

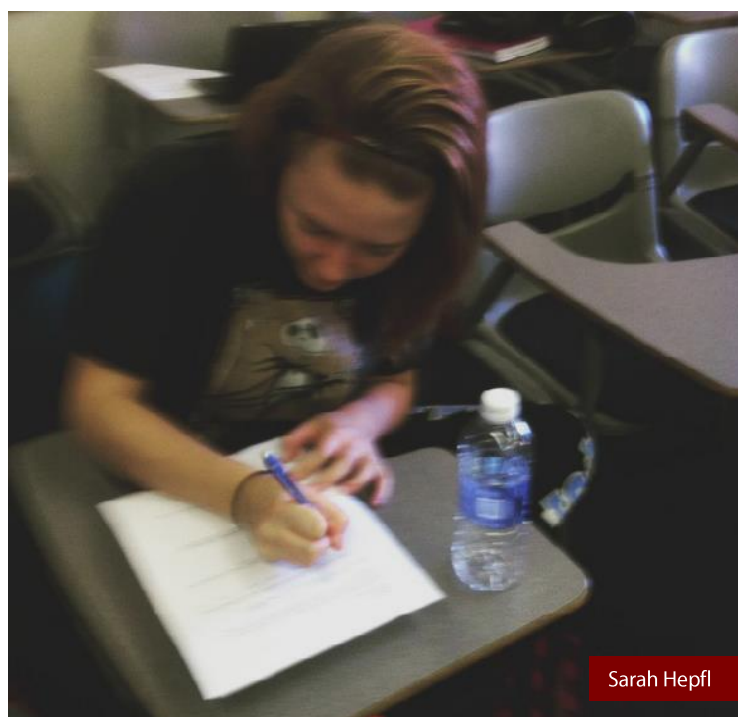
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

WAC

Writing Across the Curriculum

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National Day on Writing Celebration

In celebration of this year's National Day on Writing theme, #WhyIwrite, the Writing Across the Curriculum program teamed up with the Jones White Writing Center to offer IUP the opportunity to tell the world just that. The IUP community was encouraged to post a writing selfie to Instagram by October 20th, the day Congress has designated as the National Day on Writing.

The submissions with the best captions were awarded Amazon gift cards. Three submissions stood out:

Human Development and Environmental Studies major Serena Gordon submitted a picture of herself taping the first memoir to the wall as part of the Punxsutawney six-word memoir project and captioned it with, "We write to make a mark."

English professor Todd Thompson submitted a photo of his English 212 class celebrating the National Day on Writing by completing and submitting a major course assignment.

English major Sarah Hepfl submitted a selfie of writing with a pen and water bottle captioned, "Write on."

Established in 2009 by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and recognized by Congress, the National Day on Writing celebrates composition in all forms—from stories, poems, and letters to text messages, videos, and audio recordings—and demonstrates how writing is a vital part of our everyday lives. This is the fourth year the IUP WAC program has celebrated the National Day on Writing. ■

Teach. Write. Teach Writing.

The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program provides support for faculty university wide in implementing writing into their courses.

The program aims to create and sustain a community of writers at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

If you have questions about WAC, please contact Bryna Siegel Finer at brynasf@iup.edu.



Wright First Recipient of Jones White Writing Award

Food and Nutrition senior, Amanda Wright, was awarded the Jones White Student Writing Award at the dedication of the Kathleen Jones White Writing Center on October 16th, 2015.

The Jones White Student Writing Award is awarded by the Jones White Writing Center to a student who demonstrates growth as a writer throughout their time at IUP.

As the department spearheading the Writing Across the Curriculum pilot program, faculty in the Department of Food and Nutrition were asked to nominate a superior student writer. In the future, all departments who participate in the WAC program will be eligible to nominate students.

Said one of her professors, Jodie Seybold, "[Amanda] has always been a strong student, but her writing has made remarkable growth through her time at IUP."

The Jones White Student Writing Award is named for Kathleen Jones White (1934-2006), beloved educator, leader, and IUP alumna who was admired for her talents as a teacher and writer. ■

Learn More: Attend a WAC Workshop

Faculty Workshops

Each Workshop is presented twice, so you can choose which offering fits your schedule.

Creating Effective Writing Assignments

Monday, February 8, 11:15 am – 12:05 pm or February 9, 12:30 pm – 1:20 pm, in the writing center (218 Eicher Hall)

Learn how to help your students who struggle with writing assignments succeed.

Getting More Bang for Your Buck: An Introduction to Writing to Learn

Monday, March 21, 2:30 pm – 3:20 pm or Tuesday, March 22, 12:30 pm – 1:20 pm, in the writing center (218 Eicher Hall)

Learn how to implement quick, low-stakes writing into any classroom to help students improve their writing without increasing your workload.

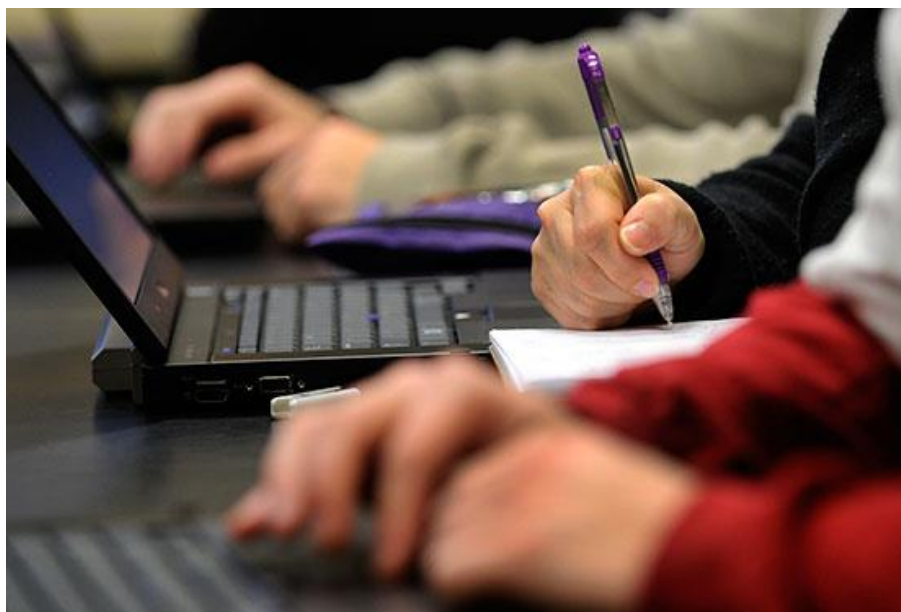
Strategies for Efficiently Grading Student Writing: Faster Response that Benefits You and Your Students

Wednesday, April 13, 10:10 am – 11:00 am or Thursday, April 14, 9:30 am – 10:20 am in the writing center (218 Eicher Hall)

Learn how to maximize your feedback with response strategies that improve student writing and save you time.



Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer, right, led a workshop on Strategies for Responding to Student Writing in October. Also pictured is Dr. Cristina Reitz-Krueger (Psychology).



Customized Writing Plans Help Departments Better Understand Writing in Their Programs

preparing them with studio skills. But we want them to be strong communicators as well. Creating a writing plan for our department is helping us to determine where we can add more writing practice into

the courses taught by their colleagues, so they know if their assignments are scaffolded. It can also help faculty create a culture among students that accepts and understands the importance of writing and communication skills.

“I’m confident our faculty will learn a lot from the process, which will make our students even more competitive when they leave IUP.”

Dr. Phil Neusius, Department of Anthropology

our courses and how we can help students prepare for their careers as studio artists who will be expected to write in a variety of ways,” said Nathan Heuer, Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and WAC faculty liaison.

WAC director Bryna Siegel Finer explains, “All departments should want to develop a DWP. It can make faculty aware of the sorts of writing tasks that are assigned in

I’m glad to see so much representation from CHSS, CHHS, CFA, and CNSM. It shows that this idea is starting to spread across the university. I hope to see more involvement from other departments and the rest of the colleges in the coming semesters.”

For information on creating a customized Department Writing Plan in your department, contact brynasf@iup.edu ■

Last year, two IUP departments, Food & Nutrition and Mathematics, began work with the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program to develop customized Department Writing Plans (DWPs) for majors in their departments. In fall 2015, Anthropology, Art, Biology, Hospitality Management, and Sociology also began to develop DWPs.

DWPs are designed to make visible how writing is situated throughout a curriculum, and they can assist faculty in any department or program to create a more meaningful relationship between the content they teach and the writing they assign. A DWP can help with assessment, accreditation, and five-year department reviews, as well as provide research and scholarship opportunities for faculty who are interested in how students write in their disciplines.

“We jumped at the chance to participate in this initiative. Our major is already writing intensive, but having the chance to think carefully about how we teach writing and how it will affect students when they graduate was an opportunity to really enrich our programs. I’m confident our faculty will learn a lot from the process, which will make our students even more competitive when they leave IUP,” said Phil Neusius, Chair of the Department of Anthropology.

The DWP process helps demonstrate how writing is currently taught in majors courses, addresses gaps in curriculum, and ensures that students get practice writing throughout their four years in order to meet writing challenges in advanced courses and in their career fields.

As the first department to develop a plan through WAC, the materials developed by the Department of Food & Nutrition have been used as templates for other departments as they have developed their own plans. Food & Nutrition has served as a model for the rest of IUP in its commitment to improving students’ communication skills and increasing their potential for career success.

“Students don’t usually expect to write in our courses, especially the courses that are

Punxsutawney Campus Participates in Unique WAC Initiative

Beginning this past summer, Punxsutawney students, faculty, and staff have been participating in a unique program in which writing journals are used in classes across the campus as well as co-curricularly and in self-sponsored ways. While many universities institute a first-year reader program in order to manifest cohesion and community in their younger and more vulnerable students, this program is possibly the first in the nation to pilot a first-year writing journal.

On arrival to campus, each first-year student was given an empty journal as a gift from the campus, embossed with the IUP Punxsutawney logo. In his welcoming address, Dean Terry Appolonia spoke about the importance of writing and offered inspiration and some ideas for how to use the journal. Faculty in many of the courses offered on campus participated in a day-long training in how to encourage students to use the journals in class and out of class for both school- and self-sponsored writing, for both academic and creative writing. Staff, including those in the library, student activities, and residence life, were also trained on

how to facilitate student use of the journals as part of the “One Punxsy” philosophy. Those faculty/staff working in the program also have journals so that they can act as models for students in their use of the journals.

Says Punxsutawney Writing Center Director, Lynn Shelly, “I like the way the journal notebooks act as a visible sign of our campus’ commitment to writing. It’s a simple way to involve students in writing both inside and outside the classroom. When I ask students to write in their journal notebooks in class, I get out my journal, and I write too. The journals are helping to create a campus culture in which writing is seen as important to learning.”

At the end of the year, students will have the opportunity to develop a piece from their journals into a submission for a campus writing contest. Prizes will be awarded.

Shelly and WAC Director, Bryna Siegel Finer, who collaboratively conceived the program, are hoping to see various benefits from the journaling, including the improvement of writing fluency and an enhancement of students’ expressive skills. Overall, they see the journals as a way for students to learn how to transfer ideas between courses, and between activities and coursework, and therefore have a fuller and more comprehensive learning experience while at the Punxsy campus. ■

Study Answers the Question of Quality vs. Quantity in Writing: Quality Wins

The study “The Contributions of Writing to Learning and Development: Results From a Large-Scale Multi-Institutional Study” was recently published in *Research in the Teaching of English*. The authors of this study determined that it is not the number of pages a student writes, but the quality and depth of what they write that correlates with greater student learning and development.

The study examined the responses of 70,000 freshman and senior students at 80 baccalaureate institutions to 27 writing practice-based questions. In particular, the relationship between student participation in “deep approaches to learning” and “perceived gains in learning and development” were examined (Anderson, Anson, Gonyea, & Pain, 2015, pp. 204-5).

What the researchers found was that the number of pages students were asked to write had little impact on their perceived gains in learning and development. Instead, it was engagement in deep approaches to learning that caused students to report gains in learning and development. In particular, interactive writing processes and expectations for assignments had a positive impact

on students’ perceived gains in learning and development.

In an interview with *Inside Higher Ed*, the authors of the study said that their findings were not only valuable for writing instructors, and, in fact, may be especially useful for instructors in fields other than writing. For these instructors, the findings show that student learning will not be aided by simply assigning longer papers, but instead that smaller writing tasks that ask students to analyze course information at a deeper level will go further towards fostering student learning and development.

These findings support the pedagogy of Writing Across the Curriculum programs, such as the one here at IUP, which seek not only to increase the number of pages students write in courses, but to ensure that the writing done throughout the university is purposeful and aimed at student learning and growth.

The full study can be found at <http://nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/presentation/2015/Contributions-of-writing-to-learning.pdf> ■

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