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**Russel Durst's
Collision Course:
Conflict, Negotia-
tion, and Learning
in College Compo-
sition** offers a peda-
gogy of "reflective
instrumentalism" as
an approach that
accepts students'
pragmatism but
attempts to add a
critical, socially
aware dimension to
writing instruction.

Comp Talk

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

CSUF TEACHING WRITING CLUB

Happy Holidays from the TWC!

December 10th is International Human Rights Day.

Join Us for a **Global-Write-A-Thon!**

As teachers and students of composition, we believe in the power of the written word. Join us in supporting Amnesty International's **Global Write-A-Thon** through December 17th.

The Teaching Writing Club will be hosting three separate "events" to write and collect letters for individual cases of human suffering. In support of International Human Rights Day, we will join hundreds of thousands of others around the world in demanding that the rights of these individuals are respected, protected and fulfilled.

How can you help?

Attend one of TWC's "Write for Rights" events and write one or more letters. We'll be writing together:

Monday, December 9th (3-4pm in LH 536); Wednesday, December 11th (12-1pm in LH536); Monday, December 16th (4-6pm in UH 447, Dr. Webber's office)

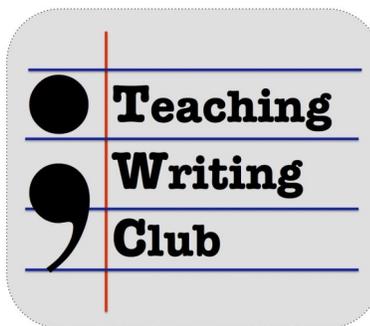
If you can't attend one of our events, you can still take part in the global write-a-thon. Here's how:

Review the cases at the link below and write a letter on your own. You can mail it to the specified address or you can drop it in the TWC mailbox and we'll mail it for you. There are also sample letters on the website that you can simply sign and mail but handwritten letters are more personal and possibly more powerful.

Please spread the word about International Human Rights Day and Amnesty International's Global Write-A-Thon. The link below will allow you to post the info on your own facebook page.

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/writeforrights/index.php>

Thank you for your support. We look forward to writing with you!



Ask a TA: The Talk Continues

Last month we asked our CSUF TAs about their experiences in the program. As promised, we're back this month with more TAs and more conversation.

CT wanted to know if there was anything our TAs wish they had known prior to starting the TA program.

Kim said: There is so much I wish I had known. But too much information can be overwhelming and many of the things I learned this semester had to be learned through trial-and-error. However, if I could go back and warn myself of anything, I think it would be a planning tip. When designing my syllabus/ course outline, I wish I had figured out the essay assignments first, then built the course outline around that. I think that would have really helped the cohesion of my class over the course of the semester. It also might have helped me pick a textbook that fit better with my overall goals. We'll see though. Ask me again next semester and I'll let you know if this planning strategy was effective or not :)

Denise told us: Oh, plenty! Still, I feel like my experience as an ISA, in the Writing Center, and in English 402 all prepared me very well. I definitely went in with a plan and some confidence and plenty of really smart and savvy people around me who I knew I could turn to for help. As for all the things I have learned since I started, I honestly don't think I would have learned them as well had I not been teaching while learning. In teaching, just like in writing, there is only so much you can absorb from reading theory and listening to other people. At some point, you just have to jump in and try it out for yourself. That is where you really learn.

Stephanie shared with us: If I could intercept myself before starting this semester, I would probably tell myself to slow down my lesson plans. With a 50-minute class, it's been best (so far) for me to focus on one general concept throughout the whole class. This can be done through activities and discussions, but it's been helpful for me to realize that they should be cen-

tered around one idea rather than multiple ideas.

Emily told us: I wish someone had told me to provide less detailed information on my course outline. That document requires a delicate balance between letting your students know what to expect and giving yourself enough room to make necessary changes in the curriculum. In other words, be a little vague on your course outline. *CT* asked what our TAs might do differently in their classes next semester.

Kim responded: A shorter answer would be what I want to keep the same. After every essay & every lesson, I realize a bunch of things I could have done differently. The structure of my course is definitely going to change. Some of the topics I'm covering later in the semester, I wish I had started with. I'm also changing my book to one that has readings I feel more passionate about and that will fit [Continued on facing page]

COMP
TALK

Got an Interesting Prompt or Writing Assignment?

Share it with us!

One major way that teachers work to get students interested in writing is through creative prompts with flexible topics. CSUF's Writing Center has seen prompts this semester involving literacy narratives, advertisement analyses, hero speeches, and even plans for the upcoming zombie apocalypse.

For this month's **Continuing the Conversation**, we'd like everyone to **share their ideas for interesting or creative assignments in the classroom**. Whether it's an assignment you completed yourself or an assignment you gave your students, whether you've been teaching for years or this is your first time in front of a classroom, share with us at facebook.com/teachingwritingclub. Tell us about the assignment and how the class reacted. If you don't have an assignment of your own to share, stop on by the facebook page anyway! You can comment on others' posts.

COMP
TALK

Ask A TA! continued

better with the types of writing I want my students to work on. So those are two big changes, but there are definitely day-to-day activities that I'm going to revise as well.

Denise told us: There are loads of things that I plan to do differently next semester. That is not to say that this semester went poorly; it's just that I have learned so many ways to make it that much better. Both talking to my colleagues and reading the books and essays for 590 have given me so many ideas. I know that I definitely want to define my essay prompts a bit more, but not too much. Part of my teaching philosophy is that I believe students will produce better writing when they are personally invested in what are they are writing about, and I firmly believe that

they will always be more invested in a topic that they have generated for themselves. However, this semester I learned that many freshman students don't know what to make of a prompt with so few boundaries. So I'm planning to rewrite the prompts and tighten up or clarify the boundaries so that students have freedom within a framework that makes them feel secure.

Emily said: I might rearrange my essay order. I started with a narrative which I find valuable as a first essay but I followed with a position paper and then an analysis and a revision. What I found was that the position papers were lacking in the analysis that they needed for effective argumentation. If I decide to maintain the order I will at least do some

class work on analysis during the second section of the course. Honestly, I wish I had another 15 weeks with this group. I feel like we've just begun to build a foundation and I have to let them go.

CT asked our TAs what they do to keep their students engaged.

Kim: For the last essay, I allowed my students to pick their own topic and I'm really happy with the results. They were hesitant at first about choosing topics that were "good enough," but I think they're way more engaged in them than if I had narrowed the topic for them. It's more fun for me to read these too because I can really get a sense of their personalities and interests.

Tips from TWC's CV Workshop

At the TWC's recent CV workshop, participants shared their working CVs and got to examine some of their professors' CVs. We also got some great tips from hiring committee personnel about how to create effective CVs, and how to prepare for obtaining full-time and adjunct positions in composition.

Here are some of the things we learned:

- College hiring season is from December to March.
- Consider organizing a community college CV with teaching experience first followed by papers, conferences, and other literary achievements listed briefly at the

bottom.

- Register yourself on the Community Colleges Registry (see pg. 4).
- Always tailor your materials to the college for which you are applying.
- It's o.k. to ask for clarification.
- Try to emphasize the variety of your teaching experience.

Teaching and Composition Call for Papers

The Acacia Club's 2014 conference is accepting submissions! While the Acacia conference typically draws a variety of papers with a literature focus, this year's "Spaces and Places" conference has plenty of room for composition papers! Within the "Spaces and Places" umbrella, Acacia hopes to see papers on the spaces within student texts, the place of composition in and outside of academia, the place of service learning in the composition classroom, the spaces (physical, mental, and social) in which students compose their papers, and much much more! Additionally, a panel on literacy narratives is in the works. To find out more about the conference, visit

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/53138>

Spaces and Places Acacia Conference 2014

May 14-15, 2014 – Abstracts due December 15, 2013

California State University, Fullerton's Acacia Group and Creative Writing Club are looking for thoughtful interdisciplinary undergraduate, graduate, and professional-level presentations of no longer than 20 minutes that interacts with the concepts of space and place in literature, critical theory, or culture.

This year's theme will address issues of space and place in literature and culture. Beyond "the final frontier," space can be any kind of distance between people, places, and things. Topics such as liminal space in the classroom, staging choices in plays, television shows, comics, and community spaces are all be welcome explorations of this topic. Similar to "space," place is not limited to being a point on a map. It can be examined through the lenses of regionalistic literature, studies on urban sprawl, or even how society has gendered and defined certain areas of geography, culture, and literature, and other myriad ways. This conference is a space and place to grow and develop ideas from any discipline. We welcome submissions that engage the aforementioned topics through different scholarly approaches either directly or tangentially related to this conference theme.

Additionally, we are accepting creative submissions: short emphatic works of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, or hybrid text which pertain to space and place. The participation of undergraduates is greatly encouraged.

For both critical and creative papers, please submit a 250-300 word abstract to:
theacaciagroupconf@msu.edu
by December 15, 2013.
Please denote either "Critical" or "Creative" in the headline.
Presenters are encouraged to submit both critical and creative pieces.

California Community Colleges Registry Job Database

The California Community Colleges Registry (CCC Registry) is a website that posts information about community college job opportunities. It also stores applications of potential community college faculty. With access to information for 112 colleges in 72 districts, applicants can search for jobs by region or district and upload transcripts and other profile infor-

mation directly to the website in order to be put in touch with potential employers.

CCC Registry Job Fair

The CCC also hosts job fairs in Northern and Southern California. There's one coming up in Los Angeles on February 1st from 10am to 3pm. The job fair is completely free and you do not need to register in advance. For more information, visit https://www.cccregistry.org/recruit_events/eventDetails.aspx?eventID=69



Teaching Writing Club

TWC Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I join the TWC?

A: Complete a membership envelope in the English Department Office (UH 323) and ask them to put it in our inbox.

Q: What can I do as a club member?

A: Besides attending our workshops and activities, you can get involved by joining one of our club committees. Our committees include workshop planning,

fundraising, *Comp Talk*, events, and community service.

Q: Do your workshops count toward the Teaching Writing Certificate?

A: Yes! All of our workshops and many of the Creative Writing Club's workshops will satisfy the workshop requirement for the certificate. There are also department-sponsored events that sometimes count toward the

If you're involved in the program it's pretty easy to take care of that requirement.

Q: Does the TWC do community service?

A: We're currently looking for teaching-based community service opportunities and would love to hear your ideas.

Q: How can I contact the TWC?

A: via e-mail at teachingwritingclub@gmail.com or facebook at [facebook.com/teachingwritingclub](https://www.facebook.com/teachingwritingclub).