

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 014

JC 930 043

AUTHOR Holladay, John M.; Zwyer, Sue
 TITLE Monroe County Community College Writing Across the Curriculum. Annual Reports 1990-1991 and 1991-1992.
 INSTITUTION Monroe County Community Coll., Mich.
 PUB DATE 92
 NOTE 9lp.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Basic Writing; Community Colleges; Participant Satisfaction; *Peer Teaching; Program Effectiveness; Student Attitudes; Thinking Skills; *Tutoring; Two Year Colleges; Writing Achievement; *Writing Across the Curriculum; *Writing Improvement; Writing Instruction; *Writing Laboratories; Writing Processes; Writing Skills; *Writing Workshops
 IDENTIFIERS *Monroe County Community College MI

ABSTRACT

Monroe County Community College (MCCC), in Monroe, Michigan, developed a "Writing Across the Curriculum" program in response to perceived deficiencies in the writing and critical thinking skills of its students. Major features of the program include a Writing Center located in the Learning Assistance Laboratory and Writing Fellows (WF's), veteran writing tutors who work in the Writing Center 2 hours per week and are assigned to work with students in selected classes. MCCC conducted studies in 1990-91 and 1991-92 to measure the success of its writing programs, as well as the satisfaction of the students, faculty, and fellows involved. The studies involved the collection of data on the use of the Writing Center, evaluations of the program by students who worked with WF's, evaluations by faculty who worked with WF's, and evaluations of the program by participating WF's. A winter 1991 survey showed that 82% of the students who had worked with Writing Fellows found their written comments "helpful" or "very helpful," 81% felt the conferences with Fellows were "helpful" or "very helpful," 86% rated the WF's as "effective" or "very effective," and 90% rated the overall program as "effective" or "very effective." Faculty also felt positive about the Writing Center and Writing Fellows program, considering its continuation a very high priority. Comments by the Writing Fellows underscored how much their own writing had improved and how much they enjoyed helping their peers. Newsletters featuring articles on the Writing Across the Curriculum program are attached to each of the reports. (MAB)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED353014

Monroe County Community College Writing Across the Curriculum.
Annual Reports 1990-1991 and 1991-1992.

1992

Sue Zwayer
John M. Holladay

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. M. Holladay

S. Zwayer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) "

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy

Monroe County Community College
Monroe, Michigan

Jr. 930043





Monroe County Community College

Writing Across the Curriculum
Annual Report
1990 - 91

Comprehensive Report

Compiled and Written
by
Dr. John M. Holladay

Humanities/Social Sciences Division

Submitted:
23 May 1991

Monroe County Community College

Writing Across the Curriculum

Annual Report 1990-91

Compiled and Written

by

Dr. John M. Holladay

Humanities/Social Sciences Division

Submitted: 23 May 1991

**Monroe County Community College
WAC Annual Report 1990-91**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introductory Remarks PAGES 1-6

ANNUAL SURVEY REPORT

- II. Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab
Frequency Use Data PAGE 7
- III. Evaluation of the Program by
Students Who Worked with Writing Fellows PAGES 8-15
- IV. Evaluation of the Program by
Faculty Who Worked with Writing Fellows PAGES 16
- V. Evaluation of the Program by
Writing Fellows PAGES 17-18

WRITING PROGRAM NEWSLETTERS

- VI. Language for Learning / Vol. III, No. 1 / Sept. '90 PAGES 19-22
- VII. Language for Learning / Vol. III, No. 2 / Oct. '90 PAGES 23-24
- VIII. Language for Learning / Vol. III, No. 3 / Nov. '90 PAGES 25-28
- IX. Language for Learning / Vol. III, No. 4 / Jan. '91 PAGES 29-34
- X. Language for Learning / Vol. III, No. 5 / Feb. '91 PAGES 35-38

Writing in the Disciplines at Monroe County Community College Annual Report: 1990-91

by
Dr. John Holladay

The 1990-91 academic year marks a turning point for Monroe County Community College's Writing Center and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) Program. Though we had held workshops and discussions earlier, WAC was first given a place in the MCCC budget for the 1988-89 school year. At that time we were granted a three-year opportunity to test our approach and see what sort of impact it would have on our students and faculty.

In March of 1990, as the three-year trial was drawing to a close, our Dean of Instruction, Jack McDonald, distributed a questionnaire to all MCCC faculty. The survey announced that "future direction and funding of the program will be determined as part of this spring's budget consideration."

The one-page questionnaire asked teachers to evaluate the degree to which the quality of their teaching had been positively influenced by MCCC's WAC program. It asked if, in the faculty's opinion, the quality of their students' writing and learning had been positively influenced by WAC. It also asked faculty to indicate the degree to which they felt the Writing Center and Writing Fellows are performing a valuable service. It asked how high a priority the faculty would consider continuation of the Writing Center and Writing Fellows. Finally, faculty were given the opportunity to do the following: "Write a brief description of your feelings about MCCC's approach to WAC (what you like or don't like, why you have been involved or why not, how you would feel about its demise)."

The faculty response to MCCC's Writing Center and Writing Fellows was extremely positive. An overwhelming majority considered its continuation a very high priority. Their written responses included such comments as these:

"WAC is a very positive learning experience for those students who participate and especially for the writing fellows. I especially like the personal touch . . . as opposed to assigning them to a computer and assuming they are learning."

"Since we do not have any honors classes, the 254 Adv. Comp. class is as close as we can come to an Honors class."

"I strongly support the WAC program at MCCC. I would like to see more effort devoted to encouraging faculty to use informal writing assignments in their classes."

"It is the best. Convenient for faculty to take advantage of the opportunity. Quality of assistance to students is high. Learning/teaching skills developed by the WF's will be invaluable as they continue their education. The only negative is that it costs the College \$, but its worth it."

"MCCC's approach is very labor intensive, but necessarily so, and effective."

"This is one of the best programs we have at this school."

"More than any other program, this WAC has improved students' ability to write. Now we are paying more than lip service to good writing."

"I have been involved in the WAC program at MCCC because developing their writing skills is the most important thing we can do for our students."

"Without question, the WAC program here is one of the best programs of any sort that I have seen at any college or university where I have taught. I think it helps make us special."

WAC will continue at MCCC because we are clearly meeting a need--one recognized by employers, administrators, faculty, and students. We will continue because we have an approach that works. It works because the people involved work--and work hard. There are simpler approaches that involve an occasional workshop and pep talk to fire up the faculty. These have little long-lasting impact. As David Russell says (College Composition and Communication, May 1987: 191):

"WAC programs must be woven so tightly into the fabric of the institution as to resist the subtle unraveling effect of academic politics. . . .WAC must be part of an institution-wide plan, with realistic goals and clear steps marked out toward them. Revival meetings or consciousness-raising efforts, however useful as springboards, cannot sustain interest after founders have gone. . . . programs require funding . . . to purchase faculty time dedicated exclusively to WAC . . . Finally, WAC programs require patience. . . .Programs must have time (and therefore hard money) to bring about the gradual transformation in attitudes necessary to make WAC a tradition instead of a trend."

We can be proud of the start we have made: faculty and students have worked together to build a solid foundation for the future. We can be grateful that we have an administration willing to make the financial commitment to continue the program. Nevertheless, even after three years, the balance is delicate and must be given the opportunity to grow. Because we have a union and a contract, faculty need not become involved to gain merit pay. Those who choose to become involved do so because they understand the benefits of writing. They know it requires more work than multiple-choice tests and scan-tron machines, but they are willing to make the extra effort because they can see the quality of learning is superior.

This summer we will hire a new director for our WAC program. This person will handle a lot of responsibility. He or she must coordinate the efforts of 20-30 faculty with 25-35 Writing Fellows who are working with over 500 students. With this many people involved, we are bound to have occasional misunderstandings and miscommunication. The faculty, the students, and the LAL staff have understood this and have managed to quickly resolve minor problems. Administrators have not always been as quick or as willing to respond to the needs of the WAC Director. One important element in our future success depends on the administration's willingness to grant the WAC Director the authority to make the decisions necessary to keep the program on course and assure its future success.

Questions about WAC at MCCC: Is the Writing Center an editing service?

Making clear the difference between revision and editing is one of the most difficult tasks faced by anyone trying to operate a Writing Center. In the past, most students, if they went to the LAL at all, were looking for a quick fix, an editor who would correct the mechanical and grammatical mistakes. In fact, even administrators and faculty often think of Writing Centers as places for remedial work--developmental centers for poor writers. **We are working to change that perception. Our Writing Fellows work with every student in class to demonstrate that revision is an integral part of writing for all writers, and it is not a punishment meted out to poor writers.**

The focus in our Writing Center and in the training of our Writing Fellows is on revision: thinking about and trying to correct high-order problems first--following the assignment carefully, demonstrating thoroughness and clarity of thought, providing accurate, adequate, and appropriate support for one's conclusions. Only after these issues have been addressed does the Writing Fellow begin to deal with issues of editing. As a result, more critical thinking is taking place on every formal writing assignment.

Who benefits from this approach?

STUDENTS BENEFIT.

We must not underestimate the intelligence and insight of our students.

The students benefit, and they know they do.

Students benefit from receiving guidance, encouragement, and positive feedback when it matters most to them--before their work is submitted for a grade.

Students benefit from the personal contact, from the assurance that help is available, that someone does care and will take the time to work with them. This is especially critical to those who are being asked to write their first paper in the disciplines. Some have not yet even had their first composition class, and they don't know where to begin. Help for these students has not always been available, and they are extremely grateful for the guidance they receive.

Students benefit from being required to get on task sooner. They are not permitted to wait until the last possible minute to begin the major writing assignments. Even though a few find this irksome, the overwhelming majority realize the need to organize their time more efficiently. They also perceive the faculty member as being more organized. If the faculty member has laid the groundwork carefully, working with the Writing Fellows becomes one more good thing about a good class and a good learning experience.

FACULTY BENEFIT.

Faculty appreciate the results of working with Writing Fellows.

Faculty working with Writing Fellows no longer have to read and grade first drafts hurriedly thrown together at the last minute. Faculty appreciate the fact that their students are on task sooner.

Faculty often admit this has required more of them. They must define their expectations more clearly. They must establish better time lines for first and second drafts. Yet the improved quality of student work makes the extra effort worthwhile.

The finished papers are easier to read and grade. Faculty feel less need to teach writing and can concentrate more on subject matter.

WRITING FELLOWS BENEFIT.

Since we learn best what we must teach to someone else, the Writing Fellows benefit more than anyone. They improve their own writing and their interpersonal communication skills.

They learn to deal with all sorts of people and all sorts of problems.

They are proud and gratified when students respond positively to their guidance. They also learn how to deal with the occasional student who is reluctant to write or revise.

They have a position of honor among students and faculty.

They appreciate the opportunity to work closely with faculty.

Writing Fellows benefit from the opportunity to take a number of papers home and read and write written responses before meeting to discuss the papers. On other campuses with writing centers, the tutors usually have to read and respond immediately. They have less time to prepare a considered response.

Writing Fellows have much more training than most writing center tutors. Each Writing Fellow must complete 254 Advanced Composition--where they read several books about writing and the tutoring of writing, and where they have the opportunity to practice their tutoring skills.

Thus, quality and quantity are served by this approach: the quality of training is improved, and the quantity of students served has grown rapidly because it is now a required part of many classes.

General Observations on MCCC's WAC Program:

Faculty and students are aware of WAC on our campus. Unlike many campuses, three years has not diminished the importance of WAC on this campus. Because of the Writing Fellows, the Writing Center, the WAC newsletter, and faculty luncheons where we discuss these issues, writing-across-the-curriculum is not a "buzz word" that has come and gone. Writing-to-learn strategies are now an important part of teaching at MCCC.

Though we are not there yet, we are a lot closer to the day when students cannot help but perceive that writing is spread across the curriculum and is important. More writing, more revising, and more critical thinking are now taking place in courses across the curriculum. Quantity and quality are both being served by MCCC's WAC program. With the continued support of faculty, students, and administrators, WAC will play an ever increasing role in learning at Monroe County Community College.

LAL Frequency Use Data / Fall 1986--Winter 1991

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Fall 1986 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 759 | 2,992 Total Tutor Sessions = 475 |
| Winter 1987 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 970 | 2,739 Total Tutor Sessions = 526 |
| Fall 1987 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 1531 | 3,120 Total Tutor Sessions = 830 |
| Winter 1988 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 1414 | 2,770 Total Tutor Sessions = 873 |
| Fall 1988 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 2029 | 3,118 Total Tutor Sessions = 938 |
| Winter 1989 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 2234 | 2,843 Total Tutor Sessions = 1244 <u>(Writing Center = 475)</u> |
| Fall 1989 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 2481 | 3,261 Total Tutor Sessions = 1434 <u>(Writing Center = 563)</u> |
| Winter 1990 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 2896 | 2,950 Total Tutor Sessions = 1937 <u>(Writing Center = 927)</u> |
| Fall 1990 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 3402 | 3,388 Total Tutor Sessions = 1983 (Writing Center = 632) |
| Winter 1991 | MCCC Enrollment Total LAL Visits = 4431 | 3,187 Total Tutor Sessions = 2186 (Writing Center = 1060) |

**Monroe County Community College
Fall 1990 and Winter 1991
Writing Fellows Program Survey**

Part One: Student Evaluation of the WAC Program

Each year I have been gratified by the nature of student responses to a questionnaire we pass out at the end of the semester. This year was no different. We had 323 students complete the evaluation, and only five or six had anything negative to say about the program or the people with whom they worked. Even the negative responses are not entirely negative. This is typical of such responses: "I feel that it is a good program, but I do not feel it should be mandatory. I think it should be all volunteer."

Each Writing Fellow is available for two hours each week in the Writing Center in the LAL. During this time, students may seek help for any paper in any class they are taking. This part is "volunteer."

Nevertheless, for good reasons, we have not made this an entirely optional program. In the classes to which Writing Fellows have been assigned, use of the Writing Fellows is not optional. (Some faculty make it mandatory on one paper and optional on others.)

Our reasons for making use of the Writing Center mandatory are not very complicated. **The first reason** has to do with the writing process. We want students to experience writing as a process and to see feedback and revision as a natural and necessary part of that process. Revision is not punishment intended only for the few who cannot write well on their own. It is quite likely that some of our students will be capable of producing good work in one draft--or by finding their own editors. In practice, however, these good writers are not among the one or two percent who object to the mandatory use of Writing Fellows. Good writers almost always appreciate the positive feedback and the reassurance Writing Fellows provide.

The second reason we will not make this approach entirely optional is more pragmatic in nature: This works better. Our students have such a full schedule of requirements (at home, at work, and at school), and their banquet of optional activities is so rich and varied, we realize that even those who most need assistance will seldom make time to take rough drafts to the Writing Center--even though they know it would help them greatly.

So, some say, let the student decide. Indeed, some students feel all their choices should be optional. But such freedom is seldom in their own best interest. Many would never attend the Writing Center for the same reasons many would never choose to take classes in math, literature, philosophy, political science, chemistry.

Many of us will not try new subjects or new approaches to old subjects. Perhaps this is because we do not recognize our weakness or, more likely, we hesitate because we fear failure and embarrassment.

When use of the Writing Center is required and when it is presented in a positive way by the faculty and the Writing Fellows, students (with very few exceptions) are grateful for the opportunity and the discipline it provides.

Our Writing Fellows are a very dedicated and flexible group of students. They are tactful and well as helpful. They know their work is important, and they find ways to get the job done.

The following pages document the responses of students and faculty working with Writing Fellows and the Writing Center.

Part Two: Evaluation of the Program by Students **Who Worked with Writing Fellows: Winter 1991**

During the winter semester 1991, twenty-five MCCC classes in a variety of disciplines had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in most of these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows. (A few faculty members could not find time during the final busy days of the semester to have the evaluations completed.)

Evaluations were completed by 323 students. Not all students who worked with Writing Fellows were in class on the days the evaluations were distributed, and some students did not respond in all categories. Nevertheless, this is a very large and representative sample of those who worked with Writing Fellows during the winter 1990 semester. The results are listed below. (Some students did not respond in every category.)

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

It is encouraging to note that again this year, more than eight out of ten students (82%) found the contribution of the Writing Fellows to be helpful or very helpful.

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 47% | Very Helpful | (151 of 323) |
| 35% | Helpful | (113 of 323) |
| 17% | Marginally Helpful | (56 of 323) |
| 1% | Not Helpful | (3 of 323) |

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?

We are encouraged to learn that 81% of the students who could arrange conferences with their Writing Fellows felt the conferences were helpful or very helpful.

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 47% | Very Helpful | (150 of 317) |
| 34% | Helpful | (106 of 317) |
| 18% | Marginally Helpful | (57 of 317) |
| 1% | Not Helpful | (4 of 317) |

3) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.

This year 86% of the students in classes with Writing Fellows found the work of their Writing Fellows to be effective (40%) or very effective (46%).

Although we will continue to work for an even higher rating, these numbers clearly demonstrate a very strong endorsement of the Writing Fellows' efforts.

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 46% | Very Effective | (146 of 317) |
| 40% | Effective | (126 of 317) |
| 12% | Marginally Effective | (40 of 317) |
| 2% | Unsatisfactory | (5 of 317) |

4) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).

This is the most favorable response of all. The effective and very effective ratings combine for a 90% approval.

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 49% | Very Effective | (155 of 316) |
| 41% | Effective | (128 of 316) |
| 10% | Marginally Useful | (31 of 316) |
| 0% | Unsatisfactory | (2 of 316) |

Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program
Fall 1990

During the fall semester 1990, thirteen MCCC classes had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows.

The approval rate is encouraging. In each category, nearly 90 per cent of the students found the experience helpful or very helpful. The results are listed below.

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 45% | Very Helpful | (76 of 156) |
| 40% | Helpful | (63 of 156) |
| 12% | Marginally Helpful | (18 of 156) |
| 3% | Not Helpful | (5 of 156) |

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?

(A few were unable to arrange conferences and had to rely on written comments.)

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 42% | Very Helpful | (65 of 153) |
| 47% | Helpful | (71 of 153) |
| 9% | Marginally Helpful | (14 of 153) |
| 2% | Not Helpful | (3 of 153) |

3) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 41% | Very Helpful | (64 of 156) |
| 48% | Helpful | (75 of 156) |
| 10% | Marginally Helpful | (16 of 156) |
| less than 1% | Not Helpful | (1 of 156) |

4) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 45% | Very Helpful | (70 of 156) |
| 47% | Helpful | (73 of 156) |
| 8% | Marginally Helpful | (13 of 156) |
| 0% | Not Helpful | (0 of 156) |

Writing Fellow Evaluations: A Sample of Student Responses

"She is a very intelligent young woman who was of great help to me."

"My Writing Fellow gave a lot of advice but did not try to change what I wrote. She explained things to me well."

"She was excellent in that she tactfully made suggestions and did not make me feel stupid."

"I found him to be helpful and congenial. Though much younger than myself, he was well educated in writing and passes that knowledge down with tact and patience. Thanks."

"He made arrangements for me on a Sunday--which I feel was exceptionally accommodating on his part."

"I think the Writing Center and the Learning Assistance Lab are altogether GREAT!"

"The Writing Fellow program is priceless for improving students' writing."

"I believe if it were not for my Writing Fellows I could have never passed this course."

"I have worked with Writing Fellows before and can say nothing but good things about any one of them I have seen."

"She put in a lot of effort. She had you read your paper out loud. I liked talking with her."

"I feel it is a great program and that MC3 students are very lucky to receive these services without a fee. I feel it has improved the quality of the students."

"Please keep this program alive."

"I would recommend her to anyone."

"Until this semester I have not used the Writing Fellows, and they have made a tremendous difference in the grades on my papers."

"The Writing Fellows have been very helpful to me in all of my classes with all of my papers. I do not know what I would do without them."

"She was honest in her comments and listened to my questions. I appreciated her interest in helping me."

"The program is wonderful and all the Writing Fellows should be rewarded."

"My Writing Fellow was very cordial and made a point to give praise and encouragement where applicable. She gave constructive criticism when indicated and was very tactful."

"She was helpful and constructive and supportive. She asked me my opinion and did not just tell me what to do."

"I did not understand critical analysis at all. She was very helpful to me."

"Since this was my first experience with MLA style, her comments were very helpful to me."

"Make it a requirement for everyone to use a Writing Fellow."

"This is a very positive influence to students. The College is up to date having this program."

"This helped me grow with confidence in my writing. I have not had Comp. I yet, and I was overwhelmed at first."

"The Writing Fellow I worked with is fantastic. She really knows what she is doing."

"I am just beginning school after a 16 year absence, and I feel this program is very beneficial to me."

"I think it is a wonderful program, and Monroe is very lucky to have it."

Part Three:

Evaluation of the Program by Faculty Who Worked with Writing Fellows

"Keep up the good work! As usual, the students' work improved as a result of the program. The students expressed appreciation for the program."

"My Writing Fellow first and foremost extended herself to the class at their convenience. I always make the first paper mandatory for the WF and the next two optional--yet 100 percent of the class took advantage of the service on their own. This speaks for itself."

"All the Writing Fellows were good. They helped greatly in the rough drafts--making the final product much easier to read. . . . Summary, yes this is a good program for the student, but it is a bitch for the instructor. It takes more time and effort on the part of the instructor."

"The program is excellent overall, and you should be commended for its continued success. I am glad that this service exists--especially after reading 16 or more papers."

"She did a top-notch job. It is too bad that she will not be here for the upcoming term."

"My WF was a big success. As the evaluations indicate, the students liked her style--her humor and insights. Apparently she can tell them, 'That's awful!' and not offend. She obviously spent a lot of time on the papers, filling them with solid comments. I would say that she is my most successful writing fellow to date. She has a high energy level that communicates well to the writers."

"The WF program is super. The quality of papers has improved, and I think the students enjoy writing more. I wish we could expand WAC so virtually every class on the campus were involved in it. Onward."

"My WF was very professional in her approach and her attitude in assisting our students. She was flexible and willing to help."

"I have been quite busy this semester, yet I wanted to add the paper assignments to this class. The WF program took some of the stress away from anticipating problems with papers. . . . This program has proved itself. It needs no other commendation."

Part Four: **Evaluation of the Program by the Writing Fellows**

Again this year the Writing Fellows have been extremely busy. This has always been especially true during the semester they take 254 Advanced Composition.

Writing Fellows are becoming more visible and accepted on our campus. This year's class was easier to recruit. We had more people than ever who had asked to be considered for the program.

In addition, word of the Writing Fellows availability must be spreading because the number of drop-in tutoring sessions increased again this year.

During the fall and winter semesters, each Writing Fellow spends two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. In addition to their work in the LAL, each Writing Fellow is assigned to work with a particular class across the curriculum. During the most recent semester (Winter 1991), Writing Fellows worked with the first drafts of all major writing assignments in twenty-five classes. These included courses in anthropology, sociology, physics, children's literature, music for classroom teachers, education, nursing, respiratory therapy, speech, organic chemistry, logic, philosophy, juvenile delinquency, marriage and family, drafting, earth science, zoology, and world history.

In spite of the long hours, hard work, and little pay, when given the opportunity to evaluate their semester, the Writing Fellows expressed a strong sense of pride in their accomplishments. The Writing Fellows know they are gaining valuable experience. Perhaps the most significant statistics are these:

- 1) **We have had seventy-five students take 254 Advanced Composition--the course during which they begin their work as Writing Fellows. Seventy-three students have successfully completed the course.**
- 2) **Every Writing Fellow who plans to return to MCCC next fall has also volunteered to work as a Writing Fellow next fall.**

The following quotes from a few of their evaluations are very typical of those received this year, and they express very clearly the positive feeling the Writing Fellows have toward MCCC and its Writing Fellow approach to Writing-to-Learn and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum:

“I see a growing interest on the part of the students to use Writing Fellows’ help though not assigned to do so. The word is getting out that there is a worthwhile supportive program for the students to use.”

“Keep the Writing Fellows. I believe this program makes a wonderful difference.”

“I have learned a lot and benefited greatly! This has been a wonderful experience! The program is terrific. I hope it will continue to be a success.”

“I absolutely loved being a part of the Writing Fellows program. I learned so much, and I enjoyed every minute. Although the work was difficult at times, it was well worth it.”

“The best part was the fact that I had students who came in for more than one appointment concerning first drafts and revisions.”

“The whole experience was very positive and helped prepare me for future courses.”

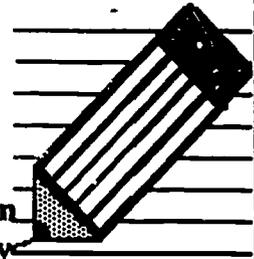
“This has been the best class and the most personally rewarding one I have ever had. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.”

Language For Learning

Vol. III, No. 1
September 1990

Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program

Editor: Dr. John Holladay



WRITING FELLOWS AND WRITING CENTER BEGIN THIRD YEAR AT MCCC

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE has twenty writing fellows this fall (up from sixteen last fall). Each of these veteran writing tutors has completed the 254 Advanced Composition class and has worked at least one semester in the Writing Center. Student evaluations indicate these peer tutors have done an outstanding job. For example, according to the end-of-the-semester evaluations last semester, nearly 91 percent of the MCCC students who worked with **Writing Fellows** indicated they found the program to be effective (42%) or very effective (49%).

This semester, in addition to being available to all students who use the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab, the Writing Fellows have been assigned to work with all students and all writing assignments in thirteen classes across the curriculum--more than 350 students. (For a complete list of Writing Fellows and "fellowed" classes, see page two of this newsletter.)

You can contribute to the effectiveness of the LAL and the Writing Center by encouraging or requiring your students to take advantage of its excellent services. You may make copies of the Writing Center referral form on the back page of this newsletter, and refer students to the Writing Center. This is not just a service for "at risk" students. We can all use a sympathetic reader, and, best of all, your students will receive guidance before it is too late--when they can still revise their early efforts, clarify their thinking, and improve their writing.

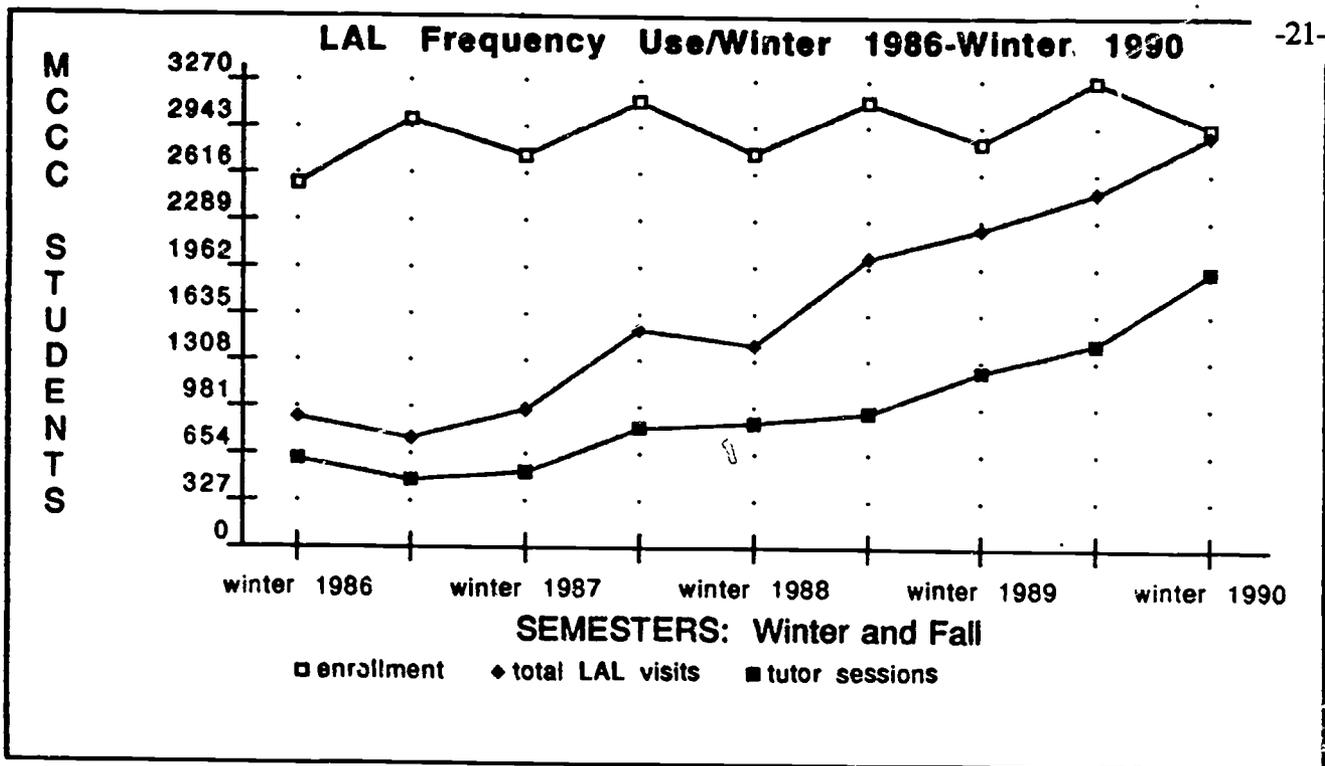
Faculty are encouraged to volunteer an hour a week in the LAL or Writing Center. Try it. Most people find this one-to-one contact to be an extremely rewarding experience. (Contact Dr. Riedel or Dr. Holladay to volunteer.)

Writing Fellow Assignments: Fall 1990

| Faculty | Class and Time | Writing Fellows |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Merkel | 256 Children's Literature / T / TH 11-12:30 | Angela Heil / Tim Hyatt |
| Pettit | 151 Earth Science / T / TH 9-10:30 | Elaine Lemley / Robert Gable |
| Howe | 251 Botany / MWF 11-12 | Janette Stanton |
| Holladay | 152 W. Philosophy / T / TH 9:30-11 | Dodie Strazzulla / Jason Breitner |
| Holladay | 252 SS and Novel / T/TH 11-12:30 | Mark Scherer / Steve Sampson |
| Moyer | 151 Sociology / T / TH 7:30-9 (South) | Pat Watkins |
| Vassar | 158 Art for Elem. Teachers / Tues. 7-10 pm | Julie Frank |
| Bennetts | 151 Radio and TV / MWF 2:30-3:30 | Melissa Steinman |
| Leski | 151 Sociology / T / TH 7:30-9 | Kristin Servey / Chris Nieswender |
| Leach | 151 Speech / T / TH 11-12:30 | Don Curtis |
| Schultz | 255 Police Administration / MW 5:30-7 | Dawn Graves |
| Havrilsak | 151 World History / MW 7:45-9:10 | Vivian Walczesky / Peggy Faunt |
| Connolly | 151 Social Work / T / Th 7-8:30 | Rose Matheny / Joan Heck |

In addition to working with writing assignments in the classes listed above, each Writing Fellow is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab. Call the LAL to find the tutoring hours of specific Writing Fellows (ext. 278).

Faculty are encouraged to recommend (or require) students to make use of the Writing Center in the LAL.



WRITING CENTER AND LAL ACTIVITY

The line graph above illustrates the recent surge in student use of the MCCC Learning Assistance Lab. Even though the top line illustrates a rather steady enrollment over the past five years, the other two lines clearly indicate a rapid growth in LAL use.

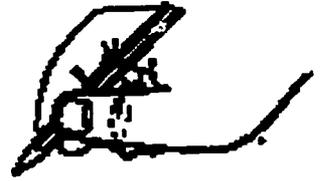
For example, during the fall semester 1986, when enrollment was 2,992, total LAL visits were 759 and tutor sessions were 475. Last semester, when enrollment was 2,950, total LAL visits were 2,896 and tutor sessions were 1,937: about a 400 per cent increase in each area.

To what can we attribute this recent growth? A number of factors have no doubt contributed, but clearly one very important factor was the introduction of The Writing Center and Writing Fellows in the winter semester of 1989. More students have had to visit the LAL, and, according to their end-of-the-semester evaluations, they have found it to be very helpful.

What must we do to maintain this upward curve? We have not reached our potential. We must make students and faculty more aware of the services offered in the LAL and in the Writing Center. Too many people equate the LAL with a remedial or developmental leaning center. This is NOT the case. Many of our best scholars and writers have discovered the value of one-on-one learning. More need to make this same discovery.

Faculty can help the most. Send your students to the LAL and the Writing Center in the LAL. If faculty make at-least-one visit a course requirement for all students, many of these students will return on their own--and their learning will improve.

LAL/Writing Center Referral Form Monroe Community College



Date: _____

(Instructor: Please attach this form to the student's assignment, if appropriate.)

I am referring _____ to the LAL/Writing Center for assistance with the writing skills listed below:

(Course Instructor)

Student: You may bring this form to the LAL (second floor of the CLRC). Someone may be available to work with you, but you would be wise to call ahead and make an appointment (242-7300 ext. 278).

DATE: _____

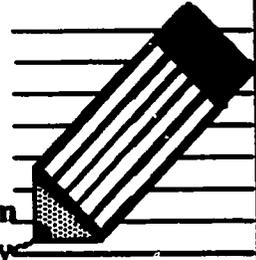
Student: _____

Your student came to the LAL/Writing Center today. We worked in the following way:

Language For Learning

Vol. III, No. 2
October 1990

Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program
Editor: Dr. John Holladay



Kudos: Faculty Volunteers Donate Time and Talent to LAL and Writing Center

Hats off to the following staff members who are volunteering their time and talent to aid students in the Learning Assistance Lab and the Writing Center.

Andy Burke / Drafting

Alan Hileman / Math and Chemistry

John Holladay / Writing Center

Larry Leach / Writing Center

Tim Maloney / Electronics and Math

Ann Savonen / Math

Jim Stanley / Math, Electronics, and Drafting

Writing-Fellow Search Begins for 1991

We need your help! MCCC will soon offer writing fellowships to about twenty-five of our best student-writers. We need to identify these students in the next few weeks. Please send the names of your top candidates to Dr. Holladay or give him a call (ext. 340).

This is probably the largest group of professional volunteers ever to work in our Writing Center or Learning Assistance Lab. These volunteers are not paid extra for their contribution, but they do find the experience rewarding. Teaching is quite a different experience when teachers and students sit down to work one-to-one. Some students make enormous strides during the give-and-take of a conference. And their appreciation is almost always evident: immediate and sincere. This is teaching as its best.

If you have an hour or two that you can donate to students in the LAL or Writing Center, please contact Cindy Riedel or John Holladay. (These times may be during office hours if you post a notice on your office door directing your students to the LAL.)



WRITING-TO-LEARN ASSIGNMENTS

Informal, writing-to-learn activities can be a valuable addition to any course. These advance student learning beyond simple recall. Informal writing assignments can be responded to in many ways--depending on the goals of the assignment and on how formal or finished the piece is supposed to be. If the course has lots of writing, if the writing is clearly an early stage of the learning process, if the material will be dealt with in some other way, then no response is needed.

The following list includes some useful writing-to-learn activities. Most take only a few or no minutes of class time. The benefits are well worth your time and effort. If you are now using similar approaches or if you try one of the following, please let Dr. Holladay know how your students respond. We would be pleased to report your experiences in a future issue of our newsletter.

Writing-to-Learn Activities

(Thanks to Joyce Magnotto, Prince George's Community College, Baltimore, Maryland)

Define _____ so that a student who was absent today can understand the term or concept.

Summarize today's lecture.

Write some questions you have about today's class (or last night's reading).

Jot down the most significant insights you got from today's class (or last night's home work, or the previous class).

Prepare a crib sheet for your use on the next exam or quiz (even if you cannot bring the sheet with you).

Explain in your own words the impact (concept X) has on your life.

List three topics from last week's newspaper that interest you, and explain why they interest you.

List as many differences as you can between X and Y.

Freewrite without stopping for five minutes about _____.

Jot down the steps you plan to follow to complete the current writing assignment (or to complete the research paper, etc.).

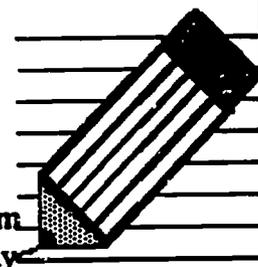
Upcoming Seminars in the LAL: Please Announce These to Your Classes

"Concentration and Memorization" / Monday, October 15 / 2-3 or 6-7 p.m.

"Getting Ready for Final Exams" / Tuesday, November 6 / 12:30-1:30 or 6-7 p.m.

All sessions held in the Learning Assistance Lab. We are planning winter semester offerings. If you would like to see a seminar offered, please contact Cindy Riedel.

Language For Learning



Vol. III, No. 3
November 1990
Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program
Editor: Dr. John Holladay

The following editorial is reprinted with permission from the Monroe Evening News.

Evening News
Monroe, MI

Fri., Oct. 19, 1990

Pushing students to write

A recent proposal to require more writing courses at Michigan State University is a brave step, but much more is needed to improve writing skills at all education levels.

Ask anyone in business who has pored over job application letters from people supposedly college-educated. Spelling often is atrocious, syntax strained and language deadly.

The frightening implication is that we are becoming a nation that writes poorly if at all.

Our children, honed on television and computer games, are adept at hearing, seeing, and responding through buttons and joysticks. But many have trouble thinking of ideas and putting them on paper.

In a small way, MSU is attacking that problem. The expanded writing requirements were proposed by a task force studying the school's required English courses, called American Thought and Language. The change is expected in the fall of 1992.

Now the university requires English only in the freshman

year. The new measure requires students, as a minimum, to take one English class in freshman year and two in junior or senior years.

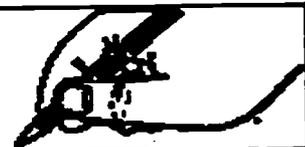
Many students may not want more writing requirements, but this proposal is none too stiff. And it does them a favor, since the real world demands college graduates who can write.

Virtually no one is immune to the need for writing after graduation. It is required in almost every job and in countless non-occupation activities, such as fund-raising, reporting on club activities — even filling out credit card applications.

Writing is perhaps the most essential communication skill other than speaking. It is vital to a productive life.

Writing often is the way ideas are converted from thought to reality. This power of the pen often is the agent of change.

Michigan State University has taken a welcome step. Other universities, high schools and elementary schools would do well to follow suit. It is imperative that we improve the writing skills of all of America's youth.



Writing for Survival

(VHS Video / Now in MCCC LRC Collection)

28 minutes (VC 862)

A Reminder: Last fall MCCC purchased this video tape. It tells students something they need to realize about their future careers:

The level of their success will almost certainly be influenced by their ability to write.
Once again, I heartily recommend this program to our faculty.

Interviews with a variety of professionals in technical fields illustrate the importance of writing and communication to success in these technical fields.

- 1) **Doug Collar, Mechanical Engineer:** "I do a lot of writing in my work." He explains that most of his work involves gathering information and then reducing that information into reports. "Fifty or sixty percent of my time is spent in writing. It could be reports, letters, inter-company memos."
- 2) **Jim Trudeau, Computer Programmer Analyst:** "I write a tremendous number of management reports. . . . I spend between fifty and seventy percent of my time writing."
- 3) **Adrian Borgias, Chemist, Dept. of Engineering Research:** "I spend probably sixty percent of my time writing while I am out in the field, and nearly eighty percent of my time writing while I am in the office."

These technicians and engineers describe in some detail how critically important writing has been to their careers:

"Being able to get your thoughts down clearly on paper will take you a long way."

"I can think of untold examples of brilliant electrical engineers, geniuses in their field who are literally useless because all that wonderful intellect they possess could not be communicated effectively to anybody."

"People judge you by what they see that you have written."

"I cannot over-stress the value of the ability to write clearly and to write quickly."

"Your ability to write and speak clearly and precisely means everything. . . . You are all working very hard at your math and your physics. I hate to be the one to tell you, but they will not help you a whole lot down the road. They won't make or break you on a daily basis. Your ability to communicate a thought both orally and in written form will determine just how successful you are—will determine your level of survival."



Writing-to-Learn in MCCC Mathematics Classes

Dr. B. J. Harmon, Professor of Mathematics at MCCC, used Writing Fellows with his math classes last winter and requested their assistance again this fall. We had more requests for Writing Fellows than we could fill this fall, so B. J. , rather than abandon the use of writing, developed a very effective alternative. He designed writing-to-learn activities to stimulate learning, and he used his own students as writing assistants. We congratulate B. J. for his continued support of Writing Across the Curriculum. We thank him for this report, and we encourage others to examine his approach and try similar activities in their own disciplines.

Please, if full-time or part-time faculty are using writing-to-learn activities, tell us about them. Call or send a written description to Dr. Holladay. We would like to share your experiences with the rest of our faculty.

The following is Dr. Harmon's account of his writing activities in his Algebra, Trigonometry, and Calculus classes:

To compel students to formulate an adequate definition of the major concept to be used throughout the term, early in the semester classes were assigned the project of writing a three to five page paper on the concept of function in the College Algebra and Trigonometry classes and on the concept of limits in the Calculus class. The assignment included expressing a definition of the concept, explaining the idea with examples, and illustrating the principle with a figure.

Students were given a month to complete the assignment and provided with sample textbooks for reference. One week before the assignment was due, students were given time in class to read a neighbor's paper. This was a rough draft and suggestions offered by other students could be incorporated into the final paper. Most students had adequate time to complete the paper although a few wrote the paper the night before it was due.

Of the sixty-eight students in the College Algebra and Trigonometry classes, only six failed to write the paper. While only one in the Calculus class of thirty-seven did not complete the assignment. The paper was graded equivalent to a test and evaluated on correct content, valid examples, and apparent depth of understanding. Grammatical errors and spelling mistakes were noted but not penalized.

Aside from additional work on the teacher's part, the experiment was positive. Students obtained a strong grasp of the concept and became focused on the central theme of the course. As in any new venture, suggestions are welcomed.

Kudos: Bonnie Giles

Bonnie Giles will be continuing with her three-part series on "Learning to Use Word Perfect."

Bonnie has been a great asset to the LAL, helping students through this seminar become familiar with Word Perfect. Thanks to Bonnie many students are now successfully typing their own research papers in the LAL. We hope to offer these seminars each semester.

Bonnie's time, dedication and expertise are very much appreciated--and very valuable to the continued success of the LAL. **Thanks Bonnie!**

LAL/Writing Center Referral Form Monroe Community College



Date: _____

(Instructor: Please attach this form to the student's assignment, if appropriate.)

I am referring _____ to the LAL/Writing Center for assistance with the writing skills listed below:

(Course Instructor)

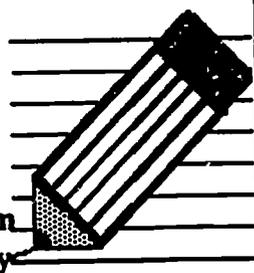
Student: You may bring this form to the LAL (second floor of the CLRC). Someone may be available to work with you, but you would be wise to call ahead and make an appointment (242-7300 ext. 278).

DATE: _____

Student: _____

Your student came to the LAL/Writing Center today. We worked in the following way:

Language For Learning



Vol. III, No. 4
January 1991

Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program
Editor: Dr. John Holladay

Thirty-Five Writing Fellows Set for Winter Semester

MCCC's Writing Center will soon complete its third year of activity. We now have thirty-five Writing Fellows: twenty-five new and ten experienced. All thirty-five Writing Fellows are available to tutor students from every course at MCCC. Each Writing Fellow is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. That means we can provide up to seventy hours of tutoring each week--if students will either drop in or make an appointment. Most, however, will not seek assistance on their own--no matter how badly they might need help. Faculty members can help by sending students to the Writing Center in the LAL. If you have students with writing problems, please send them to the Writing Center--before the final draft is due.

MCCC's Writing Fellows do more than work in the Writing Center in the LAL. Each Writing Fellow is also assigned to a particular course (see the chart on pages two and three). In these courses, they will read and respond to the first draft of required papers. Students will receive a written commentary and will meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss ways to improve the first draft. The instructor will receive the first draft, the Writing Fellow's written commentary, and the final draft of the writing assignment.

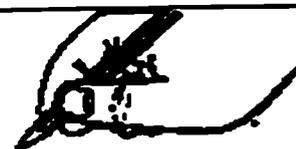
- Who Can Use the Services of the Writing Fellows?** Every teacher and every student in every class at MCCC.
- How Do Students Get Help with Their Writing?** Call the LAL and make an appointment with a Writing Fellow (ext. 278).
- How Can Faculty Make Use of the Writing Fellows?** Send students to the Writing Center in the LAL. Give specific instructions about the help you wish the student to receive.

We have some talented people willing to help our students do their best on every writing assignment. They want to help. Please make use of their services.



Writing Fellow Assignments: Winter 1991

| Faculty | Class and Time | Writing Fellows |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Merkel Merkel | 256 Children's Literature / T / TH 11-12:30 165 Music for Classroom Teachers / T/TH 9:30-11 | Peggy Engel, Edwina Nothnagel, and Kristi Adams |
| Pettit | 151 Earth Science / T / TH 9-10:30 | Jason Breitner, Tim Hyatt, Steve Sampson |
| Howe | 252 Zoology / MWF 11-12 | Victoria McIntyre |
| Holladay | 152 W. Philosophy / T / TH 9:30-11 | Don Curtis, Cathy Hatten |
| Holladay | 151 Logic / MWF 10-11 | Jim Criste, Dodie Strazzulla |
| Orwin | 151 Education / TH 3-4:30 | Aimee Staelgraeve, Molly Ziegler |
| Moyer | 152 Sociology / T / TH 7:30-9 (Bedford) | Carole Faunt |
| Leski | 151 Sociology / MWF 10-11 | Rose Matheny, Elaine Lemley |
| Leach | 151 Speech / T / TH 9:30-11 | Sally Hudson |
| Havrilsak Havrilsak | 152 World History / T/TH 7:45-9:10 (Bedford) 152 World History / T/TH 5:35-7 (Jefferson) | Vivian Walczesky Robert Kenyon |
| Connolly | 151 Social Work / MW 7:35-9 (Bedford) | Deborah Nanney |
| Evangelinos | 206 Secretarial / MTWTH 10-12 | Rebecca Marlow |
| Roberti | 151 Education / F 9:05-10:30 | Rebecca Marlow, Tara Ansel |
| Spalding Spalding | 152 Gen. Physics / MWF 10-11 252 Eng. Physics / MWTHF 1-2 | Laura Gifford, Robert Gable Rhonda Ziethlow |
| Boggs-Clothier | 112 Resp. Therapy / MWF 11:15-12:15 | Charlene Gallan |



| | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|--|
| Schramm | 210 Nursing / 1:35-3 T | Julie Frank |
| Odneal | 210 Nursing / 1:35-3 T | Tanya Roelant |
| Brooke | 209 Nursing / 8:35-10 M T | Brenda Sovoda |
| Eack | 209 Nursing / 8:35-10 M T | Carla Pruitt |
| Davis | 252 Juv. Delinquency / MWF 11-12 | Bobbie Jo Young, Sandra Johnson |
| DeVries | 152 Anthropology / MWF 10-11 | Marjorie Kohler, Matt Thom, James Pyle |
| Fink | 128 Drafting / MW 6-9:30 | Robert Gable |

Writing Center/Writing Fellow Totals for Winter 1991:

25 First-Semester Writing Fellows

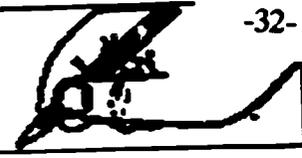
10 Experienced Writing Fellows

21 Faculty Members: Full-Timers = 18 / Part-Timers = 3

25 Classes: Main Campus = 21 / Bedford = 3 / Jefferson = 1

515 Students Enrolled in These 25 Classes at the Start of the Semester

In addition: Each of 35 Writing Fellows is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL. This means these people are available 70 hours a week to tutor students who have writing assignments in any class on campus.



Monroe County Community College Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program Fall 1990

During the fall semester 1990, 13 MCCC classes had Writing Fellows assigned to assist their fellow students with all major writing assignments. At the end of the semester, students in these classes completed a survey designed to evaluate their experiences with the Writing Fellows. The approval rate is encouraging--a bit higher than last year. In each category, nearly 90 per cent of the students found the experience helpful or very helpful. The results are listed below.

1) How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------|
| 45% | Very Helpful | (70 of 156) |
| 40% | Helpful | (63 of 156) |
| 12% | Marginally Helpful | (18 of 156) |
| 3% | Not Helpful | (5 of 156) |

2) How helpful were your conferences with Writing Fellows?

(A few were unable to arrange conferences and had to rely on written comments.)

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------|
| 42% | Very Helpful | (65 of 153) |
| 47% | Helpful | (71 of 153) |
| 9% | Marginally Helpful | (14 of 153) |
| 2% | Not Helpful | (3 of 153) |

3) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked.

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 41% | Very Helpful | (64 of 156) |
| 48% | Helpful | (75 of 156) |
| 10% | Marginally Helpful | (16 of 156) |
| less than 1% | Not Helpful | (1 of 156) |

4) Check your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows in general).

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------|
| 45% | Very Helpful | (70 of 156) |
| 47% | Helpful | (73 of 156) |
| 8% | Marginally Helpful | (13 of 156) |
| 0% | Not Helpful | (0 of 156) |



Student Comments on Their Experiences with MCCC Writing Fellows

When given the opportunity to evaluate their experiences, nearly every student had good things to say about his or her Writing Fellows:

"What I really appreciate about my WF is that he gives suggestions, but he doesn't do the work for me."

"Three of my five classes were using WAC. This put a strain on me, but the WFs helped me get through."

"He turned me in the right direction where I got off track."

"I believe this is a great program--more than anyone realizes. She didn't criticize the papers as if they were awful. She made me feel confident that they were good, but could be better."

"This is a good program and needs to be continued in all classes where a paper is assigned."

"I had a wonderful experience. The writing fellow is a very fine person. I am very pleased that we are presented with this opportunity."

"I did not feel judged. I will visit her again. She challenged me to grow in my writing and grammar skills. I appreciated her tact."

"She was very relaxed and helpful. She was willing to work around any time conflict and gave a lot of helpful comments."

"She was a great help--a super person."

Faculty Members' Comments on Working with Writing Fellows:

"Excellent program: Students find the help very useful, and they improve their work. Keep up the good effort."

"This is the best program at MCCC. Please do everything possible to keep it going!"

"The WF's organizational ability is a plus. He kept constantly in touch with me and had a good rapport with all the students."

"Superb! They are knowledgeable and were very patient. Their accessibility to the students was a major strength. The quality of the papers received was by far the best I have seen."

LAL/Writing Center Referral Form Monroe County Community College



Date: _____

(Instructor: Please attach this form to the student's assignment, if appropriate.)

I am referring _____ to the LAL/Writing Center for assistance with the writing skills listed below:

(Course Instructor)

Student: You may bring this form to the LAL (second floor of the CLRC). Someone may be available to work with you, but you would be wise to call ahead and make an appointment (242-7300 ext. 278).

DATE: _____

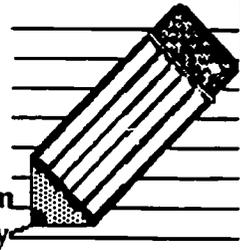
Student: _____

Your student came to the LAL/Writing Center today. We worked in the following way:

35

Language For Learning

Vol. III. No. 5
February 1991
Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program
Editor: Dr. John Holladay



Writing Fellows Share Their First Experiences in the Writing Center

This semester's Writing Fellows have begun to tutor for the first time. As with previous students, these new Writing Fellows have approached their first few sessions with a healthy mixture of anxiety, optimism, terror, and joy. Writing Fellows keep a log of their activities in the Writing Center. The following excerpts from these logs provide some valuable insights into the many things they are experiencing.

"The student I tutored tonight will come to me again. She is a lot like me. She is returning to school, has small children at home, and plans to plug away until she obtains her degree. It was nice talking to her."

"I just finished my first tutoring session. It went really well, I thought. I feel as though I really helped her see her paper from a different angle. She was really receptive and open to suggestions, so it was easy to talk to her. If only they could all be like that!"

"My first tutee was very polite, which made me less nervous. I am afraid that someone will come in and act really rude, because I don't know how long I will be able to be polite. . . . Hopefully I won't have to deal with anyone like that."

"Both nights—one student showed up and one didn't. It was interesting to me to note that the two that showed up were the ones that I considered to have put the most effort into their papers (and, therefore, were the most concerned with improving their papers?)."

"Last week a new experience took place in my life. . . . I helped two individuals achieve writing success. It was an experience unparalleled by any other in my life. It meant that someone really needed and wanted my help. What a novel concept this Writing Fellow Program is at Monroe County Community College. Not only does the writer find satisfaction, so does the Writing Fellow because he or she has helped another find satisfaction. The whole experience filled me with feelings of excitement, ecstasy, awe, content, and happiness."

Language for Learning

page 2



"At the end of my second session, the student thanked me and told me something I wasn't sure I'd really ever hear. He said to me, 'You are a good person and a great writer. I really appreciate your time and effort. You truly made a difference in my writing style. Thanks.'"

"I am learning to be patient with the people I tutor in writing. I have found I am not going to be able to make drastic improvements in my tutee's writing. This first paper needed so much work that I decided we would never have time to do much more than concentrate on a few areas in his paper. . . . He wanted some quick help. . . . I kept asking him questions, trying to get him to formulate a central idea for his paper. Although he could not explain what he wanted to say in his paper, he seemed totally at a loss to get in writing. . . . I went on to explain how terrified I was going back to school as an older student. He agreed, as he was an older student taking English Comp. and returning to classes after a long absence. Next I gave the encouragement which he seemed to desperately need. . . . As I left the Writing Center, it was nice to see him bent over his paper, working away."

"This week was definitely a learning experience. I worked in the LAL for the first time and had my first tutee. He brought rough drafts of his papers. After getting acquainted with him, I asked him to read his paper out loud. Even though he looked at me weirdly, he agreed to do this. I think he wanted me to be a proofreader and correct his technical errors right away. After he read the paper, I asked him what he liked about it, but he kept asking me if he had made any spelling errors. . . . We examined the logic of his paper, and I marked a couple of questions that I had about the writer's thinking. . . . I found this experience to be rewarding. . . . I felt a sense of pride which felt mighty good."

"I obviously need to pay some attention to time. Once happily immersed with one person, time ceases to be a factor, and I am truly amazed to discover that I spent forty minutes with customer #1 without once coming up for air."

"One pattern seems to be emerging very quickly--lack of confidence is a huge obstacle for many students. The first student tonight (a perfectly charming lady) had written a wonderfully descriptive, thoughtful essay hampered only by a few easily-fixed problems. . . . Her gratitude seemed almost out of proportion for the help I actually afforded her. . . . The lady simply did not know what was required of her for a college paper--she was articulate, bright, and self-effacing."

"Working in the LAL has definitely opened my eyes to all the added benefits that the college can offer. I am excited about being a part of a program that will help anyone and everyone who wants it. The atmosphere is quiet but friendly. It proves to be a prime learning atmosphere. I have also learned that it's okay to seek help myself while in the LAL."

Language for Learning

page 3



Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab

Writing Fellow Times



Monday

- 9-10 am / _____ Jim Criste _____
- 9:30-10:30 am / _____ Vivian Walczesky _____
- 10-11 am / _____ Matt Thom _____
- 10:30 am-11:30 / _____ Vivian Walczesky _____
- 11-12 noon / _____ Julie Frank _____
and Laura Gifford _____
- 11:30-12:30 pm / _____ Vickie McIntyre _____
- 12-1 pm / _____ Tara Ansel _____
- 12:30-1:30 pm / _____ Elaine Lemley _____
- 1-2 pm / _____ Steve Sampson _____
- 2-3 pm / _____ Steve Sampson _____
- 2:30-3:30 pm / _____ Carole Faunt _____
- 3-4 pm / _____ Kristi Adams _____
- 4-5 pm / _____ Charlene Gallan _____
- 4:30-5:30 pm / _____ Tonya Roelant _____

Tuesday

- 8:30-9:30 am/ Rhonda Ziethlow _____
- 9:30-10:30 am / Molly Ziegler _____
- 10-11 am / Brenda Sovoda _____
- 11-12 noon / Don Curtis _____
and Jason A. Breitner _____
- 11:30-12:30 pm / Sandy Johnson _____
- 12:30-1:30 pm / Bobbie Young _____
- 1-2 pm / Tim Hyatt _____
- 1:30-2:30 pm / Bobbie Young _____
- 3:30-4:30 pm / Robert Gable _____
- 5-6 pm / Sally Hudson _____
- 6-7 pm / Sally Hudson _____



Wednesday

9-10 am / Jim Criste _____
 9:30-10:30 am / Brenda Sovoda _____
 10-11 am / Matt Thom _____
 10:30 am-11:30 / Jim Pyle _____
 11-12 noon / Julie Frank _____
 and Laura Gifford _____
 11:30-12:30 pm / Vickie McIntyre _____
 12-1 pm / Tara Ansel _____
 1-2 pm / Rose Matheny _____
 2-3 pm / Rose Matheny _____
 3-4 pm / Kristi Adams _____
 4-5 pm / Carla Pruitt _____
 4:30-5:30 pm / Tonya Reelant _____
 5-6 pm / Jim Pyle _____

Thursday

8:30-9:30 am/ Rhonda Ziethlow _____
 10:30 am-11:30 / Edwina Nothnagel _____
 11-12 noon / Don Curtis _____
 and Jason A. Breitner _____
 11:30-12:30 pm / Sandy Johnson _____
 12-1 pm / Aimee Staelgraeve _____
 12:30-1:30 pm / Carole Faunt _____
 1-2 pm / Tim Hyatt _____
 1:30-2:30 pm / Rebecca Marlow _____
 2:30-3:30 pm / Rebecca Marlow _____
 3:30-4:30 pm / Robert Gable _____
 4:30-5:30 pm / Charlene Gallan _____
 4:30-5:30 pm / Marjorie Kohler _____
 5:30-6:30 pm / Marjorie Kohler _____

Friday

8:30-9:30 am/ Cathy Hatten _____
 9-10 am / Bob Kenyon _____
 9:30-10:30 am / Cathy Hatten _____
 10-11 am / Peggy Engel _____
 and Bob Kenyon _____
 11-12 noon / Peggy Engel _____
 12-1 pm / Edwina Nothnagel _____
 and Molly Ziegler _____
 12:30-1:30 pm / Elaine Lemley _____
 1-2 pm / Aimee Staelgraeve _____
 1:30-2:30 pm / Carla Pruitt _____
 2-3 pm / Daniel P. Compora _____

Saturday

9-10 am / Debora Nanney _____
 10-11 am / Debora Nanney _____

Monroe County Community College

**Writing Across the Curriculum
Annual Report 1991-1992**

Compiled and Written
by
Sue Zwayer
Humanities/Social Sciences Division

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| I. WAC Background | 1 |
| II. Faculty Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program..... | 9 |
| III. Student Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program | 15 |
| IV. Writing Fellow Evaluation of the Writing Fellows Program..... | 20 |
| V. WAC Year in Review | 25 |
| VI. WAC: The Future | 31 |
| VII. Works Cited | 33 |

1

Writing Across the Curriculum

General Background

Writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs began in the mid-1970s in response to perceived deficiencies in the writing and critical thinking skills of college and university students. The movement is not limited to improving writing skills; in actuality it addresses the complex relationship between language, learning, and institutions of higher education (Fulwiler 1). WAC programs draw on a variety of research in cognitive psychology and linguistics—Piaget, Bruner, Emig, Flower and Hayes, Britton—and stress the basic tenets:

- that writing is a skill which must be practiced;
- that writing is a recursive process for both skilled and unskilled writers who develop their ideas more fully as they write;
- that while some strategies involving the writing process are transferable, each discipline has writing modes and formats particular to it;
- that writing visualizes thought and therefore facilitates deeper learning;
- that writing develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

According to a recent study by the Association of Departments of English published in the Fall 1986 ADE Bulletin, 35 percent of all colleges and universities report having writing-across-the-curriculum programs (Huber and Young 46). In addition to these findings, a 1987 survey which focused on community and junior colleges indicated of the 400 schools that responded, approximately one-third had active WAC programs, one-third were planning to implement WAC within a year or two, and one-third had no systematic WAC activities (Stout and Magnotto 9). The community colleges which invested in WAC cited important benefits to their institutions: "more writing outside of English courses" (78 percent), "increased faculty interaction among disciplines" (60 percent), and "increased faculty interaction within disciplines" (60 percent). Other benefits included improved teaching and learning; improved composition teaching; increased faculty research, publication, and presentations; and increased interaction with other community colleges (10).

Stout and Magnotto noted possible impediments to WAC which are faculty-, curricular-, and student-based. Faculty and curricular problems which they cited included heavy teaching loads, large classes, faculty who are uncertain about grading or responding to students' writing, faculty reluctance to change methods or assignments, curricula in which writing is not usually assigned, lack of time for writing, lack of time for professional development activities, and insufficient funding for WAC programs. Possible student problems included students' wide range of abilities, their heavy job and family demands, their inability to see the importance of writing, and the writing anxiety many students experience (11).

The researchers note that while they had termed these impediments problems, "respondents saw them as simply community college realities and not necessarily blocks to successful WAC programs." According to the researchers, "most respondents believe that a thoughtfully designed program that accommodates these realities can establish a strong base for future program development" (12).

Writing Across the Curriculum at Monroe County Community College

This year has marked an important transitional period for the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program at Monroe County Community College with the appointment of a new director. As that new director, my challenge became to build on—and expand—an already successful program founded by John Holladay. It soon became clear to me that MCCC's WAC program, based on the Writing Fellows model developed by Tori Haring-Smith at Brown University, was thoughtfully designed and served the faculty and students well. From my experience at The University of Toledo where I helped to establish a Writing Center to serve as an arm of the WAC program, I was immediately impressed by the strong foundation MCCC's formal WAC program had achieved in less than four years. The same commitment, careful planning, and hard work which made the program successful in the past would be needed to ensure the successful continuation and expansion of the program. That MCCC chose to hire a new director and to fund the program with an internal budget issued a strong message that the administration recognized the importance of the program in promoting general literacy, critical thinking, improved writing, and active learning in undergraduate education.

As the program starts its fifth year, we may ask if the program is as necessary as it was in the past. Considering MCCC's mission to the Monroe community and recent economic, educational, and societal trends, I would maintain that WAC is needed more than ever.

Our mission at MCCC is clearly defined in our college catalog:

Monroe County Community College was established to provide a variety of post-secondary educational opportunities for the residents of Monroe County. It is the College's mission to provide programs for students planning to transfer to four-year institutions or programs for students seeking an associate's degree or certificate in an occupational area, training and retraining for

business and industry, a strong complement of student support services, and other courses and activities to meet the educational needs of county residents.

That our WAC program contributes to the successful fulfillment of our mission is evident. Our transfer students will need critical thinking and writing skills for the advanced courses they will take at four-year institutions. Both undergraduate and graduate students need to know how to use writing both as a tool for learning the important concepts of different disciplines and as a tool for demonstrating what they have learned. And because many four-year institutions have WAC programs which require students to take writing-intensive courses in order to graduate, our transfer students will be more successful if they have written in courses across the disciplines at MCCC. Preparing our transfer students for the writing tasks that will be demanded of them at four-year institutions is vital to our mission.

Likewise, those students earning associate's degrees or certificates in occupational fields also need critical thinking and writing skills. With the current emphasis on collaborative problem solving, today's American workers need better communication skills than ever before. While most good jobs require specific job-related skills, they also require a number of writing-related skills. Currently it is estimated that sixty million people regularly have to write as part of their jobs (Sebranek, Meyer, and Kemper 163). If we want to prepare our students to get and keep good jobs and to advance in their chosen careers, we must prepare them now for the writing skills which those good jobs will demand.

That MCCC students directly entering the job market need strong communication skills is verified by Monroe community employers' comments. In the Employer Follow-Up Data of the 1990-1991 graduates of Monroe County Community College published in February by the Placement Service, supervisors emphasized the need for better critical thinking and communication skills among our graduates. One employer noted, "This candidate demonstrates clinical knowledge but lacks some problem solving skills" (35). Another supervisor, mentioning the "abrasive manner" of the employee toward patients and coworkers stated, "Perhaps more training in communication skills would benefit this individual..." (35), and yet another employer wrote,

“If all future employees are as technically prepared as this individual, they would be in fine shape. I would emphasize better communication and managerial skills” (37).

In addition to these employer comments, during an Accounting and Data Processing Advisory Committee meeting May 29, 1992, accountants from the Monroe area expressed their concern that MCCC graduates did not have strong communication skills “both written and verbal,” and committee members indicated that “these skills are key to getting and holding a job in accounting.” According to the Business Division Chair, employers and educators at the meeting discussed MCCC’s Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program, and participants suggested that having students write management letters was a technique which would get students to write and use their analytical skills (McKay).

So also, if we want to retrain workers for new jobs in business and technology, we must ensure that they have every opportunity to develop the necessary skills which will give them an advantage in the competitive global job market. Many industries in Monroe County are victims of the current recession. According to the business editor of the Monroe Evening News, Temes Packaging shifted work out of Monroe resulting in approximately 300 layoffs; Detroit Stoker, an internationally known Monroe-based company, recently laid off 40 to 50 people; Dundee Wire and Manufacturing, a company treating industrial wire, recently laid off over 35 workers (Slat); and the list threatens to become larger. If these displaced workers choose to enroll in classes at MCCC to retrain themselves for new careers, they will need to develop and hone their writing skills in order to compete with younger graduates for jobs in the global marketplace. This is easier to do while in the classroom setting with the freedom of composing multiple drafts of writing assignments and the encouragement and guidance of Writing Fellows. Therefore, the WAC and Writing Fellows programs further the mission of MCCC because they provide important student support services which meet the specific needs of county residents.

Others who especially benefit from the Writing Fellows Program include our Whitman students. Studies have shown that many students attending classes at Whitman are unwilling or unable to take classes or use the support services at the main campus

because of work and family responsibilities. While many do not have the time to commute, others perhaps are intimidated by their perceptions of the main campus. The Writing Fellows Program continues to attract instructors who teach at Whitman, and the demand for more Writing Fellows to do on-site writing conferences has grown. We are pleased to provide our Whitman students the personal contact which is so important to their writing improvement.

Other MCCC students who benefit by working with Writing Fellows are the writers in the developmental writing courses offered for the first time in the fall of 1991. Educators across the country have noted the challenge that under-prepared students pose. In fact, one science instructor at a community college in New York asserts that educating students who are ill-prepared "constitutes the most formidable challenge of today's community college." According to Joanna Ambron, writing-across-the-curriculum programs specifically address the problem because they provide innovative modes of instruction for students with diverse learning styles (7).

While writers of all skill levels usually benefit from one-to-one conferences in which they are encouraged to talk about their work and verbalize their ideas at each stage of the writing process, one-to-one writing conferences are especially helpful for writers who may feel uncomfortable about writing papers for an academic audience. Because Writing Fellows are taught constructive ways to respond to writers and their work, have specialized knowledge of the writing process, and are available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the LAL, they provide an important support service for MCCC students in all classes requiring critical thinking and writing. In addition, they can be of especial help to students who need more intense and individualized help getting their writing to accurately reflect their ideas.

MCCC's Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program is also valuable because it combats the decline of literacy which is prevalent in communities across the United States. An extensive community college study documents the leveling down of literacy in many open-access colleges. Noting the relaxation of reading and writing requirements, the researchers cite the classroom trend toward "bitting," the disconnected use of language in isolated

words and phrases exemplified by short answer and multiple choice objective tests. Research has shown that when instructors use these language modes exclusively, students became passive accepters of disconnected facts and are not called on to integrate the information or synthesize and analyze it for holistic meaning. In contrast, when instructors use language more holistically with essay tests and writing assignments, students become critical analyzers and interpreters of information. Thus, they become active makers of meaning. While bits of language can be used as part of the process of creative problem solving and in the search for holistic meaning, the researchers found most instructors at open-access colleges did not use language in this effective way (Richardson, Jr., Fisk, and Okun 71).

Because WAC programs encourage instructors to incorporate writing-to-learn exercises, essay testing, and writing tasks appropriate to every discipline, there is a better chance that MCCC students will develop the necessary critical thinking and writing skills that are expected of college-educated individuals. The continued support of WAC by our administration will help ensure that we maintain our high academic standards and the academic integrity of MCCC.

Our WAC program also contributes to academic excellence at MCCC because of the advanced composition course, English 254, in which prospective Writing Fellows participate. This class offers MCCC's honors students the opportunity to hone their own writing skills while they help other MCCC students better understand the steps of the writing process. Former Writing Fellows who have gone on to four-year institutions and careers have applauded the program for the advanced writing and communication skills they acquired in both the classroom and the Writing Center. Examples of the competitive edge which participants in the English 254 class enjoyed include one WF's acceptance into an invitation-only independent study class where he wrote a film script for a public service program. Another student who included her Writing Fellow certificate with her job application was questioned by a prospective employer about her ability and willingness to accept writing assignments. She was hired, in part, because of her WF participation. Yet another former WF recently was selected for a job promotion over other employees because of her superior writing abilities. As we survey former WFs, we

continue to hear of other success stories. These are very real ways in which MCCC has made a substantial difference in the lives of its students because of the the Writing Fellows Program.

2

Faculty Evaluation —of the Writing Fellows Program

Faculty who seek to improve the quality of student writing at MCCC have benefited from working with Writing Fellows. Because WFs are trained in current writing theory and practice, they understand the dynamics of the writing process. Thus they are able to help students at whatever stage they are—whether it be prewriting, researching, drafting, or revising. And because Writing Fellows concentrate on helping students with the writing process, instructors are free to concentrate on their specific areas of expertise in the classroom. The Fellows help instructors by serving four essential functions:

- Collaborator for the instructor in designing writing assignments and preparing students to carry them out.
- Audience for students who want to talk about the difficulties they are having with their written assignments and for students who are hesitant to approach the instructor.
- “First readers” for students’ drafts. They respond in writing with questions they have about the draft, and they later conference the paper individually with the student to discuss ways it works and ways it can be improved.

- Mentor for students in developing, organizing, and revising their drafts.

At the beginning of the semester, Writing Fellows meet the instructor to whom they are assigned and get course syllabi and writing assignments. They meet with their assigned classes and explain how the students can make the best use of the program, the Writing Center, and LAL services. Fellows stay in contact with instructors from the time they receive drafts of the students' papers until students turn in the final drafts of their papers. Thus WFs are able to keep the instructor informed of any problems students may be having with the written assignments.

Comments from Administration and Faculty About the Writing Fellows Program

When asked about Writing Across the Curriculum at MCCC, the president of the college, Gerald Welch, issued a statement of support for the program. His statement reads:

The Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program at Monroe County Community College has become a very valuable tool to promote writing in all areas of instruction. The communication skills of our students are greatly enhanced by the institution's commitment to this philosophy.

The Writing Fellows play an essential role in bringing the concept of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum to life. Without their dedication and skill, our students would not receive the personal writing attention which is so vitally important to the success of this program.

In a conversation about the importance of good writing skills, one division chair stated, "Our Writing Fellows Program is one of the best programs at the college. It better prepares students for the writing they will be required to do in their careers." Another division chair mentioned that our WAC program stresses the importance of writing to learn and lets students know that we take writing and literacy seriously at MCCC. By requiring students to write in all disciplines, we are sending a strong message about the importance of good communication skills.

Instructors who had Writing Fellows assigned to their classes in the 1992 academic year are strong supporters of the program. When asked about the benefits of the Writing Fellows Program in general, and in particular why they liked working with Writing Fellows, they made the following comments:

“This [winter] was the best semester I had in over twenty years. With [Writing Fellows in] three classes, I had no D or E papers, and I only had a few C papers. Most were A or B papers. They were well organized, well supported, and well written. Most improved a lot from the first to to the second draft.”

“It facilitates processing more of the content of the course—students ‘work’ more, i.e. learn more. I would not have the time to do this without taking class time.”

“I liked working with Writing Fellows because:

- I knew I would not be forced to read first drafts hastily prepared at the last possible moment.
- When correcting papers I felt less need to dwell on the writing problems and focused more on the content.
- Students were aware that their writing was considered an important part of the class.”

“The students learn more about how to compose on paper. The students appreciate the help and seem to enjoy the experience. Most would not become involved in the program without the type of encouragement you provide.”

“It focuses attention on our writing (makes it more important) and it improves the quality. Also, discussions of the writing assignment (one research paper, one journal) sometimes springboards into other matters pertaining to the course.”

“[My Writing Fellow] has taken this class before and knew exactly what I was looking for in papers. Plus, she is so bright and conscientious and a real joy to work with. A winner in every way. I want her again!!”

“Both [Writing Fellows] took the time to respond to students’ needs. They were more organized than I was!”

"I would not have assigned term papers if I had the full responsibility of dealing with writing skills."

"The rough drafts were worked over well by the Writing Fellows so that the final copy was a more polished product."

"Students' papers are better (more clear: easier to read)."

"They assisted in helping students in areas that I am neither qualified nor interested. Working with Writing Fellows helped students put a higher level of organization into the writing process. My primary interest was in having the students do a library search and organize their material. Without Writing Fellows, I would not have a paper requirement."

"[My Writing Fellows] assisted students with clarity of ideas and formulating objective arguments."

"The papers are generally better."

"The papers I evaluate are in a much more polished state. I do not have any sloppy papers thrown together at the last moment."

"As usual they [Writing Fellows] focus class attention on the importance of the journal, the essay, and on the writing in general."

"The presence of a Fellow focuses more interest on the essays and other writing. Writing Fellows give a course a more 'collegiate' flavor....They were a real help in improving the process of essay writing and journal keeping."

"Among other things, I noticed the vast improvement in the quality of papers turned in from my class. Students felt a definite need to meet with the Fellows to discuss paper content as well as development. For some students this was the first opportunity and experience they had to write....Having a Writing Fellow that was a previous student of mine was very beneficial; he could explain and critique assignments more effectively because he was aware of exactly what I was looking for."

“I liked working with a Writing Fellow because [my Writing Fellow] is so sharp and understands exactly what I want on the education papers, and the papers are always better when the students work with [the Writing Fellow].”

“It [working with Writing Fellows] takes the drudgery out of assigning written work. Correcting grammar and spelling instead of content is a drudgery. Also, grades are usually good which helps pull up the grades of average students.”

“The task of general review and suggested correction could be addressed by the Writing Fellow.”

“Offer your service (WF) every semester!! Summer and Spring, too. I don't have the time to be the WF. Therefore, I drop any papers during Spring and Summer that I might assign.”

“I want to let you know that I truly enjoyed being a part of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program at Monroe County Community College. As a part-time instructor, I require my students to research and write issue papers. My first inclination was to view this as an exercise in futility; but to my surprise, the feedback has thus far been positive.

I would like to share with you some of my observations as well as those of my students regarding the program and working with writing fellows in general. The Winter 1992 semester was the first term I was fortunate enough to be assigned writing fellows. As a result, I have noticed an immense difference in the quality, not to mention the quantity, of papers I received. For some of these students, doing the required research and writing is a first-time experience. Some had to accomplish this without the benefit of an English composition class. The input and feedback given by writing fellows to these individuals enabled them to put together a well-researched, well-written, and organized paper without formal classroom training. I was able to discern measurable improvements between the first and final drafts of papers submitted and found reading the first and final product most enjoyable.

As an educator, I consider assessing learning outcomes one of the most important yet difficult aspects of teaching. Since incorporating issue papers into my course requirements, this task has

become easier; and I have noticed a rise in the average final grades I assign to students. This additional academic requirement has enabled the student who does not do well on tests or is reluctant to participate in class discussion to submit another tool for me to use in assessing critical thinking skills and abilities. More and more students are commenting on course evaluations that they enjoyed the writing and research segment of the course and found it beneficial in developing these vital skills.

I would certainly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this program for the Fall '92 semester and would highly recommend participation to any faculty members. Keep up the good work!"

3

Student Evaluation —of the Writing Fellows Program

During the fall semester 344 students in Fellowed classes worked with 18 Writing Fellows on early drafts of their writing assignments. Students wrote papers for the humanities, physical sciences, social sciences, and business. During the winter semester the number of students who were able to work directly with a writing consultant in a Fellowed class rose to 702 with the advanced writing class being taught. Twenty-one new Fellows joined 19 returning Fellows to work with students in 28 classes.

In addition to providing students with written comments on student drafts, Writing Fellows also met students in one-to-one writing conferences where they were able to give students individual attention at each stage of the writing process: prewriting, researching, drafting, revising, and editing. They were able to clear up many of the misconceptions that students had about writing and to offer them encouragement and helpful strategies for writing improvement. For those students who did not have the benefit of having a Writing Fellow attached to their class, each Writing Fellow was available two hours a week either at the Learning Assistance Lab or at the Whitman campus.

Statistics indicate that Writing Fellows conducted 1,571 writing conferences at the LAL on main campus and over 100 conferences at the Whitman campus. In addition to these meetings, Writing Fellows conferenced papers with students in classrooms, libraries, and cafeterias, and over the telephone.

Students in Fellowed classes filled out questionnaires asking them to rate the effectiveness of the program and to comment on their experiences working with Writing Fellows. From the 207 student replies from fall semester and the 295 student replies from winter semester the following statistics were compiled:

Question #1: How helpful were the written comments on your paper?

37% Very Helpful
40% Helpful
20% Marginally Helpful
3% Not Helpful

Question #2: How helpful were your conferences?

35% Very Helpful
40% Helpful
20% Marginally Helpful
5% Not Helpful

Question # 3: What is your overall rating of the Writing Fellows with whom you worked?

40% Very Effective
43% Effective
15% Marginally Useful
2% Unsatisfactory

Question # 4: What is your overall rating of the Writing Fellows Program (the Writing Center and Writing Fellows in general)?

44% Very Effective
45% Effective
10% Marginally Useful
1% Unsatisfactory

Many of the students who replied that their experiences were either “marginally helpful” or “not helpful” indicated that they were disappointed that the Writing Fellow did not edit their paper, or that they did not think that their papers needed any improvement.

The following comments were made by students who participated in Fellowed classes:

“I found the program very helpful. While I had majored in English and American literature in college, I quickly found that no academic involvement for these past 12 years meant that I had to relearn many effective writing habits. My Writing Fellow was very honest and direct in her evaluation of my ‘very’ rough drafts. Writing an issue paper for a social science course was almost alien to me; through her advice and directions I learned how to research and to evaluate the issues critically. While the final paper of my first assignment still fell short, I was satisfied with my second paper. Thanks to [my Writing Fellow] I succeeded in getting an ‘A’ in political science. For me, this was a major victory—especially after having failed it during my freshman year at The University of Michigan! Thanks to both Marges, I enjoy reading *Time* and *USA Today* and thinking about the issues with a critical mind.”

“I found it very helpful when I worked with a Writing Fellow for an English 151 essay explaining scientific concepts to readers who did not have any scientific background. The thing that surprised me was that I wanted the Writing Fellow to fix the paper—make it right—NOW! When this didn’t happen, I felt frustrated. Instead, the WF said ‘As a reader, I don’t understand this term’ or ‘I’m not clear what the connection is between this idea and that idea.’ After asking questions and listening to my answers, the Fellow left the work for me. Later, when I sat in front of the computer, I was able to remember the WF’s comments and make my own revisions. I think when I took my paper to the WF it was about a ‘C’ paper. After working on revisions, I got an ‘A’ on the paper. The WF wouldn’t do the work for me, but she gave me the direction I needed.”

“I think using the WF both times I did bettered my grade by at least one letter. I knew my papers needed work, but I didn’t know

what was wrong. I found working with a WF much more efficient than working by myself at home—talking to another writer saves time and produces better results. Why should I sit at home, when I can work with a Fellow? I know some students, men especially, would rather not use a tutorial service. Not me!”

“I was thinking about using the Writing Fellow Program, but I never did and never did. Then I was in a class which was Felloved. My WF went over the paper with me. I liked that a lot. She pointed out areas that didn’t sound right to her. I found it very unusual to have to write in a political science class. But when instructors don’t require writing, it’s a disadvantage to the student. I liked the writing emphasis. I’m not one who is really interested in the political process. Writing about the subject made it more interesting. I got a lot out of writing a research paper; in particular, I enjoyed learning to use the library.”

“I was a student in a philosophy class, and my biggest fear was class discussion. I believe that communication with others and writing skills go hand in hand, and by working with a writing fellow for this class, I realized where I thought my strengths were in my paper. I was able to become much more confident in my opinions and reflections. I started to join the discussions, and my writing became more ‘to the point.’ I began to write more smoothly and with more confidence. My ideas came through in an interesting way.”

“I used two writing fellows for my Philosophy 151 class during the winter 1992 session. Their opinion on my work each time was helpful. The first writing fellow helped me remove unnecessary verbiage which helped my paper flow. The second paper was a road block to me. The writing fellow helped me see a different way to organize my ideas. With her help I was able to express my ideas with understanding. I was impressed with both writing fellows. They always started out with my strong points. I also liked the fact that they were not there to be a grammatical checker of my work.”

“I have enjoyed the writing assignments in my humanities classes. In my chemistry and physics classes at MCCC I haven’t had any essay tests. But at the college I transferred from we often

had to explain specific concepts in our own words. I think this helped me better comprehend scientific concepts.”

“I think its always good to get other people’s input when I am writing a paper. When I read my own paper I miss things. My Writing Fellow had me read my paper out loud, and I found this to be very helpful. She also noticed that I had not included a required section in my paper which called for a personal response.”

“I was unusually frustrated when I was working on a piece of writing which was important to me. I had finished the research and had taken lots of notes, but I felt the pressure building when I couldn’t get my first draft going. Then I sat down with a Writing Fellow who was interested in my project. She asked me questions she had about my subject. She was a good sounding board: once she got me talking, she encouraged me to explore my thoughts out loud and make connections between my seemingly disjointed ideas. At that point, ‘walking through’ my project orally was just what I needed. I find it much easier to talk my ideas out before I write them, and working with a WF made the process more productive and fun.”

“I find writing to be one of the most difficult tasks that I must do both at my job and at school. While intellectually I know that working through my ideas is a step-by-step process, I still hate the messy unpredictability of the process. I long for the fantasy day when I sit down and compose perfectly polished prose with my favorite pen on an elegant piece of paper with no false starts and crossouts. Anyone who writes knows this is a real fiction! The Writing Fellows I worked with helped me get back to reality because they are writers themselves. We laugh about our desire to ‘run the zoo,’ we lament our inability to run it, and we get back to the task of punching out meaning—as messy, unpredictable, intimidating, and exciting as it is. For me, the WFs offer a support group of kindred spirits who understand not only the difficulty of the writing process but also the eventual satisfaction of finally ‘getting it right’ on paper.”

4

Writing Fellow Evaluation —of the Writing Fellows Program

During winter semester the advanced writing class which trains new Writing Fellows was offered. Students who participated in this class were nominated by MCCC instructors in classes across the discipline because of their superior writing and interpersonal skills. Because students in the class worked to hone their own writing abilities at the same time they were paired to classes, the semester proved rigorous. The Associate Writing Fellows who participated in the winter class made the following comments about the program and their experiences both in the classroom and in the Writing Center:

“I have really enjoyed reading the papers of the students I am Fellowing. I have learned so much. Everyone has a different style of writing and my job was never boring. One paper that sticks out in my mind is that of another WF. Her paper discussed a book of poetry....I knew I would enjoy Fellowing, but I never expected to get so much out of it.”

“I have started a new personal journal (since the beginning of the semester) that I write in regularly. I am a believer that it is a release valve, thinking tool, and everything that it is cracked up to be....I feel more focused and am definitely more consistent in my journal

writing....I feel strongly about writing to learn and reading to improve writing."

"I feel that I am going away [from English 254] a more observant writer and reader. I think I have learned to appreciate being able to write acceptable papers after seeing others who have a real struggle with writing."

"This class [English 254] gave us the necessary tools and information to better equip ourselves as writers and readers."

"I just can't believe how much I am enjoying being a Writing Fellow. I have recently started working with my class. Their first assignment was to keep a journal....I decided to make sure the students were simply putting in everything [the instructor] had required. [The instructor] had given me a list of what he expected in the journals....With this in mind I started to Fellow the class. To my surprise I found these students had no idea what was expected of them....I started to wonder why. The handout given to them explained the journals. Of course, the students had filed it and never looked at it. Some students had even thrown it away. I began to wonder if I would have picked up on these requirements if I would have been in this class. To be honest I don't think I would have. I am definitely looking at things differently now. This is one more way becoming a Writing Fellow has benefited me."

And the same WF in a later entry:

"...I felt so good helping these students. The results were bad for them because they all had a lot of work to do. The results for me, however, were fabulous. The work I did with these students really boosted my confidence. The improvements I had helped them make were so obvious I could actually see how much good I did them. I really hope that I am able to continue to work as a Writing Fellow when the semester is over. I am enjoying it tremendously."

"To my surprise [a student from a Fellowed class who had missed three previous appointments] showed up . After talking with her I realized she was a very bright girl. I enjoyed reading her paper....Unfortunately I had this image of her that she didn't care whether she saw me or not. On the contrary, she was very

thankful. I learned something from this experience. Punctuality is as important and everyone says it is.”

“A student came in [to the Writing Center] desperately needing help. I volunteered to give her a hand. It seems she had just transferred to MCCC from Texas. She was writing a research paper but had no idea what MLA was. I realized she was going to need a lot of help. I also realized that I couldn’t teach her everything in one session. Therefore I went over the basic parenthetical documentation, format, and citations with her in order to get her started organizing her paper....Before she left I made another appointment with her to see a WF before the paper was due. It made me glad I stayed in the LAL even though my [scheduled] appointment never showed up.”

About a difficult reading assignment in English 254:

“Because this particular article was so hard to read, I put it in outline form. This helped me organize the points. After reading and rereading the article and outlining the main points, I then wrote down the things I felt were most interesting. Thus, I reinforced what I had learned by writing it down.”

About a writing conference with a walk-in student who had written a personal paper about a family member:

“I was really touched by what the student had written, and I found it a little hard to be objective. The paper was clearly written and easy to follow. I was very interested in what the student was saying in the paper. I really enjoy working in the LAL and feel privileged to read what someone else has written. Writing is personal, yet very rewarding when it is shared with someone else.”

“Today I started reading the second draft of the papers in my Fellowed class. It was a far better experience than I expected....All of the students met with me and were very receptive to my suggestions. One man in particular stands out in my mind. He is the type of person who you aren’t sure what he’s thinking about. He seems to be very intelligent, and his paper and attitude reflected this. He seemed really protective of his paper, so I had to use the ‘delicate’ approach with my criticisms.”

A Writing Fellow responding to a video on writing across the curriculum:

"Elaine Maimon was one who spoke on behalf of collaborative learning as 'learning how to learn from each other.' She encourages her students to write a page of acknowledgments with their essays just as is done with published books. She said this is important because the finished essay is a product of not only the writer but also of those who read it, discussed it, and gave their input. The writer's colleagues are an important part of the finished work. As is stated on the tape, peer interactions are part of the issue of involving students in their own learning. They need to be actively involved in dialogue with each other. Communication is the key factor here, isn't it? Before I started this class, I thought of writing only in terms of being very personal, and I would not have guessed that peer interaction would be a method of teaching me to be a better writer. I do see merit in it though when I realize how much I have learned about writing in this class. This class has definitely been designed around collaborative learning. I know I saw my paper in a new way after others' comments. It was most helpful."

"What a semester this has been. I have learned so much. I will never again throw words on a paper and think, 'There!' Good writing requires so much more."

"This class has been one of the most valuable and memorable. The collaborative learning style initiated cemented our class as a unit. I'm grateful for that experience....my education and life have been enriched due to this class. I am grateful for this prestigious experience as a Writing Fellow of the Monroe County Community College."

"As I review my association with the Writing Fellows, I find that participation in the Writing Across the Curriculum program at Monroe County Community College is a very positive experience. I have profited as a student and a tutor. I feel it affords me a real opportunity to improve my skills and to interact with others who share an interest in writing and Fellowing."

With this activity, as well as with other group endeavors I have been a part of over the years, I find it is the people who make it special. My fellow tutors are bright, energetic students who

impress me with their serious attitude and business-like approach to their mentoring responsibilities....

I feel that those of us who have gone through the Writing Fellows training with Dr. John Holladay or Sue Zwyer and have worked in the Writing Center as Writing Fellows have developed a unique common interest in writing efforts and tutoring responsibilities. We have found ourselves a part of a diverse but dedicated group of students who have goals in life and work hard to make dreams a reality...."

5

The WAC Year in Review

Fall semester of 1991 marked the fourth year of the WAC program at MCCC. To ensure the successful continuation and growth of the program, as WAC Director I performed the following duties:

- Assigned returning WFs to classes, scheduled their LAL hours, and coordinated their WAC activities. With the support of these Senior Fellows who constituted the core of the program, our WAC program maintained its continuity. Faculty response was positive and we had more demand than Fellows to work with classes. While each of the 11 instructors who requested Fellows received them, because of the limited number of Fellows, instructors were only able to have Fellows for one class. In the fall, 16 Fellows worked with 344 students in 11 classes across the curriculum at both the main campus and the Whitman Center.

Working with Writing Fellows and representing the Humanities/Social Sciences Division were Larry Leach and John Holladay, philosophy; Robert Merkel, literature; Bob Leski and Tom Moyer, sociology; Bud Connolly, social work; Ann Orwin, education; and Jim DeVries, anthropology; from the Science-Mathematics Division were Bob Pettit, earth science; and Roger

Spalding, astronomy; and from the Business Division was Cheryl Rumler, accounting.

October:

- Published the Fall issue of the Language for Learning newsletter. This issue informed the faculty of WAC activities and highlighted the faculty development workshop by David Ametrano on using writing to teach critical thinking skills in the classroom.
- Conducted two LAL workshops entitled "Proofing Your Papers" October 21 and 22.

November:

- Led a workshop at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing at the University of Vermont, Nov. 1-3. The theme of the conference was Learning to Trust Diversity, and my workshop was entitled "Decoding the University: The Writing Consultant as Cultural Interpreter." Representing MCCC, I presented original case studies to Writing Center administration and staff who worked in small groups to discuss possible ethical issues portrayed in the case studies. Together we collaborated to work out productive ways to approach difficult writing tutorials. At this conference I was also able to discuss MCCC's WAC and writing program with the keynote speaker, Toby Fulwiler, a noted authority on writing across the curriculum.
- Began search for Writing Fellows for the winter semester class. After sending out nomination forms to instructors, I reviewed the academic records of prospective WFs to determine if they were qualified. With the invaluable help of Peggy Faunt, the secretary of the Humanities/Social Sciences Division, I sent out invitation letters. After reading the biographic essays, I personally interviewed candidates for the advanced composition course, English 254.

Winter semester:

- Trained 20 new Writing Fellows in writing and tutoring skills in the advanced composition course, English 254.
- Scheduled 40 Writing Fellows to work with 19 instructors in 28 classes and coordinated their LAL hours and WAC activities. This semester marked the widest participation in WAC to date with 697 students working with Writing Fellows in 28 classes. In all, 41 WFs worked with day and evening students in nursing, business, technology, science, social science, and humanities courses at both the main campus and the Whitman Center. Participating were 20 faculty members, including three who were working with the program for the first time. With such an ambitious undertaking, the semester was not without difficulties. Because of unavoidable circumstances, some classes had to be switched. I reassigned some papers and personally Fellowed those that remained. With other Fellows, I read drafts of writing assignments, responded in writing to the papers, and then conferenced with the students in the LAL. With the teamwork of the WFs, all appointments were kept. I gained firsthand insight into the workings of the program, and I also gained a further respect for the responsibilities of the Writing Fellows.

Participants in the WAC program who represented the Humanities/Social Sciences Division were Bob Merkel, music and literature; John Holladay, philosophy; Ann Orwin, education; Jim DeVries, Stan Davis, and Tom Moyer, sociology; Larry Leach, communications; and Bob Leski and Marge Bacarella, political science. Representing the Business Division were Angie Evangelinos, electronic office procedures; and Bob Tarrant, accounting. The Science-Mathematics Division was represented by Bob Pettit, earth science; and Jack McDonald, biology; the Health Sciences Division was represented by Gail Odneal, nursing; and Bonnie Boggs-Clothier, respiratory therapy; and the Industrial Technology Division was represented by Al Fink, drafting.

- Led a workshop entitled "Strategies for Beginning Your Essay," March 16 and 17 in the LAL. I developed overhead transparencies and handouts and incorporated the participants' strategies in a handout for my writing classes.
- Chaired a WAC session the national Conference on College Composition and Communication March 19-21 in Cincinnati. The session featured Toby Fulwiler, a noted authority on WAC in American colleges; Richard Millman, California State University, who spoke on writing in mathematics; and Randy Moore, Wright State University, who addressed writing to learn in the sciences. I attended other WAC workshops and participated in sessions on Writing Centers, literacy, collaborative learning, and portfolio assessment.

Participated in three MCCC faculty development seminars:

- Workshop on Collaborative Teaching and Learning, March 28, presented by Macomb County Community College. I had met two of the presenters during the fall semester when they came to MCCC to discuss our Writing Fellows WAC model. Since Macomb is now developing their WAC program and their Writing Center, we were able to continue our conversation about the similarities and differences between our institutions and successful WAC and Writing Center models.
- The Community of Learners Workshop. Although it was offered for Siena Heights faculty and students, I received special permission to attend this seminar with MCCC Writing Fellows. I was pleased to encourage our WFs to participate because I feel that undergraduate students should be encouraged to join our academic community. Since our WFs are MCCC's best and brightest advanced students, it is important that they be given the opportunity to attend professional seminars.
- Assessing the Under-Prepared Student, May 29. This is an important topic which affects most MCCC

instructors. The sessions dealing with under-prepared college writers and the importance of using writing samples in placement tests were especially beneficial and appropriate because of our recently organized developmental classes. At this seminar I was able to talk to faculty at Owens Technical College, a two-year, open-enrollment school which has been using writing samples in placement tests for the last two years.

Spring semester:

- Published Language for Learning newsletter. With the help of Cyril Keiffer and Angie Evangelinos the newsletter was created using Ventura Desktop Publishing. I wrote articles and solicited original writing from past and present Writing Fellows for the issue.
- Wrote a proposal for The National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing which was accepted this summer. I plan to attend the conference Oct. 23-24 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. My panel presentation on listening skills is entitled "Developing a Questioning Attitude: Verbal and Nonverbal Prompts in Writing Conferences."

Summer Activities:

- Participated in a 15-week MCCC computer course on desktop publishing offered through the Business Division.
- Created a bookmark for the Writing Center for distribution at MCCC. This promotional aid was distributed at new student orientations, at the bookstore, and at the library.
- Created a WAC handout for MCCC instructors entitled "Guide to Employing a Writing Fellow in a Content-Area Course."
- Presented a writing workshop with Mary Roberti at an orientation for part-time instructors. Our workshop

demonstrated a group essay writing activity and highlighted how instructors could use freewrites as prompts for both small and large groups. An overview of MCCC's WAC program was included.

- Compiled an LAL resource bookshelf for both Writing Fellows and instructors interested in innovative ways to help writers across the disciplines improve their writing.

6

WAC: The Future

It is not enough for students to learn the fundamentals of writing in beginning English composition courses. In order for students to learn to write well and develop good critical thinking and problem-solving skills, they must write often in subjects across the disciplines. As Monroe County Community College's Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program begins its fifth year, as WAC director my goal is to continue the steady growth of the program. I am heartened by the number of faculty members from various disciplines who understand the benefit of including a writing component in their classes, and I will continue to support their efforts.

In addition, I would like to encourage faculty from disciplines which have not yet included writing in their classroom. Many faculty may feel that writing does not naturally fit their subject area. While it is true that many traditional writing assignments like term papers are not appropriate for every subject, many successful writing-to-learn activities have been developed by instructors in different disciplines. I will continue to share ideas on innovative writing assignments by passing along current articles, bibliographies, and books to faculty from every division, and I encourage faculty members to send me articles which they find helpful.

Currently we are organizing a resource bookshelf and file drawer at the Writing Center in the LAL. Both full- and part-time instructors are welcome to consult the resources and to suggest or donate any additional material which would be helpful to faculty, Writing Fellows, and student writers.

Much new research on writing across the curriculum has been conducted since Mike Steinberg of Michigan State University led the last formal WAC workshop at MCCC in 1988. In addition, many new full- and part-time faculty members have joined our college. I suggest it is time to have another campus-wide workshop with a noted WAC authority. In this way MCCC instructors could meet and discuss their questions and exchange strategies for innovative writing assignments. If the cost of the workshop leader is prohibitive, we might invite colleagues from other colleges with similar programs and student populations to participate. We could follow up this longer workshop with in-house seminars to exchange ideas on which activities work best in various subject areas. In this way we could explore the connection between language and learning and open up a dialogue among MCCC instructors who wish to make students active participants in their own learning process.

While we can be proud of the successful Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program which we have developed at Monroe County Community College, with each new academic year we must evaluate its usefulness to both faculty and students and look for ways to improve our services. We will continue to strive to help MCCC students express themselves clearly and gracefully in their college writing. But our ultimate success is measured when our students learn the importance of good communication skills and are able to apply the lessons they have learned in our classrooms in their personal and professional lives.

Works Cited

Ambron, Joanna. "History of WAC and Its Role in Community Colleges." Writing Across the Curriculum in Community Colleges. New Directions for Community Colleges 73. Ed. Linda C. Stanley and Joanna Ambron. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991. 3-8.

Employer Follow-Up Data for 1989-1990 Graduates. Monroe, MI: Monroe Community College, Placement Service, 1992.

Fulwiler, Toby. Introduction. Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum. Ed. Toby Fulwiler and Art Young. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton, 1990. 1-8.

Huber, Bettina J. and Art Young. "Report on the 1983-84 Survey of the English Sample." ADE Bulletin 84 (1986): 35-61.

McKay, David R. "Accounting and Data Processing Advisory Committee." Monroe, MI: Monroe County Community College, 1992.

Monroe County Community College 1992-1994 Catalog. Monroe, MI: Monroe County Community College, 1992.

Richardson, Richard C., Jr., Elizabeth C. Fisk, and Morris A. Okun. Literacy in the Open-Access College. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.

Sebranek, Patrick, Verne Meyer, and Dave Kemper. Writers Inc. Burlington, WI: The Write Source, 1990.

Slat, Charlie. Phone interview. 26 August 1992.

Stout, Barbara R., and Joyce N. Magnotto. "Building on Realities: WAC Programs at Community Colleges." Writing Across the Curriculum in Community Colleges. New Directions for Community Colleges 73. Ed. Linda C. Stanley and Joanna Ambron. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991. 9-13.

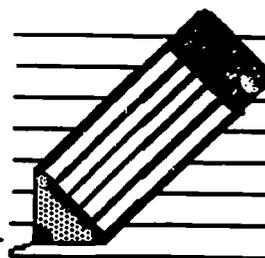
LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Vol. IV, No. 1

October 1991

Newsletter of the Monroe County Community College Writing Program

Editor: Sue Zwayer



WRITING FELLOWS AND WRITING CENTER BEGIN FOURTH YEAR AT MCCC

The Writing Across the Curriculum Program is pleased to have sixteen experienced Writing Fellows return this fall. Trained by Dr. John Holladay, the program's originator, these Writing Fellows form a seasoned and unique group at MCCC. Their advanced training, together with their extensive experience in grappling with the diverse problems of student writers, has elicited much praise from both administrators and faculty alike. In addition, the students they have worked with have been extremely positive regarding their experiences. A recent survey indicated that 42% considered the program effective, while 49% considered the program very effective.

Quite clearly, John Holladay and the Writing Fellows have effected a considerable change at MCCC; the academic atmosphere has been significantly enhanced by the tutored students' new-found confidence and enthusiasm in their developing writing skills. As the new coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, I am happy to be joining such a dynamic group.

Many students from MCCC go on to four-year colleges, where good writing skills are required; students taking classes in all disciplines must be proficient writers. MCCC's contribution through the Writing Fellow's Program helps students prepare for this eventuality. And for all students entering the workplace, whether they go directly from MCCC or from a four-year institution, the ability to think and write clearly is essential.

Former Writing Fellow Vivian Walczesky, who now attends The University of Toledo, stated it well when she said, "The program is rigorous, the best is expected of you, but the future rewards are invaluable to all concerned."

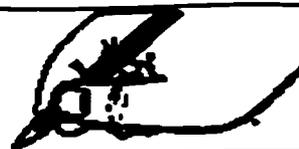


FALL 1991 FELLOWED CLASSES

| <u>Instructor</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>WF</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Larry Leach | Phil. 253 | 28 | Sally Hudson |
| Robert Pettit | Earth Science | 40 | Sandy Johnson Matthew Thom |
| Jim DeVries | Anthro. 152 | 34 | Marge Kohler Brenda Sovoda |
| Ann Orwin | Education 151 | 25 | Kristi Adams |
| Robert Leski | Sociology 151 | 34 | Tonya Roelent Elaine Lemley |
| Robert Spalding | Astronomy 151 | 35 | Laura Gifford Robert Kenyon |
| Cheryl Rumler | Accounting 205 | 13 | Peggy Faunt |
| Robert Connolly | Social Work 151 | 35 | Rose Matheny Peggy Engel |
| Thomas Moyer | Sociology 151 | 34 | Debbie Nanney Vickie McIntyre |
| Robert Merkel | Children's Lit | 34 | Jim Pyle |
| John Holladay | Western Phil. | 32 | Kathy Hatten Vickie McIntyre |

In addition to working with writing assignments in the classes listed above, each Writing Fellow is available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab. Call the LAL to find the tutoring hours of specific Writing Fellows (ext. 278).

Faculty are encouraged to recommend (or require) students to make use of the Writing Center in the LAL.



WORKSHOP LEADER DAVID AMETRANO STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF WRITING IN CRITICAL THINKING PROCESS

Can critical thinking skills be taught? According to Dr. David Ametrano, program coordinator of The Center for Research on Learning and Thinking at The University of Michigan, the answer is a resounding YES! During a recent faculty inservice day, Dr. Ametrano led a workshop in which he modeled how instructors can teach critical thinking skills in the classroom. **Vital to the process is writing.**

Dr. Ametrano began the session with a five-minute freewrite in which he asked participants to define critical thinking. He encouraged faculty to share their definitions, and he wrote them on the board. This exercise required participants to draw on their own prior knowledge and to consider new information. In addition, the freewriting and the resultant discussion set the tone for active learning.

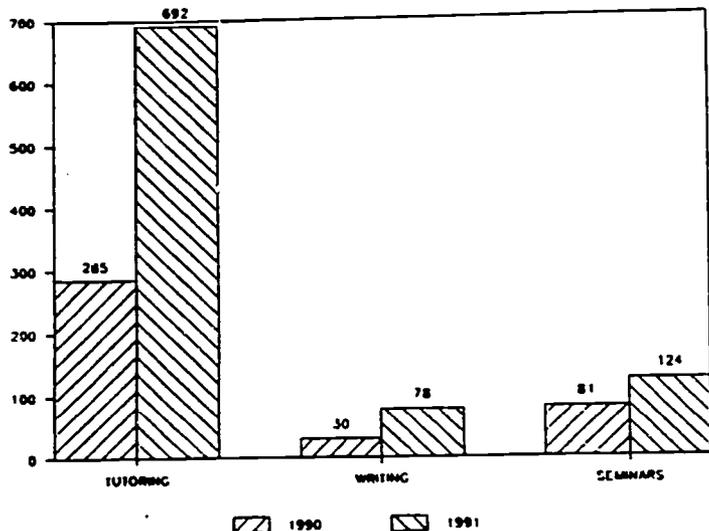
Next, Dr. Ametrano directed participants to write about what a student in their discipline might be doing if that student were engaging in critical thinking. While several disciplines were represented, answers were strikingly similar. Responses included problem solving; analyzing, synthesizing, and critiquing other writers' work; analyzing known facts and procedures to apply to new situations; and researching to discover needed background information. Dr. Ametrano again elicited and wrote responses on the board, and participants then discussed their own answers with members of different disciplines.

In another exercise, before delivering a short lecture on active learning versus passive learning, Dr. Ametrano directed participants to identify three main points and to formulate one question on the material he presented orally. This prompt focused his listeners' attention, encouraging potentially passive learners to become more active by writing down their ideas. It also served as a springboard for a lively discussion of participants' concerns. An important issue was raised by one faculty member who questioned how instructors can evaluate critical thinking in the classroom. Dr. Ametrano emphatically responded, **"Throw out multiple choice tests and give essay tests which require students to think and write critically."**

At the end of his presentation Dr. Ametrano requested that faculty respond to a questionnaire which included a short written section asking what was the most useful and least useful part of the workshop. This simple technique once again modeled how writing can be used in the classroom to both solidify learning and to evaluate teaching methods.



THE COUNT JUST KEEPS GOING UP IN THE LAL



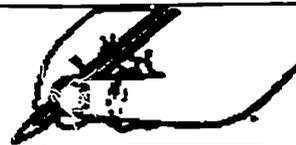
Any faculty members full-or part-time interested in donating some time to work in the LAL as a tutor or writing fellow, please contact Cindy Riedel or Sue Zwyer.

SEPT. 1990 AND SEPT. 1991

Ode to a Writing Fellow

'Twas the Fall of Ninety, the letter came
 Be a Writing Fellow! Achieve some fame!
 Perchance to dream, we HAD that chance
 And no one even looked askance--
 We were a little shy, it's true--
 (Our eagerness we'd begun to rue).
 We'd pass the time in trial runs,
 Watching the door, making up puns--
 Would no one need our new-found skills?
 No hapless student with strength of will
 to admit, that Writing Fellows could help him
 Doc. Holladay had made it sound certain.
 And then, the Fall of Ninety-One!
 Our usefulness had just begun!
 No more our Cinderella status--
 We had become the best--the greatest!
 A full appointment book became
 the norm, we suffered no more shame.
 So students make your life more mellow
 Come sit awhile with your Writing Fellow!

--Sally Hudson



THE WRITING FELLOW PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Writing Fellow Program needs your help. We are looking for students across the curriculum who have demonstrated solid critical thinking skills and the ability to translate their ideas into writing.

Please take the time to nominate your best students according to your first, second, and third choices. Return the accompanying form as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time; the Writing Across the Curriculum Program values your participation and continued support!

TO: Sue Zwayer
FROM:
RE: Writing Fellow Nominations
DATE:

I would like to nominate the following students to the Writing Fellow Program:

1st Choice _____ SS# _____
2nd Choice _____ SS# _____
3rd Choice _____ SS# _____
Any Others _____ SS# _____
_____ SS# _____
_____ SS# _____

_____ I would like more information about the program.

LAL/Writing Center Referral Form Monroe County Community College



Date: _____

(Instructor: Please attach this form to the student's assignment, if appropriate.)

I am referring _____ to the LAL/Writing Center for assistance with the writing skills listed below:

(Course Instructor)

Student: You may bring this form to the LAL (second floor of the CLRC). Someone may be available to work with you, but you would be wise to call ahead and make an appointment (242-7300 ext. 278).

DATE: _____

Student: _____

Your student came to the LAL/Writing Center today. We worked in the following way:

(Writing Fellow)

Language For Learning



Writing Fellows Team Up to Assist Writers in 27 Classes at MCCC

This winter eighteen instructors are working with forty Writing Fellows to improve the quality of student writing at MCCC. Nineteen Senior Writing Fellows, trained by John Holladay, have teamed up with twenty-one Associate Writing Fellows who are currently taking an advanced writing class. Together they are working with day and evening students in nursing, business, technology, science, social science, and humanities courses at both the main campus and the Whitman Center.

The Writing Fellows serve as "first readers" of papers: they critically respond to the early drafts to determine if the papers follow the assignment's directions, have a clear thesis, an effective pattern of organization, a logical argumentation, appropriate explanations and examples, suitable tone, and follow the specified format for documentation.

*Newsletter of the Monroe County Community
College Writing Program
Editor: Sue Zwyer*

The Writing Center is located in the Learning Assistance Lab on the second floor of the Campbell Learning Resource Center. The Center is open Monday through Thursday 8:00am until 7:00pm, Friday 8:00am until 4:30pm, and Saturday 9:00am until 1:00pm. Writing Fellows are available on a walk-in basis, but appointments are encouraged. Telephone for an appointment at 278.

After addressing these higher level concerns, Fellows note grammar and punctuation problems which interfere with the clear expression of ideas.

After reading the papers, Fellows meet with the writers to address these higher level concerns. In a writing conference, writers get the chance to rehearse their ideas with a live audience. They hear questions that a real reader has with the paper: are key concepts mentioned, what do they mean, what is the connection of this idea to the next?

This immediate feedback provides writers an opportunity to hear their voices and see the immediate effect of their words. Often students have worked with a project so long in isolation that they fail to realize they have not provided needed information. In the conference they hear questions the readers have and are able to supply the missing pieces.

With the chance to rewrite, students can better focus their ideas, and add, delete, or rearrange information for a more effective paper. Then lower level concerns such as grammar and punctuation can be addressed. If time permits, Writing Fellows look for patterns of error and together the Fellow and writer look at handbooks for rules and explanations. Waiting until the paper takes a more organized form eliminates "fixing" surface errors that often are cleared up when students have the chance to rethink and restate their ideas more clearly.

Reflections On The Letter

by Jim Criste

When an unexpected letter from the college appeared in my mail box, I was sure that I had been found out. The long suffering teachers at MCCC had been pushed to their limits, and I would have to pursue my studies elsewhere. English was sure to have been the cause of my downfall. Mr. Compora was kind enough to see that I understood the most remedial elements, but I was, after all, in college now.

After summoning what remaining courage I possessed, I opened the letter. An overwhelming sensation of relief came over me when I saw that the letter was about being a Writing Fellow. I would simply inform the department about the mistake, and they could forward the letter to the correct person. My little secret was still safe.

The axiom that no good deed goes unpunished was once again proven true; the letter was, indeed, for me. Terror's reign set in as I realized what was happening. Writing Fellows are smart. I can't belong with them. The students would all be better at writing than I am, so how could I help them? And if I managed to fool all these people, I was sure to be found out by Dr. Holladay.

My decision to confront my fears led to the most rewarding experience of my college career. If students at MCCC are willing to put forth the effort to learn, the college will support them with every

available resource. This policy also applied to me. Advanced Composition provided me the perfect opportunity to learn grammar and punctuation skills indelibly. The best way to improve your writing is to write. Peer-group feedback allows you to examine new ideas and options to develop writing skills. The idea of sharing papers with the group frightens everyone, and the first time is a baptism in ink. Sharing improves papers and reduces fears.

The next frightful incident a Writing Fellow faces is meeting with the first student in the LAL. Advanced Composition is perfect preparation for this event. Working with the students helped me over my fears. Students come to the LAL because they want to do well, and most are very good writers. I think they helped me more than I helped them.

I enjoyed my experience as a Writing Fellow, and I recommend it to everyone. Writing skills are important in college and in life. Everything in life changes except the written word. Being a member of the group, both the Writing Fellows and the LAL, and working with the faculty and students of MCCC have been important to me. When I started college, I said I was going to make it through without spelling or counting. My spelling is still in question, but I have found that I can count.

On "Fellowing" and Being "Fellowed"

by
Sally Hudson

Our Writing Fellow stood in front of our science class brimming with confidence and basking securely in the full approval of our instructor. She had obviously been given carte blanche on how to "deal" with us; she seemed superior somehow, almost some kind of super-student immune from the pressures of chasing those elusive A's. To my amazement I felt distinct stirrings of resentment; was this yet another gauntlet to run in order to get through this course? I was aghast and ashamed; surely I had done this self-same thing. Had I exuded this overwhelming confidence? Was this the way I was viewed by the student to whom I was assigned? As a "seasoned" Fellow (I hesitate to use "veteran" or even "senior" which both smack horribly of "past one's prime"), I should know better—this person was here for our benefit, wasn't she? I decided to explore my feeling further.

When I work as a Fellow, I am always amazed at just how tired I am after working with student writers; it is as if I have run a verbal marathon. Surely there must be some consistent strategy to apply in each case. After some thought, I have devised a recipe for the perfect conference:

Jim Criste served as a Writing Fellow during the winter semester of 1991. He is now majoring in social work at Eastern Michigan University. His Writing Fellow experience helped earn him a place writing the Project Embers film script. This Detroit project pairs able-bodied senior citizens with frail-bodied seniors, so that they can remain independent in their own homes.

**Newsletter of
Monroe County Community College Writing Program**

combine two cups each of diplomacy, tact, and psychology; add one teaspoon of a high tolerance for pain; sprinkle a dash of writing inspiration; and stir well.

Tiptoeing around people's sensitivities emerges as a tremendously important factor--I have been alarmed by tales of the less than tactful handling suffered by a few of "my" students at the hands of tutors and instructors. At the same time, some students' indifference to their writing assignments also makes me cringe. In these instances, I have heard disquieting criticism aimed at my fellow Fellows, by students citing "abridged" sessions: "She didn't have enough time," "I didn't like his attitude," or "She wasn't any help" are a few of the complaints.

Pondering this dilemma leads me to wonder what exactly our role is supposed to be. As a mentor, I find it extremely difficult to plumb the middle ground between too much involvement and too little. When an appropriate word or phrase seems so obvious that it attacks me with neon signs, and all the hinting in the world doesn't put the "right idea" in the student's head, it is virtually impossible not to suggest it directly--specters of plagiarism notwithstanding.

Irrevocable harm may result in less than enthusiastic handling of any student's writing efforts. Offering up one's writing to a stranger to scrutinize requires courage; careless remarks, even kindly meant, can wound deeply--after all, you are what you write. To someone who loves to write, the chance to try and to guide some other writer's efforts is nothing short of a labor of love spawned from the very best of intentions. From my own purely subjective experience, few events are more rewarding than producing the best piece of writing I can; to have an impartial reader assist in that process is an added bonus. Our intentions as Writing Fellows are, or should be, completely altruistic, regardless of the way they may be interpreted. Expectations on the part of both writer and reader should therefore be tempered with a little realism and the realization that both benefit from the experience.

Thus, casting aside all considerations of personality, ability, and motivation, all writers can only benefit from discussing their work with an impartial but caring listener.

Desktop Published by Angie Evangelinos and Cy Keiffer
Ventura Publisher for Windows 4.0 in the TLC

Newsletter of
Monroe County Community College Writing Program

WINTER 1992 FELLOWED CLASSES

| <i>Instructor</i> | <i>Course</i> | <i>Enrollment</i> | <i>Writing Fellow(s)</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bob Pettit | Earth Science | 34 | Mark Scherer Aurore Farrand |
| Angie Evangelinos | Admin. Sectl. Proc. | 4 | Peggy Faunt |
| Bob Merkel | Children's Lit | 30 | Peggy Engel Colleen Higgins |
| Bob Merkel | Music for Teachers | 25 | Kristen Fairbairn Rose Matheny |
| Ann Orwin | Exploring Teaching | 16 | Kristi Adams |
| Jim DeVries | Prin. of Sociology | 35 | Marge Kohler Heather Patrick |
| Jim DeVries | Prin. of Sociology | 35 | Laura Gifford Jean Stigen |
| Stan Davis | Juvenile Delinquency | 29 | Sandy Johnson Marilyn Ferguson |
| Marge Bacarella | American Instit. | 19 | Marge Kohler |
| | Intro. to Poli. Sci. | 40 | Vickie McIntyre Chris Balk |
| Jack McDonald | Intro. to Envir. Sci. | 20 | Sally Hudson Ray Jablonski |
| B.J. Harmon | Coll. Algebra/Trig. | 36 | Jim Pyle Jennifer Cooper |
| Bob Leski | Intro. to Poli. Sci. | 25 | Rose Matheny |
| | Intro. to Poli. Sci. | 22 | Donna Ezzell |
| | Intro. to Poli. Sci. | 11 | Tori Osborne |
| Larry Leach | Communications Fund. | 21 | Sally Hudson Adele DeSloover |
| | Intro. to Poetry/Drama | 25 | Amy Hatfield Cynthia Delker |
| Gail Odneal | Nursing Seminar | 21 | Rochelle Baval |
| | Nursing Seminar | 20 | Tonya Roelant |
| Boggs-Clothier | Respiratory Therapy | 16 | Kyiana Churchill |
| John Holladay | Intro. to West. Phil. | 34 | Brenda Sovoda |
| | Intro. to Logic | 35 | Cynthia Barkenquast |
| | Intro. to Logic | 35 | Cathy Chlebek |
| Al Fink | Drafting | 17 | Matthew Thom |
| Tom Moyer | Prin. of Sociology | 30 | Elaine Lemley Elizabeth Stein |
| Robert Tarrant | Accounting 254 | 10 | Jennifer Cooper |
| <i>Whitman Campus</i> | | | |
| Tom Moyer | Marriage and Family | 25 | Pat Watkins Karen Herren |
| Robert Connolly | Intro to Soc. Serv. | 27 | Debbie Nannee and Dee Smale |

In addition to working with writing assignments in the classes listed above, each writing fellow was available two hours a week in the Writing Center in the Learning Assistance Lab. Call the LAL (ext 278) to find the tutoring hours of specific Writing Fellows.
Faculty are encouraged to recommend students to use the Writing Center in the LAL



1992 Winter Semester • Writing Fellow Class