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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the impact of the University of Vermont's writing-across-the-curriculum program on the development of the English major. Included in the report are: (1) a summary of the faculty writing project, with a list of premises and practices; (2) descriptions of four books published collaboratively by members of the English department and other departments at the University of Vermont: "Programs That Work," "A Community of Voices: Reading and Writing in the Disciplines," "Reading, Writing, and the Study of Literature," and "Angles of Vision"; (3) a description and schematic outline of the writing curriculum; (4) a list of guidelines for English majors at Vermont; (5) a description of a new discussion-based introductory course focusing on reading, writing, and the study of literature; and (6) a report prepared for the university administration explaining the benefits of the writing program. Also included in the report are a number of reproduced documents which are content related: an application to attend the faculty writing workshop; the covers of the four collaborative books concerning the role of writing in teaching and reading and writing about literature; a schematic of Vermont's writing program; pages from the Vermont College catalogue describing changes in course offerings; a proposal by the Writing Committee for a new writing concentration for English majors; and the results of an informal survey of both English faculty and senior English majors about their responses to the changes in curriculum. (HB)

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WRITING TO REFORM THE ENGLISH MAJOR

Toby Fulwiler
The University of Vermont

ED 345261

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WRITING TO REFORM THE ENGLISH MAJOR

Toby Fulwiler
The University of Vermont

The following report outlines the impact of the University of Vermont's writing-across-the-curriculum program on the development of the English major. This report was presented as a series of overhead transparencies at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), March 20, 1992.

FACULTY WRITING PROJECT: A SUMMARY

Beginning in February, 1984, the FACULTY WRITING PROJECT (FWP) conducted 20 Introductory Workshops (two days, off campus) for approximately 480 Vermont faculty and staff, full and part time. These workshops introduced faculty to a variety of pedagogical ideas involving a more active use of language--both oral and written--by students in all subject areas. They promoted a sense of faculty community, encouraged interdisciplinary scholarship, and helped faculty develop their own writing. These workshops continue to be offered twice annually and are supported by the Provost's office.

In addition to introductory workshops, the FWP has offered a variety of "follow-up" and "advanced" workshops, ranging from two-hour afternoon meetings to two-day "writing retreats" for workshop veterans to work on their own writing ("We will feed you and leave you alone"). Retreat attendance has ranged from 18 to 30, with faculty revising dissertations, co-writing grants, developing articles, and planning syllabi. (For a more complete account of the Vermont program, see Programs that Work. Fulwiler and [unclear], 1990)

Faculty Writing Project
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

PREMISES

1. ALL TEACHERS ARE LANGUAGE TEACHERS.
2. THINKING TAKES PLACE IN LANGUAGE.
3. WRITING IS A MODE OF THINKING.
4. WRITING IS A COMPLEX PROCESS.
5. TEACHING WRITING IS TEACHING RE-WRITING.
6. WRITING PROMOTES ACTIVE LEARNING

PRACTICES

1. WRITING TO LEARN
 - freewriting & conceptual maps
 - reading response journals
 - double-entry notebooks
 - letters
2. LEARNING TO WRITE
 - invention
 - revision
 - editing
 - publishing
3. COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
 - peer revision & editing
 - problem posing & solving
 - collaborative research
 - collaborative writing

A schematic outline of Vermont's WAC program, which at present includes no curricular requirements, looks like this:

1. **INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS**
2. **FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS**
 - a. Pedagogy Workshops
 - b. Writing Workshops
3. **RESEARCH IN WRITING**
 - a. Effect on Specific Disciplines
 - b. Impact on UVM Campus
4. **PUBLICATION PROJECTS**
 - a. Writers Guide Series (New Volumes)
 - b. Professional Journals
 - c. Book describing on impact at UVM
5. **ARTICULATION X-12**
 - a. Summer Institute on Thinking and Writing
 - b. Advanced Institute to Train Teacher Trainers
 - c. In-Service Workshops at Vermont schools
6. **UVM CURRICULUM** _____

**APPLICATION TO ATTEND THE
FACULTY WRITING WORKSHOP**

DAY ONE		DAY TWO
8:30-10:15	The Why We Write and How We Do It	The Role of Audience in Writing
10:30-12:00	Evaluating Writing	Revising and Editing
12:00	Lunch	Lunch
1:00-2:15	The Composing Process	Designing Writing Assignments
2:30-4:00	Writing and Learning	Research On Writing Across the Curriculum
5:30	Dinner	
7:00-8:30	Journal Writing Across the Curriculum	

NAME _____

LAST _____

DEPARTMENT _____

PHONE _____

TRAIL AT UVM _____

COURSE _____

DATE _____

Please indicate workshop preference date:
 May 16-17, 1994
 August 23-24, 1994

**Faculty
Writing
Project**

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

We have used the same workshop model, as represented in this brochure, for eight years; faculty members are admitted on a voluntary, first-come, first-served basis, up to thirty at a time; they agree to stay for the whole two days; we supply all meals.

Programs That Work

Edited by

TOBY FULWILER, *University of Vermont*

and ART YOUNG, *Clemson University*

Workshops generate a lot of enthusiasm; however the realities of everyday curricular life often dampen the spirit to add innovative uses of writing to courses. To maintain enthusiasm and continue training in WAC ideas with professors across the curriculum, we have developed publication projects which require continued commitment to research about the role of writing in teaching. Two recent collaborative books illustrate this point:

Introduction

1. Georgetown University
2. UCLA
3. The University of Vermont
4. Prince George's Community College
5. The University of Chicago
6. California State University, Chico
7. Beaver College
8. Michigan Technological University
9. Robert Morris College
10. University of Massachusetts
11. George Mason University
12. The Minnesota Writing Project
13. The University of Michigan
14. The Baltimore Area Consortium

Afterword: *The Enemies of Writing Across the Curricula*

Bibliography



BOYNTON/COOK PUBLISHERS
HEINEMANN / PORTSMOUTH, NH

A COMMUNITY OF VOICES READING AND WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

General Editors

Toby Fulwiler and Arthur W. Biddle
University of Vermont

Carl G. Herndl (Eng)
Diane Price Herndl (Eng)
Henry Steffens (Hist)
Derk Pereboom (Phil)
Lynda Reeves McIntyre (Art)
Karen Wiley Sandler (French)
Lynne A. Bond (Psych)
Kenneth M. Holland (Phy/Sci)
Frederick E. Schmidt (Sci)
Daniel J. Bean (Bio)
Tony Magistrate (Econ)
Michael Strauss (Comm)
Ronald Savitt (Business)
John H. Clarke (Lit)
Mara R. Saule (Lit)

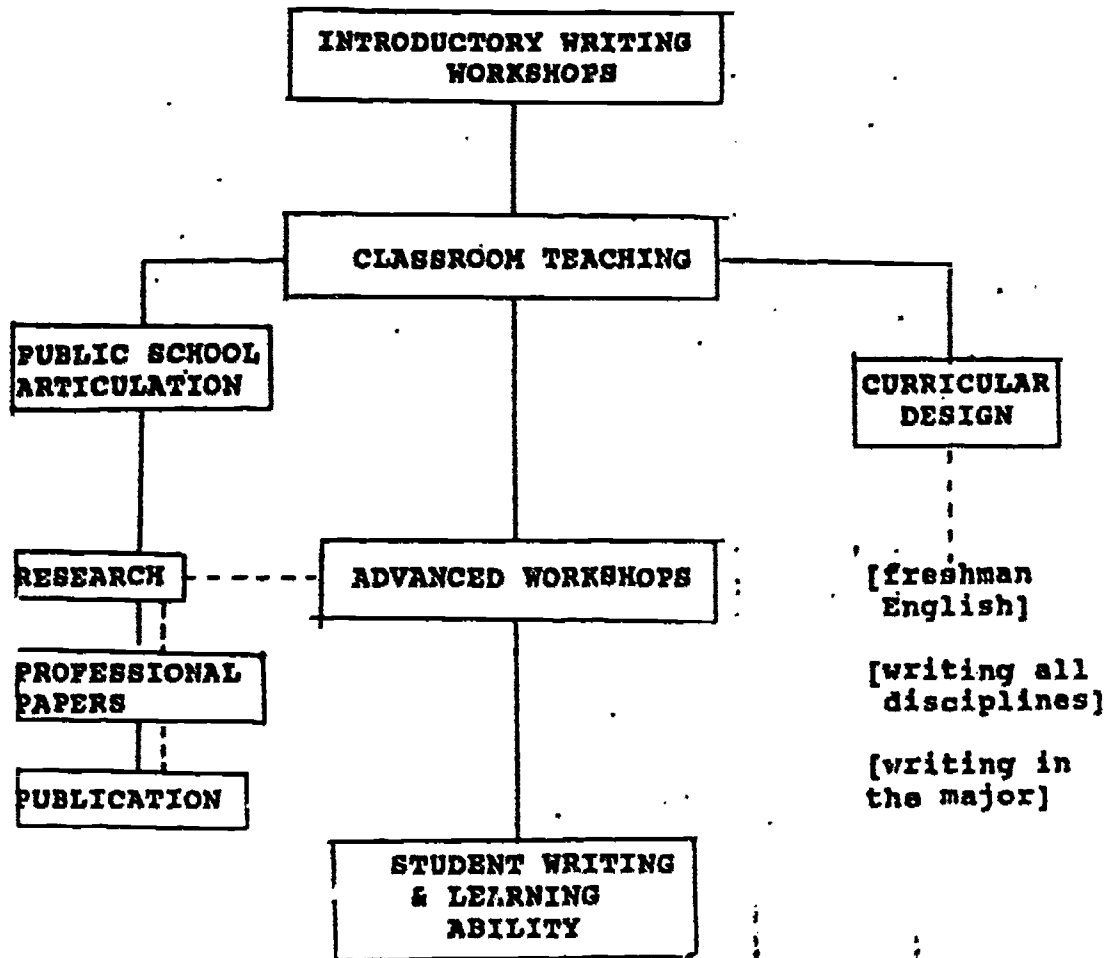
Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

PROGRAMS THAT WORK includes collaboratively written chapters detailing the programs at 14 different colleges.

A COMMUNITY OF VOICES was collaboratively written over three years by 17 authors at Vermont; it is an anthology of readings intended to introduce students in first-year writing classes to different 14 different disciplines.

Faculty Writing Project

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT



This schematic was designed to help us evaluate Vermont's program and plan further development. The brackets at the lower left around curricular development reflect our philosophy of first, educating the faculty about the possibilities writing could play within the curriculum, then seeing what curricular changes the faculty might propose.

In other words, the informal committee of eight who runs the WAC program did not want to lead the charge of curricular reform nor oversee the installation of mechanical or one-shot writing requirements

In 1990, the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences voted to put in place a two-tiered writing requirement: (1) a first-year seminar for all entering students and (2) a senior seminar in each student's major.

The senior course could be put in place in most departments with little change, as similar courses already existed.

The first-year course would be taught by full-time faculty in the twelve disciplines willing to offer such courses; content would be approximately 1/2 that normally taught in introductory courses; class size would be limited to 20; the course would include training in both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write strategies (see below).

However, the new first-year course would necessitate the hiring of eight additional new faculty; at present there is no money for new positions.

- enrollment limited to 20 students in order to allow time for frequent multiple-draft assignments, student-teacher and student-student conferences, and in-depth evaluation of student writing;
- emphasis on scholarship pertinent to a particular discipline;
- emphasis on the process of writing, including instruction on generating and organizing ideas, developing drafts, and producing final edited copy with appropriate grammar, syntax, and style;
- the use of writing as a means for students both to explore and express ideas; and
- instruction in basic research methods, including library research [when appropriate]."

THE ENGLISH MAJOR

When I arrived at the University of Vermont in 1983, the junior-senior course offerings in writing were limited to a single course (177-178) with different sections devoted to fiction, poetry, or non-fiction (see catalogue page below).

By 1992, the new courses had been added to allow junior and senior English majors to take more writing courses; courses such as 171 and 172 were designed as 50/50 courses: including substantial literary content as well as substantial practice writing in the literary forms (see catalogue page opposite).

VERMONT COLLEGE CATALOGUE, 1992

141 19th Century American Novel The flowering of the novel in the United States. Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Howells, James, and others. Biddle, Cochran, Eschholz, Shepherd.

144 American Poetry to World War I Major American poets to 1917, including Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, and others. Cochran, Gutman.

145 The Literature of Vermont An exploration of Vermont writing from the narratives of the Allen brothers to the poetry and fiction of today. Normally offered in summers only. Biddle.

150 Modern Short Fiction. I, II. Cochran, M. J. Dickerson, Gutman, Jones, Shepherd.

151 Modern American Novel American novelists from 1915 to 1945. Biddle, Cochran, Eschholz, Gutman, Poger, Shepherd.

152 Modern American Drama Recent and contemporary, including plays by O'Neill, Miller, and Williams. Orth.

153 Contemporary American Poetry American Poetry since 1950. Edwards, Gutman. (Not offered 1982-83.)

154 Contemporary American Novel Significant American novelists since 1945. Cochran, Gutman, Shepherd.

155 Literature of Black America Poetry, fiction, and drama by black writers since the turn of the century. M. J. Dickerson. (Not offered 1982-83.)

177, 178 Advanced Writing Students follow their own interests in the writing of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Permission of instructor required. *Prerequisite:* 53 for poetry and fiction, 50 for non-fiction. No more than six credit hours of English 177, 178 Advanced Writing will count toward fulfillment of major requirements. Broughton, Edwards, Huddle.

191, 192 Internship May not be used to satisfy major requirements. *Prerequisites:* Consent of instructor, junior or senior standing. One to six hours. Biddle.

VERMONT COLLEGE CATALOGUE, 1992

153 Contemporary American Poetry American Poetry since 1950. Edwards, Gutman.

154 Contemporary American Novel Significant American novelists since 1945. Cochran, Shepherd.

155 Literature of Black America Poetry, fiction, and drama by black writers since the turn of the century. M. J. Dickerson, Magistrale. Alternate years, 1989-90.

171 Writing Literary Criticism Introduction to theory and practice of literary criticism. Students read and write about literary theories representing various approaches to selected works of literature. Holstun, Warhol.

172 Personal Voice Intensive examination of writing from the first-person point of view. Theory and practice in personal writing and analysis of published writing in this mode. *Prerequisite:* 50 or 53. Fulwiler.

173 The Composing Process Exploration of the process by which writers produce texts. Students study their own writing, the writing and reflections of established authors, and current research. *Prerequisite:* 50 or 53. Eschholz.

177, 178 Advanced Writing Students follow their own interests in the writing of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Permission of instructor required. *Prerequisite:* 53 for poetry and fiction, 50 for nonfiction. No more than six credit hours of English 177, 178 Advanced Writing or 179 Writer's Workshop, will count toward fulfillment of major requirements. Broughton, M.J. Dickerson, Fulwiler, Huddle.

179 Writers' Workshop An intensive two-week workshop with assignments designed to emphasize autobiographical aspects of poetry and fiction writing. Summer only. *Prerequisite:* 53, permission of instructor. Broughton, Engels, Huddle.

191, 192 Internship May not be used to satisfy major requirements. *Prerequisites:* Consent of instructor, junior or senior standing. One to six hours.

193, 194 College Honors Departmental permission required. Not to exceed three hours per semester.



WRITING THE NEW YORKER

ENGLISH 202

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(EACH STUDENT TO COMPLETE ALL 5 ITEMS)

1. The Talk of the Town
2. Profiles
3. Reporter at Large
Reflections
Letter from
Report From
Annals of
Our Far Flung Correspondant
(Our Local Correspondant)
On and Off the Avenue
Around City Hall
Journals
4. The Current Cinema
The Art World
Musical Events
Jazz
Books
The Theatre
Dancing
In Fashion
Photography
The Sporting Scene
A Critic at Large
5. "Poems"
"Short Fiction"

Students will write their way through 5 of the forms of writing represented in The New Yorker magazine: Talk of the Town; Profiles; Reporters at Large; Book, Movie, Music Reviews; Poetry; Fiction; Cartoons; and maybe a cover. At terms end, each student will have written an entire issue. At terms end, the class as a whole will publish (Kinkos!) one collaborative issue. The idea behind "Writing The New Yorker" is to provide graduating English majors with the broadest possible writing experience. By early May students will have a substantial writing portfolio to present to future employers or graduate schools.

This year (1991-92) the department has passed still two more upper-level writing courses both designated 50/50--half reading and half writing (see below). Enrollment in these courses is limited to 25--compared to 18 in straight writing courses and 35 in straight literature courses. These will appear in next year's catalogue and be offered for the first time in 1992-93.

Student enthusiasm for these new writing courses has been high. Offering them, however, has meant fewer offerings in period and survey literature courses.

For the past two years I have offered a senior seminar (one required of each major; 6 offered per semester; enrollment limited to 18) in "Writing The New Yorker" which introduced graduating majors to new types of writing which required reporting, interviewing, and investigative local research--how else do you write "Talk-of-the-Town," "Profile," or "Reporter-at-Large" pieces? Other seminars have been offered in "Publishing and Editing" "The Composing Process."

REPORT FROM UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

The following two new courses have been approved by USC and passed on to the department for consideration:

- I. 174 Reading and Writing Autobiography Study of the autobiographical literary tradition as well as practice writing within this tradition. Prerequisite: English 50 and permission of instructor. M.J. Dickerson, Edwards.
- II. 175 The Art of Nonfiction Theory, readings, and practice in literary nonfiction, including the essay and/or literary journalism. Moore, Swaterlitch.

Supporting documentation for both is appended.

Reading, Writing, and the Study of Literature

PRELUDE: *Reading and Writing in Colleges*
Arthur W. Biddle and Toby Fulwiler

CHAPTER 1 *Journal Writing* Toby Fulwiler

CHAPTER 2 *Responding to Fiction* Arthur W. Biddle
and Allen Shepherd

CHAPTER 3 *Responding to Poetry* Sidney Poger

CHAPTER 4 *Responding to Drama* James Howe

CHAPTER 5 *Literary Criticism and Theory* James Holstun

CHAPTER 6 *Writing Critical Essays* Robyn Warhol

CHAPTER 7 *Writing Personal Essays* Mary Jane Dickerson

CHAPTER 8 *Imaginative Writing/Risk Taking* William A. S.

CHAPTER 9 *Examining Essay Examinations* Tony Magist

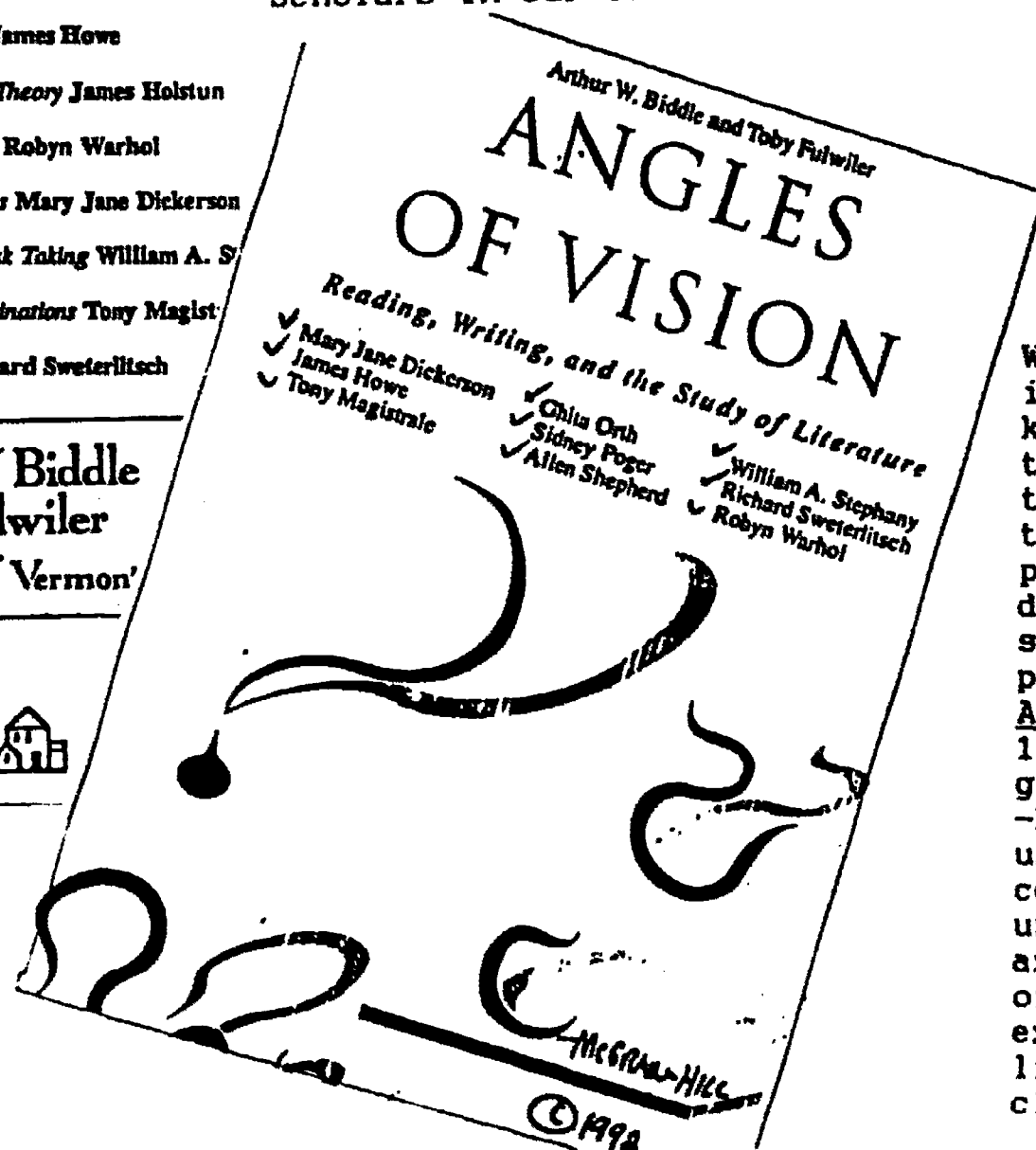
CHAPTER 10 *Writing Research* Richard Sweterlitsch

Arthur W. Biddle
Toby Fulwiler
University of Vermont

Random House



Beginning in 1986, ten of us in the department, representing both writing and literature teachers, joined to write a book for English majors in which we would share with them our collective wisdom about reading and writing strategies. The book, Reading, Writing, and the Study of Literature, was a worthy project, as Random House offered generous advances, and the resulting book turned out well. But from the beginning, the process of writing it--meeting regularly, workshop style, sharing drafts, collaborating upon vision--was the prime reason for the book's existence. In other words, the product initiated a powerful sharing process: Doing the book helped bridge the lit/comp gap within the department and led to other forms of sharing and collaboration as well. (For more information, see "Community of Scholars in Our Own Back Yard," ADE Bulletin, fall, 1989.)



When the first book was finished, in 1988, we began a second book to keep our collaboration alive: this time we would write an Introduction to Literature anthology together, teaming on four distinct sections, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama--with innovative writing strategies and student texts prominently featured. And so Angles of Vision (McGraw-Hill 1992) was published. Nobody will get rich--we're each in for shares--but every little bit helps in an underpaid department. Two more collaborative books are currently under contract, and several others are now in the talking stages--one of them a professional book examining writing and learning in literature classes based upon classroom research.

At present the Vermont English major requires one sophomore-level survey course; four upper-level courses prior to 1900; and one senior seminar. There is no other pattern or coherence in the course offerings, and none of the professors in the department is any longer satisfied with this smorgasbord curriculum. In addition, new challenges to the largely canonical offerings of our old curriculum appear from feminist studies, post-modern literary theory, and multi-cultural sensibilities.

A few years ago, given some of the departmental debates that took place in the mid-1980's to pass some of the aforementioned writing courses, I would have listed "composition studies" as a challenge to curricular literary orthodoxy. However, I believe two things have happened in our department to change that: First, attacks on the old literary canon from all sides have made composition studies seem fairly tame and old hat—never mind that adding student texts to the curriculum still seems problematic. And second, the WAC program has had a slow but steady affect on attitudes about writing within English departments.

To date, the Faculty Writing Project has enrolled approximately half of our 35 member (full time) department in its workshops, so that a much wider variety of writing activities are going on in straight literature classes. In addition, in the spirit of WAC, we in the department have now co-authored (ten of us) two texts that bring together reading and writing in a harmonious manner (see next page). As a result, we who meet on the department Writing Committee feel less marginalized than central to department concerns.

In the spirit of curricular coherence we proposed "a writing concentration within the English major" as an alternate to the current formless shape of the major (see below). When we presented the proposal to the department, instead of a battle, we were told, "slow down; let us catch up with you." As a result the whole curriculum is undergoing a provocative review and revision; we believe the Writing Committee Proposal has been a major catalyst in new thinking of the curriculum.

A Proposal by The Writing Committee

English majors may develop a concentration in writing by requesting permission from the English Department to follow an alternate track through the major. Students qualifying* for the writing concentration will meet the following requirements:

Thirty hours, at least 21 at the 100 level to include the following:

6 hours from one contiguous general survey series 21/22, 23/24, 25/26, 81/82

3 hours of 50 or 53

9 hours of writing courses at the 100 level, including at least 3 hours from each of the following clusters:

Cluster A (50/50 composition/literature; enrollment 25)

171 (Writing Literary Criticism)

172 (Personal Voice)

173 (The Composing Process)

174 (New Course: ^{Reading = 4} Writing Autobiography. Students will examine the autobiographical literary tradition and practice writing within this tradition. Instructors: M.J. Dickerson, M. Edwards) **

175 (New Course: Reading and Writing Nonfiction. Students will study nonfiction as literature, examining both traditional essays and literary journalism. Scope will include historic development and modern trends; students will practice writing in the forms themselves as well as writing about the forms. Instructors: Molly Moore, Richard Swaterlitsch) **

Cluster B (full composition courses; enrollment 18)

177-78 (Advanced Writing: fiction, non-fiction, poetry)

179 (Writer's Workshop)

3 hours from the 201-202 seminar series (includes "Editing and Publishing," "Writing the New Yorker," others)

9 hours of literature courses 108-155 and 211-262, including at least 6 hours of literature prior to 1900.

Recommended additional courses for a concentration in writing: twentieth-century genre and literature courses to help students understand techniques and forms in contemporary writing, fiction and non-fiction alike.

Immediately prior the CCCC talk (March, 1992) I surveyed both English faculty and senior English majors about their response to our curriculum so far. A summary of the results follows; most interesting is how few faculty predict writing-related job interests of the graduating students:

SURVEY OF STUDENTS / FACULTY MARIAN, PML

STUDENTS N = 65
FACULTY N = 15

1. WHY IS WRITING ASSIGNED:

"TO LEARN" STUDENTS 70%
FACULTY 65%

2. MOST FREQUENT ASSIGNMENT:

"ANALYTICAL / CRITICAL" STUDENTS 70%
FACULTY 40%

3. MOST FREQUENT WRITING ACTIVITY:

PEER RESPONSE STUDENTS 50%
FACULTY 40%

MULTIPLE-DRAFTS STUDENTS 48%
FACULTY 35%

JOURNALS STUDENTS 35%
FACULTY 33%

4(S). MOST HELPFUL TO STUDENTS:

MULTIPLE DRAFTS 33%
JOURNALS 33%

4(F). FACULTY CHANGES LAST 5-10 YEARS:

WHAT? TOWARD PROCESS WRITING 48%
WHY? COLLABORATION w/ COLLEAGUES 42%

5. STUDENTS INTENTIONS AFTER GRADUATION:

WRITING-RELATED JOB STUDENTS 37%
FACULTY

TEACHING STUDENTS 25%
FACULTY 7% (1)

GRAD SCHOOL STUDENTS 21%
FACULTY 7% (1)

LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS 13%
FACULTY 7% (1)

A sampling of unusual student comments to question 4 of the survey:

4. Describe the courses, practices, or assignments that have helped you most to develop as a writer:

Without doubt, the biggest influence on my writing has been creative assignments.

Studying literary theory has had the most effect on my writing since it is through lit crit that I have looked at the importance of structure to content.

In the last four years I've taught me the single most valuable place on campus is The library.

Being a writing tutor for 2 years here at WVM has greatly improved my writing.

Falling in love my freshman year.

A sampling of the most common student comments from question 4 of the survey:

4. Describe the courses, practices, or assignments that have helped you most to develop as a writer:

- * Journals, multiple drafts and peer responses
- * Journals in the past & present are very helpful in keeping up w/ the reading and forcing students to actually think about the book
- * I have found the classes which required me to write a regular journal helped me the most. Writing a journal can ~~be~~ work like brainstorming, and I have found most paper topics come out of my journals.
- * Multiple drafts, which I feel includes peer and faculty responses, is the most effective tool for improving my writing.
- * Multiple draft assignments presented in class or with the class in a circle. Relaxed atmosphere, but the pressure to show your work. Oral comments following reading, with written summary. Also, assigned topics for journal entries pertaining to read
- * WRITING/EDITING IN CLASS - EVERY CLASS
- * CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OF WRITTEN EXERCISES - EVERY CLASS:
- * BY PEERS + INSTRUCTORS.
- * "TIGHT" FORMS: POETRY, SHORT FICTION, SUMMARIES
- * ARGUMENTATION/CLASSIC RHETORIC

My major complaint with UVM English is that I spent 10% of my time being creative, 90% being 'appreciative'. In other words, I was told much and asked little. This is stifling and frustrating. 17

Senior 1992

I think my most progressive times in writing were when I took writing classes. This gave me a chance to explore my previous skills, concentrate on my weakness and develop new ways to improve my techniques as an effective writer.

In ordinary English literature classes, the emphasis was always on criticism, analysis and content - which took away from my focus on writing itself.

In 1989 I prepared a report of FWP activities for the President, Provost and Board of Control of the University of Vermont, explaining the benefits of continued funding (about \$12,000 a year) for our writing-across-the-curriculum program, which I summarized on a transparency this way:

DIMENSIONS

- I. PROMOTES COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS
- II. EXPLORES ACTIVE FACULTY PEDAGOGY
- III. EMPHASIZES WRITING TO LEARN
- IV. EMPHASIZES LEARNING TO WRITE
- V. ENCOURAGES FACULTY WRITING

Now, in 1992, I would add, cautiously, two additional benefits of the program though they are still in process:

- VI. WRITING REQUIREMENT FOR THE ARTS COLLEGE
- VII. CURRICULAR CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Faculty Writing Project

I HEAR,
I FORGET

I SEE,
I REMEMBER

I WRITE,
I UNDERSTAND

**Sponsored by the Office of the Provost*

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