1992

An Analysis of Writing Across the Curriculum

M. Katherine Haight

This research is a product of the graduate program in English at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

Recommended Citation

Haight, M. Katherine, "An Analysis of Writing Across the Curriculum" (1992). *Masters Theses*. 2162.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/2162

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

09-03-92
_____
       Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because _____ _____

_____

_____

_____   _____

       Date   Author

m

An Analysis of

Writing Across the Curriculum

(TITLE)

BY

M. Katherine Haight

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts in English

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1992

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

9/9/92

DATE

9/9/92

DATE

ABSTRACT

Between 1900 and 1925 several changes took place which modernized American universities. One of the most significant involved a different curriculum. The new program was, in part, geared toward preparing students for specialized careers. This approach, however, made it possible for teachers outside of English to eliminate writing from their courses and, more generally, to develop distorted and limited views of the uses of writing. Today, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs are being incorporated into many colleges and universities across the country in an attempt to correct misperceptions and to bring writing back into non-English courses.

WAC stresses the advantages of using writing as a way to learn and to communicate in all disciplines. For the business discipline, more specifically, WAC means combining efforts with teachers in other disciplines in order to learn how best to use writing to teach course material and business-specific communication skills. Teachers who already have brought writing into their courses found that it is an excellent way to improve students comprehension and analytical skills while improving their writing ability.

Voluntary WAC workshops are the most common and effective way to educate faculty on the meaning, practices, and benefits of WAC. Leaders of a WAC workshops usually clearly outline the writing process and show how it involves several recursive steps: invention, drafting, and revision.

An explanation of evaluation is also included in a WAC workshops. WAC workshops are intended to dispel common misperceptions so that participants see that writing is an excellent way to improve students' learning ability and to turn them into more fluent and confident writers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is a movement that involves an unlimited scope of disciplines and recognizes writing's essential role in thinking and communicating. Professor Janet Emig from Rutgers University is widely quoted for her explanation of the role of writing in WAC: "Writing represents a unique mode of learning—not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique" (122). Throughout the past century there have been a variety of WAC programs, but Emig's goals inform the most recent approach, emphasizing writing to learn and to communicate in the disciplines. Specifically for the business discipline, WAC means combining efforts with teachers in other disciplines in order to learn how best to use writing to teach course material and business-specific communication skills. Today in the business discipline, Emig's idea is becoming the motto of more and more business teachers in colleges and universities across the country as the Writing Across the Curriculum movement continues to expand.

Starting in the 1970's, educators both in and out of English began to research the effectiveness of writing as a teaching tool in non-English courses.[1] Studies continue to be done, and with few exceptions, these studies show that

---

[1] For more on relevant research performed during the 1970's, see Klinger 343-47; Raimes 797-80; and Rose 272-79.

the same methods used to teach writing in English courses
are also excellent for promoting and enhancing learning in
all disciplines. Those teachers who incorporate writing
into their courses also see an improvement in their
students' analytical and comprehension skills. For example,
Gloria Fauth, Robert Gilstrap, and Joan Isenberg, professors
of education at George Mason University, now use writing in
their courses and find a concomitant improvement in their
students' abilities to understand course content, develop
term projects, write for different audiences, and prepare
for discussion. They also report that their students
responded favorably to the use of writing:

> Written student feedback has indicated
> that using these procedures has
> increased their confidence in their
> ability to think and write more
> effectively. They recognize that these
> procedures will be helpful to them
> beyond this particular course in a
> variety of situations. (86)

The author of "Teaching Intermediate Micro Economics by
Adopting a Writing Strategy," Anthony Greco, also praises
the use of writing in his course. Greco reports that his
students show a lack of interest in memorizing the lectures;
however, when he incorporates writing into his course, he
finds that writing leads his students to a "new discovery of

knowledge while improving their writing skills" (255).
Writing forces his students to change from passive to active
learners. These teachers are not unique or special. The
many similar tests that are performed by teachers in all
disciplines also result in improved student performance.[2]

In addition to helping students learn course material,
WAC develops students' writing skills because all writing,
including informal writing that is being used as a means to
learn, helps students improve their linguistic skills. An
improvement in writing ability is important during a time
when students' weaknesses in this area are becoming more
apparent to college and university faculty. For example,
Mike Rose, a professor at UCLA and a member of UCLA's
Writing Research Project, is concerned because "an alarming
number of students cannot write effectively; a small number
are sadly inept" (272). Ann Raimes, who is the coordinator
of the Developmental English Program at Hunter College and a
published author, expresses another typical concern. Raimes
writes, "Across the curriculum, our students had to use
correct grammar and syntax, express and illustrate their
ideas clearly, marshal arguments, and provide evidence. We
saw that their grasp of these fundamental skills were often
lacking . . ." (798). English teachers are not alone in
these concerns. For example, Maurice Hirsch and Janet

---

[2] For other studies see, Emig 127-128; Gray 729-33; Henry
89-93; Knoblauch 465-74; Laufer and Crosser 83-87; and Odell 42-50.

Duthie Collins, professors of accounting, are also concerned because they have found that "managers in many different industries complain that recent graduates are unable to effectively communicate their ideas in writing" (15). WAC is a response to these concerns.

Teachers in all disciplines who use writing find that "frequent writing develops better writers" (Sensenbaugh 462). By bringing writing back into all disciplines, the students cannot help but improve as writers. In "Teaching Teachers to Teach Writing: A Modeling Approach," Gloria Fauth shares her own and her colleagues' findings after using writing in their education classes:

> We have noticed that students' papers
>
> and examinations reflect more attention
>
> to organization of thoughts and
>
> material. This makes their writing more
>
> comprehensible to the reader as well as
>
> being a reflection of their ability to
>
> express themselves through this medium.
>
> (85)

In The Practical Tutor, a book that is geared toward helping English teachers and tutors better understand students and writing, authors Emily Meyer and Louise Smith assert that with practice, students gain fluency in their writing. Meyer and Smith also say that researchers have found "that as writers gain fluency, many of their problems with

correctness mysteriously vanish. . . . We have seen that, indeed, as writers become more fluent, many of their problems with sentence structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics DO begin to clear up" (47). These facts alone should give teachers an incentive to implement WAC.

Because so many teachers like Fauth, Sensenbaugh, and Greco are starting to realize the many positive results that writing has on students' writing skills and learning ability, the WAC movement is gaining momentum. In 1988, Susan McLeod of Washington State University conducted a survey to estimate the growth of WAC. McLeod sent questionnaires,

> to all 2735 post-secondary institutions
> in the United States and Canada. Of
> those, 1113 (40%) replied. . . . Of the
> institutions that responded, 695 (62%)
> had no WAC programs, but 73 of those
> indicated their institutions were in the
> planning\discussion stage and hoped to
> set up a program soon. (338)

Forty other schools asked for more information and said that they were interested in WAC. Thirty-Eight percent responded that they already had a WAC program. McLeod reacts to the positive results and writes, "This seems a remarkable number, considering that just a decade ago only a handful of

such programs existed. Writing Across the Curriculum is clearly alive and well, and just as clearly is growing as a movement" (338).

Despite all of the encouraging feedback, the concept of writing as a teaching tool is still fairly new. This change in pedagogy which would result in a more complete education for students has not yet been made by all or even a sufficient number of teachers. David Russell interprets the resistance to this change in his article, "Writing Across the Curriculum in Historical Perspective: Toward a Social Interpretation." Russell, who has recently had articles published in College English, College Composition and Communication, and Rhetoric Review and is currently working on a history of writing in the academic disciplines, blames the resistance on the major changes that modernized universities across the United States between 1900 and 1925. One of these changes was the specialization of the programs which were intended to prepare students for the "new urban industrial economy and a new class of specialized professionals" (55). As a result of the compartmentalization of universities, it became possible for teachers outside of English to eliminate writing from their courses. Unless a course was specifically related to English, such as a composition or literature class, teachers were not required to teach or use writing. In the business field, for example, "the active, personal,

language-dependent instructional methods of the old
curriculum were replaced by passive, rather impersonal
methods borrowed from Germany or from scientific management:
lecture, objective testing, and the like" (55). Each
discipline concentrated on skills specific to that
particular profession. The importance of writing skills in
non-English disciplines, however, was overlooked. Outside
of English, writing became known as "a separate and
independent technique that should have been learned
elsewhere" and "taught by someone
else . . ." (55). By taking away the responsibility of
non-English teachers to teach writing, the importance of
discipline-specific writing was ignored. Therefore,
graduates of non-English programs, for example business
students, had memorized the facts and equations but lacked
the skills to write basic letters, memos, and reports, which
are a necessary part of the business field.

Russell also explains how the change in the curriculum
led to an even more extreme view than that of having the
English department be responsible for all writing. When the
changes first took place, the "abolitionist argument"
developed. This argument said that "writing cannot be
formally taught (only gradually acquired)." As a result of
this attitude, fewer students were able to attend and
graduate from college:

In lieu of teaching writing, they

>[colleges] were forced to deny students
>
>admission who had not already acquired
>
>the necessary conventions, flunk those
>
>who did not quickly acquire them, or
>
>pass students with the hope that they
>
>would acquire those conventions on the
>
>job. (Russell 65)

Today, however, the "abolitionist argument" that writing cannot be taught and the idea that non-English disciplines can excuse themselves from teaching and using writing in their courses are primarily recognized as flaws in a system that prevents students from developing the communication skills that they need, and a new system is finally being developed. The new WAC programs are proof that "there are some signs that the structural resistance to cross-curricular writing is weakening" (Russell 67). Unfortunately, the old ideas and attitudes are not extinct.

The misconceptions and concerns about writing and WAC that still exist in all disciplines are slowing the progress of WAC. Louis Henry, author of "Clustering: Writing (and Learning) about Economics," explains that "under typical classroom conditions, the professor sees writing as an evaluative tool" and "this form of writing, for example essay exams, term papers, and book reports, usually involves a regurgitation of lecture notes, text material, and other external sources of information" (89). This attitude

explains why some teachers, who are not yet familiar with writing, think of it as a dreaded and time-consuming activity. These teachers perceive writing assignments only in terms of lengthy research papers and tedious correction of grammatical errors. This perception then leads to the argument that writing cannot be incorporated into non-English courses because teachers do not have time to grade term papers and essay exams on top of covering the course material. Other common misperceptions are that writing is a "mysterious activity," that "good writers are born not made," and that "good writers get it right the first time" (Hairston and Ruszkiewicz 3-4). Because of these misperceptions, which echo those explained by Russell, some teachers do not want to use writing in their classes, and some resent being asked to do what they consider to be the English department's job. In reality, however, the faculty outside of English are not being asked to teach writing in the traditional sense, but to use writing as a way to help their students learn course material and develop the necessary communication skills.

Misperceptions exist even among those non-English teachers who are currently using writing in their courses. One mistake commonly made by these teachers is thinking that writing helps their students learn the course material but does not help the students improve their writing skills. One of the most obvious examples of this is found in "Using

Writing as a Tool for Learning Economics" by Douglas Crowe and Janet Youga. In their article, Crowe and Youga applaud the use of writing as a means of learning. However, in the closing paragraph they make the statement that "unlike other writing-across-the-curriculum plans, our approach does not suggest using writing to improve students' writing ability, but as a way to teach a better economics course" (222). While it is true that writing will help their students learn, Crowe and Youga are selling themselves short because through writing, writing will improve.

Even English teachers are not exempt from holding misperceptions about WAC. Occasionally, English teachers feel that their territory is being invaded. In "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work," Toby Fulwiler, who is the director of the freshman writing program at Michigan Technological University and the founder of MTU's WAC program, reports that "English teachers, especially those who view their proper domain as literature, often do not believe that their colleagues in other disciplines can teach anything about writing" (116). When this is the case, conflicts arise between the English and non-English teachers. Fulwiler goes on to explain in his article that there are harmful consequences to the belief that English teachers are the only ones who know how to teach writing, with one being that English teachers try to instruct other teachers how to teach. Although the English teachers'

intentions are good, for teachers outside of English the instructing may sound too close to telling, and the non-English teachers may feel that the English teachers have over-stepped their bounds. This attitude drives a wider gap between faculty, which is the exact opposite of the WAC goal--to bring all faculty together in order to develop a university-wide understanding of writing and the ways it can benefit students.

In "Interdisciplinary Writing Workshops," Fulwiler expands on this WAC goal when he describes how English and non-English teachers can provide a much more complete education when they are working together. One consequence of faculty members not cooperating with each other is that although the English teachers teach their students to write, when these "lessons taught in writing classes are not repeated and emphasized in the student's other classes, those lessons will atrophy" (27). However, business teachers, for example, can give their students the "motivation" and "reinforcement" that the students need to continue writing. Fulwiler adds that business teachers,

> do not suffer from the same long-term
> stigmas as English teachers who have too
> faithfully red-penciled misspelled word
> on student compositions all the
> student's life; students do not view
> teachers in other disciplines as they

view English teachers--hung up on

correct language. (27)

Fulwiler also suggests that in return, English teachers,

must share with our colleagues what we

teach to our students. If, for example,

history and business teachers are not

aware of the writing process and how to

use it in instructing their students,

then we must teach them that. (27)

By achieving the kind of faculty cooperation suggested by

WAC, teachers will be able to help each other provide the

best possible education for the students.

In order for colleges and universities to establish a

successful WAC program, faculty members must be willing to

change their pedagogy to accommodate the WAC program.

However, faculty's concerns about WAC more than likely will

not go away without some proof, examples, and facts to back

up the WAC claims that writing is an excellent teaching tool

for all disciplines and that writing will improve students'

analytical and comprehension skills while improving their

writing skills. Sample assignments must be provided so that

all teachers will come to understand that WAC programs do

not require assigning and grading term papers and book

reports in every class. When teachers realize that WAC does

not equal "term papers across the curriculum" or "grammar

across the curriculum," they will see that, instead, WAC

means incorporating assignments from the various stages of the writing process. Fulwiler develops his ideas on the importance of a universal faculty understanding of WAC and claims that in order for WAC programs to be successful, it is vital

> to influence the entire academic
> community in which writing takes place,
> to make faculty sensitive to the role of
> writing in learning as well as the
> relationship of writing to other
> communication skills--reading, speaking,
> and learning. (113)

The success of WAC greatly depends on clearing up the misperceptions and concerns held by all faculty and developing a universal understanding of the actual writing process. This faculty-wide distribution of knowledge is possible through interdisciplinary WAC workshops.

WAC WORKSHOPS

WAC workshops are most often planned and put on by a WAC committee within the university or college. Ideally, the committee should be made up of at least one faculty member from each discipline or college. The role of the committee is to research what needs to be done within the school and develop a workshop to fit the school's needs.

Therefore, there is no set outline to be followed for a WAC
workshop, and each workshop is campus specific. However,
the primary goals of WAC programs are basically the same:
to explain and clear up misconception and concerns and to
show participants that it is possible to adapt writing
methods to fit individual personalities and pedagogies. In
the past, workshop leaders have found that although there
are a few exceptions, the workshops are generally
successful.

Fulwiler, who in 1983 had already conducted twelve WAC
workshops for over 200 faculty and staff at his university,
has developed a program. He found that intensive two-and
four-day workshops for fifteen to twenty-five faculty
presented the ideal opportunity to introduce "these general
concepts: 1) that writing can be used to promote learning
as well as to measure it; 2) that the writing process can
inform all assignments and evaluation; and 3) that students
write poorly for a variety of reasons . . ." (114).
Although these are the concepts that are usually covered,
each committee will often have to adjust the length and size
of the workshops in order to stay within a given budget and
to fulfill the goals specific to their program.

Fulwiler also makes some suggestions that apply to
schools of all sizes and that fit all budgets. For example,
it is best for attendance at the workshops to be on a
voluntary basis because being required to attend often

causes resentment which puts a "damper" on the workshop (116). Another important suggestion made by Fulwiler is to discuss early in the workshop the difference between process and product-oriented assignments. A process-oriented assignment is used for learning. For example, a business teacher may ask his\her students to write a response to that day's reading or lecture material. In this situation, the teacher will not grade students' writing for grammatical perfection, but instead, will look at students' thoughts on and understanding of the material. A product-oriented assignment is one that stresses a completed and polished paper as its primary goal. For example, a term paper, business report, or resume will inevitably be product-oriented. It is important for the participants to recognize that the purpose of the assignment affects whether the assignment should be process or product-oriented. An understanding of the difference between the two types of assignments is crucial later in the workshop when the writing process and evaluation are discussed.

Research shows that teachers, often without being aware of it, are already either process or product-minded, which influences the types of things that teachers feel are important in writing, such as content or punctuation and spelling (Fulwiler 118). This may explain why it is more difficult for some teachers than it is for others to relate to the idea that writing is a learning tool. Fulwiler

explains that acceptance of WAC is often especially
difficult among those teachers who are product-oriented. In
Fulwiler's experience, occasionally the workshops can
influence product-oriented teachers, but for the most part
he has found that for "these teachers, no matter how much we
stress techniques and strategies to generate good final
products (journal writes, freewrites, multiple drafts,
etc.), the workshop produces only superficial changes in
their attitudes or practices" (118). Fulwiler gives an
example of a forestry teacher who attended a workshop and
professed immediately after the workshop, "how much she got
out of it," but returned six months later to say that the
"main thing she looks for on her papers are 'spelling,
style, and neatness'" (118). However, Fulwiler has found
that if the participants are able to recognize
product-oriented thinking they will be more likely to catch
themselves when they engage in it.

Fulwiler also found that there are many teachers who
are process-oriented and are unconsciously using the
techniques. These teachers enter the workshops with an open
mind and usually leave with at least a few writing
strategies and techniques that improve their students'
writing and learning. Fulwiler claims that for these
teachers, "Perhaps the greatest value of the workshops is
reinforcing one's current predispositions and practices"
(119). Therefore, it is important to explain to these

teachers what they are doing correctly and encourage them to continue.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Because a lack of understanding about the writing process is the root of many existing misperceptions, one of the most significant roles of a WAC workshop is to explain the process. As a part of this explanation, the leaders of the workshop usually clearly outline the writing process and show how it involves several recursive steps: invention, drafting, and revision. The explanation may include information about how the writing process is "not a simplistic series of linear steps, but rather a set of deliberate and recursive decisions" (Lannon v). In other words, although invention, drafting, and revision are called steps and are performed with the intention of leading to a final product, each step can be returned to as often as necessary at any time during the writing process. For example, if a writer finds in drafting or revising that a point needs developing, then the writer may return to invention to generate more ideas.

In the past, workshop leaders have found that it is beneficial to give the participants a chance to try the writing methods used for each step and later discuss what they have done during the writing process section of the

workshop. For example, workshops often begin with the leaders asking the participants to do some freewriting about their feelings on writing. After the participants have completed their freewrites, they discuss as a group what they have written. Right away this gives the participants an idea of how freewriting can be used to explore an idea or start a discussion. Toby Fulwiler expands on this point in "Showing Not Telling, at a Writing Workshop." Fulwiler shares how in his workshops the participants use journal writing, summarizing, freewriting, and brainstorming because research shows that these writing methods are more effective in a classroom situation if the teachers are comfortable with the methods and have themselves benefitted from or learned through using them (58).

By acquiring a better understanding of the writing process and actually experiencing first-hand how the techniques work, teachers can more easily accept the impressive claims of how writing will improve students' comprehension and analytical skills. For example, teachers can begin to understand why authors, such as Donald Gray in his article "Writing Across the College Curriculum," claim that because the writing process is recursive, "writing makes a record that can be returned to, refined, and its parts connected" (729). Gray says, "Continual revisions make writing seem to be not the residue of thinking but a transcription of the act itself" (729). In other words,

writing is not an after-product of thinking, but rather a visible copy of the thinking itself; therefore, writing helps students and their teachers understand more clearly what the students are thinking. Lee Odell, author of "The Process of Writing and the Process of Learning," agrees with Gray and writes, "The writing process entails some conscious exploration of the subject matter one is to write about" (43). Once teachers experience for themselves how the writing process works and aids in learning, the impressive claims, like those made by Odell and Gray, become reality, and this recognition makes it more likely for teachers to want to bring writing into their classes.

The WAC workshops give examples of how the writing process is useful to both teachers and students. Students in general benefit from the different instructional methods used in each step of the writing process when writing a paper or when learning course material. When writing a paper, students who follow the writing process can complete the assignment in an organized way without the frustration and anxiety that often accompanies a paper. Also, the methods can be used in both English and non-English courses to increase students' comprehension and analytical skills.

Specifically, the methods in the writing process are excellent for helping business students. Research in discourse analysis shows that writing styles vary in different professions; therefore, it is important to

acknowledge that there is an additional benefit to using writing in the business discipline--students will have the advantage of learning the writing skills specific to their field (Rose 274). Robert Weiss and Michael Peich, co-authors of "Faculty Attitude Change in a Cross-Disciplinary Writing Workshop," recognize the importance of students knowing how to write for a specific audience, and at their WAC workshops they stress that writing will improve students' ability to perform "basic audience analysis" (37). According to Maurice Hirsch and Janet Duthie Collins, too many business students do not believe that it is important to own good writing skills; however, these students could not be more wrong. Mike Rose gives a specific example of the importance of writing to business management students: "In management, students must explain a personnel dilemma or a marketing strategy to a business audience that usually does not possess the writer's knowledge, and that wants, therefore, clear, straightforward information" (274). Thus, it is vital to use writing in business courses so that students will learn how to use the appropriate terminology, style, and form for each prospective business audience.

An additional benefit for teachers who use writing in their courses is that it provides a way to regularly measure their students' performance, as opposed to evaluating exams only a few times a semester. First, by using new and more

widely effective teaching techniques, instructors will find that their students become more active participants, which will give teachers a better understanding of how well students are doing than if the students passively listened to lectures. In addition, Crowe and Youga find that,

> Writing can be used to monitor students'
>
> progress toward understanding. Because
>
> writing shows how students are
>
> processing material, their errors in
>
> reasoning, wrong approaches, and poor
>
> thinking will be readily apparent.
>
> Exactly where in the process the student
>
> begins to stray will also be clear, thus
>
> enabling teachers to pinpoint the kind
>
> of help a student needs. (219)

Writing makes it possible for teachers to catch more quickly students who are having trouble and to recognize more easily exactly where the students' problems lie.

Invention

The explanation of the writing process ordinarily begins with invention. The purpose of this stage is for students to generate their own ideas. The teacher's role during the invention stage is not to grade or criticize what the students produce but to help students start thinking about the given topic. According to Zemelman and Daniels, the role of the teacher during the invention stage is simply

to be encouraging and to listen to the students' ideas (223).

Several invention methods exist, all of which can be used successfully in any discipline, including business. A few of the most popular methods of invention are clustering, freewriting, and the journalist questions. These methods take up very little of the teacher's time outside of class because often there is no need to grade or evaluate the writing in a traditional sense, if at all. Also, the methods can take up as much or as little class time as the teacher desires. For example, in an English course, these methods may be used for several class periods in combination with all the other steps as a means of getting students started on what will eventually be a completed paper. On the other hand, the methods can be used by themselves for a few minutes a day as a way to improve students' fluency and build confidence in their writing ability. For teachers, this means that they can help develop their students' writing skills while still having time to cover other material. The same applies when invention methods are used in business courses where they are useful in getting students started on a business paper, or can be used as a means of helping students learn discipline-specific material. For example, the invention methods can serve as memory trigger, a start to a class discussion, and a way to improve critical thinking, all of which reinforce the course

material covered.

The least structured of the three invention methods listed above is freewriting, which involves writing everything that comes to mind for a set period of time, usually about five to fifteen minutes. While the students are writing, their only concern is to get all of their ideas down on paper: "In general, freewriting encourages writers to start anywhere and write about anything, including how boring\impossible\silly the writing assignment is and how frustrated\anxious\hopeless they may feel about completing it" (Meyer and Smith 94). After the set period of time has expired, the students can then take a critical look at all of their ideas and feelings about the subject. The students are not looking for mechanical correctness, but are instead looking at the content for ideas that can be expanded. Many teachers find that freewriting produces the desired outcome, proclaiming "that freewriting can tap into powerful unconscious sources of ideas, images and languages, that it can lead to enlightening or self-awareness" because it gives students ". . . an opportunity to play with ideas, try out various voices and different arguments, become more fluent, get in touch with what they really want to say" (Mullin 140). Much of the success of freewriting is due to the fact that students know beforehand that they will not be graded or criticized for errors; therefore, they are able to write without worrying about spelling, grammar, or

punctuation. This results in not only improving students'
fluency, but students are better able to focus and generate
ideas, and overcome writer's block.

When not used as a means of starting a paper,
freewriting is used independently as a method of learning
and thinking. Lynn Hammond explains in <u>Nothing Begins With
N</u>, a book that investigates the results of using freewriting
in all disciplines, that freewriting helps promote critical
thinking. Hammond explains how some students "abbreviate
the process of invention" when interpreting as assigned
reading (72). Hammond asserts that these students
immediately form an opinion and then "ignore all aspects
that contradict their original impression or force on them
an interpretation that makes them 'fit'" (72). This means
that students' readings are either incomplete or inaccurate.
Hammond says,

> Focused freewritings can counteract
> these tendencies by helping students
> methodically 1) to discover all aspects
> relevant for examinations 2) to examine
> these aspects in detail and from varying
> points of view 3) to see what patterns
> are emerging; and only then 4) to draw
> conclusions. (72)

Therefore, by using freewriting to work through these steps,
students develop a more thorough way of thinking.

Also in <u>Nothing Begins With N</u>, Sheridan Blau asserts that freewriting allows students to think more clearly. Blau writes, "Thinking is most productive, that is, most likely to produce insights, to make advances in understanding, to demonstrate creativity, when it is most free" (290). Blau acknowledges that this concept seems contradictory to the popular idea that "the best thinking is the product of the most concentrated (which is to say, most focused and sustained) attention . . ." (290). However, he elaborates on his theory and explains that freewriting "liberates the writer from having to attend to many of the usual constraints on written discourse . . . so he is able to attend more fully to finding what we can call the deep structure or gist of his own thinking" (290). This means that freewriting will be especially helpful for those students who occasionally do not perform up to their potential when they write because they are too worried about their grade on the final product.

Evidence shows that freewriting helps students in many ways, but it also helps the teachers (Hammond 75). Freewriting gives the teacher a chance to see what students are thinking about the assigned subject. For example, a finance teacher may ask students to do some freewriting on what they read for homework the previous night. Depending on the size of the class, the teacher may select a few students to explain some of their written ideas as a start

to a class discussion, or the teacher may want to collect and read the freewrites. If the freewrites are used in a class discussion, the teacher can respond to the students' ideas while in class. If the teacher collects the freewrites, he or she can give a brief written response to the ideas addressed in the freewrite so that the students see that the teacher cares about what they have done, but the freewrites do not need to be graded. Whether the freewrites are used in or outside of class, they give the teacher some insight to the kind of thoughts, questions, or problems that the students have about the reading assignment.

A more structured form of invention that has been found to be useful by many teachers, including instructors in business, is clustering. This invention method is especially beneficial to visually oriented students because they can see the connections as opposed to just hearing or abstractly thinking of them: "Clustering is especially useful in tutoring associated writers, because it helps them notice both how many different subjects their string of associations produce and how rapidly . . . they move from on thing to the next" (Meyer and Smith 96). The process of clustering involves writing a main idea in the middle of a piece of paper--for example, for a marketing class the main idea could be the "target market." The student draws a circle around this main idea. Next, the student makes

branches off the main circle and at the end of the branches writes down other ideas or details that pertain to the main topic and circles them. Off of "target market" the student might write "sex," "age," "race," "class." The student can continue to draw branches off any circled idea in order to narrow the concentration into a specific area. Like freewriting, clustering is useful to all students for generating ideas and details that will support the given topic.

Louis Henry, a professor of economics at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, gives an example of how clustering helps students learn course material in a business class. Henry found that words can trigger recall and that the cluster word serves the students as a memory device. Henry concludes that clustering is a "whole brain activity" that makes demands on the "rational mind." His report gives supporting evidence that explains how he gave an extra credit question on an exam that was related to some clustering the students did in the previous two weeks. The question was attempted by 62% of the class, and every student that attempted the question responded correctly. In response to these outcomes, Henry says, "Such results had never happened before in over seventeen years of my teaching principles of economics," a claim that suggests that writing can help students better retain material than if they were just passively listening to a lecture (93).

Of the three invention methods, the journalist questions are the most directed. This method is known to help students who feel overwhelmed by an assigned paper. The journalist questions relieve anxiety because they help the students anticipate the audience's questions; therefore, the students do not need to worry if they are addressing the right issues. The journalist questions are especially helpful in business management classes where students often must do a substantial amount of writing. For example, most senior management students are required to take a course in which the students take part in a simulated company game. As a part of this course, students must write quarterly reports to their company's stockholders. The journalist questions can guide students through the exact issues that need to be addressed: What has changed in their company this quarter; Who will be affected by the change; When the change occurred, and when the affects will take place; and Why these changes were implemented. Teachers have found that the journalist questions "offer a built in organizing strategy--a series of 'perspectives' for looking at something from different angles" (Lannon 29). However, like clustering, there are instances when every question does not have to be developed and used. For example, the student may want to concentrate and elaborate only on the "who." For students who are trying to figure out the important points

of a lecture or reading material, the journalist questions provide a focus.

Whether a teacher intends to use the journalist questions as a way to start students on a paper or as a review of reading or lecture material, the assignment can be performed in or out of class. Unless a student has a question or problem regarding one of the questions, there is often no need for the teacher to grade or even look at what the students write, unless a student has a question or problem regarding one of the questions. When a teacher does decide to look at the students' answers to the questions, he\she would be doing so only to see that the students have completed the assignment and possibly to make a few suggestions.

For years, freewriting, clustering, and the journalist questions have been used in English courses and have been recognized as useful tools for improving students' writing skills. Today, more and more teachers in business are starting to use these invention techniques, and the research shows that freewriting, clustering, and the journalist questions aid students in upgrading their performance and increasing their learning ability while creating little or no extra work for the teachers.

Drafting

During drafting, the second stage of the writing process, the students, for the first time, start to develop

and organize their ideas from the invention stage and put their ideas into paragraphs. The emphasis here is for students to start to put their material into a fluent form. The role of the teacher during this stage is quite similar to that in the invention stage--not to judge but to encourage and possibly make some suggestions (Zemelman and Daniels 223). In a dialogue with the student, the teacher can ask open-ended questions about the paper that give the student new ideas and insights. A student often find this helpful because at times it is comforting to get another opinion or some reassurance.

As with the techniques in the invention stage, the methods used while drafting can be used by themselves or as steps to a final paper. Edward Pierce, a faculty member of the Department of Finance at George Mason University, explains in his article "Reinforced Learning Through Written Case Studies" how he uses a form of drafting to improve his students' performance in his finance course. Pierce's course objective is "to facilitate student understanding of how to apply principles and techniques of financial management" (65). Through trial and error Pierce came up with a successful four-part format for his class that revolves around case studies. The format includes a statement of the problem, a list of pertinent facts, an analysis of the problem and several logical courses of action, and eventually one final decision. Pierce limits

the case studies to two typed pages. Because the students are expected to present and discuss their studies in class, Pierce finds that there is no need for him to collect and read the studies. Pierce feels that his format allows him to meet his course objective because "as the course progresses and analytical skills develop, most students train the intuition that enables them to read between the lines and to conceptualize organizational and procedural problems only hinted at in the statement case" (66-7). Like many business teachers, Pierce finds that writing case studies in his financial management course "permits the writer to learn from exercising and extending technical skills, analyzing and interpreting, selecting and organizing" (64). Pierce is able to turn his students into active participants and get them to develop the skills that they need for financial management without increasing his own workload.

Another method of drafting that is valuable by itself for learning but can also be developed later into a paper is journal writing. With this method, students can respond to something that they have read for a class or heard in a lecture or even to an event that happened to them during the day. Journal writing can be used in any business course. For example, students taking a business law course may use their journals to respond to a particular case that they have read. Included in their response may be their

reactions or questions regarding the assigned case or even any legal questions that they may have regarding experiences in their own lives. The purpose of the assignment is to get their thoughts on paper in sentence form with some clarity, but their journal entries do not have to be polished and free of error. Again, the emphasis is on the exploration of their thoughts and ideas. Having the students write a response to a reading assignment or lecture in their journal forces them to become active listeners, readers, and reactors, which in turn will increase their ability to understand and retain the course material.

Gloria Fauth, for example, uses journals in her education classes for her students "to record specific learning, to identify implications from the learning, and to develop an application of the learning that applies to their professional role" (73). She stresses that the journals are to help the students, not her, meaning that she does not grade the journals for the purpose of measuring the students' performance. However, Fauth does collect the journals three times a semester: "I always make comments, generally in the form of responses to what the student has written, or in the form of questions posed to encourage the writers to do more thinking about their ideas" (73). She finds that by the second time she collects the journals her students have learned to write for themselves, addressing the questions and concerns that they have instead of writing

only what they think the teacher wants to read. The
students' performance along with the evaluation forms filled
out by Fauth's students from the past four semesters
indicate,

> that in spite of considerable initial
> resistance, students find this, in the
> final analysis, a valuable learning
> experience. Writing down specific bits
> of learning, analyzing them, deriving
> implications, and developing
> applications appears both to help them
> 'own' their learning and to make the
> transition from theory or data to
> practice. (73)

Teaching students to write for someone beside the teacher
helps turn writing into a more enjoyable activity and will
increase the chances of using writing again in the future.

Richard Coffinberger, a professor in the Department of
Accounting and Business Legal Studies, uses journal writing
in his Business Law courses. When talking about journal
writing, he says that "it requires the student to reproduce
detailed narrative versions of the specifics of my lecture
and to identify and analyze the reasons for and alternatives
to the rules of law presented in those lectures" (101). In
the journals, students also identify any unanswered
questions that they may have. Because Coffinberger's goal

is to "augment and deepen students' understanding of course
content," he instructs his students to concentrate on the
material rather than grammar. Coffinberger collects the
journals prior to his three exams. He comments on the
entries, answers the questions, and evaluates the students
on a pass-fail basis. He has found that four-fifths of his
students feel that they benefit from the exercise, and when
the students are asked what they learned most from keeping a
journal, most respond "that keeping a journal helped them
learn the course material" (103). In addition, some
students indicate that they would use this "learning tool"
in their other courses; therefore, through journal writing
Coffinberger is able not only to meet the immediate
objectives of his class, but to help his students form
habits that they will continue to benefit from in the
future.

Revision

The third stage in the writing process involves a
two-part process called revision. In "Multiple Drafts of
Experimental Laboratory Reports," James F. Sanford
summarizes Donald Murray's ideas on writing and the revision
process. Sanford identifies the two separate acts involved
in the revising process. When explaining Murray's article
"Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery," Sanford says,
"Internal revision begins with the reading of information
which [the writer] is trying to convey. . . . According to

Murray, the internal revision processes are, by far, the
most important" (119). Internal revision takes place once a
student has a draft of a paper. It is here that students
should make sure that their papers have clarity, cohesion,
and sufficient supporting details. A part of the internal
revising process usually includes students asking themselves
questions, such as, "Have I fulfilled the purpose of this
assignment?" or "Am I writing to the correct audience?"
These questions help students develop their thinking. The
teacher's role here is to be an "expert" and "coach"
(Zemelman and Daniels 223). As Meyer and Smith explain in
The Practical Tutor's chapter on revision, the teacher
should ask "conceptual" questions: "Conceptual comments
address the ideas in a paper as if it is a
work-in-process . . ." (136). Meyer and Smith give some
examples of conceptual questions: "What unanswered
questions does it raise?" and "How might the point be more
fully supported?" These questions and suggestions are meant
to help the students develop their final papers. Internal
revision is not the final step. It is, therefore, not
graded.

As Sanford explains, the second act in revision is
called external revision or editing which "consists of the
process which the writer uses to communicate to the
audience. It is the way the outcome of the internal
revision is presented, and consists of choosing format,

refining language, proofreading, etc" (119). External
revision is finally the appropriate time for students and
teachers to be concerned about the grammatical and
mechanical aspects of the paper. During external revision,
students should be checking for errors in spelling,
punctuation, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and the
like. However, it is not until the student has completed
all the other steps--invention, drafting, and internal
revision--that the teacher begins to stress the importance
of grammatical perfection and acts as the student's editor.

In "The 'Writing-Across-the-Curriculum' Concept in
Accounting and Tax Courses," Doug Laufer and Rich Crosser
explain how they use writing and both stages of revision in
their accounting classes. They describe how day one of
their class starts out with an in-class discussion of the
topic, and the students' assignment for that day is then to
take rough notes on ideas that they have come up with
through thinking, reading, and researching the given topic.
Next, they are supposed to make a draft to present the
following day. Day two consists of students reading and
providing feedback on each others' papers. As a part of the
feedback, students fill out an evaluation sheet on the
paper. The evaluation sheet asks the students to rate the
paper from low to high on certain areas. Some examples of
the questions asked on the evaluation sheet are: 1) "Does
this paper address the proper audience?" 2) "Are the ideas

presented in a logical manner?" 3) "Do examples used amplify the subject matter?" and 4) "Are the sentences clear and concise?" On day three, papers and evaluation sheets are returned to the students, and they are allowed to work on their final draft, which usually involves considering input from the reviews and visiting the writing center.

Laufer and Crosser acknowledge that their methods require a significant time investment, yet they continue to use them because they are so pleased with the results. They feel that the writing assignments help to improve their students' critical thinking abilities as well as helping them better retain the information for future use. Laufer and Crosser are equally pleased that their "students are writing to learn and learning to write simultaneously," especially since employers have recently stated that "a major deficiency of graduates is their inability to write effectively" (83-84). In fact, even the American Accounting Association (AAA) is starting to recognize that, "development of written communication skills are an essential part of an accounting student's education," and at "at a recent American Accounting Association New Faculty Consortium a charge was given to accounting faculty to furnish students opportunities to develop their written communication skills" (85). It was in response to this charge that Laufer and Crosser made writing a priority in their class.

Whatever discipline teachers attending the WAC workshop are from, a better understanding of the entire writing process is beneficial. A thorough explanation will show teachers that the methods used in each step of the writing process will help their students improve their analytical and comprehension skills and increase the number of active participants in their class, while giving the teacher more insight into how and what their students are thinking. Plus, whatever kind of writing the teachers use will automatically improve students' writing skills.

EVALUATION

Although WAC workshops briefly cover the subject of evaluation during the explanation of the writing process, to have a separate workshop discussion dedicated specifically to this topic may be helpful. The question of how and when to evaluate students has always been problematic and controversial, and it becomes a legitimate concern for teachers involved with WAC. Therefore, it is important to clarify early in the discussion that evaluating does not always mean giving the student a letter grade; evaluation may simply include commenting on students' writing. Also when discussing this topic, workshop leaders need to remind teachers that it is important for them to keep in mind the role of writing in their course.

Among the many arguments about evaluation, there exists a minority view held by some teachers. C.H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon, authors of "Writing as Learning Through the Curriculum," are a part of the minority who believe that the "teacher need not 'correct' writing at all . . ." (467). Robert Weis and Michael Peich in "Faculty Attitude Change in a Cross Discipline Writing Workshops" also argue against grading students' writing assignments. They say that correcting the students' writing inhibits students because it puts harmful pressure on them (36). Most faculty involved in WAC would agree that there are times when these theories apply--for example, when an assignment is process-oriented and being used primarily as a strategy to learn.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that even when it is not appropriate to assign letter grades (e.g., when the student is freewriting) teachers should show students that what they write is important. By simply reading students' writing, faculty show that they value the activity. There are several ways to emphasize the importance of the writing assignment without assigning grades, such as using what the students write in a class discussion. For example, a few students can be asked to read what they have written. Students then can compare responses and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each response which will also help students learn, by reinforcing

the material. Another way to demonstrate the value of the assignment without giving letter grades is to have related material appear on an exam. Peer evaluation has also been found to be effective. When students know that a peer will be critiquing their work, they tend to be more conscientious, and students who are doing the evaluating get a chance to see other perspectives besides their own. Whichever method is selected, "it should be clear that careful consideration of material covered in the writing will be rewarded at evaluation time" (Crowe and Youga 218).

There also may be appropriate times for process-oriented writing to be evaluated and given a grade. Even in these cases, the teacher should keep in mind that among the primary goals of WAC is to use writing to improve students' ability to learn the course material, placing a major emphasis on content. How well students handle the conventions of standard written English is not the top priority in this instance. In "Writing Across the Curriculum: Evolving Reform," Sensenbaugh warns that the "instructor's attitude is crucial; that the emphasis must be on the quality of the content, not language arts skills" because in process-oriented activities "there is constant need for experimentation and modification," for example, when journal writing is used to get students thinking or generating ideas about a subject (463). When writing is being used to help students learn the course material,

students' grades can be based on content because they are writing in order to learn and discover. They should be encouraged to write for themselves instead of an audience and not to worry about producing a perfect end product.

On the opposite end of the evaluation continuum, opposite Knoblauch, Brannon, Weis, and Peich, are teachers like Anne Herrington, who in "Writing to Learn: Writing Across the Disciplines" expresses her opinion that correcting students' writing assignments is absolutely necessary because to ignore serious grammatical problems is not in students' best interest. This leads to a legitimate question held by many teachers who are unfamiliar with WAC: What should be done with students who have serious grammatical problems when the assignment is process-oriented? First, teachers can be on alert for these problems in product-oriented assignments. Second, though the instructor may not wish to edit prematurely, he or she can offer suggestions to the students for ways to get help, for example tutoring in the writing center.

In those instances when an assignment is product-oriented, Herrington's position is more widely accepted: grammar, organization, and mechanics should influence the letter grade that students receive. With assignments such as research papers, business letters, and reports, a lack of proper language arts skills affects the quality of the content. For example, a student's

grammatical errors may take away from the quality of the written work when the errors make the material hard to read and difficult to understand. In the business discipline when the students are writing business letters or other common forms of business writing, grammatical perfection is vital because once the students are actually in the business field, grammatical errors will not be accepted. However, teachers should also remember that when the students are in the process of working on a product-oriented assignment, they should not be evaluated or judged until they have completed the steps of invention, drafting, and revising.

CONCLUSION

By attending workshops and experimenting with writing in their courses, misconceptions about WAC will clear up. Teachers who have never used writing will see that it involves much more than assigning and grading lengthy research papers. Through their new understanding of process and product-oriented assignments, the many writing methods that exist, and the use writing as a learning tool, most teachers will see that writing does not always involve marking grammar errors and can be used successfully even in larger classes. By acquiring knowledge about the writing process, teachers who at one time felt that writing was a

"mysterious" activity will come to understand that all students can learn to write by acquiring the skills taught in each phase of the writing process.

A better understanding of the process will also clearly show teachers that writing, whether it stops at the first stage of generating ideas or is followed through to a completed paper, will help students develop into more fluent and organized writers. Teachers will see that, like anything else, practice leads to improvement, and just as importantly, with improvement comes confidence.

Once a faculty-wide understanding of WAC is established, teachers will see that the WAC movement is not attempting to take away the English departments' responsibility to teach writing and to reassign it to other departments. Instead, WAC is suggesting that writing can be used to improve students' learning ability in all disciplines while at the same time continuing to improve their writing skills. Therefore, if teachers from all disciplines can combine their efforts and skills, colleges and universities will be able to offer a more complete education to their students.

WORKS CITED

Belanoff, Pat, Peter Elbow, and Sheryl Fontaine, eds.
    Nothing Begins with N. Carbondale: Southern Illinois
    UP, 1991.

Blau, Sheridan. "Thinking and the Liberation of Attention:
    The Uses of Free and Invisible Writing." Belanoff
    283-299.

Coffinberger, Richard. "Evaluating the Classroom Journal as
    a Supplemental Teaching Strategy in Business Law."
    Thaiss 101-105.

Crowe, Douglas, and Janet Youga. "Using Writing as a Tool
    for Learning Economics." Journal of Economic Education
    17 (1986): 218-222.

Eblen, Charlene. "Writing Across the Curriculum: A Survey
    of a University Faculty's Views and Classroom
    Practices." Research in the Teaching of English 17
    (1983): 343-348.

Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." College
    Composition and Communication 28 (1977): 122-27.

Faith, Gloria, Robert Gilstrap, and Joan Isenberg.
    "Teaching Teachers to Teach Writing: A Modeling
    Approach." Thaiss 72-86.

Fulwiler, Toby. "How Well Does Writing Across the
    Curriculum Work?" College English 46 (1984):
    113-125.

---. "Interdisciplinary Writing Workshops." CEA Critics 43
    (1981): 27-32.

---. "Showing, Not Telling, at a Writing Workshop."
    College English 43 (1981): 55-63.

Gray, Donald J. "Writing Across the College Curriculum."
    Phi Delta Kappan 70 (1988): 729-733.

Greco, Anthony. "Teaching Intermediate Micro Economics by
    Adopting a Writing Strategy." Journal of Business
    Education 59 (1984): 254-56.

Hairston, Maxine, and John Ruszkiewicz. The Scott Foresman
    Handbook for Writers. Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1988.

Hammond, Lynn. "Using Focused Freewriting to Promote
    Critical Thinking." Belanoff 71-92.

Henry, Louis H. "Clustering: Writing (and Learning) about
    Economics." College Teaching 34 (1986): 89-93.

Herrington, Anne J. "Writing to Learn: Writing Across the
    Disciplines." College English 43 (1981): 379-87.

Hirsch, Maurice, and Janet Duthie Collins. "An Integrated
    Approach to Communication Skills in an Accounting
    Course." Journal of Accounting Education 6 (1988):
    15-31.

Klinger, George. "A Campus View of College Writing."

   College Composition and Communication 28 (1977):

   343- 47.

Knoblauch, C.H., and Lil Brannon. "Writing as Learning

   Through the Curriculum." College English 45 (1983):

   465-74.

Lannon, John. The Writing Process. Boston: Little, Brown,

   1986.

Laufer, Doug, and Rich Crosser. "The Writing Across the

   Curriculum Concept in Accounting and Tax Course."

   Journal of Education for Business 66 (1990): 83-87.

McLeod, Susan H. "Writing Across the Curriculum: The

   Second Stage, and Beyond." College Composition and

   Communication 40 (1989): 337-43.

Meyer, Emily, and Louise Smith. The Practical Tutor. New

   York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Odell, Lee. "The Process of Writing and the Process of

   Learning." College Composition and Communication 31

   (1980): 42-50.

Pierce, Edward. "Reinforced Learning Through Written Case

   Studies." Thaiss 64-71.

Raimes, Ann. "Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum"

   the Experience of a Faculth Seminar." College English

   41 (1979): 797-801.

Rose, Mike. "When Faculty Talk About Writing." College

   English 41 (1979): 279-97.

Russell, David. "The Cooperation Movement: Language Across
the Curriculum and Mass Education." Research in the
Teaching of English 23 (1989): 399-423.

Sanford, James F. "Multiple Drafts of Experimental
Laboratory Reports." Thaiss 119-126.

Sensenbough, Roger. "Process Writing in the Classroom."
Journal of Reading 33 (1990): 382-383.

Smith, Louise Z. "Opinion: Why English Departments Should
House 'Writing Across the Curriculum'." College
English 50 (1988): 390-95.

Thaiss, Christopher, ed. Writing to Learn. Iowa:
Kendall\Hunt, 1983.

Weis, Robert, and Michael Peich. "Faculty Attitude Change
in a Cross-Disciplinary Writing Workshop." College
Composition and Communication 32 (1981): 33-41.

Zemelman, Steven, and Harvey Daniels. A Community of
Writers: Teaching Writing in the Junior and
Senior High. New Hampshire: Heineman, 1988.