Appendix 2

Dilek Tokay, SUWC, Oct 14, 2008
A brief WAC Report with data in chart and graphs presented to Linda Bergmann, Director, Purdue University Online Writing Lab [OWL], for a review of the alternative ways of improvement of the WAC practice at SU.

History of WAC at SU
Sabanci University aims at creation and dissemination of knowledge within an interdisciplinary educational infrastructure through the medium of instruction in English. Within the interdisciplinary context and frame of curricula, students are required to have writing competence in undergraduate and graduate courses as they are expected to write response or research papers, academic essays, case studies, project reports, dissertations, and take essay exams. The overall approach to education in SU has made writing an important component of many courses, seeking Writing in the Curriculum [WIC] and Writing across the Curriculum [WAC] implementations. Since 2000, SUWC has been offering services through three programs, one of which is the Undergraduate Program. This program, starting at the time of foundation with 11 workshops, found ground for WAC practice out of necessity and professional interest of course designers as well as their desire for perfection in Spring 2002, giving support to students of HUM 201, which required both short and long academic papers as well as essay exams.

The courses included in the WAC implementation due to similar requirements, their inception semesters in chronological order and continuance have been:

Among all the courses for which WAC workshops were tailored after careful review of the syllabi and depicting of course-specific examples, Project 102 has proved to reach highest numbers for workshop participation and tutorial requests despite the fact that the students were given guidance through a very thorough 37-page Handbook for the course. This achievement is due to attendance made mandatory by the course designers. It’s the success of Proj 102 Committee following up the assessment of Proposal, Progress and Final Reports. Please refer to the numbers in the chart and graphs for specifics [Ref: Appendixes 1 and 2].

Implementation
Following the dialogue with the course designer professors and the concerned TAs, a three-tier writing workshop series is offered to the students of a particular course in two or three sessions where attendance is taken. Workshop materials in PowerPoint and supplementary handouts, together with the attendance list and checklist for assessment of papers are presented to the faculty and assistants giving the course.

A training session for assessment of papers is carried with TAs who are highly concerned or interested and find sparing the time worthwhile. Writing Workshop participation of students is often awarded with 5% bonus when student essays are evaluated.

Workshop materials are reinforced through face-to-face tutorials set by appointment. Each WAC tutorial is between 1-2 hours in length with lead-in questions for students’ improvement and revision of written work, which is electronically sent to the Center a day in advance.

Two undergraduate student tutors have contributed to SUWC’s work concerning WAC in the years 2006-2008 inclusive.

In Fall 2008, out of 22 tentatively scheduled Undergraduate Workshops, 17 workshops are for WAC, concerning courses: HUM 201, 203, 204, 206, 211, Proj 102, SPS 101 & 102, HIS 227, CULT 201, 355, 391 [Ref: Appendix 3]

Issues
1. There is a decline in writing requirements in some courses and a tendency for more exams with essay components due to increasing number of students and the need for qualified assistants to assess students’ written work.
2. Professional development of TAs for the assessment of written work is a growing need. Work load and research demands may be restrictions. Orientations and ongoing professional development sessions with TAs need to be worked on.

3. There is a desire for institutionalized WAC, stretching the practice beyond personal efforts and enthusiasm.

Recommendations

1. **Possibility of a WAC Committee addressing:**
   - Course/ level goals and needs for writing skills in the three faculties
   - Priorities and strategies for enhancing writing in SU
   - Mechanisms for regular communication with faculty “Needs Analysis Committees”
   - Overall quality-quantity issues of the WAC workshops and tutorials currently being offered in the SUWC Undergraduate Program

   In subsequent years, Committee’s involvement in developing and overseeing an action plan for writing instruction in the university can also be a possibility.

2. **Institutionalization of the WAC program with a definition of goals and objectives for practice considering the importance of series of workshops or an adjunct/regular course.** This may demand:
   - Funds for the specialized/trained TAs serving as team leaders in specific courses
   - More TAs to be involved in peer tutoring in the faculties/courses

3. **Professional development workshops related to writing/editing strategies for TAs concerned, either nominated or assigned by course designers.**

4. **Solutions in need of consensus for specific courses:**

   Other than the faculty members whose care for WAC has been tremendous, reflecting itself in requiring writing workshop participation from their students and indicating this emphasis in their course descriptions, some faculty members have had contacts with their colleagues for improvement in students’ written work. The aim was encouraging students for quality in academic writing and requiring more frequent and longer written work from students. To find a solution to the decline in writing workshop participation and students’ number of appointments for tutorials concerning some courses, two faculty members’ efforts have been invaluable. Below is a sample Proposal.

Professor Ayhan Akman’s PROPOSALS to improve the quality of students’ writing, concerning SPS 101 & 102 after some SUWC Workshop Announcements and group mails exchanged among colleagues [An attachment to his letter dated below]:

-------- Original Message --------

Subject: Re: A REQUEST concerning students' writing needs

Date: Wed, 05 Mar 2008 16:43:32 +0200

From: Ayhan Akman <ayhan@sabanciuniv.edu>

Organisation: SABANCI UNIVERSITY

To: Dilek Tokay <dilekt@sabanciuniv.edu>

CC: Hulya Canbakal <canbakal@sabanciuniv.edu>, Yusuf Hakan Erdem <erdemy@sabanciuniv.edu>

References: <47C23EBD.9040603@sabanciuniv.edu> <47CDDCC5.8020200@sabanciuniv.edu>

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Material in the Attachment:

Issues in SPS 101/102’s coordination with the Writing Center

**Issue I:** For Spring 2008

Workshop I: Essay Assignments and Workshop II: Essay Writing in Exams are offered. What other topics can be covered?

**Issue II:** For Spring 2008

Special workshop for the TAs “Educate the educators”. We are unable to offer small-scale writing workshops for our undergraduates; however, we can offer at least one workshop for the TAs during this semester. This way, they can be more efficient in disseminating their knowledge to their students in their discussion sections.

**Issue III:** For next year [Fall 2008]
What kind of incentives are appropriate and effective?
A bonus system: when a student participates to one of the workshops, s/he gets a 5 point bonus in the mid-term exam. If s/he participates to two workshops, s/he gets a 10 point bonus?

**Issue IV:** For next year [Fall 2008]
Require discussion sections to have a 5 page term paper as part of their requisites.

**Issue V:** For next year [Fall 2008]
Need for at least one “dedicated” TA to ask as a liaison between Writing Center and SPS (along the model developed with BAGEM)

**Issue VI:** Long term objective
Need for small scale writing workshops (maximum 25 students per session): Instead of lectures [workshops] in large auditoriums, writing skills can be far more effectively acquired in small group workshops that meet throughout the semester.

**Issue VII:** Long term objective
Support for instituting a one semester Writing Skills course as a mandatory University Course (with credit) to be taken by students during their first year.