Welcome to the
Inaugural Issue of
the Writing Center
Newsletter

Eva Falletta, Director of the Learning Center

I am very proud to introduce the first issue of our newsletter, which is made possible by the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction grant, "Developing the Writing Center to Enhance Student Success." Thanks to Shannon Dougherty and Veronica Pantoja for all their hard work in putting the newsletter together. The purpose of the newsletter is to enhance communication among the Writing Center, students, and faculty. We plan for the newsletter to promote and encourage the development of programs and workshops available through the Writing Center for students. The newsletter will also serve as a place to share ideas and tips about writing. Additionally, the newsletter will provide a space for students to talk about writing to their peers and faculty.

What We Do
The Writing Center's mission is to help CGCC students develop more effective strategies for generating and organizing their ideas, for enhancing analytical and critical thinking skills, and for revising and editing their own writing through dialogue about their writing and their ideas with writing tutors. The Writing Center strives to provide a supportive and instructive environment in which all writers, regardless of skill or competency level and regardless of writing task, find the fullest and clearest expression of their ideas without judgment or appropriation.

The Writing Center is a valuable resource to assist students with their writing assignments from any CGCC class or discipline—not just for English class. The Center is designed to offer support to students at all levels of writing skills. In addition to tutoring, the Center offers writing/grammar handouts, videotapes, reference materials, study skills tip sheets, and a comfortable place to study. We also have computers with updated software for students' academic use.

Who We Are
The Center is staffed with adjunct writing faculty and professional staff who provide students with writing assistance. Residential English faculty contribute one hour of service per week to the Writing Center as well. The Center is open 5 days a week, providing 46.5 hours of service a week, for 16 weeks of each semester. See our "Who's Who" of Writing Tutors on p. 2 to get to know Writing Center Tutors.

Who We Serve
Faculty from all disciplines are encouraged to bring their classes to the Writing Center during the first few weeks of the semester for an orientation. We provide a tour of our facility and an optional scavenger hunt activity to acquaint students with the Center.

Continued on page 2
Students who visit the Writing Center come from all disciplines and most are referred by faculty. During 2002 - 2003, the Writing Center served 7,791 student visits and 6,068 visit hours. The Writing Center offers a variety of services for students. 53% of the Writing Center visits were for tutoring, 18% for computer/software usage, 13% for studying, 12% for class orientation visits and 4% for resources.

Get To Know the Writing Tutors

Wendy Crabtree-Matar
Wendy works part-time in the Writing Center. She comes back every semester because she enjoys working with the students on a one-on-one basis. Her academic background includes an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in rhetoric and composition. She is currently working on her doctorate. Some of her non-academic interests include spending time with her husband and two children, horseback riding, reading, photography, and scrapbooking. She has 1 horse, 1 dog, and 2 cats.

Darren Crovitz
Darren teaches writing at CGCC and Arizona State University. He's currently enrolled in the English Education Ph.D. program at ASU. His interests include reading, hiking, and writing essays (seriously!). He also likes philosophical discussions, but only if they take place on the beach or in a pub.

Shannon Dougherty
Shannon is a Learning Associate for CGCC's Writing Center, which means in addition to coaching students with writing and ESL assignments, she also coordinates the day-to-day activities of the Writing Center. She loves helping students express their complex ideas and opinions in writing. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in English at Arizona State University and is working on a Master of Arts in Mass Communication. She’s published several short stories and won ASU's Swarthout Award for short fiction. When she’s not at the Writing Center, she works as a freelance writer and editor. She lives in Gilbert, AZ with one devoted husband, two naughty dogs, one ancient cat and a perpetual novel-in-progress.

Jeanne Duve
Jeanne received her master’s degree from NAU. She’s taught ENG 071, 101 and 102 courses at CGCC since 1999. She previously taught in the Mesa Public School system and was involved in curriculum development and textbook selection for that district. Jeanne also testified before state legislative committees concerning various educational programs and curricula. In her spare time, she enjoys reading ideas, stories and reports created by students.

Amory Kaiser
Amory is currently an adjunct ESL instructor and Writing Center tutor at CGCC. She has a master's degree in English, with a Linguistics emphasis, and was a technical writer at Honeywell (formerly AlliedSignal Aerospace Corp.) for 12 years. For the past four years, she has been an adjunct ESL/English teacher at both MCC and CGCC and has enjoyed every minute of teaching and tutoring! Her hobbies include reading, water and snow skiing, and sailing.

Don Ownsby
Don has taught English at colleges in Florida, Texas, and Arizona, specializing in teaching writing. He has coordinated a writing center and has experience in tutoring both reading and writing students. In addition to tutoring in the CGCC writing center, he also teaches freshman composition here.

Veronica Pantoja
Back in her hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas, Veronica worked in writing centers for almost 10 years before beginning her work on her Ph.D. in English at Arizona State University. She is brand new to the CGCC community, where she is currently teaching writing. In her spare time, Veronica enjoys avoiding work on her degree.

Rulon Parker
Rulon started teaching high school English in 1969. He spent 20 years in the public schools of Utah, Idaho, and Arizona. He has spent the last 7 years teaching in the community college. Presently he’s teaching full time at Collins College of Design and Technology in Tempe. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from Brigham Young University, and a master’s degree in education from the University of Phoenix.

"Close the door. Write with no one looking over your shoulder. Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer."
--Barbara Kingsolver

Jodie Thiessen
Jodie possesses a Master of Arts degree in Education with 36 graduate credits in ESL. She has taught as an adjunct ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor at CGCC for five years. She has also had six years ESL teaching experience in the public schools. Although her specialty is working with ESL students, she is available to tutor anyone. Her hobbies include reading, writing poetry, cooking gourmet food, and watching “Law and Order.”
Frequently Asked Questions about the Writing Center

Can tutors only help with English papers?
No, we’ll help you with the writing aspect of any class project you have, including Math, Psychology, Education, etc.

What can I expect when I visit the Writing Center?
• We will help you feel comfortable and welcome
• We will listen to your ideas, questions and concerns
• We will offer ideas, suggestions, and advice

How can I make the most of my tutoring session?
• Come prepared! Bring your assignment, notes, and textbook and be ready to work.
• Ask questions. If you’re not sure what a tutor is saying, ask. If you need help with something in particular, let us know.
• Choose which of our suggestions (if any) you will incorporate in your paper based on your understanding of the assignment, your audience, and your purpose. You may want to take notes during your session so that you know what you need to do with your writing.

Can tutors fix my grammar and punctuation?
While we are happy to work with you on grammar and punctuation, there are many more important things you may want to think about first:
• Focus: Does my paper focus on one main point (thesis)?
• Development/support: Do I have enough details/information/explanation to support my claims?
• Organization: Is everything where it’s supposed to be?
• Audience: Have I considered the needs of my reader(s)?

• Ideas: What do I have to say about this topic?
• Brainstorming: How can I get started on my topic?
• Clarity: Does this make sense?
• Voice: Do my voice, ideas, and perspective shine through? Am I in control of my research or is my research controlling me?
• Works Cited: How do I give credit where credit is due?
• Plagiarism: How do I avoid it?

What’s in the Writing Center?

by Shannon Dougherty

Student Workshops: The Writing Center will soon be hosting a series of workshops designed by students, for students! Faculty and staff of the Writing Center are currently assessing what workshop topics YOU want. Have an idea? Let us know! Call Shannon at 480-461-7295.

Writing Center Newsletter: As you can see, we've officially launched our first-ever newsletter! Thanks to a generous grant from the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction, we will be publishing the newsletter in December and spring. Students may contribute ideas, anecdotes, or articles to shannon.dougherty@cgcmail.maricopa.edu.

5-Year Strategic and Operating Plan: Dull? No way! Writing our 5-year Strategic and Operating Plan ensures that we will continue to be The Best Writing Center Ever for years to come. We are forming an Advisory Committee comprised of students, faculty, staff, and other advisors who will analyze our data and provide feedback to the Writing Center. Interested in participating? Please contact shannon.dougherty@cgcmail.maricopa.edu.

Did You Know?
Many words and phrases rarely add anything to a sentence. Avoid these whenever you can:

- quite
- very
- extremely
- as it were
- moreover
- it can be seen that
- it has been indicated that
- basically
- essentially
- totally
- completely
- therefore
- it should be remembered that
- it should be noted that
- thus
- it is imperative that
- at the present moment in time

These are fine in their place, but they often slither into your writing with the sinister purpose of tempting you into the sin of padding your sentences.


Writing Center Website Extreme Makeover: Our current website has served us faithfully for a long time, but it's time to update our site! Plans include creating a database of handouts and materials related to writing, expanding and classifying our collection of helpful links, and including information about our tutors and their specialties.
**Taming the Thesis Statement**

*A Tried and True Method*  
*by Shannon Dougherty*

Thesis statements are a frequent subject of discussion in the Writing Center. Tutors are frequently asked, "Can you look over my thesis statement and see if I have one?", "I'm not sure my thesis statement makes sense," or, "What the heck is a thesis statement anyway?"

Those tricky thesis statements can be cut down to size with just a little planning. Try to keep in mind that thesis statements are not meant to frustrate you as a writer! Rather, they are an aid for your reader to understand your purpose. Strong thesis statements are:

- a roadmap to your essay which declares your purpose for writing;
- a general statement about your topic, which you will develop in detail within the body of your essay;
- usually found somewhere in the introduction to your essay but not necessarily in the opening lines;
- usually 1-3 sentences in length;
- if writing a persuasive essay, thesis statements make an arguable point by stating your claim or position.

**Planning your Thesis Statement**

I usually recommend that writers begin the writing process with a research question which will help guide their research and pre-writing. This research question can then morph into a thesis statement for your paper. Generally, the best time to write your thesis statement is after you have completed your research and pre-writing, but before you begin your draft.

**Writing your Thesis Statement**

Now that your pre-writing is complete, we can borrow a trick from journalists by remembering 5 W's and 1 H.

A strong, workable thesis statement answers all of these questions in some way:

**WHO** are the people, demographics related to your topic?

**WHAT** is the subject matter, the heart of your opinion/message/argument?

**WHY** is your subject matter important/why is what you have to say important?

**WHEN** is the time frame of your subject matter? Always ground your reader in a specific place and time. The 1970s? Last year?

**WHERE** is the location -- neighborhood, city, state, nation?

**HOW** did the events take place; how you will present or prove your information/claim.

If your thesis statement answers all these questions, then it is a complete, general statement of your essay topic. Sometimes just by answering these questions in your pre-writing, your thesis statement will write itself! And now you have a way to check and fix your thesis.

**An Example**

Let's say your paper topic is Native Americans during World War II -- after completing your research and pre-writing, you've narrowed your direction:

**WHO**: displaced Lakota from the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations

**WHAT**: the conditions of work and home life in a Midwestern town

**WHY**: why they moved from the reservations in the first place

**WHEN**: 1940s to 1950s, when the Army created hundreds of menial jobs

**WHERE**: from South Dakota to small town Nebraska

**HOW**: show how the social interactions evolved, how racial clashes took place, how this era began and ended

*Continued on Page 5*
You can now write a strong thesis statement:

(WHEN) Between 1940 and 1950, a major exodus of (WHO) Pine Ridge and Rosebud Lakota arrived in (WHERE) Cornfield, Nebraska, to work in the hundreds of jobs created by the Army Paratrooper Training base located there. Once arrived, nearly all the Lakota faced unexpected hardships - (WHAT) racial clashes, economic disadvantages, inadequate housing and educational opportunities, and sudden unemployment when the Base closed, unannounced, in 1949. This essay traces (WHY) the motivations for leaving the reservations prior to WWII, examines the reality of conditions in 1940s small town Nebraska, and (HOW) observes what became of the displaced at the end of that era.

See? That wasn't so bad! Most writers run into trouble with thesis statements when they either try to write them too early (before they've answered the questions of who, what, why, when, where, and how in their own mind) or when their thesis statement doesn't adequately address each question. If you have any doubt, stop by the Writing Center and have a tutor look over your draft. See you soon! _

(Information compiled from handout, "Thesis Statements: Creating Good Ones," available in CGCC's Writing Center.)

Name the Newsletter!

Send us your best ideas for a unique and creative title for the Writing Center Newsletter. Email veronica.pantoja@cgcmail.maricopa.edu with your ideas with “Writing Center Newsletter Title” in the subject line. _

Writing Center Workshop
When 'The End' Isn't...
Tips for Revising and Proofing Your Own Paper

How do you catch sentence-level errors?
How do you revise unorganized ideas?
How can you best revise for clarity?

Come to the free Writing Center Workshop
to learn strategies and tips for revising and proofreading your writing to make sure it’s as effective as possible.

Wednesday, December 3, 2003
12:30-1:15 pm
L 228
Library, 2nd floor

Look for future workshops (and newsletters!) in the spring.

Resources from the Web
Strategies for Editing and Revising

Although reading your writing out loud is a good way to catch errors, you'll also need to develop other strategies for revising. Check out these sites for tips on how to edit, revise, and proofread writing.

How to Proofread and Edit your Writing
http://cal.bemidji.msus.edu/WRC/Handouts/ProofAndEdit.html

Editing and Proofreading Strategies for Revision
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_edit.html

Editing and Proofreading
http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/proofread.html
The Maricopa Community College District is an EEO/AA institution.