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CSUF TEACHING WRITING CLUB

Dr. Bonz on An 'Exhilarating' First Semester

Dr. Bonz, one of CSUF's new composition instructors and the Teaching Writing Club's faculty advisor, reflects on her first semester [here](#).

My first semester at Cal State Fullerton has been an exhilarating experience. I have met many great students, both in my classes and throughout the extended campus community. I have also been welcomed and motivated by my surrounding colleagues in the department and other disciplines/fields of study at Cal State Fullerton. However, the greatest highlight of my first semester at CSUF was my experience teaching the course titled "English 305: English Language in America." In this course I had the opportunity to work with juniors and seniors who may become future teachers. In this course we examined the origins of American English, how it changes and what it does for individuals and societies. We also explored how various regional and social dialects are perceived in the U.S. and the implications this may have for schools, corporations, government, and the media.

In the first few weeks of the course we discussed linguistic prejudice, the distinctions between languages and dialects, language myths, and language stereotyping. Many of the students were unfamiliar with these terms. However, by the end of the semester I was overwhelmed by the development of knowledge students had acquired in class, and more specifically the knowledge they acquired through their own research outside of class. Students created final projects in the course that were,

based on my experience, more advanced than some forms of scholarly research I have seen in text and/or presented at academic conferences. The students were required to develop curriculum that works to advance language diversity in the academic English Language Arts classroom. Some projects included the following: one group presented a board game for a hypothetical high school English class in which students would roll a die and land



on different regions of the country. As part of the game, players take part in speaking in different dialects. Another group devised a creative writing curriculum which exposed students to various authors who utilize language varieties to great effect in their works such as Ernesto Galarza, Zora Neale Hurston, and John Green to teach students how to engage code-meshing or code-mixing as a tool to create writing that is unique and engaging to readers.

At the end of the course one of the students asked me if there was a place where we could post all of the projects so they could be made available to everyone after the class was over. This student explained to me that she wanted to have access to these

projects when she began teaching so she could implement some of the pedagogical practices developed by her colleagues when she taught in her own classroom. After chatting with this student I thought it might be a great idea to ask the students if they would be interested in composing a workbook/textbook for teachers in which all of their projects would be represented. When I presented this idea to the class many of the students were excited about the opportunity to become published authors and to share their work with teachers and scholars. As a result, we have put together a team of students from the 305 course and we are now working on a conference panel and workshop proposal for the 2015 conference on college composition and communication. This conference will give us the opportunity to discuss our projects with other scholars in the field and receive feedback that will hopefully lead to a publication.

The encouragement I received from students in this course to advance language diversity in academic settings has been the most fulfilling emotion any teacher could ask for. I am so glad to be able to contribute to the mission, goals, and strategic plans of this University and I am so happy to have been welcomed to the University in this way.

Short and Sweet:

Acronyms Every Comp Nerd Should Know

In the world of writing, shorter is usually better, and we demonstrate that belief with our abundant use of acronyms. Here are just a few we all should know:

NCTE: The National Council of Teachers of English. They are a professional organization for educators of English Studies, Literacy, and Language Arts at all levels. In many ways, they are the gateway to knowledge in the field. Join as a student and gain access to the composition's most important journals as well as information about CCCC's.

CCCC: What is 4 C's? It's the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication. Not to be confused with **CCC** (aka 3 C's) which is the premier journal in the field. This year's 4 C's convention will be held in Indianapolis from March 19-22. Even if you can't attend, be sure to read about it on <http://www.ncte.org/>

NADE: Another important organization to be aware of (and join) if you're interested in teaching writing at a community college is

NADE. It stands for the National Association for Developmental Education. Check out their blog on <http://www.nadedevd.blogspot.com/>

CalADE: They are the California Chapter of NADE; they will host the NADE conference 2016 in Anaheim, CA!

WAC: Writing Across the Curriculum is a pedagogical movement that began in the 1980's. The basic idea is that writing instruction should happen across the academic community throughout the entire course of one's undergraduate education. WAC supporters value writing as a mode of learning and encourage student practice in discipline-specific writing conventions.

WID: Writing In the Disciplines. This is the WAC approach that aims to honor the writing structures, formats, and conventions particular to specific disciplines. The goal is for students to learn to "compose" in their own fields using tools and platforms that give them access to their own unique discourse communities.

What We're Reading:

Grammar Alive! by Brock Haussamen et al

Brock Haussamen and other members of NCTE's Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar offer a much-needed resource for the myriad teachers who wonder what to do about grammar—how to teach it, how to apply it, how to learn what they themselves were never taught. Anticipating the pressures of standardized and high-stakes testing that threaten to revive older, ineffective methods of teaching grammar, the authors of *Grammar Alive!* offer teachers ways to negotiate the often conflicting goals of testing, confident writing, the culturally inclusive classroom, and the teaching of Standard English while also honoring other varieties of English.



Why We LOVE Composition!

We polled our members and teachers to find out what makes composition so lovable. Here's what they said:

In literature, we're taught to find meanings in texts. In composition, we learn to treat everything as a text.

- Jamie Greuel

I like comp because it is the study of how we express ourselves; there is no subject we seek mastery over--the self is the subject!

-Bob Neis

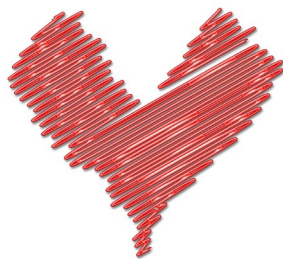
Composition offers the rare occasion where the logic of the mind meets the passion of the heart. What culminates is the expression of soul.

- Cameron Young

In composition we don't have to solve for x. Instead, we figure out why x is even in the equation, how we might relate x to ourselves, and apply some critical thinking. In essence, there are no completely right answers in composition. Instead

there is enriching discussion and everyone is allowed a voice to share how they solved for x.

- Nicole Neitzke



I love composition because it gives students the building blocks and the foundation to go further in their education.

-Laura Powell

That's easy . . . the students!

-Kim George

I love composition because, at its best, it is a creative expression that drives and informs the intellect.

- Elle Mooney

Composition brings all the boys to the yard
And they're like
my composition is better
than yours

Damn right
it's better than yours
I can teach you
but I have to charge

-Steve Westbrook

Other Things We Love . . .

CSUF's Professional Certificate in Writing and Teaching

The Professional Certificate Program in Writing and Teaching is an excellent way to extend your professional development as you work toward your MA degree in English.

To satisfy the certificate requirements, students must complete twelve units of study from the following courses. Note that the units may be applied simultaneously to the MA program. In addition to these units, students are also required to attend three workshops connected to professional development. These workshops are offered periodically throughout the semester by the English department and the Teaching Writing and Creating Writing Clubs.

Study Plan Requirements

Practical Application Course (minimum 3 units):
Eng 402(S), 515, or 590

Additional Coursework:

Eng 404T, 509, 510, 525T, 575T, 591T

If you attend a professional series workshop, be sure to sign the roster. You may pick up a certificate planning sheet from Dr. Westbrook to track your progress toward the certificate.

COMP TALK

Looking Ahead: Club Plans for the Semester

Interview Skills Workshop!

This semester, the club will host a **Professional Development Workshop** to prepare our fellow students for nailing those interviews. Jeff Sipos, an experienced teacher and interview workshop leader himself, will share his knowledge of successful interviewing. We will then break into small groups for some practice—speed interview style. Whether you're planning an upcoming interview for a position at the writing center, in the TA program, or as an adjunct or full-time instructor, this workshop will be worth your while. Remember that applications for the CSUF writing center and TA program are due by April 25th at 5pm. The **Interview Skills Workshop** will be held on **Thursday, March 27th** at 7 p.m., and it will count toward the Professional Certificate in Teaching and Writing.

“Ask a TA” Night!

On **Thursday, April 17th**, the club will host a special “Ask a TA” night. Following our regular 7 p.m. club meeting, current TAs will be available to respond to questions from soon-to-be TAs. Come prepared with questions — anything goes!

If you're interested in getting involved in the club, drop us a line at teachingwritingclub@gmail.com or visit us at [facebook.com/teachingwritingclub](https://www.facebook.com/teachingwritingclub). Our current committees include: Workshop Planning, Newsletter, Fundraising, and Community Service.

CFP: *Pupil* 2014

This year's *Pupil* is taking a practical approach to the teaching of writing by compiling a sourcebook for new and seasoned teachers alike. So gather up your favorite prompts, exercises, and bits of knowledge, and look out for the upcoming CFP on upenn and in your campus mailbox!

Composition Calls for Papers

NeMLA 46th Annual Convention:

The Northeast Modern Language Association is accepting papers for its 2015 conference in Toronto, Ontario. They are particularly welcoming topics on digital humanities, urban ecology, diversity, disability, visual cultures, and photography and language. Submissions are due by April 22nd 2014. Learn more at: <http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/55169>

St. John's University English Graduate Conference:

St. John's is accepting abstracts of 250 words or less by February 14th 2014 for their April 5th conference themed: “Working Through Environmental Unlikelihood: Ecology and Nature in the Humanities.” They are looking to create a discussion on the ways environment impacts pedagogy, and you can learn more about joining that conversation at <http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/55082>.