



## Friday @ the Center: February 16, 2007

### Writing for Everyone: Part 3

**GLOBAL TIP:** Strategize about ways to encourage students to view writing as a process. In my formal writing assignments, I identify several steps that students should go through, roughly divided into 1) Creating (coming up with ideas via thought, research, brainstorming, freewriting, etc.), 2) Shaping (organization), and 3) Finishing (crafting intros, working on diction, cleaning up grammatical errors, etc.). The exact nature of each of these stages will differ depending on the assignment. The Creating stage, for example, might include doing an experiment and recording the data, if the final product is a lab report. Some professors require something to be turned for each stage, thus encouraging students to begin the process earlier than the night before the final assignment is due.

**FINISHING TIP:** The third most frequent punctuation error in college writing, according to Lunsford's research, is **forgetting the comma in a compound sentence**. A *compound sentence* has two or more parts that could be a sentence. When those parts are connected with *and, but, so, yet, or, nor, or for*, a comma needs to appear before the connecting word. Example: Writers need to be able to recognize when a sentence part could stand alone, and they also need to know the seven connecting words (aka *coordinating conjunctions*).

**STRATEGY:** More in-class editing. Briefly define this rule and the two key concepts (*compound sentence, coordinating conjunctions*). Then have students underline all the compound sentences in a paper they are going to turn in and to circle the coordinating conjunctions. They can add a coordinating conjunction if they identify a sentence that is missing one. If you have them check for the missing comma after the introductory element, vague pronoun references, and then for compound sentences, I'd send the paper back home to be re-printed and turned in (along with the original) the next class period, without penalty. It's a great way to reinforce the finishing stage.

### Student Opportunities—Encourage the Best and Brightest

- The Queen Anne Rotary Club is looking for gifted applicants for the Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarships, which provides up to \$27,000 to study abroad for a year. Students who have completed two years of undergraduate study are eligible to apply. For more information see <http://www.spu.edu/depts/csfd/rotary.asp>, or contact Doug Taylor ([dtaylor@spu.edu](mailto:dtaylor@spu.edu)).
- The U.S. Department of State and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) are offering scholarships for intensive overseas study in the foreign languages of Arabic, Bangla/Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu for Summer 2007. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, have completed at least one year of undergraduate work, and be currently enrolled at the undergraduate or graduate level. Students in all disciplines including business, engineering, science, the social sciences

and humanities are encouraged to apply. See [www.CLScholarship.org](http://www.CLScholarship.org). Application deadline is March 15.

- Finally, congratulations and best wishes to Hanna Oltean, junior in Biochemistry, who has been nominated for a Goldwater Scholarship by SPU!

### **Cancelled! Keeping Effective Office Hours**

Does anyone else feel as if our university-wide event calendar has been overbooked lately? In order to avoid adding to this trend, we are cancelling the faculty luncheon workshop on office hours that was scheduled to be held next week. Next quarter's faculty luncheon workshop on using the *New York Times* in the classroom—sponsored by the *New York Times*—will be held on April 19..

*Susan*

Susan VanZanten Gallagher  
Professor of English  
Director, Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development