

# The Sounding Board

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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This is the first 2006 issue of the Writing Colleagues Program Newsletter, *The Sounding Board!* With your help, Colleagues, there will be many more to come this semester!

—Kristen Kehoe, Writing Colleagues Coordinator

## Writing Colleagues Approach Student Colleagues With Original Methods

### Mark Your Calendar!

- *The first Writing Colleagues Program dinner for the Spring 2006 semester will be February 20, 2005 at 5:00p.m. in Smith 002. There will be pizza, discussion, and activities. Delicious!*
- *Your Writing Colleague Journals are due to the Coordinator and your Professor 48 hours after your last meeting. Don't forget!*

### Inside this issue:

Calendar Reminders	1
Original Methods	1
WC Placements	1
SB's "One Essay"	2
The Writing Colleague Says . . . .	3
Recruitment	3
Writing Colleague Handout.	4

At the end of the Fall 2005 semester, Writing Colleague Alfred Croteau met with his Student Colleagues one last time. What he shared with them during that last chat in the café will extend outside their First-Year Seminar and into their next 3 1/2 years of college writing.

Alfred wanted to teach his fellow students that writing is a process, that the improvement of writing goes on and on, and just because a semester-long intensive writing course is over, the writing isn't. The improvement isn't over.

Sitting at the café, a semester's worth of papers between them, he gave each Student Colleague a blank note card.

Alfred asked his fellow students to flip through the essays and identify any trends they could find. Together, they listed the areas needing improvement on the note card. Alfred's Student Colleagues left their meetings with a note card they could forever have, each bullet point serving to remind them of issues they need to look out for in their writing.

Writing Colleagues do things like this all the time. They work with the techniques they learned in the Writing Colleagues Seminar, but they also build off them to create new ways of helping their students. Writing Colleagues like Alfred learned about writing as a process in the (continued, page 2)



**Writing Colleagues: Help your Student Colleagues to realize that writing is a process, and that revising is a part of that process!**

## Writing Colleague Placements: Spring 2006

As those involved in the WCP know, the Spring Semester tends to be quieter than the Fall. We can attribute this to one thing: no First-Year Seminars. The 2006 Spring semester features a line-up of 10 trusty Writing Colleagues ready for the challenges of an intro-level course. The following is a list of this semester's placements:

- Professor Erussard: ENG 101: Literary Consciousness  
Katy Goodrich, '08 & Alysa Austin, '08
- Professor Kendrick: GEO 150: The Geology of New York  
Keith Datz, '08 & Stephanie Bishop, '07
- Professor Spates & Professor McGuire: BIDIS 229: Two Cities  
Lauren Gary, '08, Christina Yancey, '06
- Professor Tinkler: ART 101: Ancient to Medieval  
Caitlin Caron, '08, Christie Police, '08, Holly Clark, '07
- Professor Blanchard: ART 103: East Asian Art Survey  
Kristen Kehoe, '05 (also Writing Colleagues Seminar)

## Original Methods, *continued* . . . .

Seminar. His note card activity is his very own articulation of that same idea.

Caitlin Caron has gone the extra Writing Colleague mile to help her students, too.

Together, Caitlin and her placement professor identified a trend in many of their First Year Seminar's students' essays. They were not delivering proper analysis of the material they were presenting. Caitlin came to the rescue.

Caitlin developed a paper handout for her Student Colleagues. On it, she

included a passage from an essay she had written. She lent one paragraph of her own to help Student Colleagues understand that both commentary and

**That extra bit of innovation goes a long way.**

concrete details are important to an essay. Students had to identify the commentaries and concrete details in the passage and label them CM. Identifying what worked in Caitlin's essay showed them what might work in their essay. Caitlin and her professor saw immediate improvements in the students' writing.

*Alfred Croteau was a Writing Colleague for Professor Sigrid Carle's FYS-008: Epidemics and Promise of Biotechnology in the Fall of '05. He is a Junior.*

*Caitlin Caron was a Writing Colleague for Professor James McCorkle's FYS-042: Mirrored Histories in the Fall of '05. She is a Sophomore. (turn to page 4 to see Caitlin's handout.)*

## One Essay: "The Drugs Don't Work" K.Kehoe

**INSPIRED BY THE HWS WRITES WEBSITE, THE SOUNDING BOARD BRINGS THE "ONE ESSAY" FEATURE, MODIFIED, OF COURSE, TO ITS PAGES. HERE, WRITING COLLEAGUES CAN SHOWCASE THEIR OWN WORK AS WRITERS. SEND YOUR CLASS ESSAYS, POEMS, STORIES, ETC. TO BE PRINTED!**

I have always known I will never be a Jack London. I don't say that because he's a brilliant. I, too, am utterly brilliant, and as I will forever be a student, I recognize

my infinite potential. My infinite, untapped, neglected potential. I say I will never be a Jack London because the thought of waking at 5 a.m. every morning to write through breakfast and maybe even lunch gives me a headache. I am not a dedicated Jack London. I, as every student, wish to be left alone in peace, content knowing the heights I could reach, content exerting negative effort. I am 22; I'm rationing my energy for when I need it. No one needs to adhere to Lon-

don's creative process to be called a "writer." We need to find our own, and I've found mine with my feet up, remote in my hand, *Laguna Beach* T.V. glowing.

I have always hidden my laziness. I appear to be oh-so-well disciplined and focused. Secretly, when I wake in the middle of the night feeling as though I need to write, I don't. I don't because I would have to get out of bed, cross the room, reach toward my shelves, grab the black and white memo pad. I often say I absolutely hate writing. I do, you know. Being this prolific is hard work. I would venture to say it's a burden. I have been cursed with a beautiful mind.

Writing and Kristen Kehoe: it is a love/hate relationship.

I haven't written in my journal once since November. I haven't written poetry in a year. This if my first bit of writing since I graduated.

I think maybe I overdosed. The analogy is perfect. Decadent musicians blow lines off of porcelain seats (I just

watched *Behind the Music: Guns and Roses*), wake up in hospitals after their stomachs have been pumped (Slash, anyone?), and they go back to the same life they have always known. They don't say no to drugs. How

**"I can't stop creating."**

many times have I bottomed out because I can't say no? I blame most of my college illnesses on writing because it was the writing that kept me up all night. The Writing and Rhetoric courses. The poetry phase. The honors project. I tap one key and I'm stuck, forced to ride the writing out until it's perfect or gritty and smart. It takes up too much of my time, and it makes me tired, and sometimes I get frustrated. But I always come back. I know it's an unhealthy addiction, but I can't stop coming back. I can't stop creating.

I'm a liar. I'm a little dog that pretends to be independent, and then follows its master anywhere. I am a masochist. I say I hate writing, and I do, but I don't. I want to control my

## The Drugs Don't Work, *continued* . . . .

writing, but it controls me. I like the stress. But I don't.

I am the most impatient, unsympathetic, and selfish person in the world, but I am a Writing Colleague, and I love it. I would have never done it had my First Year Seminar professor not urged me to. Forced me to is more like it. No it's not. He said "I think you'd be good at this; Check it out." And then I said "Well, I don't know . . ." and then he gave me *that look*, and then I got the guilty feeling, and then I said "fine," and I resented him for the remainder of the semester. I can't say no. D.A.R.E taught me nothing.

So I guess you could say I got suckered into writing. I used to really hate writing, but I wrote letters, long, long letters to friends back home weekly. I wrote in my journal morning and night, and I made stories up in my head, line for line. But I hated writing for school. I hated anything that would be graded. Before the grade. After the grade. I just wanted to be a slacker. Let me be a slacker.

Writing doesn't work with the lifestyle I desire. There are television shows to be watched, couches to be passed out on, hammocks calling my name. But I still say "yes" to the writing. Sometime during the Writing Colleague Seminar I learned that I didn't always have to think about what the professor wanted. I could have my

own voice. And writing that got graded could be enjoyable! Yeah, for a second. Axl Rose knew the heroine was bad news, but it didn't stop him. He did it because it felt good, and it felt good just for a moment. The warm feeling I get from writing is fleeting, too. I write. I feel high. I get strung out and tired. I crash. I swear it off, and I do it all over again. I always nearly break up the band. I know writing can't afford me the luxurious life I want, but I need it. I can't stop. No time away from it will end my need for it. Even now when I am in my period of laziness, I find myself writing when I least expect it. I can't bring myself to write in the black and white memo pad, but I decide to do a class essay I'm not even getting credit for. Because I love hating the stressful zone of my writing.

I love (without hating) the sonorous quality of words. I love pushing an attitude onto the page that no one knows I have. I love being able to lie and embellish. I love being loud in ink. I love to make fun of myself and share it with my reader. I love to write myself way cooler than I actually am. I am self-indulgent in my writing. It's about me. In those moments, I don't care about the reality show I'm missing, or the nap waiting for me. Those moments are of entirely self-indulgent decadence.

Which lead to exhaustion.

Which leads to resistance.

Which leads to a painful, lifestopping, beautiful relapse.

I am an addict.

*This essay was written for the Fall '05 Writing Colleague Seminar first assignment, "The Writer in Me."*

## The Writing Colleague Says . . .

"I like to make small talk and relate to the students to really form relationships with them. I feel it really makes the meetings more comfortable and fun." — **Martha Pigott, '06**

"I love to write and love to watch other people discover they can both enjoy and be good at writing. . . . The best part is being able to take classes with professors who you wouldn't otherwise be able to."

—**Sarah Jean Kenney-Helfrich, '06**

"The most exciting part of being a colleague is when a student breaks through a wall and finds a solution to his or her dilemma with my help."

— **Cindy Bors, 2008**

## Writing Colleagues are the Best Recruiters



**It's not too early to start thinking about new Writing Colleagues!**

The Writing Colleagues Seminar will have 13 students this semester thanks to the keen eye of last semester's practicing Writing Colleagues. This is a

great number, and it means next year, the Program may be able to cover an even larger number of placements than usual!

Because you, the Writing Colleague, work with students on a regular basis, you have an intimate knowledge of your Student Colleagues' personalities and writing processes that a professor may not have. You know who can talk

about writing. You know who can work well with others. And you know who can write.

Use this to your advantage. Use this to the Program's advantage! Keep tabs on students you think may make great Writing Colleagues, and send their names to the Writing Colleagues Coordinator!

## Writing Concrete Details with Commentary, by Caitlin Caron

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When writing papers for any college level class, it is important that your papers contain concrete details and commentary. Concrete details are details from the text that support your thesis. They may be plot references or quotations. After the quote or supporting detail, should be your commentary about it. The commentary should be an analysis of the text, not a summary. It should be a reflection, opinion, or response about the point you are making, this way your voice is evident in the text.

In the following example, label a sentence CD for concrete detail or CM for commentary. Think about how they are used in the passage. Next, read through a paragraph of your own essay, labeling CD or CM when able. Think about how they are used in your paragraph. Can you improve your use of CD and CM?

Example:

Throughout the novel, O'Brien's imagery showers the chapters like a magazine of ammunition, highlighting both the beauty and horror of war. He describes combat as a majestic rainbow of color: "the illumination rounds, the white phosphorous, the purple orange glow of napalms, the red rockets glare" (81). The imagery underlines that despite the awesome killing power, war possesses an undefined beauty, like fireworks on the Fourth of July. Equally, O'Brien shows the death of his friend Curt Lemon as a lovely ascent into Heaven, although he was blown to pieces a landmine: "When he died it was almost beautiful, the way the sunlight came around him and lifted him up and sucked him high into a tree full of moss and vines and white blossoms" (70). The words "moss," "vines," and "white blossoms" provide angelic and heavenly imagery. Also, the terms "lifted" and "sucked" suggest that Lemon is now airless and free from the burdens of war. Conversely, O'Brien illustrates the gruesome images of war as he tells of the night his troop spent in the septic field: "The field just exploded. Rain and slop and shrapnel, nowhere to run, and all you could do was worm down into the slime and cover up and wait" (148). O'Brien masterfully depicts the feeling of slithering into the filth with no place to go while being bombarded by enemy rounds. Through his fierce, biting imagery, the reader can see, smell, and feel the horrors of death that the soldiers experience in Vietnam.

Some helpful signal phrases to lead into a quote include:

Acknowledge	comments	endorses
Adds	compares	grants
Admits	confirms	illustrates
Agrees	contends	implies
Argues	declares	insists
Asserts	denies	notes
Believes	disputes	observes
claims	emphasizes	points out

Moreover, some helpful verbs that move toward analysis could be:

Suggests, highlights, implies, illustrates, alludes to, expresses, underlines, propels, develops, reinforces, creates, provokes, etc.