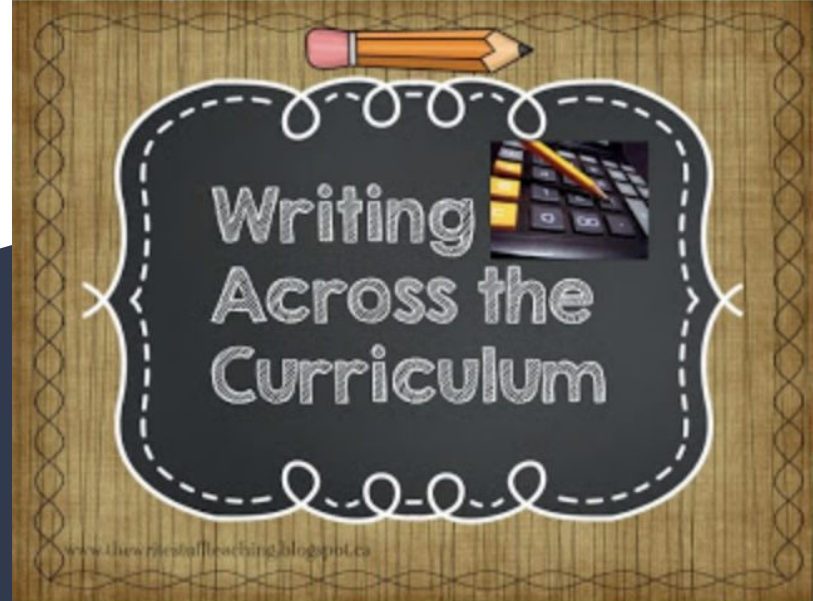
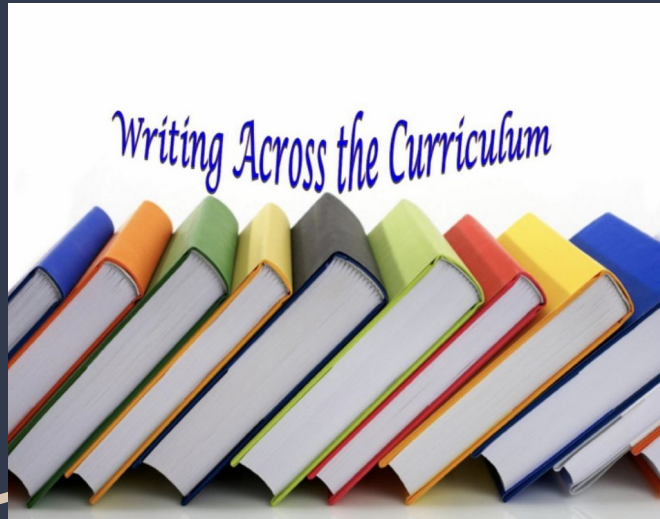


We Come Together: WAC Programs and College Composition

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Misconceptions of “Good Writing”



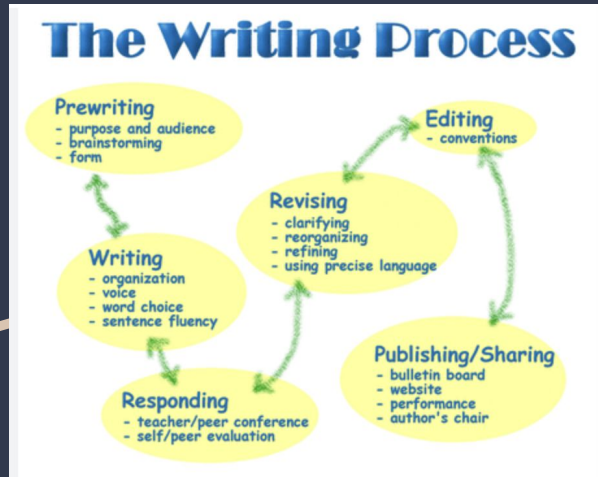
While WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) programs are meant to ensure that various disciplines work collectively in the construction of composition pedagogy, without proper facilitation of collaborating across discipline lines, misconceptions arise as to what the true purpose of college composition is and how students may best be served.

During my time as a WAC Fellow at Hunter College in 2020, a suspicion I held was confirmed: In other disciplines, composition classes are sometimes seen as service courses where the teaching of mechanics is expected and that the composition classroom is a place where linguistic monitoring and correcting should happen.

Nevertheless, my research has turned up shared ideas, initiatives, and desired outcomes of college composition, and the pursuit of “good writing,” across disciplines.

The Power of Process

Process Theory as Pedagogy Theory



Melzer claims in his study that the WAC courses he observed, “[...] ask students to write for real and hypothetical audiences beyond the instructor. These WAC courses stand out, not just for their assignment of disciplinary genres rather than short-answer exams, but also for their explicit placement of these genres within the social context of the discipline. They ask students to engage in extensive composing processes of drafting, peer response, tutoring response, and instructor response. These WAC courses stand out as an argument for the value of WAC programs, and the transformative effects WAC initiatives—like writing-intensive courses and writing fellows programs—have on college instructors and on the literary expectations placed on students.” (100)

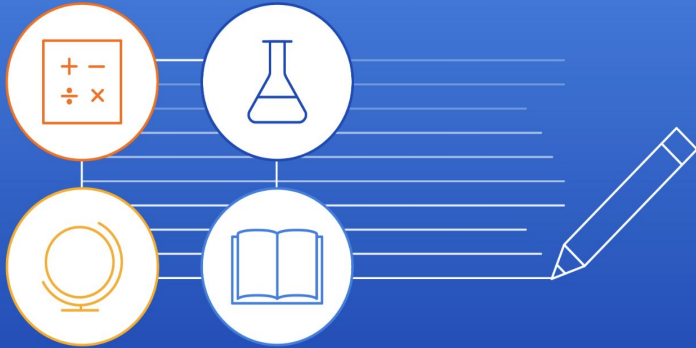
Argumentation: Where We Find Common Ground

FROM WALKOVA & BRADFORD:

“[...] Writing argumentative essays, [is] a genre that many students find challenging” (23).

“[...] Argument can be found in manifold and diverse academic genres, not only in argumentative essays” (23).

“[...] Students can still benefit from some exposure to several argument patterns across disciplines. This would take the form of an engagement in interdisciplinarity in the classroom. This could be achieved through group work when exploring argument in the classroom, by engaging in an awareness-raising activity, for example. In doing this, the students can relate to it through the lens of their own discipline, and even work to compare and contrast the argument models presented” (38).



Out of Many, One

When Disciplines Come Together to Achieve a Common Goal



“[The academy] is a place which is moving more and more to work across disciplines through cross-departmental and external collaboration” (Walkova and Bradford, 38).

Collaborative discussions of pedagogy can include:

- Assignments
- Activities
- Grades
- Standards
- Reviewing and/or Revising
- Use of rubrics (if applicable)

→ While I see WAC-centered faculty development workshops as beneficial, these are conversations that can first happen within our departments and then branch out to conversations outside of our departments. Student success, faculty success, and success of the institution overall is our goal.

The Precarious Future of WAC at CUNY



The decision to end WAC fellowships at the Graduate Center came from CUNY Central - so the reasoning behind it is unclear. The hope is that, as the Graduate Center decides on alternatives to the program, WAC fellowships will be kept as at least one of the range of options. The belief is that WAC programs are meant to continue existing at the campuses - but how they will function without WAC fellows is a question that remains.

Right now, the Graduate Center is saying that 5th year students will receive the same monetary package as their WAC fellowship would offer, but they will be asked to either continue their GTF (Graduate Teaching Fellowship) or arrange internships either within or outside of CUNY. WAC coordinators are working on putting together an internship program in order to continue the fellows program on campuses where it is supported.

WORKS CITED

Melzer, D. (2014). *Assignments across the curriculum : a national study of college writing*. Utah State University Press.

Walková, M., & Bradford, J. (2022). Constructing an Argument in Academic Writing Across Disciplines. *ESP Today*, 10(1), 22–42.

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