? To describe? To argue? To reflect?
- Who do they write for?





Next Steps

Workshops:

- Clear Instructions, Great Expectations: Creating good writing assignments
- Marking Essays: Designing Rubrics that Work

Other support initiatives:

- Publicizing the C4W to Human Ecology students
- Curriculum: Writing in Human Ecology?

