



## Friday @ the Center: April 6, 2007

### Copyright Questions?

Wondering if you can make a copy of a poem to use in class? Can you put several copies of an essay on reserve in the library? What about showing a film clip? How about distributing copies of an electronic article for your faculty committee to read? For questions relating to copyright issues, check out and bookmark

[http://www.spu.edu/depts/library/about\\_library/main/policies/copyright.htm](http://www.spu.edu/depts/library/about_library/main/policies/copyright.htm).

### Writing for Everyone: Part 6

**GLOBAL TIP:** We've talked about the importance of supporting evidence and synthesis in the middle stage of writing (creating, shaping, finishing), but an even larger issue in shaping is the matter of organization. In academic writing, we often expect a thesis, or claim, or governing idea; followed by a logical development or proof of that idea. It can be useful to highlight your expectations regarding this central idea—when it should appear in the essay (first sentence? end of first paragraph? last paragraph?), how blatant the writer should be about including it (“This paper argues . . .”), if an implied thesis would or would not be appropriate.

**STRATEGY:** Ask students to bring a draft to class and have another student read it, underlining or circling the controlling idea/claim/thesis/assertion of the essay. Then have the “shaping editor” cross out any material that he or she believes does not directly relate to that central idea. Again, providing a short sample on an overhead before doing this exercise may be useful. Students then take their drafts and revise for shape, accordingly. While the shaping editor is at work, you could also ask her or him to indicate where some more evidence or detail would be helpful.

**FINISHING TIP:** The sixth most frequent punctuation error in college writing, according to Lunsford's research, is **using a wrong or missing verb ending**. I have to admit that I was surprised to find this one on the list, as I can't say I've encountered a lot of problems with this. Lunsford notes that “It is easy to forget the verb endings *-s* (or *-es*) and *-ed* (or *-d*) because they are not always pronounced clearly when spoken” (14). They also probably are often omitted in the text-messaging that makes up such a large part of our students' communication strategies. The *-s* endings are related to subject/verb agreement: “**Dickinson write (writes) extremely dense poetry.**” The *-d* endings should be included to indicate a past tense: “**When they first were married, they love (loved) each other very much.**”

### March Teaching Professor

The March issue of *The Teaching Professor* was distributed a few weeks ago to department chairs and school deans. It contains a helpful article called “Assessing Class Participation: One Useful Strategy,” two brief pieces on those annoying cell phones in class, a discussion of teaching large classes, and a piece advocating the use of quizzes. Ask around in your

department or school if you haven't seen this publication yet and are interested in any of these essays.

### And don't forget . . .

- *April 10, 2007*  
**Vali Nasr**  
1:00 pm -1:50 pm, Upper Gwinn  
A public lecture by one of America's leading voices on the history of Islam.
- *April 11, 2007*  
**Social Venture Plan Competition Showcase**  
3:00 – 6:00 pm, Weter Lounge  
Students from all disciplines display plans for social venture projects—businesses that help of hers.
- *April 12, 2007*  
**Is Grad School For You?**  
1:00 pm - 1:50 pm, DH 353  
An informational meeting for undergraduates that addresses questions such as what kinds of graduate programs are there? How do I know if I can do graduate level work? MA or Ph.D? How do you pay for graduate school? *Please encourage your academically talented students to attend.*

Have a blessed Easter, all!

*Susan*

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