

THE SOUNDING BOARD

the newsletter of the writing colleagues program

february 2008

volume III, issue IV

THE CULTURE OF RESPONSE: ASK INTERESTING QUESTIONS AND GET INTERESTING ANSWERS

"I was able to better my arguments in writing and better explain and understand them myself."

Rodriguez's story and comparing it to our views behind education.

"I was able to improve my writing skills in a comfortable setting."

Akilah: OK, so you were able to write in your own format and use a personal example. I understand. What was the point that you were trying to get across in your essay? This is just so I can get a better understanding of your paper as it relates to you.

"Her advice was very helpful because otherwise I wouldn't have shared my writing with anyone."

RiShana: I wanted to explain that I didn't agree with Rodriguez relying on his teachers to teach him about a new heritage. He should have been proud of his own family heritage.

"It enhanced my understanding so it made it easier for me to get acclimated to the college writing process—something I was nervous about."

Akilah: Yeah, I saw that you used a lot of really good personal examples in the essay to show how your family helped you to learn about your heritage and you also did a good job at distinguishing that from Rodriguez's education process. I especially liked when you said "However, unlike Rodriguez, when I entered school I wasn't a blank slate for my teachers to write on." Is there anything else that you wanted to get across?

The comments above were made by first-year students who worked with writing colleagues during 2007's FSEM program. From the feedback writing colleagues receive each semester, it's clear many students feel that writing colleagues contribute to their intellectual and social experience. As one professor remarked in a course evaluation: "The role the WC plays in FYS I believe is substantial. They begin to introduce the students—on a peer level—to the demands of college level writing and thinking. Furthermore, they really do work as mentors."

RiShana: That's about it. I just wanted to show the importance of heritage because I feel that Rodriguez didn't support his heritage at all.

As mentors, writing colleagues learn to lead by asking questions. To begin preparing for this approach to peer workshop and review, WC candidates are asked to read sample student essays and then create scripts that depict how they might conduct a subsequent writing colleague meeting. Below is an example of the facilitative approach in an excerpt of a script by Akilah Browne, '11, who is a student in the Writing Colleagues Seminar this semester.

Akilah: Definitely, and I think that having some background examples like you had with your mother would be very helpful. Can you point out your main thesis for this essay?

RiShana: It is this sentence in the first paragraph.

Akilah: So, let's get to this paper. First, in your words, what did you feel you had to do for this assignment?

Akilah: Do you feel like that accurately explains what you're trying to say in the rest of your essay? To clarify that statement, do you think that the last sentence of that paragraph shows the reader that you have a negative outlook on how Rodriguez went about using his education?

RiShana: Now that I think of it, I really didn't. How do you think I can phrase it better?

RiShana: Well, on the direction sheet, Professor Salibrici asked us to explain education by using Richard

Akilah: Well, can you explain to me in one sentence what you want to get through to the reader of this essay?

WRITING COLLEAGUE PLACEMENTS SPRING 2008

**Caitlin Caron &
Professor D. Weiss**
ENG 203 Jewish American Fiction

**Katherine Faherty &
Professor N. Bhasin**
WRRH 100 Writer's Seminar

**Lauren Gary, Christie Police &
Professor C. Banks**
EDUC 370 Multiculturalism

**Jessica Meyers &
Professor J. McCorkle**
FSEM 025 Odyssey & Enlightenment

**Kelly Morell &
Professor M. Newcomb**
WRRH 100 Writer's Seminar

**Joelle Rudnick &
Professor S. Hess**
WRRH 200 Writer's Seminar II

**Sam Koval, Stephen Smith &
Professor E. Cadavid**
PHIL 195 The Good Life

**Shane Simon &
Professor L. Blanchard**
ART 103 East Asian Art Survey

**Kristin Stascavage &
Professor N. Bhasin**
WRRH 100 Writer's Seminar

**Margaret Stirling &
Professor L. Erussard**
ENG 217 Chaucer

**Maria Trainor &
Professor S. Lee**
PHIL 155 Morality of War

**Michele Viterise &
Professors J. Spates & P. McGuire**
BIDS 229 Two Cities: New York & Toronto

“My aim is to put down what I see and what I feel in the best and simplest way I can tell it.”

Ernest Hemingway, novelist, short story writer, journalist

COMMONLY CONFUSED TERMS IN WRITING: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Ever wonder how to distinguish between a metaphor and a simile? Here's a quick guide! If you don't, read on, as these kinds of things can prove to be cool party tricks.

Metaphor: compares two different things. The distinction to make with the metaphor is that it identifies the subject with the image. In short, instead of saying that the subject is like the image, a metaphor asserts that the subject *is* the image in some sense.

Example: She is a tree of rectitude.

Simile: compares two very different things that have at least one quality in common. In poetry they are used for artistic effect, and in formal writing they serve to clarify an idea in an imaginative way.

Example: The two-year-old was so intent on getting his own way that his mother joked he was like a fascist ruler.

Analogy: compares two things like a simile by identifying points of similarity. It is often used to give conceptual clarity by explaining an unfamiliar idea by comparing it to a familiar one. Therefore, it is a practical device so the qualities in common between subjects are illuminated, rather than striving for effect through the use of images.

Example: “In order to solve a problem, you first have to know what the problem really is, in the same way that you can't untie a knot until you've found the knot.” - Aristotle

Adapted from: *Writing with Clarity and Style: A Guide to Rhetorical Devices for Contemporary Writing* (2003)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the difference between active and passive voice?

A: In a sentence using active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb.

Examples:

The dog jumped onto the boy.

Kristy will give a book report to the class.

In a sentence using passive voice, the subject is acted upon; he, she or it receives the action expressed by the verb.

Examples:

The boy was jumped on by the dog.

A book report will be given by Kristy to the class.

For more information, got to: www.owl.english.purdue.edu

CONGRATULATIONS, WRITING COLLEAGUE CANDIDATES SPRING 2008

The Writing Colleagues Seminar has a great group of students this spring because of the keen eye of last semester's Writing Colleagues and Faculty Colleagues.

You know who works well with their peers and professors. You also know who can write well. So, please send their names to Heidi Beach, WCP Coordinator, and encourage those students to apply.

**Meghan Abbott
Kyli Archibald
Keith Bartlett
Kathryn Bowering
Akilah Browne
Rachael Cico
Hannah Kallet
Elizabeth Leibman
Alexandra Lucas
Sarah O'Neill King
Felix Rodriguez
Phil Yamartino**

Interested in a Writing Colleague for your course next semester? Interested in becoming a Writing Colleague? Please contact:

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Check out *The Sounding Board* online:
www.hws.edu/academics/enrichment/writingcolleagues.asp