

CWC Profile: Sue Cross

Sue Cross, a writing specialist in the English Department, is excited to be working as Tutor Coordinator in the newly created program of Writing and Library Research Peer Tutoring. Along with Education and Outreach Librarian Anne Bock, Sue trains and supervises the tutors. Sue says, "It's delightful to work with these bright, energetic, creative people — a diverse group in terms of experience, personality and major field of study. Actively engaged in their own writing, they publish in venues such as the *New University* and the *UCI Undergraduate Research Journal*. Occasionally they even visit each others' tutoring sessions for advice on their own writing-in-progress."

To design the program in accordance with research in the field of rhetoric and composition, and to tailor it to UCI students' needs, Sue

worked with Cathy Palmer (Head of the Libraries' Education and Outreach Department) and Lydia Soleil (Housing's First-Year-Initiative Coordinator). With the support of the Campus Writing Coordinator, Libraries, and Housing, the program was successfully piloted in Spring Quarter 2006, and it is now fully



Sue Cross, Tutor Coordinator

implemented for the Academic Year 2006-07. It is slated to continue in 2007-2008. In Fall Quarter 2006, the program served hundreds of students. Many of them returned for multiple sessions, and over 94% of them rated the tutors as either good or excellent. Tutoring sessions take place Monday though Thursday evenings, 6-9 p.m. in Langson Library, Mesa Court, Middle Earth and the Science Library. For more information on the Writing and Library Research Peer Tutoring Program, visit <http://www.writing.uci.edu/peertutors.html>.

Contributor: Alexandra Sartor
Editor: Susan C. Jarratt
Design: Iveta Cruse

Published by the Office of the Campus Writing Coordinator

www.writing.uci.edu

2006-2007 Upper-Division Writing Award Winners

The office of the Campus Writing Coordinator is pleased to announce the winners of the annual writing awards for excellence in student writing:

EXCELLENT ACADEMIC WRITING

Humanities and Arts

Ann Thuy Dang, Studio Art
"Maintaining a State of Emergency"

Instructor: Professor Simon Leung, Studio Art

Social Sciences

Kapil Dandamudi, Political Science
"Public Opinion on the Environment"

Instructor: Professor Katherine Tate, Political Science

Science and Technology

Kenny Mayoral, Chemistry
"Construction of Nanometer-Scale DNA Strand Thermocouple"

Instructor: Professor Gregory Weiss, Chemistry

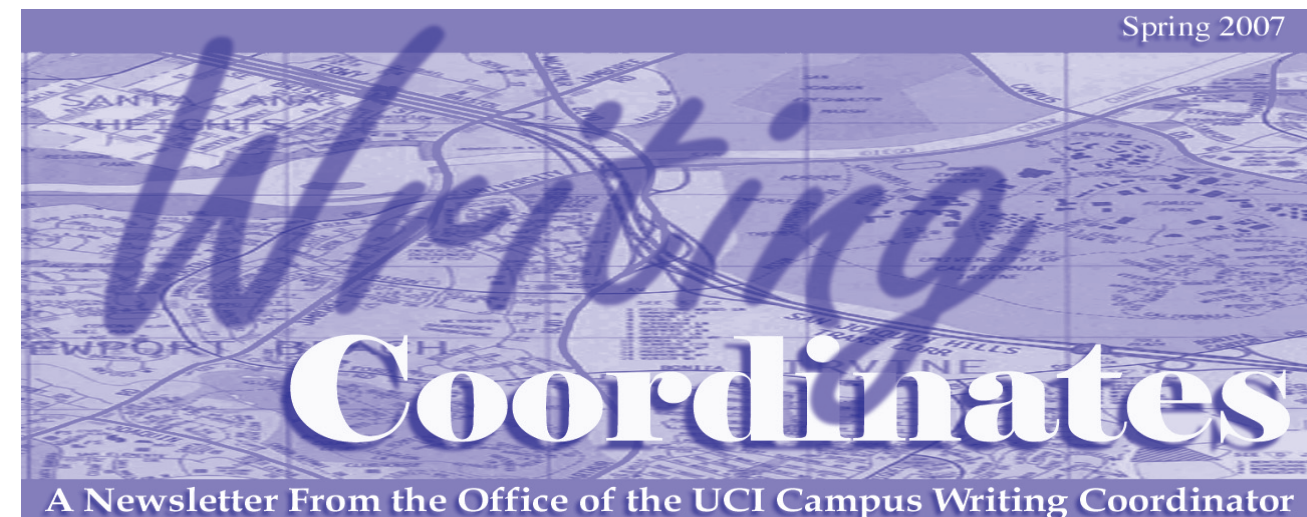
EFFECTIVE PUBLIC WRITING

Patrick Appel, Studio Art and Literary Journalism
"The City Within a City"

WRITING PORTFOLIO

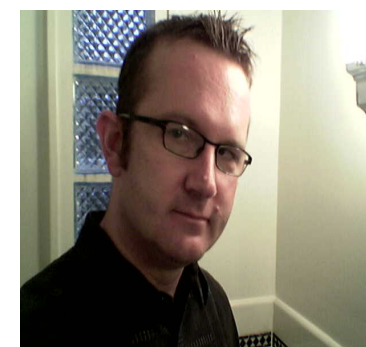
Neha Mahajan, Genetics and Criminology

Recipients were honored at a ceremony held at the University Club on May 24.



Welcome to New Campus Writing Coordinator

After a six-year term as the Campus Writing Coordinator, Susan Jarratt will return to a full-time appointment in the Department of Comparative Literature. We are pleased to announce that the work she began will carry on with the arrival of a new English Department faculty member,



Professor Jonathan Alexander

Jonathan Alexander, who will take on the role of CWC. Jonathan comes to UCI from the University of Cincinnati where, as an associate professor of English and Comparative literature, he served as the director of the

Pedagogical Memory and the Transferability of Writing Knowledge: CWC Research Implications for Teachers of Writing

During the Spring Quarter 2006, CWC researchers conducted half-hour interviews with fifty-seven UCI juniors and seniors while they were completing upper-division writing to discover what they remembered of early writing instruction and how they used it. The interviews broadly confirmed results in similar research that students don't remember prior instruction when they aren't asked to repeat similar tasks, but students over the course of the interview generated a broad range of memories. Prompting memories about these trajectories produced some unanticipated testimonies to the power of writing in college. For example, Edward, a psychology and social behavior major reports amazement that he could "produce writing so different

from my everyday speaking style...I didn't know I had it in me." Another student reports a moment when "It finally hit home. It's not just writing. It's *my* writing. . . . What my teachers are seeing now is not just words, but me behind the words and that really hit home" (Andrew, Literary Journalism).

A substantial group remembered first-year writing in terms of critical thinking and valued it as an introduction to academic discourse. One BioSci major, for example, indicated that "lower-division writing broadened my way of thinking...it helped changed my perceptions on the world" (Alfonso).

The most prominent example of *active transfer* came from student memories of a first-year composition research

Pedagogical Memory and the Transferability of Writing Knowledge: CWC Research Implications for Teachers of Writing

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experience. According to one Economics major, “39C is argument and research so it was a totally new thing and I really enjoyed that class because it was research and writing your own arguments on something you believed in so I remember a lot from that” (Tom).

Teachers can forge additional connections between lower- and upper-division writing courses by actively encouraging pedagogical memories. We offer the following suggestions for teachers:

- 1) Invite students to talk about previous writing courses and experiences; consider a diagnostic writing exercise that asks students to reconstruct their writing histories.

- 2) Incorporate reflective writing assignments throughout the quarter: writer’s memos, journals, portfolios, etc.
- 3) Offer names of genres (e.g. literature review) and modes of development (e.g. analysis) in writing assignments. Discuss how the definitions of these terms may vary from course to course, discipline to discipline, and even within a discipline and its sub-fields.

To read the full text of “Pedagogical Memory and the Transferability of Knowledge: An Interview-Based Study of UCI Juniors and Seniors,” please visit: <http://www.writing.uci/research.html>

CWC Resources

The CWC office offers consultations to faculty to answer questions, gather information, and advise on any issue related to the teaching of writing.

The CWC Web page www.writing.uci.edu offers a wealth of information of topics ranging from designing effective writing assignments to evaluating student writing.

Welcome to New Campus Writing Coordinator

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English Composition Program. His teaching and research interests focus on writing studies, the use of technology in the teaching of writing, and sexuality studies. Jonathan’s publications include *Digital Youth: Emerging Literacies on the World Wide Web* (Hampton Press, 2005), and *Argument Now: A Brief Rhetoric* (Longman Press, 2005), a textbook co-authored with Margaret Barber. In *Digital Youth*, he argues that students use the Web to experiment with a number of rhetorical strategies and encourages writing instructors to engage the skills students develop online in the classroom. His scholarly and pedagogical experience, combined with Jonathan’s enthusiasm for the teaching of writing, will be true assets to fostering a culture of writing at UCI.

Contact Campus Writing Coordinator Susan Jarratt (sjarratt@uci.edu, x49533) or Graduate Writing Consultant Alexandra Sartor (asartor@uci.edu x49531) for more information.

Campus Visit Sparks Discussion on Disciplinary Writing

An audience of faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students from UCI and other area universities welcomed Christopher Thaiss to campus on March 8. Thaiss, Clark Kerr Presidential Chair and Director of the University Writing Program at the University of California at Davis, is one of the newest members of a growing number of writing scholars in the UC system. Until 2006, he was Professor of English at George Mason University, where he directed the composition and writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs and served as chair of the English Department.

Thaiss’ presentation offered highlights from his book, *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines: Research on the Academic Writing Life* (Boynton/Cook, 2006), co-authored by Terry Myers Zawacki. Thaiss presented findings based on a wide variety of data collected at George Mason University between 2000 and 2005. His sources included interviews with faculty in fourteen fields, instructors’ course material, and a survey of students from 40 disciplines, student focus groups, and reflective essays written by students as part of a portfolio

system. His conclusions are of interest to any writing instructor concerned with students’ adaptation to disciplinary writing and he offered helpful implications for teaching to the audience.

Thaiss spoke about writing proficiency as a developmental process. His findings indicate that those students who wrote in a variety of courses at different levels throughout their college career were far more conversant in the nuances of disciplinary writing than were those with only limited experience in writing in their majors. He also discussed the role of teacher feedback in this developmental process. The students he observed describe teachers as the most influential factor in their development as disciplinary writers, and the most proficient writers in the study commented at length on the importance of teachers who showed interest in their writing.

In his interviews with faculty, Thaiss found that while members of different disciplines often use the same terms to describe “good writing,” the meaning of such terms may vary widely. Understandably, students



Professor Christopher Thaiss

may interpret differing expectations described in the same terms as the product of personal idiosyncrasies from instructors. In order to impart the range of writing practices characteristic of a discipline, writing instructors must work to articulate methods, formal structures, and ways of thought of a field, and differentiate them from any localized or sub-disciplinary practices that may affect assignment expectations. Thaiss suggested that a teacher can describe his/her own research interests and writing to give students a sense of how an individual’s practices may align with and differ from general disciplinary practices.

For a detailed summary of Thaiss’ findings, please visit: <http://writingprogram.ucdavis.edu/thaiss/#Research>.