

# Writing & Literature Program Review

Spring 2010

## Table of Contents

- 1) Program Goals. 1-2.
- 2) Changes in Courses. 3.
- 3) Needs of Students. 3-7.
- 4) Outcomes of Courses. 7-10.
- 5) Faculty Outcomes of Courses. 10-15.
- 6) Core College Outcomes. 15-25.
- 7) Distance Learning. 25-32.
- 8) Facilities and Support. 32-38.
- 9) Appendices. 39-88.

## 1. PROGRAM GOALS

### Portland Community College's Writing and Literature Program

#### 2010 Program Review

#### An Overview of Program Offerings

One of the largest programs at PCC, the Writing and Literature division offers courses three main areas: Transfer Writing, Creative Writing, and Literature. PCC's offerings in Writing are extensive. Transfer Writing courses include WR 115, WR 121, WR 122, WR 180 (Composition Conferencing and Tutoring), WR 222 (Writing the Research Paper), and WR 227 (Technical and Business Writing). The program also offers nine courses in Creative Writing: WR 240 (Creative Non-fiction), WR 241 (Fiction), WR 242 (Poetry), WR 243 (Script-writing), WR 244 (Advanced Fiction), WR 245 (Advanced Poetry), WR 246 (Editing and Publishing), WR 247 (Advanced Script-writing), and WR 248 (Advanced Non-fiction). PCC's Writing program also offers specialty courses in grammar (WR 92 & WR 93), composing for scholarships (WR 105).

PCC's Literature program is noted for both its breadth and depth. The catalog of courses is unique and represents a spectrum of choice not typically found at a community college.

PCC's Program also offers a variety of literature sequences that provides students the chance to explore a literary subject in great depth. PCC offers nearly 50% of University of Oregon's literature offerings, even though PCC only grants an A.A. transfer degree in English while U of O grants a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. In other words, PCC's Literature program is exceptionally rich in offerings.

Here is a representative sample of PCC's Literature course catalog, beginning with its unique menu of sequence courses:

ENG 104 (Fiction), 105 (Drama), and 106 (Poetry) allows students the opportunity to devote a year to the study of literary genres. English 107 & 108 (World Literature) allow students to survey Middle Eastern, European, and American literatures from antiquity to the modern period. PCC also offers a world literature sequence (English 207, 208, and 209) that allows students to study the literatures of India, China, and Japan, respectively. PCC also has a unique year-long sequence in African American literature (English 256, 257, 258). And PCC's Film Studies sequence (English 195, 196, and 197) is one of the first of its kind in the region. (Seattle University has just recently begun offering film studies courses in its English program.) The Literature program also offers unique stand-alone courses, such as Literature of the Genocide (English 215), Introduction to Women Writers (English 260), and The Bible as Literature (English 275). PCC students are blessed with an abundance of literature course offerings from which to choose in satisfying their transfer degree literature requirements.

### Writing and Literature Program Objectives.

Writing and Literature are in strong harmony with PCC's core objectives. The following narrative will briefly detail the alignment between PCC's outcomes and the programs. (Words in italics are PCC's official core outcomes.) *Communication* is a foundational aim in all of PCC's Writing courses. Students learn all the principles and practices associated with written communication. While particular goals for writing courses may differ—WR 115, say, from WR 242—basically the core goal of mastering the art of effective expression is fundamentally the same. Writing courses typically assign writing projects centered on social issues or humanistic ideas, which address PCC's core goal of *Community and Environmental Responsibility*. These writing projects ask students to consider issues and ideas in social contexts to better understand such forces as ideology, customs, traditions, progress, etc. 2009 marks the year that PCC has adopted the challenge to teach *Critical Thinking* as a system-wide endeavor. Many of the goals and outcomes of the Writing and Literature program are associated with critical thinking. Critical thinking is at the very heart of Writing 122, a course on persuasive and critical writing. In this course students learn how to critically evaluate text and social phenomena using the tools of logic and rhetoric. In the literature courses textual analysis—a form of critical thinking—is a cornerstone practice. Many of PCC's Literature courses are specifically arranged to address *Cultural Awareness* as an academic phenomenon. Consider PCC's Latin American Literature (English 213). The bedrock objective of this course is to expose students to an alternative cultural literary aesthetic and canon of work. In terms of Professional Competence, the need for a literate workforce has been

abundantly documented. PCC's broad and deep offerings in Writing and Literature assure the college that students exiting the programs are prepared to step into any profession that requires strong writing, thinking, and speaking skills. Finally, Writing and Literature, as a complete program, offers students the academic space for *Personal Reflection*. Several of PCC's Writing courses help students to acquire a healthy, positive, and useful means for introspection. Writing 242, for example, a creative writing course on poetry, invites students to learn the craft of poetry while exploring themselves as material for verse. It is hard to imagine a better environment for mastering the technique of personal reflection.

## 2. CHANGES IN COURSES

### Growth and Change in PCC's Writing and Literature Program

The Writing and Literature Program is never static; due to its size and staggering intellectual and creative workforce, it constantly adapts to new trends and evolves towards a better state. Since the last Program Review, the Writing and Literature Program has developed new courses (e.g., WR 222: Writing the Research Paper; Literature of the Working Class) and begun the long-term process of building a catalog of online courses. The Writing and Literature Program has always been at the center of progressive trends. Consider the important role that the Program plays here at PCC regarding Service Learning. Or the contributions that instructors within the Program have made to the development and direction of such programs as the Teaching and Learning Center and Women's Studies. Or the strong, continuous presence of Writing and Literature in steerage of Art Beat year after year. What would Art Beat be without the strong presence and support of Writing and Literature?

## 3) NEEDS OF STUDENTS

### **District-wide Report:**

Since the last program review, several factors have put pressure on curriculum and instruction, particularly for Writing 115 and Writing 121:

1) Economic changes have led to high enrollment, which has brought more first-time and first-generation college students to PCC. Many of these students test into DE classes and Writing 115. Because of space and staffing restrictions, department chairs have not always been able to meet the demand for the early classes in our program.

2) The new prerequisite system has also brought more students to Writing 115 and 121.

In response to these factors, our subcommittee chose to focus on the core courses of the writing program rather than on literature or creative writing. We studied student success rates and enrollment patterns, noting any consistent gaps and shifts. We also looked at support services for writing students and community outreach programs.

**Student Success:**

To view student success district-wide, we looked at success rates in Writing 115 and Writing 122 in 2008-2009 in general and in terms of gender, ethnicity, and age. As the average Pass rate for these courses was 79% and the average No Pass rate was 21%, we were then able to compare success rates for particular groups. We made three critical discoveries: 1) Women passed both classes at a rate of 5-6% higher than men. 2) Older students (25-49) passed both classes at an average rate of 5% higher than younger students (18-24). For both classes, the success rate actually increased incrementally with the age brackets of the students. 3) White, Asian, and Hispanic students passed Writing 115 at an average rate of 10% higher than Black and Native American students, and White and Hispanic students passed Writing 122 at an average rate of 5-6% higher than Asian, Black, and Native American students (Appendices A and B - Students). The committee plans to share these statistics with the SAC and to develop strategies for increasing success rates for male students, younger students, and students of color.

**Enrollment:**

We also discovered significant enrollment increases for veterans and Latino students since the last program review.

**Veterans:**

Institutional Effectiveness has reported that during the 2008-09 academic year, a total of 610 students identified as Veteran status in Banner enrolled in WR or ENG courses (only 53 total students enrolled in ENG courses). Of the 557 WR enrollments, 79.3% received a passing grade, although these enrollments represented seventeen different courses. Students were most likely to enroll in WR 115 (76.4% pass rate); WR 121 (218 students, 78.4% pass rate), and WR 122 (106 students, 83% pass rate).

While this research gives us some useful data, it does not break veterans down into different categories. Obviously, we serve not only students who have fought in the first Gulf war but also students who enlisted in all the branches of the military and who have experienced various degrees of combat. Those students who have more recently engaged in active combat often suffer from a host of problems upon returning, including substance abuse, divorce, post-traumatic stress and other medical problems. Anecdotal evidence indicates that otherwise skilled and prepared students may not be able to complete coursework due to outside conflicts and stresses related to their experience in war. While there have been a couple steps taken to think about how we should address this growing population, (The Rock Creek campus in-service a few years back on veterans issues, for example), we, as a discipline or as a college, have not thought deeply about how best to serve this population. Based on anecdotal reports, veterans, especially in WR115, do seem willing and able to seek out one another in classes and to help each other succeed. Using their inherent sense of connectedness with each other may be an important best practice for us to consider.

### **Latino Students:**

Because the number of Latino students has increased district-wide and because the success rates for these students varies significantly by campus, we interviewed key support staff members to look for ways to best serve this growing population.

**Brenda Maldonado**, Multicultural Coordinator of the Rock Creek Campus, also runs CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) and the Oregon Leadership Institute (a peer mentoring program and outreach for Latino High School students). Throughout our discussion, she repeatedly emphasized the importance of the one-on-one relationship for Latino students (whether that be between faculty and student, advisor and student or student and student). She confirmed that in her experience while Latino students may successfully complete a particular course or sequence of courses, at the same time, they may “wander” throughout the system with no clear career or program goals. (This would be particularly true on campuses where there is no program targeted for Latino students.) She also indicated that due to a strong cultural commitment to the extended family, Latino students may put themselves at risk academically by prioritizing family obligations over attending class. Thus, how do we as instructors maintain a balance between “fairness” and cultural sensitivity?

In our conversation with **Paul Halloran** (a bilingual Rock Creek adviser, who also has worked with CAMP and Oregon Leadership Institute) and **Claire Oliveros** (Sylvania Multicultural Center), Paul pointed out that Latino students may perceive a sharp hierarchical difference between faculty and student that may impact advising/career counseling conversations an instructor attempts to have with a student. From his experience, Latino students treated him differently when he was an instructor than when he was their advisor. As part of the same conversation, Claire noted that the services such as the Multicultural Center, Women’s Resource Center, Illumination Project and the Men Student of Color cohort all serve as resources for students of color. When pressed, however, she did admit that Latino students did not utilize such resources as frequently and extensively as other students of other populations. She also added that from her conversations with students, she heard criticisms of boring instructor delivery of material, as well as occasionally instructors not preparing classes adequately enough for difficult conversations around race and ethnicity. Paul and Claire both noted that students had been intimidated by the first-day diagnostic writing in Writing 115 and that some students had been told that they wouldn’t pass the class based on that piece of writing; clearly, a strategy that is meant to increase student success can sometimes work against it.

At the time of this program review, advisor and retention specialist **Nerva Pfund** was the only Spanish/English bilingual student service staff member at Sylvania, a point that Claire and Paul pointed out in their conversation. During the interview, Nerva repeatedly discussed student issues around ESOL and immigrant issues. She indicated appropriate and skilled advising so that ESOL/Latino students were accurately assessed of their needs, skill levels and strengths/weaknesses for academic and career counseling.

The Campus Climate survey indicates that Latino students do in fact make use of advising and career counseling much more than their white or Asian counterparts.

However, such data does not distinguish students by campus, and as a result, it is unclear if Brenda's or Paul's excellent programs at Rock Creek may account for the overwhelming number of Latino students that indicated that they seek academic and career counseling. Also, in the data, international students from Latin America are not separated out from domestic Latino students – a problem, since the two populations have very different challenges and barriers to success.

Given the reluctance for Latino students to bond with faculty in order to form mentoring relationships, or even to converse about career and academic advising issues, student services, it can be argued, then become increasingly important. Our recommendations include bringing more bilingual advisors and counselors to Sylvania, Cascade, and Southeast Center as well as extending the CAMP and/or Oregon Leadership Institute (or similar program) to these campuses.

### **Support for Writing Students:**

In order to support students in the writing program, each campus has a writing center with tutoring services available, though the students would benefit from longer hours, including evenings and weekends. Students can also take advantage of PCC's online tutoring program.

Students also benefit from innovative faculty projects. For example, at Rock Creek, faculty share ideas for improving student success through their "Writing Instructors' Best Practices Idea Book" and through interdisciplinary workshops on topics such as "Writing 115 Proficiencies" and "Common Problems for Non-native Speakers." At Cascade, Cynthia Kimball has developed a program for increasing the success rate of Writing 115 students. Through support from a Learning Center grant, she analyzed the areas of weakness that many students encounter and designed workshops to address them. All students who are taking Writing 115 attend the workshops every other week during the term. This approach has created more continuity in the curriculum and has allowed the Writing 115 instructors to communicate more extensively about the course.

More support for faculty projects would help to increase the student success rate. For example, at Cascade and Southeast Center, the enrollment of students of color in Writing 80, 90, and 115 is markedly higher than enrollment in Writing 121 and Writing 122 (Appendix C - Students). A faculty project that focused on recruitment and retention for students of color would help these students to advance to higher levels in the writing program and thereby to be more successful in their college coursework.

### **Community Outreach:**

Portland Community College English Department faculty respond to community needs and are doing more every year to reach out. Several English department part-time faculty members work with Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) Education Fund by offering tutoring to SEIU members who are also PCC composition, developmental education, and ESOL students. One part-time writing instructor facilitates RD and WR "bridge type" workshops that aim to boost confidence in SEIU employees preparing for their COMPASS exams. One full-time ENG instructor works with an immigrant group

teaching English and another works with *p:ear*, a homeless advocacy group for Portland teens. These are just a few examples of how English department faculty represent PCC in their communities. Creative writing faculty are particularly involved in community teaching/writing projects. Many of the faculty do local readings of their work and serve on literary boards in the community.

#### **4) OUTCOMES of COURSES**

##### **Outcomes in WR 115: How students fare in WR 121 and in the Gen Ed courses for which 115 is a prerequisite.**

In our examination of course outcomes, we traced the progress of students who took Writing 115 and 121 and went on to enter other general education courses at PCC, including Wr 122 and 227.

In each of the subject areas examined, we found that students who passed Wr 121 fared better in subsequent courses than those who did not. We also found that the percentage of Wr 115 students who passed Wr 121 was equal to the percentage of passing students placed in the class by Compass.

(See Appendix)

##### *Background*

In 2008, with the conversion of all writing courses to 4 credits, the Course Outcome Guides were revised to reflect the new configuration of the individual courses, as well as writing sequence itself as two 4-credit courses rather than three 3-credit courses. Two years into the conversion, it became clear that these COGs were in need of further revision to more accurately and consistently reflect the outcomes and processes of the 4-credit writing sequence as it is actually being taught.

In addition, over the same time period the AAOT degree began a revision process of its own at the state level, which has resulted in new, clearly mandated outcomes for the degree's writing requirement.

##### *The Project*

As a consequence of these two major changes to the writing sequence—one internal and one external--SAC subcommittees, with members drawn district wide, have begun a process of reviewing and revising the Course Outcome Guides for the writing sequence: WR115, WR121 and WR122.

The goals of this revision process are

1. To make the writing COGs internally consistent and coherent, and of practical use to instructors
2. To be sure the writing course outcomes reflect and are consistent with the revised AAOT outcomes for writing, including the mandate that WR121 and WR122 incorporate the new Information Literacy proficiencies required by the AAOT degree.

3. To be sure the writing course outcomes reflect and correlate strongly with PCC's Core Outcomes.

The process of review and revision began Fall 2009 with WR122. The process works backward from the "end" course: clearly articulating what students should be able to do as a result of completing the final course of the writing sequence makes the process of determining outcomes for the courses leading up to this end point consistent and logically coherent, and allows us to emphasize the recursive nature of the writing process.

As of Feb 1, 2010, the WR122 revised outcomes have been completed in draft stage and will be presented to the Comp/Lit SAC at the Spring meeting for approval before being brought to the Curriculum Committee. Work on WR121 will begin this Spring, to be presented at the Fall 2010 SAC meeting, and finally the WR115 revisions should be completed Spring 2011.

#### *What's Next*

The focus of this project has been on ensuring that the writing course outcomes are consistent, useful and intelligible, and that they are clearly connected to institutional and degree outcomes. A noteworthy by-product of the process, however, has been to open a valuable and sustaining conversation among writing instructors about the meaning and value of what we do, which we hope to continue. Developing a program wide assessment of the new outcomes, beyond the traditional practices of classroom assessment, would be the next step.

### **Literature Courses.**

*The following is text from the Program Review Guidelines*

A. Evaluate the curriculum using national and/or professional program/discipline guidelines where available.

To evaluate our literature curriculum, we should begin by looking at some foundational outcomes for our literature courses and then discuss how those outcomes serve overall student achievement:

By using the text to learn about and interpret diverse points of view, students articulate ways in which the text contributes to understanding of self and others. By contextualizing a work as a product of a particular culture and period, students integrate related concepts from other disciplines. By identifying a variety of stylistic choices that authors make, students analyze how form influences meaning. By performing a close reading of the text and identifying support/evidence for a particular interpretation, students improve their ability to think critically.

While these are immediate outcomes, a 2005 report from the American Association of Colleges and Universities details evidence suggesting that these kinds of outcomes significantly contribute to student achievement (Data are from the 2004 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) for all surveyed colleges and universities. FSSE poses questions to college faculty to find the degree to which faculty expect students to engage in educational practices known to be linked to improved learning and personal development.) Some questions were paraphrased or created by combining stems and specific prompts. For the report from the AACU, see [http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/pdfs/leap\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/pdfs/leap_report_final.pdf)

For a sample see:

<[http://www.iusb.edu/~iusboir/FSSE/FSSE%202005/Results/FSSE%202005%20NSSE%20Comparison%20\(IU%20South%20Bend\).pdf](http://www.iusb.edu/~iusboir/FSSE/FSSE%202005/Results/FSSE%202005%20NSSE%20Comparison%20(IU%20South%20Bend).pdf)>

Since the last program review, our courses have certainly changed. But since our literature program offers 32 distinct courses, generalizing about these changes is difficult. An observer of individual course content might notice content changes from term to term and certainly from instructor to instructor. The nature of the humanities allows—indeed requires—a diverse approach to course content.

Our course guides (CCOGs) describe our course outcomes as well as the assessments used to measure those outcomes. In particular, these assessments tools are described: informal responses to study questions; evaluation of small- and full-group discussion; in-class and out-of-class writing; formal essays, as well as informal responses to study questions and other types of informal writing; presentations by individuals and groups; short and long essay exams; close reading exercises using support/ evidence; writing exercises which include evaluation of various interpretations of a text and their relative validity. Both instructor and peer evaluation may be incorporated in the assessment process.

### **What our SACC is already doing to serve and enrich our program.**

Our SACC has made consistent, successful steps towards an internationalization of curriculum, through involvement in the Asian Studies Committee, implementation of literature courses such as the Asian Literature sequence, Latin American Literature, Literature of Genocide, Film Studies. Members of our SACC have also participated in the valuable seminars offered by the Council on International Educational Exchange.

The PCC Writing Centers are a vital component of campus life, a way for students to receive support and guidance with their writing across the disciplines, as well as with scholarship applications and job letters. The added value, usually one that is not requested or even expected by a visiting student, is study skills. Our tutors—whether faculty with their years of experience and insight or peer tutors who have excelled in their studies already—are able to model crucial habits which lead to student success across the curriculum. The Sylvania Writing Center, for example, served almost 600 students in 2009, for a total of nearly 1400 visits.

We have recently made efforts to adopt common writing handbooks, which will allow our many instructors to be quite literally on the same page. Students will also be spared the expense of buying a series of different, costly handbooks term by term. So far, Rock Creek has adopted one handbook and Sylvania instructors can choose from three recommended handbooks.

The Comp Wiki is a dynamic, free, easily accessible, comprehensive, and current online composition “handbook” using wiki software to help all PCC students with all aspects of essay writing—from invention to grammar to MLA documentation. The Wiki offers keyword-searchable explanations tailored to PCC’s CCOGs and the PCC Composition

program and individual faculty needs. Entries discuss expectations of instructors in WR 115, 121, 122 and provide information about student-instructor conferences, PCC tutoring centers, writing centers, libraries, and advising, all from a student writer's perspective. With faculty-written rhetorical sections as well as links to the Perdue University Online Writing Lab, students might potentially save thousands of dollars from not having to purchase generic and quickly outdated writing handbooks. While still in its first year of use, and, like all wikis, under construction, the Comp Wiki is in the early stages of generating collaboration among English faculty district-wide as they expand and develop the entries. The expectation is to arrive at an overall far more uniform approach to Composition district-wide, while at the same time letting students in on the diverse and sometimes contradictory set of approaches to composition and rhetoric among the faculty. With every faculty member able to add to and revise any wiki entry, the Comp Wiki demonstrates to students the give-and-take and synthesizing of ideas in intellectual life on the college level.

Instructors have been integrating service learning into their curriculum. Service-Learning is a teaching/learning method which is rapidly gaining popularity in schools and colleges across the country. When students enroll in a Service-Learning course at PCC, it means the professor has agreed to include a service option or requirement in the course. Instead of writing a research paper or taking an exam, students perform community service and then relate that service to the course material in a written report, presentation, or other method of reflection. Students learn about the subject through hands-on volunteerism (good for different learning styles, as well as addressing the college's core outcome of community involvement, and students reflect on that active learning, which addresses another core outcome. This practice brings together the classroom and the community, bridges these worlds and provides students with real world experience.

## 5) FACULTY

### A. Composition of faculty

#### *Rationale for size and distribution of faculty*

The rationale for the size of the faculty in our subject area is driven by community and student need--mitigated by economic possibility. Fortunately, the writing and literature programs are economically able to offer classes "on the margin"—and so can work beyond some aspects of economic restriction to serve our increasing numbers of students. Unfortunately, at this time we have waiting lists of students who would like to take our classes, but who cannot due to lack of classrooms. That is, we have the economic ability to hire and pay the needed instructors; we have the "job pool" of upwards of 300 well qualified applicants. We do not, however, have sufficient classroom space to serve all the students who would like to take our required composition classes.

Writing and literature faculty members live throughout the college's geographical boundaries and serve all PCC campuses, including the newest, Newberg. Distance

learning expands our faculty and student population well beyond PCC's traditional borders.

*i. Full-time faculty*

Each full-time writing and literature faculty member teaches courses at the ratio of 2/3 composition/writing to 1/3 literature. (In some cases the ratio is 3/4 to 1/4). With the exception of a few administrative appointments, each full-time faculty member is chosen from a pool of approximately 350 applicants. Each full-time faculty member has formal academic education; the minimum requirement being a Master's Degree in an appropriate field with substantive upper division and graduate literature coursework.

*ii. Part-time Faculty*

Generally, each part-time faculty teaches one or two writing classes. Contractually, given the "writing bonus" and our conversion from three- to four-credit classes, a part-time faculty may teach a maximum of two writing classes each term, with the addition of one literature class during one term of a four-term year. Part-time faculty members are drawn from a Human Resources "job pool" of upwards of 300 qualified applicants.

Full-time and part-time faculty members, alike, undergo an assessment process at least every three years. Faculty preparation at PCC certainly exceeds that of public and private colleges and universities that have graduate schools. Commonly, parallel undergraduate transfer classes at universities are taught by graduate teaching assistants or graduate students who teach first-year composition and/or literature classes as part of their graduate requirements. Here at PCC all faculty hold graduate degrees and have greater classroom experience.

*iii. Faculty turnover*

Anticipated faculty turnover and changes are dictated by funding. Currently, the economy does not seem to promise future increases in funding. However, the college has done well to support the stability of the faculty without economic layoffs.

*iv. Reliance on adjunct faculty*

Currently, the demand for our classes is rising and the funding for full-time faculty does not reflect the rising student demand. Hence, the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty is gradually diminishing—which is at odds with the goals of the college. Additional funding could allow the hiring of additional full-time faculty.

The part-time faculty (drawn from a nationally sought pool of over 300 applicants) is held to the same educational and experiential requirements as the full-time faculty. Given the increasing competition in the national job market, the qualifications of the part-time faculty are steadily rising above the minimum of a Master's Degree.

As of Fall 2009, full-time Comp/Lit faculty only taught 39% of sections of classes offered at PCC, nearly a 10% decrease from Fall 2007.

*v. Faculty composition as reflection of the diversity and cultural competency goals of the institution.*

Although PCC does create an atmosphere that welcomes ethnic diversity—via text selections, public readings, cultural events, etc.—the composition of our department faculty could better reflect the diversity of the population we serve.

Out of 36 full time faculty members, six identify as belonging to a protected minority group, which is roughly 17%. Out of 72 part-time faculty members, two identify as belonging to a protected minority group, and nine are listed as unknown. Assuming these nine are white, this means that roughly 7% of our faculty identifies as coming from an ethnic minority group.

The U.S. census reports the white population at 78.9%; in an America free of racism and educational disparities, one would expect that roughly 20% of our instructors would come from a minority group, and so we fall significantly short.

To work against this disparity, we do have some institutional measures in place. Human Resources screens our applicant pool to assure there is adequate minority representation. In addition, the hiring committee includes a person who represents diversity and helps form the interview question that specifically addresses diversity. It is, though, important to note that these measures have been in place for at least 20 years, and the disparity remains.

We cannot, for a variety of reasons, solve this problem directly by hiring instructors based primarily on their skin color. We can, however, continue to hack away at the roots of racism that have twisted down into our culture. In the classroom we can expose our students to diverse writers, thinkers, filmmakers, and artists whose distinct perspective pushes our minds out of cultural ruts. We can teach critical thinking skills to expose the subliminal forms of discrimination that have been glossed over by recent improvements in race relations. We can support students of color by helping them recognize and defy cultural expectations that they are unlikely to graduate. We can encourage the next generation of citizens to acknowledge the ways education has been and is affected by the legacy of racism. And we can better instill in them, and in ourselves, the value of reading and thinking and writing about fellow human beings whose backgrounds are different from our own, and the necessity of approaching these differences with understanding and compassion.

## B. Changes to instructor qualifications.

Instructor qualifications for Composition and Literature positions *have not changed since the last Program review in 2004*. The current list of qualifications can be found at the Comp/Lit SAC Website <http://spot.pcc.edu/academ/mlsyt1/eml/saccinstructorqual.html>. At present the Educational requirement for instructors is an “MFA, MA, or PhD in English, Rhetoric and Composition, or appropriate equivalent degree (e.g., Comparative Literature, American Studies, Humanities, Linguistics) with a minimum of 29 upper-division and graduate quarter hours in literature and/or rhetoric and composition, with a minimum of 9 graduate quarter hours in these areas. Degree must be from an accredited institution.”

Since March 2009, however, PCC’s Human Resources ([http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/standards-practices/documents/I301InstQual\\_Mar09.pdf](http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/standards-practices/documents/I301InstQual_Mar09.pdf)) requires that all applicants “hold a master's degree in the subject area (or hold a master's degree in a related area and have completed at least 30 quarter hours of graduate credit in the subject area)”

## C. Professional development

Much money for professional development has recently dried up, due to underfunding by the State of Oregon’s revised Community College budget. This has detrimentally affected Sabbaticals for eligible faculty; some members of the faculty were awarded sabbaticals only to have them subsequently rescinded. Despite this recent “economic downturn,” many members of the Comp/Lit faculty have been able to sustain their professional development.

### **Recommendations:**

#### *Reliance upon adjunct faculty*

Currently, the demand for our classes is rising and the funding for full-time faculty does not reflect the rising student demand. Hence, the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty is gradually diminishing—which is at odds with the goals of the college. Additional funding could allow the hiring of additional full-time faculty.

#### *Instructor qualifications*

Although yet to be approved by the Comp/Lit SAC, two potential revisions to the above have been discussed:

- Require all 30 credits of literature/rhetoric to be at the *graduate* level.
- Require that high school teachers teaching dual-credit courses meet the *same* standards as Comp/Lit faculty.

### *Professional development*

The Comp/Lit SAC believes that sabbaticals must be supported. In addition, the Comp/Lit SAC believes that Conference attendance for both PT and FT faculty must be encouraged and supported financially.

### *Class size*

The Comp/Lit SAC endorses the National Council of Teachers of English “Statement on Class Size and Teacher Workload: College” (reprinted below).

<<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/classsizecollege>>

“In an era of increasing public concern over the writing and reading ability of college students, it is especially important that the workload of English faculty members be reasonable enough to guarantee that every student receive the time and attention needed for genuine improvement. Faculty members must be given adequate time to fulfill their responsibility to their students, their departments, their institutions, their profession, the larger community, and to themselves. Without that time, they cannot teach effectively. Unless English teachers are given reasonable loads, students cannot make the progress the public demands.

Economic pressures and budgetary restrictions may tempt administrations to increase teaching loads. With this conflict in mind, the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English endorses the following standards:

1. English faculty members should never be assigned more than 12 hours a week of classroom teaching. In fact, the teaching load should be less, to provide adequate time for reading and responding to students' writing; for holding individual conferences; for preparing to teach classes; and for research and professional growth.
2. *No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class.* Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement.
3. Remedial or developmental sections should be limited to a maximum of 15 students. It is essential to provide these students extra teaching if they are to acquire the reading and writing skills they need in college.
4. *No English faculty member should teach more than 60 writing students a term:* if the students are developmental, the maximum should be 45.
5. *No more than 25 students should be permitted in discussion courses in literature or language.* Classes larger than 25 do not give students and teachers the opportunity to engage literary texts through questions, discussion, and writing. If lecture classes must be offered, teachers should be given adjusted time or assistance to hold conferences and respond to students' writing.
6. Any faculty members assigned to reading or writing laboratories or to skills centers should have that assignment counted as part of the teaching load.

Identifying and addressing the individual needs of students is a demanding form of teaching.

7. No full-time faculty member's load should be composed exclusively of sections of a single course. (An exception might occur when a specific teacher, for professional reasons such as research or intensive experimentation, specifically requests such an assignment.) Even in colleges where the English program consists mainly of composition, course assignments should be varied. Repeating identical material for the third or fourth time the same day or semester after semester is unlikely to be either creative or responsive.
8. No English faculty member should be required to prepare more than three different courses during a single term. Even if the faculty member has taught the same course in previous years, the material must be reexamined in the context of current scholarship and the presentation adapted to the needs of each class.
9. The time and responsibility required for administrative, professional, scholarly, and institutional activities should be considered in determining teaching loads and schedules for English faculty members. These responsibilities cover a broad range, such as directing independent study, theses, and dissertations; advising students on academic programs; supervising student publications; developing new courses and materials; serving on college or departmental committees; publishing scholarly and creative work; refereeing and editing professional manuscripts and journals; or holding office in professional organizations.”

*SAC Recommendations for absolute class size limits*

All Literature (ENG) classes	35	(DL= 25)
WR121-WR 227	27	(DL= 20)
WR 115	24	(DL= 20)

Given the new mandate for Comp/Lit to be responsible for PCC students’ “information literacy” (and additional obligations) there is strong concern about the potential efficiency of our program. The SAC would like some research into how these additional obligations affect our program’s effectiveness and, depending on the outcome of said research, to revisit/adjust the recommendations for class sizes.

## 6) College Core Outcomes

### College Core Outcomes

The courses in the Composition/Literature programs address the College Core Outcomes very directly. In fact, the Core Outcomes serve as an accurate description of the core content and outcomes of our discipline because the writing sequence is based on the concept of using writing for communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, and self-reflection. In addition, both our composition and our literature courses foster skills in and concern for cultural awareness and community and environmental responsibility

through assigned topics and readings. And all of us work toward helping students to increase their professional competence in the crucial skills of writing, speaking, reading, listening, and thinking carefully.

**Communication and Self-Reflection** – These outcomes define our profession: helping students in writing and literature classes learn to “communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits.” What they communicate, in part, is awareness of their own thought processes, biases, experiences, and place in the larger scheme of things – awareness developed through coaching in self-reflection.

**Cultural Awareness; Community and Environmental Responsibility** – These outcomes are actively fostered through text choice and community service projects. Instructors are free to select from a wide range of reading texts, including textbooks, on-line sources, recent periodicals, and e-books (electronic books). The readings included in these sources touch on current concerns, from social justice issues to sustainability.

In addition to the diverse topics raised in course reading assignments, cultural awareness is also promoted in our courses through discussion-based methodology. Full-group work, small-group work, and peer review of student writing all ensure a greater awareness of difference, while developing critical thinking and writing skills. Acknowledging and addressing the points of view of others and appropriately addressing specific audiences are central outcomes for our classes.

Community and environmental responsibility are fostered in our classes not only through the reading assignments and discussions, but also through the inclusion of service learning components in classes as individual faculty see fit. For example, several are currently working with the Environmental Center at Sylvania creating assignments in which students directly address and propose solutions to environmental concerns in the community. Another example, from Winter 2009, was the participation of students from Writing 115 and Writing 122 classes in a mini-grant project whereby composition students met once or twice a week to help tutor students in the first three levels of ESOL.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** – Critical thinking also defines our field and subject matter. We teach and require critical reading and analysis fostered by group discussion and reading journals that summarize central ideas, offer critical response to readings, and aid in the incorporation of sources or analyses into essays. These activities also occur during peer review. Analyzing any communication question (what does my audience need to know? in what order do they need to know it? how do I avoid logical fallacies?) involves critical thinking and problem-solving – as does constructing an argument and evaluating the logic of others. A common assignment in our composition classes involves problem analysis and development of potential solutions.

Another aspect of our writing sequence that is integral to the development of critical thinking is the ability to conduct research, from identifying and investigating problems through evaluating information sources and using appropriate methods of reasoning to

develop creative and practical solutions, resulting in a long – even a term-long – written project.

We have added the outcome of “Information Literacy” to all of our classes to delineate this component of our work. This term designates six specific proficiencies as recommended by Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC). In order to achieve “Information Literacy,” students must be able to identify gaps in their knowledge and recognize when they need information; find information efficiently and effectively, using appropriate research tools and search strategies; evaluate and select information using appropriate criteria; treat research as a multi-stage, recursive learning process; ethically and legally use information and information technologies; and create, produce, and communicate understanding of a subject through synthesis of relevant information. These proficiencies directly align with our course outcomes for WR 121 and WR 122 and echo indicators of outcome achievement from the Core Outcomes matrix. The SAC has found it useful to discuss how we incorporate information literacy into and assess it in our classes as we make an effort to replace our former capstone course, WR 123 (dropped so as to better align with transfer universities). There are myriad examples in our syllabi. Many instructors require students to access readings from on-line sources and e-books, thus pushing them to manipulate the necessary technology to accomplish their coursework. A number of instructors forego using print textbooks entirely, and others assign a combination of online sources and textbooks.

**Professional Competence** – Inherent in the goals of the Writing sequence is the development of the students’ skills as they progress through the courses from private to public writing, enhancing their ability to apply skills in a variety of academic and professional settings.

Some of the measures of student outcomes in communication-based technology have been addressed as more instructors are using MyPCC Course Tools and getting Blackboard training so as to use technology in the classroom and as an additional means of connecting with students outside the classroom.

Some measures of student success in communication might not necessarily be applied to a student going through the Writing sequence. Not every student in the Writing sequence would analyze or draw references from numerical models, depending on instructional topic choices. It would be hard for a student to avoid using statistical support appropriately for at least one project once the student had completed WR 122, WR 222, or WR 227, however, but it is possible. On the other hand, it is highly likely that every student having completed WR 122 would address the indicator for communication involving interpreting visual images and communicating visually because most instructors and most of the newer textbooks include advertisement, art, or film analysis in order to help students practice visual interpretation.

## **Strategies for determining how well students are meeting College Core Outcomes**

Because several of the PCC Core Outcomes are directly addressed in our CCOGs, and all of our course outcomes align with the College Cores, we are confident that in assessing at the course level, we are assessing for achievement of the Core Outcomes as well. Our CCOGs and syllabi indicate a range of assessment tools, the most prevalent of which are assigning students to write essays, to read and evaluate texts of both print and visual types, and to participate in discussion in both class and small-group situations.

### **Communication; Self-Reflection; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.**

As described above, essay writing requires communication, self-reflection, critical thinking. Our CCOGs for WR 121 describe tasks by which student reading and writing work will be assessed: “At least one essay with sustained development (1,000-1,500 words) which explores multiple facets of a controlling idea and reaches a significant conclusion. One paper must include outside research with properly documented and integrated sources.” Other assessment tasks may include: “presentations by individuals and groups, peer analysis, self-analysis...[and] evaluation of small- and full-group discussion.” Our CCOGs for WR 122, in addition to similar assessment tasks for more advanced assignments, includes study questions and reading journals as means to assess student reading comprehension and analytic skills.

### **Cultural Awareness; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.**

As described above, group discussion fosters cultural awareness and critical thinking, and our classes are structured around student participation rather than instructor lectures. We assess group participation both in face-to-face classes and in online classes, grading students on their participation and the quality of their discussions and presentations. For example, a typical syllabus states, “This is largely a discussion class, not a lecture class, and how much you enjoy and benefit from the class is directly proportionate to how well you’ve read and thought about the assigned readings before class and how much you speak up in class...Not having anything to say about the day’s readings says you’re not meeting the reading and discussion requirements.” Another syllabus requires students to “Participate actively, listen reflectively, confront challenging ideas through reading, writing and discussion.”

### **Community and Environmental Responsibility.**

Writing, reading, and discussion assignments, especially in WR 121 and WR 122, often require students to become actively engaged in the community through fieldwork as part of their research for a term paper. Fieldwork often includes interviewing people in the community, visiting sites such as CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), and investigating local social issues. The PCC library’s cooperation with the “Oregonian in Education” program allows instructors to use the daily Oregonian newspaper as a text in class, so that the topics for essays and research are focused on local issues.

## **Professional Competence.**

Many of the indicators of achievement of Professional Competence are present in the assignments we require of our students, including the use of technology and other available resources to find information (“Information literacy”) and ability to identify and communicate with different audiences, thereby transferring the skills they learn in our classes to new situations. The peer reviews we require in our composition classes and the collaboration necessary to accomplish group work in literature classes both involve the students in risk-taking as they expose their ideas to critical audiences. As one typical student put it, “[M]y writing as a whole has changed for the better. I am no longer afraid to write of topics that I feel uncomfortable about.”

Writing-across-the-curriculum assignments further develop students’ ability to transfer concepts to other fields creatively. For example, students in WR 121 and WR 122 are encouraged to do sustained research in other disciplines for their term projects. Many of us have students write letters to the editor which requires not only that the students participate in the community but also that they meet standards of journalistic professionalism.

## **Evidence that students are meeting Core Outcomes**

In considering the types of evidence available to us from our assessments of the Core Outcomes, we decided not to update the Institutional Research used in the Appendices of the 2003 Program Review (see statement below “About the 2003 Program Review Appendix 4, IR Success Study”), and instead to gather information from several sources: collected student essays and exams; syllabi and assignments; and a large survey of student perceptions about their experiences of the Core Outcomes in our classes. We also have testimony from other departments from collaborative work, such as when Comp/Lit and ESOL instructors worked together to set up composition students with ESOL students as conversation partners and informal tutors.

At the end of Fall 2002, the SAC conducted a survey of 158 WR 123 students. The results of this survey indicated that “In general, students found that the writing classes they have taken have benefited them in many ways, including strengthening their general writing skills, especially organization, grammar, punctuation, and format; improved their critical thinking abilities; and heightened their sense of confidence in writing (both for writing class and for other classes).” (from Appendix 13, Program Review 2003) This description touches on three of the six PCC Core Outcomes: Communication; Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving; and Professional Competence. The survey itself required students to practice a fourth core value: Self-Reflection.

For our new survey, we worked with Rob Vergun of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to create an instrument we sent via email to our current students in WR 122 (and above) and ENG 200-level courses. We crafted the survey questions so as to measure the students’ perception of the Core outcomes, with a focus on the one College

Core Outcome with which the Learning Assessment Council is most concerned for this academic year's investigations: development in Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving. The results of the survey, with 350 respondents, are attached.

Every Composition instructor in our program reads, discusses, responds to, and assesses between 1040 and 1620 pages of student writing every term. (27 students x 20 pages x 2 or 3 classes). Examples such as the following abound, but in the interests of space, we have provided some of the more cogent from some of the first representative batches of essays we had available. Thousands more can be made available upon request.

### **Communication and Self-Reflection**

An earnest attempt at communication is self-evident in nearly every piece of our students' writing, reading and listening work. Usually this communicative practice results in a certain amount of self-reflection as well. Here are a couple of examples from students' self-evaluations toward the ends of two courses – the first a creative writing class, the second from WR 122:

“Since the beginning of the term, I’ve become a much more literal reader. As a result my writing makes staggeringly more sense. I’m also actively writing in kinetics and attempting to run with extensive metaphor. I’m avoiding end-line rhyme, and I’m using stronger words. I’m also not as passive as I was at the beginning of the term. I’m doing much more ricocheting around rooms than I am around a page with incoherent imagery. I’m also endeavoring to be a better observer actively touching new textures, I’m making further reaching similes, and I’m having more fun with the whole process.”

“This paper left with me the ability to eat organic. It’s not as easy as you would think to eat locally grown or organic food, but [this project] has shown me that it’s only a click away. Whole Foods gets their organic produce from farms no more than 7 hours away from its locations.”

### **Cultural Awareness; Community and Environmental Responsibility**

The writing and research students share in our classes enhances the cultural awareness of the entire group, as is evident in this excerpt from a paper by a Native American student from the Umatilla tribe who discusses his realization of the need to return to a traditional diet, both for his own sake and for larger cultural reasons:

“The traditional Umatilla foods are taken care of or are prepared as soon as possible...elk and deer are taken in the fall and winter, while salmon and other fish are taken in the spring and summer, the roots harvested in the spring and berries in the fall. With the Western diet, the animals are corn-fed in filthy feed lots. Here they are pumped full of antibiotics and hormones to keep them healthy.

Herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers are used on huge fields where the fruits and vegetables are grown.”

Another student’s comment is typical of those beginning to understand their own roles in the community: “We are inundated by a constant onslaught of consumer appeals, flashy signs, and jingles that mesh into indecipherable white noise, and somewhere in the media blitz, we are entrusted with the well-being of the future inheritors of our culture.”

Another example reveals a student’s awareness of environmental responsibility: “The fact that Cargill is blatantly eroding the Amazon Rainforest to make room for soya farming is a serious matter.”

### **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

In a student’s conclusion about merit pay, she brings together information from several sources to suggest a solution to a problem she has identified in the body of the essay: “Merit pay can only exist with the cooperation of all involved. School districts, unions, and teachers alike must all be part of an intricate cooperative intent, with a passion for the education of the students as its only goal...As Deborah Meier, founder of the Central Park East schools in Harlem and senior scholar at New York University’s Steinhardt School of Education explains, ‘Every school must have the power and responsibility to select its own particulars.’ She argues that the three common features of exemplary schools are smallness, self-governing, and choice. These words ring true for me. As radical of a reform as the Chattanooga school district went through, it was successful nonetheless...Perhaps a radical reform of education on a national level is overdue.”

### **Professional Competence**

An important component of professional competence is a student’s ability to assess his or her own progress. This excerpt speaks to that ability as well as provides examples of the specific competencies this student has developed: “This class has helped progress my writing significantly. I look back at the poetry I wrote even weeks before class started and I am amazed at how much I’ve grown. My writing now includes more grounded images, plays with similes, references actual historical events, names and places, and avoids abstract ideas or words. Before, my writing was very mediocre and was obviously written by an amateur because thoughts were disorganized, there were no signs of pattern, rhyme, stanza use, or control in mostly all I wrote.”

Student essays are the best place to find evidence of their developing professional skills, including the awareness of audience, familiarity with academic style and tone, integration of sources, organization of points, and proper citation. Accordingly, we attach two sample essays which also address the outcome of students’ ability to interpret visual as well as textual information. Please see Appendices 1 (“Words, Images, and Reality”) and 2 (“Perception of Police: Through Images”).

## About the 2003 Program Review Appendix 4, IR Success Study

We have decided not to use one of the methods used in the 2003 Program Review for assessing student success in our composition sequence. We find that the analysis by Institutional Research (now the Office of Institutional Effectiveness) of grades of English Composition students in subsequent courses as a measure of the value of Writing 121, 122, and 123 to be based upon a misunderstanding of how students and faculty actually deal with problems in student writing. The IR analysis is misleading at best, and generally irrelevant to an understanding of the benefits of students taking Composition courses. The study purports to provide quantification of student success, but the numbers are meaningless.

The IR study looks at the grades in various courses for students who had taken and passed various combinations of English Composition classes and compares them to the grades in those courses for students who had not taken English Composition classes. Sometimes students who had English Composition did better in subsequent courses; sometimes they didn't. Overall, for each combination of courses, students who had taken English Composition had slightly higher grades than students who hadn't had English Composition.

But no valid conclusion can be drawn from the comparison, whether the conclusion is positive (English Composition leads to higher grades) or negative (English Composition's effect is minimal). And the reason is that at Portland Community College, all faculty meet students where their abilities happen to be, as in most open-door colleges. Students who haven't had English Composition tend to read less effectively, have a more difficult time identifying main ideas in a reading, encounter more difficulties in organizing ideas logically, and produce papers that ramble and fail to make clear points and misuse language more than the papers of those who have completed English Composition.

The faculty in all areas of the school are committed to student success, however. What that means is that the students who are having difficulty are having to be helped by the non-Composition faculty teaching them. That may mean more elaborate explanations of the text readings during class time; it may mean more elaborate explanations of how to do the written assignments; it may mean a general lowering of expectations for the entire class, when half the class can't clearly express their ideas or find ideas in text readings; it may mean meeting individual students outside of class-time to explain. The students who haven't had English Composition are thus brought up to the level of the other students, blurring any grade differences, at the instructor's expense of extra effort, extra class time, and the other students' loss of class time moving forward on additional course topics.

The result? The common "I'm grading on ideas, rather than writing"—Instructors in other disciplines end up trying to find the ideas in the middle of paragraphs, struggling to credit a student for accomplishing something, whereas if more of the students had had Composition, the instructor's task would be easier—the ideas would be where they're

expected to be in an essay, in a clear thesis in the opening and in topic sentences. The difficulties of dealing with the morass of writing turned in by many students who haven't had Composition leads many, many instructors to use Scantrons and other grading methods that avoid student writing. Grades resulting from such assessments tell little about the effect of having had a Composition course, and the quality of the education students receive at PCC is lessened, because students haven't been challenged to formulate their own ideas in the subject matter as writing would have required.

The benefits of having taken Writing 121, 122, and 123 are hidden to the uninformed outsider because the additional efforts of all faculty college-wide to ensure student success mitigate the disadvantages of not having had these Composition courses. The final grades don't tell the story of the extra work on the part of students and faculty that wouldn't have been necessary if more students had taken and passed Composition courses.

### **Changes made towards improving attainment of the Core outcomes**

Historically, the Comp/Lit SAC has played an unusually active role in the design of the College Core outcomes, as well as in describing what attainment of Core outcomes might look like. The College Core Outcomes and accompanying indications ("indicators") of what might demonstrate student accomplishment of outcomes were drafted by a Comp/Lit faculty member and administrator with input from a cross-disciplinary review committee chaired by the faculty member (and ultimately with input from other college-wide academic committees). These indicators are located on the PCC website under Academic Resources and Core Outcomes Mapping – now referred to as "the matrix."

In addition, the College Core Outcomes drafting process was concurrent with the Comp/Lit SAC revision of their course outcome guides, and discussed in the SAC as the draft unfolded. The drafters drew much material within the College Core outcomes document from philosophical and pedagogical discussion of Comp/Lit course outcomes, and the CCOGs drew from early drafts of measures of student outcomes.

The process of drafting, offering feedback, and supporting the College Core Outcomes was valuable to the SAC, and as new faculty come into the group, it becomes necessary to maintain and improve awareness of the College Core Outcomes among our members. Thus, the SAC is committed to having representation on the Learning Assessment Council, a committee charged with designing ways to get the PCC Core Outcomes assessed at the college level. Currently three members of the Comp/Lit faculty are on this Council and keep the SAC apprised of discussions, projects, and learning opportunities the Council provides. As of this writing, we are participating in the LAC's effort for 2009/2010 to get all SACs to report on their involvement with and assessment of the Core Outcome of critical thinking and problem solving (**see survey description above**).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Before converting our courses from 3 to 4 credits, we did not require “Information Literacy” at the WR 115 level except in the broadest sense of the term (**see above**). We have succeeded in incorporating specific new components of Information literacy into WR 115, as well as enhancing this instruction at the higher levels, in an effort to make sure the students still experience the materials formerly contained in our capstone WR 123 now that that course is no longer taught. However, we do want to know if our students are doing as well at the end of the program as they did when we still taught WR 123. Currently, our goal is to set aside time to talk about Information Literacy at the WR 121 and WR 122 levels, to see how effective these changes have been from the instructors’ vantage points. We are not convinced that there is enough time in the shorter sequence to cover all the topics we used to be able to cover.

We are recommending revisions to the Comp/Lit instructor evaluation forms that students fill out at the end of the term. In these forms, we want to highlight the College Core Outcomes, so we can gather evidence of student achievement and instruction.

We would like to improve our survey information by asking IE to contact students who have graduated from PCC and who may be able to tell us how well our classes prepared them for the circumstances in which they find themselves needing to use their communication and analytic skills.

We are recommending that the Comp/Lit SAC compile a digital archive of sample student essays such as those attached below. We would use this archive of representative work to show new instructors and instructors in the dual-credit high school programs, to communicate our expectations of what our students are asked to produce. We would also be able to use the archive during our inservices when we do “group reads” of assignments so as to norm our grading process. Perhaps the current wiki-space provided by the college to the SAC would be an appropriate place for this digital archive.

An issue we are watching at the moment is the effect of our SAC having waived the Math 20 competency prerequisite for our classes. This decision may be making it more difficult for students to achieve the outcome of numerical analysis when they work with research materials in our upper-level writing classes.

We will revisit the Core Outcomes Mapping Matrix and update it after we finish the current process of revising the composition CCOGs. We recommend that our SAC discuss the inclusion of specific language from the College Core Outcomes in our new CCOGs, based on our reflection regarding Core outcomes with specific attention to community and environmental responsibility.

Appendix 1: Sample student essay: **Words, Images, and Reality**

Appendix 2: Sample student essay: **Perception of Police: Through Images**

Appendix 3: Results of WR 122 + 200-level literature survey, March 2010.

## 7): Distance Learning (DL) Program

### **REPORT**

#### **A. Advising**

According to Susan Wilson, Coordinator of Academic Advising Services, the only students required to see an advisor prior to registration are those who place into the DE levels of reading and writing, and the two lowest levels of math. Those who place into WR/RD 115 (or higher) and MTH 65 (or higher) are not required to get advising. Thus, most DL students likely receive little or no advising before they embark on these classes.

Currently, we do not have a way to screen DL students before they register. The assumption is that, if students meet the prerequisites for a particular course, they can handle the online learning piece. Once registered, new students must then complete the DL on-line orientation, which walks them through the process of logging in and accessing their class site.

Wilson believes that, from an advising standpoint, most students who struggle with DL classes do so because of poor computer skills—they are not savvy in terms of uploading or downloading documents, etc.—and lack of self-discipline. If the student happens to talk to an advisor before signing up, the advisor can clarify to the student what to expect. Unfortunately, the large majority of DL students never speak with advisors up front.

Despite there being no formal system for advising our DL student population, meaning no dedicated advisor assigned to this group, for many years now PCC has offered an email address where students can send their advising questions. The bulk of those are handled by Kathleen Bradach, a full-time advisor at Sylvania. She will often forward the ones that are specific to a particular campus. Susan Wilson receives the ones that address Paralegal, Medical Assistant, and other programs exclusive to Cascade.

PCC also handles prerequisite overrides via email, fax, and phone. Again, this is available to all students, but is especially helpful for students who live at a distance and are unable to come to campus.

When students want to know how credits from other schools will be applied at PCC, they now have the ability to request a formal transfer credit evaluation through Student Records. The process takes about 8 weeks and all credits accepted from the other school(s) are posted to the PCC transcript.

That leaves the degree audit. Let's say a DL student has attended for one year and wants to know what they still need for a particular degree. They could call or email one of the full-time advisors and request a transcript evaluation. PCC can accommodate this type of

request easily during Weeks 2-6 of any term, but once registration starts, these requests go on the back burner. Once DegreeWorks is in place, students will be able to do their own audit via MyPCC. This will be a tremendous improvement for the CTE programs particularly. For transfer programs, however, there will always need to be a certain degree of human interaction, because there is a huge gap between the minimal requirements for one of our transfer degrees and the requirements for a particular major at a specific university. That piece will not likely be automated anytime in the near future.

## **B. Delivery Methods**

PCC currently offers Comp/Lit courses in two formats: WEB and CLWEB. During the past five academic years (2005-2009), PCC has offered no Comp/Lit DL courses in the TV, ITV, TVWEB, or IVWEB formats. That being said, the number of WEB and CLWEB offerings of Comp/Lit courses at PCC has steadily increased over the past five years (see Enrollments).

WEB courses are delivered fully online. Students enrolled in these courses must meet basic technical and proficiency requirements, including:

- A. Reliable access to a computer with an Internet connection
- B. Basic computer literacy, which includes the ability to send and receive emails with attachments, follow and save hyperlinks on a web page, and create and save documents in a word processor
- C. Web Browsers: Internet Explorer 7 or later; Safari 3.x or later; Firefox 2.5 or later
- D. Browser plugins: Flash, Acrobat Reader, and Java
- E. Anti-Virus and Firewall software
- F. Word Processor/Office suite

CLWEB, or Classroom Web courses, as the name suggests, have the above-mentioned prerequisites while also requiring that students can attend on-site classes during scheduled class times.

Instructors tend to distribute course materials, including syllabi, assignment sheets, and handouts, through one or a combination of the following online course facilitation programs: MyPCC, Blackboard, and personal web pages (often hosted by PCC). The most commonly used program is Blackboard, which includes the following features:

- A. Email
- B. Chat
- C. Discussion boards
- D. The ability to post and download image, sound, and video files
- E. The ability to post password-protected progress reports/grades
- F. Course calendars
- G. Learning modules

To improve the program's effectiveness for instructors and students, the college has established a dedicated phone line and email address, known as the PCC Blackboard

Help Desk. These programs appear to pose no major technical problems for students. A Winter 2009 survey of all DL students at PCC, conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, revealed that 36.8% of students reported “no technical problems” using the Blackboard program. Of those that did experience problems, 22.8 percent, they reported that the PCC Blackboard Help Desk successfully resolved their issues. Among those who used the Blackboard Helpdesk, over three-quarters of DL students were either “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied.” Of greatest concern to DL students—more than using course tools such as Blackboard—is registration, with 39.8% listing it as their top priority; only 2.6% listed “technical support” as a concern. These findings suggest a fair degree of student satisfaction with DL delivery methods and bode well for the future of DL instruction at PCC.

### **C. Enrollments**

DL serves about 20,000 students per year, which is one-fifth of the total enrollment at PCC. In the context of the Composition and Literature subject area, DL courses serve on average several hundred students per term (see detailed breakdown below).

A review of Fall term enrollment data on Comp/Lit DL courses—WEB and CLWEB for-credit courses—over the past five years reveals that, with the exception of the Fall 2005 data, enrollments have steadily increased:

- A. Fall 2005: 32 sections / 653 students (no CLWEB courses offered)
- B. Fall 2006: 26 sections / 582 students
- C. Fall 2007: 34 sections / 699 students
- D. Fall 2009: 41 sections / 880 students
- E. Fall 2009: 56 sections / 1233 students

When viewed in the context of total enrollments for Comp/Lit courses, DL students increasingly account for a larger percentage of students served. Of the 6593 students enrolled in Comp/Lit courses in Fall 2009, for instance, a full 18.7 percent (1233 students) were DL students. Compare this percentage to just a year before, Fall 2008: of 5627 total students, 880 were DL enrollments, or 15.6% of the total population. These figures show a full 3% increase in DL students in a single year.

As the above data makes clear, DL Comp/Literature courses are on the rise at PCC; at this rate of growth, PCC should expect to see close to 70 DL sections in Fall 2010, with enrollments near or above the 1400-student mark.

### **D. Class Size**

As stated in the Faculty subsection of the Program Review (above), the Comp/Lit SAC endorses the National Council of Teachers of English “Statement on Class Size and

Teacher Workload: College.” This endorsement applies to DL courses, specifically the following subsection of the NCTE statement:

*No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement.*

The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) and Arizona State University’s Project 85 study explicitly support the NCTE findings. In a 2007 article by Alice Horning, the CWPA reiterated the benefits of limiting composition classrooms to 20 students. Horning frames the article by noting that these benefits are threefold: “Smaller class size in writing courses improves student success, so it is good for students. In addition, research shows that smaller writing class size improves teaching effectiveness, so it is good for faculty. Finally, the evidence indicates that smaller writing class size is cost effective, so it is good for institutions” (11).

(Project 85 is available as a Powerpoint text. Please contact Scott Dionne at [sdionne@pcc.edu](mailto:sdionne@pcc.edu) for a copy.)

The ASU Project 85 study, conducted over the 2004-2005 academic year, found that a reduction in class size to 20 students brought with it marked improvements in a) student pass rates, b) drop rates, c) failure rates, and d) instructor evaluations (see Appendix to view the detailed findings).

## **E. Resources**

An important concern in the delivery of Writing courses on line is whether dl students may be missing out on the “total college experience.” One way to address that concern is to look into whether online students are making use of college resources. Three important aspects of the college experience are use of the library, involvement in student activities, and use of tutoring services.

### **Library Services**

Two questions seem central to the issue of library services: what library services are available on line and what is the rate of utilization by DL students? A review of library services available on line shows that, in the main, library resources available on line are mostly equivalent to those available for on-site students. No statistics are available to answer the question as to the utilization of library resources across the board by on-site and on-line students. However, as far as the critical component of information literacy is concerned, it is the judgment of the Rock Creek reference librarians that both on-site and on-line students avail themselves of information literacy resources and training at the same rate. What makes the biggest difference in utilization, whether online or on site, is the encouragement of the instructor and the integration of an information literacy component in the course itself.

### Student Resources

The second question relates to online access to student resources. There are no statistics available to compare utilization of student resources by online and onsite students. Online students who are unable to come to campus will be limited in their access to student resources, but PCC is making good progress in raising the awareness of online students regarding the large number of services that are available on line.

### Tutoring services

PCC has initiated online tutoring services. Response to the new online tutoring service is very positive. Usage of tutoring services winter quarter, 2010 is doubling fall 2009 usage. Student feedback is very positive.

## **F. Quality Assessments**

### Office of Institutional Effectiveness

A 2009 study conducted by Rob Vergun focused on how students who had taken WR 115 as a DL course went on to perform in General Education courses where WR 121 readiness is particularly important. The study found no difference between grades earned by distance learning WR 115 students versus non-distance learning WR 115 students.

### Distance Learning Department

According to John Sneed, Director of Distance Learning at PCC, every newly developed distance learning course and course revision goes through the quality matters peer review process, which is a formative process designed to give instructors feedback and assistance around a set of standards and best practices. Annually the Office of Institutional Effectiveness works with the Distance Education Department to develop and administer a student satisfaction survey, tracking student attitudes and behaviors in online classes. These data are compiled into an annual satisfaction report shared with the college community. Additionally, the department offers an online student survey to instructors who wish to survey students for specific classes. The Distance Education Department does not receive these results, but makes them available to the instructor or departments requesting them. Currently there is no discipline specific survey for online English courses, but Sneed said DL would be happy to work with the SAC to develop one.

### Division Deans

Division deans review and approve newly designed online courses and assess existing online courses for full-time instructors as part of the three year assessment cycle. The deans report that online course observations actually give them more insight into what is happening in a class than an observation in a face-to-face class because they are able to look at every aspect of the course and its development over time as opposed to only viewing a snapshot of the larger class experience.

### Department Chairs

The department chairs at Cascade, Rock Creek, and SE Center oversee the assessment of DL courses offered by part-time faculty. Being relatively new to offering DL courses, the Sylvania chairs have not yet begun to assess part-time faculty teaching DL courses, but expressed plans to do so.

### DL Mentors

The Distance Learning Department's Online Lead Faculty Mentor, Samm Erickson, works one-on-one with instructors throughout the district who are developing online courses. In addition, Samm provides ongoing review and feedback during the first quarter to the instructor and department chair, as appropriate.

### DL Instructors

DL Instructors use a variety of tools including anonymous discussion board postings, formal course evaluations, informal talks with students, and observed progress in student work to gauge the effectiveness of their courses.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Advising**

Any method of improving student-advisor interaction throughout the Distance Learning experience, but especially at the onset of the experience, would significantly benefit our students. While Distance Learning is still in its developmental stages, many schools are implementing on-line or face-to-face advising for on-line students. Some use software that evaluates a student's entry scores, computer knowledge, and even typing speed to assess whether that student can comfortably meet the requirements of an online class, while others insist that students contact advisors by phone to plan their schedules. Certainly, at this time, online advising is minimal at most schools.

Recommendation 1: Before registration, optional face-to-face orientations at a variety of locations are one way to help students determine if they are ready for the challenges of Distance Learning.

Recommendation 2: A web page of student cautionary comments may help students understand what to expect. Having experienced online students answering the question, "What do you wish you had known before you began taking distance learning classes?" can provide a variety of insights that may alert new students to the nature of the Distance Learning experience. Especially with humanities classes, students express surprise at the amount of time and the level of interaction required.

Recommendation 3: Distance Learning students should be encouraged to contact advisors by telephone or through Eluminate, especially prior to registering for the first online class but also throughout the student's online experience to determine whether that is the appropriate modality for that individual and to facilitate instructor-student communication or make suggestions to enhance the experience.

## **B. Delivery Methods**

Recommendation 1: IE might conduct a study of Comp/Lit DL students and instructors to address any curriculum-specific strengths and weaknesses.

## **C. Enrollments**

The disparity in withdraw rates between DL and on-campus classes is great in all classes except WR 121. This may call into question the accuracy of overall success rates shown in these classes. If students who feel they are not passing a class drop that class, then the statistics following those who do stay in the class are not representative. In other words, in looking at the success only of those who complete the class, PCC only looks at those who have already succeeded. However, the causality here is underdetermined, and the statistics are from a single term.

Recommendation 1: Gain more information on attrition rates in all writing classes to get a better sense of why and when students are dropping. Start with the withdraw rates from the past several years.

Recommendation 2: Find out why WR 121 alone does not have these results, as this could help PCC to make changes to the other DL classes to improve these rates.

Recommendation 3: Find out how many of those who dropped a writing class went on to try again and what modality they eventually succeeded in (for those who did end up completing the class).

## **D. Class Size**

Recommendation 1: In accordance with the NCTE, CWPA, and ASU findings and statements on class size, the Comp./Lit. SAC recommends that enrollments for DL composition courses be limited to 20 students.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that discussions begin now on how best to implement these changes so that they can take effect in the near future in a manner that is beneficial to students, faculty, and staff while also being cost effective.

## **E. Resources**

Online faculty should be encouraged to facilitate information literacy competencies of their students by taking advantage of reference librarian resources in developing the course structure and course activities. Three opportunities should be highlighted:

Recommendation 1: Development of research guides for a department, course, or assignment.

Recommendation 2: Weekly RSS feed messages with text, links, and/or tutorials delivered to the course page.

Recommendation 3: Online tutorials. A personal email should be sent by the campus reference librarians to the online instructors from that campus before the start of classes in order to promote available services for the instructors. Mailing lists should be supplied by the department heads.

## **F. Quality Assessments**

Recommendation 1: The SAC should work with the DL Department to develop student satisfaction surveys specific to literature and composition courses.

Recommendation 2: The SAC should look at how departmental involvement in DL course assessment varies by campus and make recommendations for improvements.

## **8) Facilities & Support**

### **A. Space, Classrooms, and Technology Accommodations.**

Due to increased enrollments, the English Departments on all campuses need more computerized classrooms for writing classes, more private office space to conduct student conferences, and more office space for part-time faculty. In order to encourage group discussion, classrooms need to be designed to accommodate circular table set ups arrangements rather than long rectangular rows.

Faculty on the Cascade campus specifically identified the need for wheelchair accessible podiums for physically challenged instructors and high chairs for instructors who are unable to stand for long periods of time. All campuses could potentially benefit from designing a few classrooms to include these special accommodations.

Sylvania is the only campus with a computerized classroom specifically for WR.115 classes, but needs at least three more classrooms for other writing classes.

Sylvania needs another instructional computer lab to accommodate the increase demands of faculty teaching foreign language and writing courses. The Sylvania campus also lacks enough classrooms with computer podiums, which is increasingly

important since so many of our new textbooks are web based and faculty use the internet during class lectures and discussions.

Cascade needs an instructional computer lab. Rock Creek has one instructional computer lab, but needs one more podium classroom. Faculty on both the Rock Creek and Sylvania campuses need private offices.

The South East Center needs more office space and classrooms. Presently, South East has no computerized classrooms and only one general use computer lab.

## **B. Library Support**

According to the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, the library staff received the second highest student satisfaction rating (5.50/7.0). From Fall 2007 to 2008, the library provided services to 3,770 students in 214 classes district- wide:

*Cascade*- In 2008-2009, 1,251 students in 49 classes received library research instruction. In the Fall of 2009 alone, 362 students in 16 classes received instruction.  
*Sylvania*- In Fall 2007-2008, 1297 students in 84 writing classes received instruction.

*Rock Creek*- In Fall 2008-2009 1545 students in 80 classes received instruction. In the of Fall of 2008, over 700 students in 28 classes were served.

*Southeast* - In Fall 2007-2008, 102 students in 5 classes received instruction.

**1. Student Library Research** -The library supports faculty by helping students with topic development, identifying information needs, providing a variety of document sources, explaining search strategies and helping students cite sources. The staff seeks the advice and input of faculty for library collections and services. Before each library class tour they request a list of student research topics or the class assignment, to tailor their presentations specifically around the needs of the students. The service “Ask a Librarian” service, allows students to E-mail their research questions to a librarian and receive an answer sometimes the same day.

**2. Instructional Computing Services for Faculty**- The librarians help keep faculty abreast of the new databases, software and new services offered by the campus staff and outside services.

**Library Prize Competition**- The Library Prize Competition is sponsored by the Friends of the Library and is awarded to PCC students whose work illustrates exemplary levels of research, writing ability and the best use of library resources. Each student receives a \$300.00 award at the annual recognition ceremony. Since its inception in 2005, ten of the winning papers have been written by students in our writing courses.

**C. Clerical and Administrative Support**

1. **Cascade-** Cascade’s English Department is supported by the Liberal Arts and Mathematics Department and facilitated by an English Composition/Literature Chairperson. The department has three Instructional Administrative support positions.
2. **Rock Creek-** Rock Creek has a Business and Humanities Division Dean, an English Department Chair and three Administrative Assistants.
3. **Sylvania-** Sylvania has a Division Dean of English and World Languages, a Chairperson of Writing, a Chairperson of Literature, A Departmental Administrative Assistant, an Assistant Administrative Assistant, and a part-time clerical assistant. The Instructional Computer Lab is run by two part-time computer lab assistants. An additional full-time clerical position is needed in the English department and an additional part-time computer lab assistant is essential to deal with increased student enrollment and facilitate more productive use of the one instructional computer lab.

**D. Campus Student Support Services Used by Faculty to Help Our Students**

1. **Faculty Teaching Learning Center** - The Teaching Learning Centers on Sylvania, Rock Creek and Cascade promote excellence in teaching, professional growth, and student services. Many English SAC faculty have served as center coordinators and are regular presenters in the centers. Seventeen English faculty attended 15 TLC sessions in 2008-2009 at Rock Creek and four of them were awarded \$200 conference funding. At Sylvania, English faculty participated in thirty four sessions and ESOL faculty attended thirty nine sessions. On the Cascade campus, English and ESOL faculty attended a total of thirty eight sessions. The South East campus does not have a TLC.

**2. Number of Students Serviced in ESOL and Writing/Tutor Labs  
2008-2009**

	<b>Sylvania</b>	<b>Rock Creek</b>	<b>Cascade</b>	<b>South East</b>
<b>ESOL</b>	958	*	522	No ESOL Lab
<b>Writing/ Tutor Lab</b>	577	950	1,563	1,472
<b>Total</b>	1,535	950	2,085	1,472

\*= not available

**Cascade-** Several part-time faculty provide tutoring services and mentor student peer tutors though the newly funded ASPCC and TLC program, The “Peer-to-Peer Tutoring Program.”

**Number of Tutoring Sessions in Rock Creek Writing Center  
2006-2009**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
WR.115	144	244	248
WR.121	297	341	492
WR. 122	89	225	200
WR.123	7	-	-
WR.227	17	4	4
WR.242	1	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>950</b>

The Rock Creek campus is an excellent example of the additional strain increased enrollments have placed on our labs and classrooms. Enrollments in the Writing/ Tutor alone increased from 555 in 2007 to 815 in 2008 and finally to 950 by 2009. The Rock Creek facility not only needs permanent funding, but more space and tutors to accommodate increased enrollments.

**3. College Placement Testing**

The College Testing office provides a central service for faculty. PCC uses the COMPASS Placement Tests to gauge a student’s academic strengths to insure appropriate course placement. Distance learning students who are unable to come to PCC to take a test can submit test scores from other institutions. PCC accepts COMPASS, ASSET, or Accuplacer test scores.

In the summer of 2008, 1,907 students on the Sylvania Campus took the CPT,ESOL and ASSET tests compared to 2,957 students in the summer of 2009, due to increased enrollments. If the past year is any indication of future trends, the English departments on every campus will be significantly impacted and will require more resources.

**Sylvania Testing Services 2008-2009**

CPT                      ESOL                      ASSET  
 # of Students      # of Students      # of Students

<b>Summer 2008</b>	1,567	320	20	1907
<b>Fall 2008</b>	781	211	10	1,002
<b>Winter 2008</b>	1,638	257	10	1,905
<b>Spring 2008</b>	1,442	190	50	1,682
<b>Summer 2009</b>	2,616	296	45	2,957
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,093</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>9,453</b>

#### 4) Service Learning

##### Participation of English Faculty in Service-Learning Program by Campus 2008-2009

<b>Sylvania</b>	<b>Rock Creek</b>	<b>Cascade</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>

To date more than 100 PCC faculty have connected with the Service Learning Program and thirty four (34) of our faculty have participated. Since the inception of the Service Learning Program students in the following courses have been provided the opportunity to learned about social issues and make a difference in their communities: WR.80, WR.115, WR.121, WR.122, WR.123, WR.222, WR.227, WR.246, Eng.105, Eng.213 and Eng.215

##### 2. Sylvania ESOL Lab Activity 2008-2009

	<b># of Students</b>	<b># of Hours</b>
<b>Fall 2008</b>	282	1,454
<b>Winter 2009</b>	280	1,284
<b>Spring 2009</b>	262	1,587
<b>Summer 2009</b>	134	736

The ESOL Lab has nine tutors, who the tutors have Masters Degrees in TESOL or English and have many years of teaching experience in the U.S and abroad. The ESOL classes feed directly into our WR.115, WR.121, and literature classes and are one of our pivotal supportive services.

##### 6. PCC Theatre and Music Departments

The plays and performances of the PCC Theatre and Music Departments have benefited faculty, who teach Drama/ Eng.105. Students who are not able to afford expensive plays off campus are able to view live drama and musical performances on campus each term. These experiences help to further the goal of increased cultural appreciation for the arts, which is a central learning outcome, particularly for our literature courses.

## **7. Cascade Festival of African Films and Art Beat**

The annual Cascade Festival of African Films honors Black History Month and the art and craft of filmmaking from Africa. Since its inception twenty years ago, it has been offered free to our students and the public. In 2009, over 5,000 people attended, exposing the community to the largest collection of African films in the Northwest. The Film Festival is a valuable resource for all faculty, but particularly to those who teach Film Studies (Eng. 196).

Art beat is a yearly spring celebration of art, dance, music, theater and literature. Students are exposed to a number of poets and writers on all three campuses and the South East Center. This cultural exposure provides students with a greater appreciation for their literature and writing classes, while supporting the goals in several of our course content guidelines.

## **E. Scheduling Arrangements Which Help Us Teach More Effectively**

**1. *The Two Day/ 4 Credit Schedule-*** The four – credit conversion has made the workloads of faculty more manageable. The conversion has benefited students academically and there has been a significant reduction in student absenteeism. Most faculty believe that the two day a week schedule is better for instruction, lecture delivery, class activities and group discussion.

**2. *Class Times-***According to The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, student dissatisfaction with class scheduling ( 4.92/7.0) ranked second in the highest three areas of dissatisfaction with their college experiences, only surpassed by their dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of financial aid ( 4.61/7.0). Recognizing this student scheduling concern, the English SAC recently developed a policy to coordinate our class schedules to insure that the same courses are not offered on the same days at both campuses. The overlapping of courses days was of particular concern for the Sylvania and Cascade campuses. In the future, the Rock Creek and Southeast campuses will be offering more evening classes, while Sylvania will offer more early morning classes to meet the needs of our students.

**3. *Class size limits-*** To insure the quality of instruction, the desired class size limits are: Thirty five (35) for Literature courses; Twenty seven (27) for writing courses other than WR 115; twenty (20) for all distance learning writing courses; and twenty-four (24) for WR.115

**4. *Wait Lists-*** Wait lists serve as an important administrative enrollment tool and provide a more standardized system for students to add courses, but these lists put more pressure on instructors to over-enroll. Wait lists are not actually reflective of the real number of students waiting for the class, because students sign up for multiple courses in hopes of being accepted into just one or two courses. In spite of this new tool, most campuses have still opened two to five additional sections a term for WR.115 and WR.121 courses, due to increased enrollments.

## Facilities and Support Recommendations

1. **To increase instructional effectiveness, all classrooms should be equipped with computer podiums.** Most of our textbooks are web based and require constant access to the internet during class. Internet reference and research sources are also used to support faculty lectures and class discussions. Additionally, wheelchair accessible podiums should be made available to physically challenged faculty.
  
2. **Increased office space, classrooms, more offices for part-time faculty, and more faculty conference areas should be provided.** At present, there are not enough computerized classrooms, offices for part-time faculty and private areas for faculty- student conferencing, to accommodate our present and future enrollments.

# Appendices

## 3) Needs of Students

### Appendix A

13-Nov-2009 12:16 PM  
SWEDEPF

Portland Community College  
Course Demographic Data by Pass/NoPass  
2008-09

Course: WR 115

	Sylvania				College-wide			
	PASS		NO PASS		PASS		NO PASS	
Headcount:	619	77%	181	23%	2112	78%	589	22%
Female:	324	81%	76	19%	1149	81%	263	19%
Male:	290	74%	100	26%	939	75%	312	25%
White:	331	78%	96	22%	1041	79%	280	21%
Asian:	71	78%	20	22%	253	83%	53	17%
Hispanic:	50	69%	22	31%	231	78%	65	22%
Black:	13	72%	5	28%	149	67%	73	33%
Native Am:	7	78%	2	22%	32	67%	16	33%
Pacific Is:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Multiracial:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Foreign:	61	86%	10	14%	137	88%	19	12%
Age, to 19:	285	75%	97	25%	897	76%	290	24%
20-24:	154	76%	49	24%	501	77%	147	23%
25-29:	84	87%	13	13%	296	82%	65	18%
30-39:	57	78%	16	22%	256	83%	54	17%
40-49:	24	80%	6	20%	115	84%	22	16%
50+:	15	100%	0	0%	46	81%	11	19%

Notes:

Caution: Percentages may be misleading if counts are low.  
Due to unreported data, category sums may not equal headcounts.  
Headcounts represent unduplicated students.  
PASS = A, B, C, or D; all other grades are NO PASS.  
College-wide includes class/budget campuses 1-4.

## Appendix B

13-Nov-2009 12:12 PM  
SWRDEPF

Portland Community College  
Course Demographic Data by Pass/NoPass  
2008-09

Course: WR 122

	Sylvania				College-wide			
	PASS		NO PASS		PASS		NO PASS	
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Headcount:	898	79%	244	21%	2885	80%	704	20%
Female:	476	84%	90	16%	1695	82%	360	18%
Male:	415	73%	151	27%	1151	77%	336	23%
White:	581	80%	142	20%	1824	82%	413	18%
Asian:	69	77%	21	23%	202	77%	61	23%
Hispanic:	49	73%	18	27%	192	81%	45	19%
Black:	25	81%	6	19%	118	77%	35	23%
Native Am:	10	67%	5	33%	45	71%	18	29%
Pacific Is:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Multiracial:	2	67%	1	33%	4	80%	1	20%
Foreign:	27	90%	3	10%	66	87%	10	13%
Age, to 19:	341	77%	100	23%	950	78%	264	22%
20-24:	303	76%	96	24%	876	79%	232	21%
25-29:	121	80%	31	20%	472	81%	108	19%
30-39:	92	88%	13	12%	421	85%	75	15%
40-49:	30	91%	3	9%	126	88%	18	13%
50+:	11	92%	1	8%	40	85%	7	15%

Notes:

Caution: Percentages may be misleading if counts are low.  
Due to unreported data, category sums may not equal headcounts.  
Headcounts represent unduplicated students.  
PASS = A, B, C, or D; all other grades are NO PASS.  
College-wide includes class/budget campuses 1-4.

13-Nov-2009 12:12 PM  
SWRDEPF

Portland Community College  
Course Demographic Data by Pass/NoPass  
2008-09

Course: WR 122

	Sylvania				College-wide			
	PASS		NO PASS		PASS		NO PASS	
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Headcount:	898	79%	244	21%	2885	80%	704	20%
Female:	476	84%	90	16%	1695	82%	360	18%
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White:	581	80%	142	20%	1824	82%	413	18%
Asian:	69	77%	21	23%	202	77%	61	23%
Hispanic:	49	73%	18	27%	192	81%	45	19%
Black:	25	81%	6	19%	118	77%	35	23%
Native Am:	10	67%	5	33%	45	71%	18	29%
Pacific Is:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Multiracial:	2	67%	1	33%	4	80%	1	20%
Foreign:	27	90%	3	10%	66	87%	10	13%
Age, to 19:	341	77%	100	23%	950	78%	264	22%
20-24:	303	76%	96	24%	876	79%	232	21%
25-29:	121	80%	31	20%	472	81%	108	19%
30-39:	92	88%	13	12%	421	85%	75	15%
40-49:	30	91%	3	9%	126	88%	18	13%
50+:	11	92%	1	8%	40	85%	7	15%

Notes:

Caution: Percentages may be misleading if counts are low.  
Due to unreported data, category sums may not equal headcounts.  
Headcounts represent unduplicated students.  
PASS = A, B, C, or D; all other grades are NO PASS.  
College-wide includes class/budget campuses 1-4.

**Appendix C**

**Fall 2009 Enrollments in WR 80, 90, 115, 121, 122 by Race/Ethnicity**

Count of students		race/ethn											
campus	crsno	Unknown		White		Asian/Pac Is		Black		Hispanic		Multi-Racial	
CAS	WR 80	3	2%	20	3%	4	5%	34	15%	8	11%	2	10%
	WR 90	16	9%	69	12%	7	9%	56	25%	12	16%	3	14%
	WR 115	25	14%	91	16%	17	21%	55	24%	12	16%	1	5%
	WR 121	100	56%	327	56%	44	54%	62	27%	29	38%	15	71%
	WR122	35	20%	80	14%	10	12%	21	9%	15	20%		
CAS Total		179	100%	587	100%	82	100%	228	100%	76	100%	21	100%

campus	crsno	Unknown		White		Asian/Pac Is		Black		Hispanic		Multi-Racial	
ELC	WR 80	9	9%	23	6%	10	11%	14	22%	10	22%	1	9%
	WR 90	18	18%	97	26%	12	13%	19	29%	11	24%	5	45%
	WR 115	21	21%	79	21%	28	31%	13	20%	10	22%		
	WR 121	33	33%	135	36%	35	39%	12	18%	10	22%	5	45%
	WR122	18	18%	37	10%	5	6%	7	11%	4	9%		
ELC Total		99	100%	371	100%	90	100%	65	100%	45	100%	11	100%

campus	crsno	Unknown		White		Asian/Pac Is		Black		Hispanic		Multi-Racial	
RC	WR 80	3	1%	38	3%	9	4%	5	6%	19	7%	3	13%
	WR 90	54	17%	173	13%	33	16%	16	18%	54	20%	2	8%
	WR 115	64	20%	191	14%	46	22%	22	24%	51	19%	4	17%
	WR 121	133	41%	648	48%	81	38%	34	38%	95	36%	14	58%
	WR122	72	22%	292	22%	42	20%	13	14%	45	17%	1	4%
RC Total		326	100%	1342	100%	211	100%	90	100%	264	100%	24	100%

campus	crsno	Unknown		White		Asian/Pac Is		Black		Hispanic		Multi-Racial	
SYL	WR 80	11	3%	62	4%	6	4%	6	8%	10	7%	3	16%
	WR 90	26	8%	181	13%	23	14%	17	24%	35	23%	5	26%
	WR 115	50	15%	142	10%	44	26%	12	17%	23	15%	3	16%
	WR 121	172	52%	756	54%	56	33%	31	43%	63	42%	8	42%
	WR122	69	21%	247	18%	41	24%	6	8%	20	13%		
SYL Total		328	100%	1388	100%	170	100%	72	100%	151	100%	19	100%

Grand Total                      932                      3688                      553                      455                      536                      75

PCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Dec 2009, wr80\_122\_ethn\_200904.xls

#### 4) Outcomes of Courses

##### Appendix A

26-JAN-2010 11:57  
SMRCRSP

Portland Community College  
Course Grades Based on Prior Course Completion  
200904

Page 1

WR 121 students who completed WR 115:

Successful Completions			Unsuccessful Completions			Non-completions			Other	
Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count
A	153	23.8%	D	33	5.1%	I	6	0.9%	AUD	2
B	234	36.4%	F	31	4.8%	W	61	9.5%	CIP	0
C	110	17.1%	NP	14	2.2%	X	0	0.0%	Other	0
P	1	0.2%				DROP	0	0.0%		
-----			-----			-----			-----	
498 77.4%			78 12.1%			67 10.4%			2	

WR 121 students who did not complete WR 115:

Successful Completions			Unsuccessful Completions			Non-completions			Other	
Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count	Pct	Grade	Count
A	830	36.3%	D	85	3.7%	I	26	1.1%	AUD	7
B	667	29.2%	F	126	5.5%	W	224	9.8%	CIP	0
C	274	12.0%	NP	52	2.3%	X	0	0.0%	Other	5
P	1	0.0%				DROP	0	0.0%		
-----			-----			-----			-----	
1,772 77.5%			263 11.5%			250 10.9%			12	

#### 5) Faculty

##### Appendix A.

###### A. Composition of Full-time faculty

10 PhDs, 7 MFAs, 19 MAs

Subject areas include: Literature, 26; Creative Writing, 7;  
Writing/Composition/Rhetoric, 2;  
Humanities, 2; Journalism, 1; Education, 1; Public Affairs, 1.

###### C. Professional development

- Curricula have recently been developed for Transnational Literature (Salomeh Maodab) and Working-Class Literature (Rachel Stevens); both courses are in high demand among students and reflect the forefront of national and international

literature offerings. Stevens will be attending the Association of Working Class Academics Conference in June, 2010.

- Jane Zunkel and Kristin Bryant both serve on the Pacific-Western board of the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA). Many SAC members have gone to and presented papers at both national and regional CCHA conferences in the past 6 years.
- Kristin Bryant attended the National Endowment for the Humanities' workshop "Concord, Massachusetts: A Center of Transcendentalism and Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century" in Summer 2008.
- Bryan Hull (Turkey), Tom Huminski (Vietnam and Cambodia), and Ron Ross (China, canceled) were selected for Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) trips: all three serve on PCC's Asian Studies Committee.
- Melody Wilson attended the National Collegiate Honors Council in conjunction with the development and implementation of an Honors' Program at PCC.
- Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)—Martha Henning and Cynthia Kimball presented papers at the CCCC convention in March, 2010.

## 6) College Core Outcomes.

### **Appendix A:**

#### **Perception of Police: Through Images**

When we see an image of police arresting a man, is it possible that we automatically side with the man and have a sort of disdain for the police? I know when I was a teen I was rather hostile and defiant when it came to local law enforcement. It was as if they were simply around to harass, punish and attempt to make every weekend devoid of fun. I was pulled over and ticketed a few times as a youth for minor infractions: seatbelt, speeding, etc. After paying my tickets with hard earned money from a part time job at a local pizza joint, I developed, along with my friends, an apprehension for the boys in blue. I understood that the officers in my community were public servants, and that their

job description in my small farm town entailed protection and absolute lawfulness for the inhabitants of Winterset, Iowa.

Even though I knew this, it didn't stop me from speaking openly against the authorities or feeling a shortness of breath every time I saw a cop's flashing lights. All through my adolescence I allowed negative experiences with the police to have a much stronger impact on my personal beliefs about law enforcement than my positive experiences. And now, at 27 years old, I realize that not only did I allow the negative experiences to influence the way I felt when I was younger, but I see how the newspapers and stories I read on the internet reinforced my negative perception. It is my belief that coverage of police activity primarily focuses on street-crime, particularly violent offenses. Only a select number of crimes and police activities are presented in the media. These news story images need not be, and often are not, accurate representations of the prevalence of crime or the effectiveness of police intervention.

So how is it that these images and stories I would read were only adding fuel to the proverbial fire that was my contempt for police? How are such images and words affecting the public's perception of law enforcement, for good or ill? In order to fully understand how people read an image we must first familiarize ourselves with the notion that an image presents two messages. Roland Barthes described this as, "the photographic paradox" and he defines it as, "the co-existence of two messages, the one without a code (the photographic analogue), the other with a code (the 'art,' or the treatment, or the 'writing,' or the rhetoric of the photograph)" (Mitchell 334).

In more clear and simple terms we might view the image denotatively. That is, we might view the photo as genuine, reading it without pursuing a deeper meaning.

Alternately, we may view it connotatively, which would be a verbal message the photograph might make to us, a translation of that what we see to that which we feel.

When I view this photograph denotatively, as a moment in time, authorities appear to be detaining a man in the middle of a riot. But when I view it connotatively, it becomes an entirely different thing. The photo begins to speak to me. It makes me feel disturbed. It implicates that the police are harming an innocent man; his hands are up in the air, his

face, bleeding, doesn't seem to warrant the abuse of four armored police. It's an abuse of power and I find myself feeling sympathetic towards this man. Regardless of what he



has done before this I can't help but feel he is being victimized. There is no text present to tell me the context of what I am viewing. Therefore it becomes very possible that the viewer is able to create a sort of false reality about this image. Should they choose to view this as an act of barbarism and brutality by the police, it is so. Our perception of the police becomes quite negative. It becomes evidence to perhaps reinforce a negative experience we've had. The interesting thing about this image is the fact that we do not know what led to this moment. We have no frame of reference to what came immediately before or after this one captured moment. How might our perception change if we acknowledge that this photograph is part of something much larger? That this particular image is but a quote from a greater story is worth mentioning as it helps us to

understand that our reactions and emotions towards an image are based upon but one aspect of the photo.

In the essay “Appearances,” John Berger argues that photography “quotes” rather than “translates.” In other words, the photograph is a quotation, a piece of something bigger—an event, or a moment in time. It is only a part of that which came immediately before it and that which came after it. Berger argues that, “The photographic quotation is, within its limits, incontrovertible. Yet the quotation, placed like a fact in an explicit or implicit argument, can misinform. Sometimes the misinforming is deliberate, as in the case of publicity; often it is the result of an unquestioned ideological assumption” (184). Berger is unequivocally stating that our “ideological assumptions” or our beliefs and



perceptions can lead us to be misinformed. For example, let’s say this image presents two police officers on duty. It appears as if they are simply monitoring an escalator, working as crowd control for a busy section of the subway.

However, if viewers were to have a bad temperament towards law enforcement due to previous experiences, they might use this image to further fuel hatred for police, viewing it in any way they see fit, with no care or concern for what this image may be representing as a whole. Maybe it is simply viewed as an intimidating police presence; a bunch of bullies with nothing else to do. Perhaps the reality of this photo is that it was

taken shortly after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and it depicts a heightened security presence in public places where large groups of innocent civilians may need help, should something terrible happen. Or maybe the officers are there on a tip about a suspicious person. Either way, this photo too shows how two images can exist and how the connotative message can reinforce our perceptions.

In summation I'd like focus on the concept of *Punctum*. Roland Barthes used this term in his essay, *Camera Lucida*. It's an element within an image that strikes us or becomes that which we focus on. We know that two messages can exist in a photograph and we know that we can define them as connotative and denotative. But what about when these two terms don't

cover what we see or feel?

When something within a photograph disrupts our standard reactions and feelings towards an image we are experiencing punctum.



Barthes defines punctum as, “that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)” (147). How might the concept of punctum help us to understand the influence a photograph can have on our perceptions of law enforcement? For me, it can all be summarized in this final image of an altercation between World War I veterans and police. The thing that strikes me about this image is the flag. An officer and a veteran seem to be fighting over it. Or perhaps one man was wielding it and it has become entangled in the heat of the moment. The flag is a representation of neutrality in this

image. It does not represent either group more so than the other. This flag that holds my gaze is a catalyst. It forces me to consider who is right and who is wrong in this picture. I've come to the conclusion that neither group is fighting the winning battle and both are in the wrong.

This place I've gone, the place this flag, this punctum, has taken me is somewhere far beyond the surface of the photograph. It prompts me to take a step back and look at my own life, a moment of introspection if you will. While images and photographs can most certainly help to paint law enforcement, police, etc., in a negative light, it is ultimately up to the viewer to determine just what stance they are going to take. Should we choose to always find the negative aspects or maintain a pessimistic view of law enforcement, through any type of media, we are destined to maintain and pass it along to those who follow our in our footsteps. But should we choose to break the mold and find something within the image that forces us to look at ourselves, to question our negative perceptions based on personal history with law enforcement, then we shall find ourselves on a much more enlightened path.

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## **Appendix B:**

### **Words, Images, and Reality**

Our present reality is a product of words and images. I realized this the other night while looking up, into the sky, upon a cover of grayish-purple clouds. Beyond those clouds, as far as I knew, a meteor shower was occurring. Had this night not been overcast, I presumably would have been able to see up to 500 meteors per hour. It occurred to me that if my girlfriend had not read about this event on her friend's facebook page and then told me, I would not have known that it was going to happen. It also occurred to me that had no one recorded previous astrological observations and developed the technology to capture the images of these phenomena, it is likely that no one would have been able to predict the meteor shower.

I imagined what it would be like living in the Willamette Valley before the influence of the industrial revolution, or perhaps in an alternate reality in which that influence never spread to this region. There are many other things besides the meteor shower that I also wouldn't know about such as the existence of the African elephant or the current events of anywhere outside of my immediate location. I do know, at least a little about both those things though, but not because I have been to an African savannah

or have the ability to be in two places at once. I know these things because this is syndicated information which is delivered by images and words. It is information that is available anywhere.

A large part of the information we get, at least in the society in which I live, comes from other people, places or times. There was a point in time when this was not the case; the things that a person knew were learned by experiencing them. Going back to the primitive Willamette Valley example; I might know a lot about the life cycles of certain insects that lived here; I might know what affect the weather had on my neighbor's mood; I might even know about the existence of the Pacific Ocean. I would know these things because I experienced them first hand. Connected to this knowledge would be the other experiences that helped me to gain it. In a journey westward I might note the differences in terrain and firmness of the ground, I might be afraid of getting lost in the woods, I might feel the difference in the wind as I reached the top of the coast range. Perhaps there would be a particular person or thing that would be occupying my thoughts for a large part of this journey; perhaps my immediate surroundings at the time of my first view of the ocean in the distance would be emblazoned in mind, and every other time after that in which I thought about the Pacific Ocean, the memory of my surroundings would be attached to that thought. Looking at it from this perspective, it is possible to see that knowing the ocean is there is only one small part of a greater set of experiences.

The type of knowledge described above would be hard to explain to other people. Of course you could tell someone there was an ocean; but you could not say, for example, where exactly or how far away it was in precise terms. For this you would need

standardized units of measurement of distance and time, map, compass etc. To explain the location of the ocean without these tools might go something like this; “go to the river, walk in the direction that the water is flowing, beyond those hills this river runs into another one, continue to walk with the flow of the water, the river will get wider and wider until you will eventual reach the ocean. When I walked there I twisted my ankle, so it took me longer than it probably would to normally get there. But if you are lucky you might make it in the amount of time it takes for a small fish to decompose in damp weather.”

While we still use information like this today in our daily lives, it is easy to see that it would be hard to make what our society calls progress with it. Since ancient times, human beings have attempted to standardize information. There was a movement which happened in the mid nineteenth century that intensified this project. John Berger describes what sustained this Positivist movement as “...the belief that observable quantifiable facts, recorded by scientists and experts, would one day offer man such a total knowledge about nature and society that he would be able to order them both” (185). The camera was also invented in this time period and was viewed as a means of capturing irrefutable evidence that would contribute to this “total knowledge”. “When a photograph is used scientifically, its unquestionable evidence is an aid in coming to a conclusion: it supplies information *within the conceptual framework* of an investigation” (185).

Photography, along with the written word (and film, later), made the syndication of information possible. It also made it possible for this information to be stored and accessed by others in present or future times. This contributes to a collection of

information which can be accessed and learned without experiencing it first hand. For example; I know that there is a war in Afghanistan without having actually been there; I learn this by reading the news paper. I haven't experienced war though, and because of that my knowledge of it is very superficial. Even if I had experienced war, it would be a different experience than any other individual's. Thinking about the Positivist movement in this way exposes the futility of its goal.

Roland Barthes' concept of *studium* and *punctum*, in a way can be seen as an explanation of this. If a photograph represents irrefutable evidence, it is by *studium* that it does so. *Studium* is the realm in which photography is conceived. It is explainable; the photographer (operator) takes a photo for a reason and this can be communicated through language, the person who views the photograph (spectator) sees the photo through a "haze" of language; what is this a photo of? What does this photo represent? What is the message? What does it remind me of? Etc. These questions could be almost infinite and even if some of them can't be answered, they are all able to be pondered and discussed. This illustrates the role of *studium*; it is a lens, through which our minds comprehend photography. It is by means of language that this is possible. The quantifiable facts collected by scientists and experts could be seen in this way. A fact could be likened to a photo in that they are both quotations from a larger continuity.

*Punctum* is an element which exists in certain photography; it connects an individual viewer to a detail or an aspect of an individual photograph. Barthes says that the *punctum* "... will break (or punctuate) the *studium*. This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" (146).

The effect of the punctum breaking through the studium is that it transmits a message which bypasses the codifying nature of the studium and connects to the spectator in a way that transcends language. This could be due to a memory and all the emotion or sensation that goes along with it, or anything that leaves one “at a loss for words”.

It is just as probable for a fact to contain a punctum-like element which can pierce its studium, as it is for a photo. Facts, like photos are pieces of an infinitely complex whole transcribed into a format that can be studied.

A recent study found plastic particles in the stomachs of 8 of 11 seabird species caught as bycatch in drift nets used by squid fishermen in the pelagic waters of the eastern North Pacific. This is a fact; it can be categorized, related to other facts and plugged into formulas. It is stripped of its complexities so that we can see its “message”. It doesn’t tell us though, what the fishermen think about the bird’s ending up in the nets and drowning, what it feels like to have a stomach full of plastic, what the weather was like when the birds went down for their last dive, what it is like to go through the contents of a dead sea bird’s stomach or anything else in between. It is taken out of continuity, like a photo.

Berger continues, “...The Positivist utopia was not achieved. And the world today is less controllable by experts, who have mastered what they believe to be its mechanisms, than it was in the nineteenth century. What *was* achieved was unprecedented scientific and technical progress...” (185-6). The Punctum-like effect on data clearly illustrates how the Positivist utopia could not be achieved; that did not stop them from applying this type of reality to the world though. “The unachieved positivist utopia became, instead, the global system of late capitalism wherein all that exists

becomes quantifiable- not simply because it *can be* reduced to a statistical fact, but also because it *has been* reduced to a commodity” (186).

The world is divided up into what is “useful” and what is not. Squid and plastic are apparently useful while sea birds are not. I doubt we would be in this same state of mind if we collected our knowledge from our personal experiences instead of getting it from the plethora of sources we have available to us in these modern times. We can piece together facts from here or there picking and choosing what compliments our lifestyles. Information can be slanted, applied subconsciously, taken out of context or even fabricated.

\* \* \*

In his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard describes the way in which the real is replaced by signs through an order of simulacra. He provides as one example of this, many films which came about between the end of World War II and the early 1980’s being fascinated with historically accurate portrayals of bygone eras. Especially those which portrayed “the immediately preceding era (fascism, war, the period immediately following the war – the innumerable films that play on these themes for us have a closer, more perverse, denser, more confused essence)” (44). He introduces the referential, which in linguistics means: relating to a referent, in particular having the external world rather than a text or language as a referent (C.O.E.D. 1208). “History is our lost referential, that is to say our myth. It is by virtue of this fact that it takes the place of myths on screen” (43). History then, is the thing which is being simulated in this case, and ultimately recreated and formed into what Baudrillard calls a “hyperreality”; the complete and self-perpetuating replacement by simulacra. The films are the signs

which replace this “real” history by creating a resemblance of it. This resemblance is empty though; it is a shell which has the appearance of history but is not connected to it. He says that the reason many films focus on this time period was not so much based on an aesthetic or ideological value which this era represented as much as it was “to resurrect the period when *at least* there was history” (44); the last era in which history’s mythology existed. He continues to explain that “Photography and cinema contributed in large part to the secularization of history, to fixing it in its visible, ‘objective’ form at the expense of the myths that once traversed it” (48).

I take the “mythology of history” to be the experienced connection that existed before, as Berger put it, history and time were conflated. Cinema creates a resemblance of history, a sign, and through this process eradicates this connection and moves into the realm of the hyperreal; the referential is lost and what remains is simulacrum. He concludes, “Today cinema can place all its talent, all its technology in the service of reanimating what it itself contributed to liquidating. It only resurrects ghosts, and it itself is lost therein” (48).

Another example of this that comes to mind is that of pornography (sign) replacing sex (referential). Pornography is the empty resemblance of sex; the reduction to its most mechanical aspects, phallus-orifice-ejaculation. The prevalence of the pornographic image forces it’s commingling with sex, until the two are inseparable becoming the hyperreal; since who is to say what desires, expectations, manifestations pornography does or does not claim responsibility for.

\* \* \*

A photograph is a sign which replaces the memory of a lived moment with a portrait that is simultaneously ambiguous and irrefutable. It is tempting to believe then, that the punctum's sting might be found in all simulacra; a tear in the façade, through which the "real" is visible if only for a moment, and in isolation, taken out of a continuity and therefore unexplainable. I would like to believe that there is a real "real" which could be connected to. But I am doubtful; our reality is a product of images and words. We have developed a dependency on them and in doing so we have made them an inextricable part of our lives and in fact everything.

I recently walked down a stretch of shoreline, relatively isolated due to the terrain which surrounded it. Based on the scraps of brass boat wreckage that I found in plain sight, it was obvious that not many people came here. Yet with this absence of a human presence, this beach was strewn with plastic in every imaginable form.

At the opposite end of his career from *Camera Lucida*, Barthes wrote a short essay on plastic which was published in *Mythologies*; "more than a substance, plastic is the very idea of its infinite transformation" (97), the perfect simulator! It is a material which is molded and made to simulate objects which already exist. Then it plays at reality, by allowing the creation of new tools and technologies and inundating the planet until the point in which it becomes a hyperreality. That is to say, it is now a thing of the natural world; floating to the farthest reaches, forming its own land masses, even replacing grains of sand. "Removing" it would only validate the hyperreality further; it can be thrown away only when one pretends that there is such a thing as "away". Not to mention the fact that its removal creates its own demand; trash bags, for instance.

Sea birds exist for me in a study or a photo. There is a series of photos taken of dead albatross chicks on Midway atoll in the North Pacific; though thousands of miles from civilization, the evidence of its culpability is undeniable. What is real to me becomes tragically obvious when the sight of one of these photos serves as a reminder that I am low on dish soap.



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## Appendix C:

### Survey of Students who have taken PCC English Literature and/or College-Level Writing Courses (Winter Term 2010; N=350)

#### Part I. English Literature and College-Level Writing Courses Taken at PCC

Please indicate which English Literature courses you have successfully completed (received a passing grade) at PCC. DO NOT include courses you are CURRENTLY taking this (Winter) term or have taken at OTHER colleges.

#### 1. DERIVED VARIABLES:

Percentage of Respondents Surveyed who Took (and Successfully Completed) at Least One PCC ENG Course: 9.7%

Among Respondents who Took (and Successfully Completed) at Least One PCC ENG Course, Average Number of PCC ENG Courses Taken: 3.2

**3. Thinking about the above English Literature courses, when did you most RECENTLY complete (with a passing grade) any one of the above courses? Do not include courses taken this term or at a college other than PCC.**

(Note: Responses include only students who took at least one PCC ENG Course):

Fall 2009 term	<u>28</u> ( 30%)
Summer 2009 term	<u>8</u> ( 9%)
Spring 2009 term	<u>16</u> ( 17%)
Winter 2009 term	<u>12</u> ( 13%)
Fall 2008 term	<u>8</u> ( 9%)
Earlier than the Fall 2008 term	<u>22</u> ( 23%)

**Please indicate which college-level Writing courses you have successfully completed (received a passing grade) at PCC. DO NOT include courses you are CURRENTLY taking this (Winter) term or have taken at OTHER colleges.**

**3. DERIVED VARIABLES:**

Percentage of Respondents Surveyed who Took (and Successfully Completed) at Least One PCC College-Level WR Course (WR 121 and above): 83.4%

Among Respondents who Took (and Successfully Completed) at Least One PCC College-Level WR Course (WR 121 and above),

Average Number of PCC College-Level WR Courses Taken: 2.5

**3. Thinking about the above college-level Writing courses, when did you most RECENTLY complete (with a passing grade) any one of the above courses? Do not include courses taken this term or at a college other than PCC.**

(Note: Responses include only students who took at least one PCC College-Level WR Course i.e., WR 121 and above):

Fall 2009 term	<u>102</u> (30%)
Summer 2009 term	<u>24</u> ( 7%)
Spring 2009 term	<u>66</u> (20%)
Winter 2009 term	<u>48</u> (14%)
Fall 2008 term	<u>24</u> ( 7%)
Earlier than the Fall 2008 term	<u>74</u> (22%)

**Part II. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills**





**The following questions pertain to critical thinking and problem solving skills that you may or may not have developed as a result of taking the above college-level Writing and/or English Literature courses at PCC.**

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**





**The college-level Writing and/or English Literature courses I have taken (and passed) at PCC**

**provided me a GOOD opportunity to ...**





**5a. ... formulate my own opinions.**

Strongly Agree	<u>172</u> (50%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>132</u> (38%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>32</u> (9%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>10</u> (3%)	





**5b. ... express ideas in writing.**

Strongly Agree	<u>208</u> (60%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>112</u> (32%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>20</u> (6%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>6</u> (2%)	





**5c. ... express ideas visually.**

Strongly Agree	<u>80</u> (24%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>128</u> (38%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>98</u> (29%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>32</u> (9%)	





**5d. ... express ideas orally.**

Strongly Agree	<u>96</u> (28%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>144</u> (43%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>74</u> (22%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>24</u> (7%)	





**5e. ... develop listening skills.**

Strongly Agree	<u>126</u> (37%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>158</u> (46%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>32</u> (9%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>26</u> (8%)	





**5f. ... recognize assumptions that underlie my opinions.**

Strongly Agree	<u>98</u> (28%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>164</u> (48%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>58</u> (17%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>24</u> (7%)	





**5g. ... recognize the consequences of my assumptions.**

Strongly Agree	<u>100</u> (29%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>156</u> (46%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>58</u> (17%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>26</u> (8%)	





**5h. ... find evidence to support my ideas.**

Strongly Agree	<u>180</u> (52%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>140</u> (41%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>22</u> (6%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>2</u> (1%)	





**5i. ... change and refine my opinions.**

Strongly Agree	<u>132</u> (39%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>154</u> (45%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>44</u> (13%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>10</u> (3%)	





**5j. ... draw rational and reasoned conclusions.**

Strongly Agree	<u>154</u> (45%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>152</u> (44%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>30</u> (9%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>8</u> (2%)	





**5k. ... summarize the ideas of others.**

Strongly Agree	<u>152</u> (43%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>154</u> (44%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>32</u> (9%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>4</u> (1%)	





**5l. ... be open to other's ideas.**

Strongly Agree	<u>168</u> (49%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>142</u> (42%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>20</u> (6%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>12</u> (4%)	





**5m. ... consider various factors that influence my ideas and the ideas of others.**

Strongly Agree	<u>148</u> (44%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>144</u> (43%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>28</u> (8%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>14</u> (4%)	





**5n. ... see connections across academic disciplines.**

Strongly Agree	<u>122</u> (36%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>154</u> (45%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>38</u> (11%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>26</u> (8%)	

**5o. ... understand the issues surrounding the use of information (for example, ethical/legal issues; access to information; how information is used).**

Strongly Agree	<u>144</u> (42%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>142</u> (42%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>40</u> (12%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>14</u> (4%)	

**5p. ... engage in service learning opportunities.**





Strongly Agree	<u>48</u> (14%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>78</u> (23%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>118</u> (35%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>92</u> (27%)	

**The following questions pertain to the areas and places in which you engaged in the above critical thinking and problem solving skills.**





**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

**The college-level Writing and/or English Literature courses I have taken at PCC have given me the opportunity to engage in some of the above critical thinking and problem solving skills...**





**6a. ... during class discussion and/or group work in class.**

Strongly Agree	<u>176</u> (51%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>134</u> (39%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>24</u> (7%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>10</u> (3%)	





**6b. ... with homework assignments and/or tests.**

Strongly Agree	<u>172</u> (50%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>126</u> (37%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>34</u> (10%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>10</u> (3%)	





**6c. ... in interactions with other students.**

Strongly Agree	<u>148</u> (43%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>150</u> (44%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>38</u> (11%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>6</u> (2%)	





**6d. ... in interactions with instructors.**

Strongly Agree	<u>158</u>	(46%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>112</u>	(33%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>60</u>	(18%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>12</u>	(4%)	





**6e. ... in interactions with other college staff (besides instructors).**

Strongly Agree	<u>52</u>	(15%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>100</u>	(29%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>122</u>	(36%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>66</u>	(19%)	

**6f. ... in college groups and clubs.**

Strongly Agree	<u>38</u>	(11%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>82</u>	(25%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>122</u>	(37%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>90</u>	(27%)	

**6g. ... in service learning opportunities.**

Strongly Agree	<u>36</u>	(11%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>74</u>	(22%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>130</u>	(39%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>90</u>	(27%)	

**6)Thinking about the above areas and places, briefly describe a time when you engaged in critical thinking and problem solving skills while taking college-level Writing and/or English Literature courses at PCC.**

All the time in essays, projects, and presentations.

At work when composing emails, memos and apology letters. After taking WR 227 I was able in a few situations to compose each of those type of documents to the satisfaction of work managers as well as customer feedback.

Blackboard has a discussion board. During English 204 my class spent a lot of time discussing literature on this board. In order to fulfill the assignment each student had to use a lot of critical thinking. I learned a lot from the discussions in this class.

Both of my WR121 and WR122 classes helped me quite a bit on structure, critical thinking, looking outside the box, how to make a strong argument, etc..... I particularly thought well of my writing 122 teacher. Technical writing also taught me many things, but it was frustrating at times because of it being an online course.

By far the most useful Writing course I have taken, was Wr. 121 while I was still in the gateway program. The smaller class size allowed for lots of communication between students, and I believe, actually getting to hear my peers view points, helped me to refine my thoughts on the subject. In classes without class interaction and student feedback, it is easy to over look things like; cultural, economic and ethnical differences. Then, instead of critically thinking about the subject, the assignment becomes trying to write what you think the instructor wants you to think.

Composing essays always challenges my critical thinking skills.

Constructing an essay for any of the writing classes required "critical thinking and problem solving skills". The questions that came to mind: What will my topic be? Is it acceptable within the context of the essay? How can I express my opinion regarding the matter, and still keep it factual? The classes helped me develop the ability to address these questions. However, the faculty was not always a great help. My writing 121 teacher did not state what she would like us specifically to do with our essays, yet graded us as harshly and minutely as if she did. I found this extremely inhibiting to learning, for you cannot learn from a mistake if you don't entirely know what it was. I would like to mention that just because Writing 121 is a class nearly everybody takes, and you need many instructors for it, not everybody should be allowed to teach it. It is still a college class, and we are still paying for the opportunity to take it. Not all of us students are "just here for the credits."

Credible sources research paper for Writing 122

Discussing a Assigned story from the text book in groups.

Discussing themes, symbolism in an INTRO TO AMERICAN LITERATURE CASS. We were discussing the symbols of The Garden of Eden in Hawthorn;s short story.

During a group project for a technical writing course, (WR 227) my problem solving skills were severely tested. The two other group members contributed perhaps twenty minutes of actual work, yet they received full credit for a paper that I had written on my own, (of which I had spent some thirty hours working on.) The situation was never resolved. Although group work is important in education,

each group member should be required to document their contribution(s) and graded accordingly.  
during any group activities in class only

During class I had a great time analyzing and sharing ideas/discussing thoughts in a clear and concise and respectful manner.

During most class periods of the WR122 class, the instructor encouraged critical thinking. Problem solving was also encouraged while discussing essays we had read, as well as in papers we wrote for the class. The entire course was based on argumentative writing, and there really wasn't much of the class that wasn't critical thinking or problem solving.

During the class discussions I would engage in conversations with my peers about different areas of interest. This would usually lead me to further investigating the issues and later writing about them.

During writing 121 with [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] I was provided the opportunity to examine my viewpoint and see what assumptions I was having that informed my point of view. [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] provided the space through helpful questioning for me to question and explore to beyond my perspective.

During writing 122 we had to take an issue such as racism, for example, and write about our opinions in a way that did not alienate all readers. This was not easy to do without flip flopping on the topic. We had to figure out a way to rationally explain our side in an open minded fashion based on information we researched.

During writing class each class we were involved in critical thinking using our books and various teacher assignments.

Every paper that was assigned required me to use critical thinking and problem solving skills. Typically each paper asked you to find new ways to solve the same problems.

Every week in my writing class, we would read other students' writing and during class, give feedback and constructive criticism to the respective student for his final paper.

Everyday in ENG 201/202, one had to use multiple abilities to understand and express what Shakespeare was/is about. What started me on the English road was taking a ENG 104 class in which dissecting Hemingway and C.S.Lewis was a whole lot of fun. This is where I developed critical thinking of literature and began to learn how to formulate it in writing.

everyday life as i work with people that are under stress and pain emotionally and physically, so i need to have a clear mind when speaking with them, also when expressing the events of the day in writing to keep logs of what happened.

For Writing 122 I initially began writing an argument paper that I personally had a personal interest in and a strongly formed biased opinion. Thanks to the writing process, my strong opinion evolved into a more moderate one as I delved into the supporting evidence of both sides of the argument.

Group review and revision activities.

I am sorry to say I have not engaged in critical thinking and problem solving skills from the writing courses, but they have helped me improve my writing skills (please excuse this writing). I just finished

study skills for college learning, CG 111A. This helped me to learn a six step problem solving formula. Critical thinking was defined in the same class, but no time spent developing any skill. The class was full of so much success information, more so than the writing classes. All the classes were very helpful.

I don't feel that your classes have room for opinions that are anything but liberal. There are other ideas out there - ideas that are based on facts and observations not just how one 'wishes' it could be. I didn't even realize that I was conservative until I took writing at PCC; any time I expressed an opinion I was jumped on and called names.

I employed my critical thinking and problem-solving skills while tutoring in the peer-to-peer program in order to convey criticisms in the most constructive and least offensive manner, while dealing with students who were not very receptive to the challenges in their work. I also used my understanding of writing theory while evaluating students' varying essays.

I engaged in a lot of critical thinking while taking college-level Writing courses at PCC.

I feel like the opportunity to engage in critical thinking practice and problem solving skills rarely presented itself in the Writing classes I took. This may have been largely as a result of a difficult group of students in my 121 class and a very poor experience with instructor for 122 class.

I had to present a speech to the Board of State Representatives at a hearing in Salem, Oregon. In this speech I needed to present my experiences, opinions and key-points to those opinions. I also had to conclude the speech with the reasons why this program is successful and why the cap should be raised. I accomplished my goals and got my point across that day and I utilized my critical thinking and problem solving skills this day.

I have engaged critical thinking and problem solving when composing arguments for research papers.

I have found that even though there are a lot of resources, tutors, research opportunities and centers/venues to both study/tutor and research, there are two problematic compounds that exist within PCC. 1.) Very "BIASED" professors/teachers and/or staff members that speak to prohibit a very good speech of having and/or supporting an open and non-judgemental view of student opinion(s), feeling(s) and view(s) on both their own personal and individual views and perspectives of things both taught and learned; but somehow, these individuals still manage to discriminate, stigmatize, stereotype, procrastinate, and hinder the spoken and unspoken rhetorics of others to manifest, be voiced aloud or made public in some aspect. There are employed staff and members of the teaching profession that are biased, racist, egotistical, brutal, mean, cruel and unjust to the student body and no matter what rights the student may have... there are a lot of "UNETHICAL UNPROFESSIONAL" behavior(s) occurring within the frameworks and within the foundations of PCC! 2.) Nothing is ever done about it...even under the availabilities of either written or verbal grievances. Your available resources for addressing these EXISTING issues are USELESS! You will continue to filter and control whatever you chose to and the problem(s) that exist "WITHIN" the system will inevitably REMAIN!

I learned a lot about critical thinking and analyzing my ideas through [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED]'s class (121). I wrote a paper about the futility of voting and it was then I noticed I was utilizing the skills that Well's had taught me. I learned to research and analyze my ideologies, assumptions and the information I gathered while researching my paper.

I learned that different cultures communicate differently and because of this delicate issue, people may be uncomfortable, intimidated, or come across as a delicate flower that causes its' petals to the ground.

When I write, speak, or use body language, I keep culture in mind with the person or group that I am interacting with.

I recall WR 122 from the Fall of 2009. Because this course focuses on developing and expressing arguments, the class was often engaged in group discussions about controversial topics and writing about them. It was very stimulating to discuss the gray areas of social, political and moral topics, to debate multiple sides or aspects of the issue, and attempt to come up with a personal realization or conclusion.

I took a Computers in Business course and there were discussion topics. The skills and research I learned in Writing 122 helped me critically think through the topic and respond with a more educated opinion.

I use my critical thinking and problem skills every day...however, while enrolled in writing courses, I found that I needed those skills most to interpret vague and poorly written assignment instructions. I was part of a team writing a grant for a non-profit organization for our technical writing class. We had to be honest, direct, clear and persuasive at the same time. It was harder than I had imagined. I wasn't cognitively aware of any of the affects PCC's Writing and Lit classes had on my behavior and thinking until I transferred out to WSU, and nothing stands out for either critical thinking or problem solving. Mostly it was mood management, from when I tried taking classes outside my discipline (mostly Art and Sciences) and struggled to keep from hating the word at large.

I wrote a few papers in WR 122 that demonstrated critical thinking.

I, perhaps incorrectly, believe myself to be a non-traditional PCC student. I currently have a BA in Economics from the University of Michigan-Dearborn and a JD from Whittier College School of Law in Costa Mesa, California. Due to that background and being somewhat older than most students I have used these skills in my career/profession for the past 30 years. Taking these courses enabled me to brush up on these skills.

I'd say that was pretty much a staple of the Tech/Professional Writing class. I'm too tired to get into it any more now.

In comparison to other advanced course work I've taken in Writing (one setting was an Ivy League College, the other a large University ranked in the American top 10 for Creative Writing), I found the Portland Community College adequately propels young people to read textbook material and, in turn, write in response their formulated ideas. The practice and discipline of writing on a continual basis provides the core writing development gathered in a class such as Writing 121 or 122. By providing a steady stream of assignments, the courses invigorate and stimulate the student to produce. This seems to meet the goals of a college at this level. I would recommend this setting for a new or young writer. The basic foundation of writing is presented and discipline is instilled. For one striving to articulate heightened writing skills and compete for work in journalism, research or published media, I would perhaps recommend an alternative venue.

In my creative writing courses I engaged my critical thinking and problem solving skills nearly every class period. Any time I critiqued another writer's work (whether in small groups or as part of the entire class) it was done in a thoughtful manner and with a focus on providing helpful ideas and suggestions for any 'problem' story elements. I did my best to provide specific feedback that could be used constructively by the author to build a stronger piece of writing.

In my writing 121 class we often had really intense discussions about really controversial topics. These included religion, philosophy, and politics. Everyone really contributed and made the discussion interesting and enlightening.

In the English 254 class I am currently finishing up, we were told to write our own manifestos of writing. I felt that the manifesto assignment allowed students to consider their own opinions as well as the opinions that shape the canon of literature. We were given copies of everyone's manifestos and that allowed us to see even more opinions and get a better sense of the world around us.

In WR 122 I read everything is an argument and that was a great problem solving book, and I felt that new directions helped me a lot with all of this as well.

In Writing 122 I learned how to structure my writing to make it more concise and more persuasive. We discussed, read and wrote about a variety of topics, specifically *The Art of War*, and other short pieces of writing out of an anthology about being a woman, being a man, poverty, freedom of speech and a few others. If I had to relate them all somehow, I took away that there is importance not only in what is done, but also HOW it is done. I researched and wrote about animal hoarding, animal welfare, animal rights and similar topics, and through those assignments I had ample opportunity to consider different views of the same issue; it made me re-evaluate certain opinions and solidify others. Through class assignments, discussions and one-on-one conferences with the instructor I learned a lot about how to structure my writing to inform or persuade my readers (using an intro-body-conclusion, using supporting arguments, summarizing others' ideas, quoting others) and I learned about other people's experiences through reading and listening to things written and said by the instructor and fellow classmates.

In writing 122, we engaged in many critical thinking and problem solving skills. For instance, we were required to critique other students' papers. In doing so, we all agree that we naturally think critically about how we compose our own work.

It actually happened quite frequently, even in my fiction class. The instructors are always pushing their students to think outside of the box, and look at the reading material from every angle; be it a fellow student's piece of literature, or a well known source.

It happened mainly during classes but later on I did use some critical thinking/problem solving skills outside of class.

I've done so while enrolled in WR121 as well as BI211,212.

I've had to think critically and solve a problem, I'm sure, at least once a day.

I've used my critical thinking and problem solving skills in all writing classes I've taken at PCC. Last fall term, when I took Writing 122, the course provided me with ample opportunities to use those skills. In fact, I don't believe a student could successfully navigate the class without tapping into their problem solving and critical thinking skills. We were assigned a number of essays and response papers in which those skills were necessary to complete the assignment. The subject matter of the literature we were assigned (globalization, societal views of women from different cultures, war, etc.) stimulated excellent group discussions and essays. Because the class I took was online, we were assigned lots of group discussions over a message board. We had to read and respond to a minimum of two students (with a quality response) to get points for the assignment. That required me to really take a good look at my fellow students' thoughts and opinions. I didn't agree with all of them, and I had to figure out ways to

present my views without squashing theirs, and without sounding combative, which is a big issue for an online class. I definitely had to keep an open mind when dealing with my peers in that setting.

My answers do not apply to WR 121. I was very disappointed with that class. Writing 122 with [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED], and ENG 253 and 254 with [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] were both excellent classes and I would recommend them strongly to anyone who asked.

My classes were online so most discussion took place in the discussion board online.

My final paper for WR 122 was to be on a controversial topic. It challenged my thinking on the topic I chose. It made me more aware of the mechanics and decisions behind our actions at my place of work.

My writing instructor preferred a different style of writing than mine but I used critical thinking to choose to write as the teacher wanted to pass the class rather than remain as I was in regards to writing.

often times, the discussions that would happen after class, at the bar or some other social setting, would reveal some very interesting information. I have made several friends, particularly while studying Shakespeare, who could debate for hours our perspective on not only Shakespeare's work, but 16th century England and the politics that were veiled in his sonnets and plays. Spring 2007, WR121, instructor: [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] -- The required reading included part of a sociology textbook and a memoir written by a woman who was raised in a Texas border town and who was a lesbian. [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] used these materials to spur our thinking about our perceptions of ourselves and society's perceptions. Class discussions and free writing helped me flow naturally into an essay about interracial dating. Writing and revising the essay allowed me to explore my feelings about my experiences and my feelings about how society had responded. It gave me a better understanding of why society reacted as it did. I am less angry and judgmental about racist language and behavior because of this self-analysis and sociological perspective. I still don't like it and believe attitudes need to be changed, but removing my anger allows me to approach discussions and situations from a reasonable, instead of emotional, stance.

Taking a programming language class. For research paper for a business class.

The classes I've taken have not required critical thinking - just the ability to read and write things in a timely manner. Group assignments and/or work with other students were required, as with almost any class at PCC, but with no real benefit to me. I am sure some of the other English classes are much more engaging, as they are centered around topics and not just broadly based on improving writing skills.

The English Literature courses I have taken at PCC had a strong emphasis on peer critique. This offered an excellent opportunity to analyze the work of others and help to strengthen your own arguments or those of others. In writing 121, we analyzed several short stories through our own writing and in class discussions. This experience utilized critical thinking.

This online WR122 class really didn't do much for me on this question.

Times I remember we did the most critical thinking and problem solving were in my college level writing classes during book discussions and writing discussions. I really enjoyed those because during those times I felt I got to see point of views from everyone, and see how my thinking related to theirs. To be honest, the responses strongly or somewhat agree are waffle-like and hard to apply to the

questions asked in this survey. I had a problem to engage my critical thinking right there to decide which of the two most applied to a question like "Did writing class give a good opportunity to engage in service learning?" Somewhat agree?? Strongly agree? Sorta fits, but really doesn't.

US history, the instructor told us about a time and period. Then we had to find legal reason for that happening. Finding logos, pathos, and ethos arguments.

Using the MLA was the only benefit.

We did a good amount of critical thinking and actual writing critique work in both creative fiction and non-fiction. I feel like some of the discussions there were helpful to myself, or to the other students in the class.

We had a debate in class and the teacher picked a recent political action and had one side of the class argue for it and the other disagree. It made everyone uncomfortable but most of us pretended not to be completely offended by her choice in topic.

We had a major research paper due in Writing 121. I chose to research and submit a paper addressing the non-confrontation of the AIDS epidemic in the African American community. As an African American woman who has no choice but to address and confront the reality of HIV & AIDS, this assignment was extremely difficult, emotional and trying-though necessary- for me to take on. Due to the consistent and gentle persistence of my instructor to search for truth and confront/question it through thorough research, not only was I able to turn in a very well researched, academic paper, I was able to examine more than a few extremely painful and negative stereotypes-AND ADDRESS THEM-through critical thinking and examination.

We had discussion groups where we had to talk about specific subjects and we also did peer reviews

We had to work in small groups for a project in Eng: World Lit Japan. It was very beneficial to my problem solving skills.

Well, since both of my courses were taken online, this survey does not address any of the particular issues that are particular to online courses. I would say that for the most part, in the essays I have written for my classes have been the time when I was most able to engage in problem solving and critical thinking. Again, I took both of these classes online...

When I took English 104 we had to use critical thinking skills to better understand what the authors were trying to say in the books we read. For instance with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" we used critical thinking skills to see that Harriet Beecher Stowe was showing us not only how that segregation existed at this time but also how much it affected people and in exactly what ways they dealt with it.

When I was in writing 122, the only critical thinking and problem solving I used was to edit my paper to conform to my teacher's beliefs. I felt we were given topics to write that were specific to her interests and did not give us the freedom of expression. The class became burdensome and was, by far, the least engaging class I've ever taken at PCC.

When taking Technical Writing, my group and I had to come up with a plan to best lay out the information we had to present.

While the whole class was brainstorming about the final projects in Wr 12. Everyone gave a critical

thinking about the subject one was going to talk about, and help each other to make a better paper.

While writing a literary analysis of a short story I had recently read for class.

While writing poetry, I found that painting and other forms of art relate to the very nature of perception and the articulation of a good writing which others can grasp, see, and experience.

While writing several papers for WR227, I had the opportunity to engage in many critical thinking and problem solving skills while interacting with the instructor and the class. It was an online class and I had an amazing instructor. I tell everybody about [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] and how much I learned from his class.

Writing 121 with [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] was a great introduction to critical thinking and essay writing. She had us evaluate each others' essays and write page-long responses. I thought that was a good opportunity.

Writing 227 required group work to produce a brochure for a small business. The tie-in was analyzing the needs of the business, the needs of the audience, and using the skills learned in class to create the document from the ground up, and then present it to the business owner and class. The critical thinking involved primarily was with two big aspects of this project: analyzing the needs of the business and audience, and dealing with other people in the group. My problem solving skills were stretched in a way I didn't anticipate. There were bumps in the road with personalities and roles in the group, and in ensuring each person was accountable for their own contributions and for the end product. Communication was a huge component to the group project, and not just written communication.

Writing papers in WR122 we were required to write and rewrite essays. We had to each time improve upon the essay and it required great consideration and thinking to do so.

Writing research papers, or reviewing articles on various topics.

Writing workshops were always constructive.

### **Part III. Outcomes of Courses**





**The following questions pertain to outcomes of college-level Writing and/or English**

**Literature courses taken at PCC.**





**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

**The Writing and/or English Literature courses I have taken at PCC has given me  
the opportunity to experience/consider ...**





**8a. ... greater cultural awareness.**

Strongly Agree	<u>128</u> (38%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>152</u> (45%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>38</u> (11%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>20</u> (6%)	





**8b. ... greater community responsibility.**

Strongly Agree	<u>70</u> (21%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>148</u> (44%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>94</u> (28%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>26</u> (9%)	





**8c. ... greater environmental responsibility (for example, understanding and discussing human's impact on the environment).**

Strongly Agree	<u>70</u> (21%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>124</u> (37%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>100</u> (30%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>40</u> (12%)	

**8d. ... greater sense of self reflection.**




Strongly Agree	<u>136</u> (40%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>154</u> (46%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>32</u> (9%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>16</u> (5%)	

**8e. ... better ability/potential to use writing and/or critical reading in a professional setting.**

Strongly Agree	<u>162</u> (49%)	
Somewhat Agree	<u>136</u> (41%)	
Somewhat Disagree	<u>28</u> (8%)	
Strongly Disagree	<u>8</u> (2%)	

**8f. ... better general communication skills.**

Strongly Agree	<u>138</u> (41%)	
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Somewhat Agree 152 (46%)   
Somewhat Disagree 32 ( 10%)   
Strongly Disagree 12 ( 4%) 

**10. Please briefly relate a real-life story of your learning experience while taking one of the above college-level Writing and/or English Literature courses at PCC.**

ability to articulate my ideas verbally in a particular setting in which vocabulary needed to be strong

After taking the classes, I found myself using and understanding bigger words I had never used before. I also was able to formulate my ideas or concerns in letters or emails to customers in my daily job.

Again, I will repeat that different cultures is an important factor to learn, so that I may not offend the person I am communicating with, whether it is through writings, body language, or verbally.

again, my daily job to keep vital information correct and logged correctly. This is on a small scale to some, but it is all about the human being your documenting the information on.

Also for Writing 122, my final paper was a proposal which I actually refined in class and submitted to my colleagues at work. The paper was overkill since my peers at work function very informally, but having such a well presented idea also prevented anyone from wanting to argue with me.

Assessing another person's writing in poetry was difficult at first. It is really nice to learn how to encourage another writer and help them see their strengths, and give them straight and honest feedback. One of the young men in class discovered a talent with writing sci-fi. It was nice to see him emerge with greater personal confidence as the class proceeded.

Composing a piece that is personal and then presenting it to the class in workshop forced me to examine and reflect on the complete meaning of the words I was writing. On the whole, the action of bringing a work to life by reading it aloud and putting it out there was very beneficial towards the growth of my confidence as a writer.

Dear Ms./Mr. PCC, I don't feel that "community responsibility" or "greater environmental responsibility" should be taught as "right or wrong" as they are political or ethical matters to a greater extent, and therein lies gray areas of philosophical debates on ethics and morality. That is, unless I'm taking an ethics and morality philosophy class... Everything regarding areas of "responsibility" should be taught with two or more sides to

the arguments, which I feel is often neglected in courses, and I hope isn't due to biasing constraints. The word "responsibility" denotes a sense of duty. For me, a teacher's job should be to teach both sides of content with exposition, instead of objectively leading us to the "light" regarding current affairs or even history. Let us determine our own path to maxim potentiality as it suits us and/or society and are so called "responsibilities". Ergo, I think you should remove the word "responsibility" from the above survey questions, unless it is rooted in some scholastic agenda you have 'provided' us. If the latter is the case, then you should too remove such objectives. Basically, we don't want to be told what to think. We just want to be told what 'is' or 'was' in a non-baised and agenda-free way. The only responsibilities that should be taught in english classes are those whom guide us to participate and excel within the institution of school itself. You see what happens? You teach me how write, and then this\_\_\_ ^. :) Joking aside though, I do feel strongly about what I just wrote, per what you may already know. ~WKH

During writing 122 we discussed current events such as how elders are abused in today's society. For me this was important, because I have previously done work with elders (Loaves and Fishes) and that experience really opened my eyes to the people who care enough to make sure that these people are cared for. Also during one of our group discussions a met a person named Gary who was really upset bout how elders are treated in our society,especially because his mother was elderly and people didn't really want to help her either. When we got to talking we both understood more of what the problem really was and even came up with ideas on how to help relieve this problem.

For a technical writing course I was required to contact a local, non-profit organization and offer my technical writing services. I ended up writing a funding grant for a local, non-profit animal sanctuary. Although I am an electrical engineering transfer degree student, this writing assignment is still the most personally rewarding educational experience I have had thus far at PCC. (I have only three more courses to complete here at PCC before I transfer to a four-year institution.)

Help your self to solve your own existing problems within the faults of your professors trying to back-bite and hinder one another and then maybe you will be able to help the student gain a better quality of education as opposed to trying to get your paychecks in order!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am a technical writer by trade and my technical writing class gave me the opportunity to fine tune my writing skills. Also, since I was doing so well I had the opportunity to review a technical website and write weekly reviews on it.

I came into college in September 2007 as a person re-entering the community from a life of alcohol and drug addiction. Writing 121 was one of my first courses and I never thought that I would pass. I was committed to going to school and no matter what grade I got I would continue to attend. I was open and was able to learn new ways of writing. [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] was my instructor and he guided me into turning my writing skills around. I received an A by the end of the term; which was the same time that I graduated from treatment. I was on my way and very excited for it.

I consider myself a generally positive person and had long held Anne Frank's statement that all people were basically good at heart as an example of my own attitude toward others. In WR122, I set out to "prove" Frank's position in an argument paper. Through my research and self-reflection, I came to the conclusion that we are basically selfish and survival-driven, but that through conscious decision and deliberate effort, we can be "good" people. This fundamentally changed how I view myself and how I view the words and actions of others.

I DEFINITELY don't have the energy to get into this! Suffice it to say that an interesting situation came up with overtones of cultural differences, age differences, and just plain communication difficulties.

Thanks to the professor, things came out about as well as they could have.

I did service learnin with SP 111, not WR 122

I don't have anything specific, I am an older student (age 35) and now enjoy reading and analyzing works of bygone writers.

i feel like the teachers were super supportive. one time i got a story published that my teacher wasn't a fan of, and i felt like she was genuinely proud of me, even if she didn't think it was a good story

I have had to navigate stressful situations with other students who have very strong feelings on certain issues. By using analytical and presentation skills that I have learned, I have been able to communicate important information in difficult situations.

I have taken English for a while, and it has help me shape a better vocabulary and a better way of thinking and writing. I had a teacher, that help me a lot with my writing, he would help me shape my ideas better so i could be able to write them it better expressions.

I learned a great deal about the environment during the research paper presentations because most people chose a topic related the the environment.

I learned all this and more taking the new directions course threw the womens resource center, it was an amazing leaning experience I don't believe I have ever had before.

I learned how to write a great argument paper in Writing 122.

I learned the difference between analytical and creative writing. I have a definite preference for creative writing, but analytical writing when the assignment calls for it gives me a better grade. This difference I learned more when writing for a history class. I do plan to take more lit and English classes, but I feel I have perhaps not taken enough to do this survey justice.

I must write reports in my career that are concise and accurate.

I never thought of myself as going to a local town hall meeting, but in Writing 122 I did the culture immersion paper and I delved into the world of politics. It opened up my eyes to a part of life I would never have gone to and instilled in me a srong interest in politics.

I sat in class to receive information. Once at home, I processed and used the information in order to complete assignments, both personal and academic.

I think my technical writing class did the most to help me. I learned how to make professional documents that I might use in the workplace. That is a skill I might actually use in my career, unlike traditional writing classes that focus on creative writing.

I think the college writing classes have prepared be to write better in the sense of being to write in varity of ways. I feel I have been able to take aspects and write for example better application essays for jobs, school programs and essays.

I took Creative Writing: Scriptwriting in Fall 2009. It was a night class and had a very diverse age range and background make up of students. We all wrote two plays and had one critically critiqued by the class after being read outloud. Workshop classes like this class can be intimidating and frankly nervewracking because

of this. However, the instructor made us all feel confident in our writing abilities and guided us all through constructive criticism of other student's work. It was a wonderful process that each writer appreciated. We laughed, we talked, we ate good food and we learned a lot. It was an amazing group to be a part of.

I took my course online; there's no real-life story to tell

I took online Eng 104- Intro to fictional literature, which isn't listed here. I haven't been pleased with any of the English classes I've taken at PCC. One of my instructors used to bring in past students' work, point out minor flaws and then literally laugh at it.

I took WR 122 with Christopher Rose and my general experience was that he talked to us about self reflection but did not offer the process up as a learning tool therefore those of us not familiar with self reflection did not get practice using the tool of self reflection.

I was abundantly given new information and was open up to a world unknown to me prior.

I was often frustrated with mr on-line teacher always telling me she was too busy to give the feed back I needed . I

I was very disapointed in my English instructor. She did not apply very much time to this class, and she did not really teach anything. The discussion questions that were posted, were good questions. However, she did not participate in the discussion at all. While I really enjoyed the stories that were chosen from the text, they were all politically slanted one way. There were no opposing views, nor did she ask for apposing views.

I work in customer service/collections; verbal communication is very important for this job. I had, and still have to a certain extent, difficulty being concise. I'm still working on improving my communicaton skills, trying to cut back superfluous language and "getting to the point" quicker. The feedback from the instructor throughout the course helped me improve this area significantly. Something in particular that my instructor said to us was that it's easy to say no to everything, but an intelligent yes is much harder. Thinking about that particular statement and our discussion surrounding that had a big impact on me and helps me keep my arrogance in check regularly. [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] and many of the things she pointed out about fallacies and arguments really made me think about and reconsider many of my opinions and attitudes. I learned a lot in that class.

I would've liked feedback from the instructor. We didn't receive our papers till the end of the term and that made it difficult for me to know where I was in the class.

In my Writing 122 course, during a class discussion that touched on racism, the whole class seemed dumdfounded to discover that unlike the rest of them, I believed that a racist had just as much right to his racist beliefs as everyone else has to disagree with them. They were dumdfounded because I was the only self-disclosed African American woman in the class. They assumed that I would be as close-minded towards a racist as the racist would be/is to me. However, I had come to better understand the value of learning how to hear-IF NOT ACCEPT OR AGRRE WITH-an opinion that was oppositional and offensive to my own, in my Writing 121 course.

In the two writing courses I participated in through PCC, we were assigned work and reading on a steady basis by the instructor. So much of writing is a thoughtful consideration and response to the world around us. The books we read were thoughtfully chosen and the major writing assignments for the term were imaginative, creative and interactive with the world we live in. The course was stimulating and the instructor interactive. After personal contemplation, I would have to stress the importance of classroom reading material and major assignment topics. Through these arenas the mind finds stimulation and room to grow.

In WR122 we had to take a look at propaganda in all forms, not just through word. It forced the students, myself included, to look at artwork used as advertisements and see the subtle yet real messages held within them, be it through color contrast, symbolism, or merely distinct shapes and focuses. It helped me see that a story or opinion does not have to be held just in word, but can and is held in other mediums as well. When I pass a poster on the street now I tend to see it in a whole new light.

In writing 122, I wrote a paper on the education system. The end product turned out to be completely different than what my idea first started out as. I ended up learning that my educational experience as a child was very neglected. My paper went from my writing about my childhood educational experiences to a suggested reform of the education system in general. It was a totally great learning experience for me that I will always hold on to.

Instead of relaying real-life stories I'd like to ask what in the world do Composition classes have to do with 'community responsibility' and 'environmental responsibility'? Your time and my tax dollars should be spent on educating students, not pushing political beliefs or agendas.

Just noticing how every single person has a different perspective on things is a huge stepping stone to me advancing as a person and with my education.

Most of the english classes that we are required to take are taught by self driven teachers who love only to talk about their own agenda. Unless you pretend to agree with them then you are likely to fail. They have no room for 'listening', 'accepting others opinions' or, even having an 'open mind'.

My academic writing skills have increased very much, while taking these courses at PCC, and I feel more confident moving forward with my education that I am better able to put pen to paper and express my thoughts clearly.

My speech and writing has improved dramatically, I am more confident in professional situations, and I feel inspired to be involved in the community. I am now a Community Development major and regularly volunteer.

My WR 122 class was web based. Most weekly assignments involved reading an article then writing a response guided by the teacher's prompts. I learned a great deal about literary criticism from this process and the subsequent exchanges with my classmates in the discussion forum.

My writing has improved. I was used to drafting letters and business documents. Now I tend to formalize them and creat a better informed documents as well as brush up on the formating of my documents.

No story comes to mind. Though I appreciated many of my instructors, especially those within the "creative writing" classes, I did not experience anything significant worth recalling. To me these classes were lectures - nothing more. In my opinion any "cultural responsibility" and "awareness of issues" should come from personal experience, not a desire to look for it in order to attain a grade. My purpose in being a student is to learn method - leave it to me to find reasons for using it.

Note: For 8e and 8f, I already had excellent business writing and communication skills and lots of professional experience; so taking the class WR227 (required) was a review rather than a new skills development course. The book and course were designed for students who theoretically had no professional

writing experience - memos, reports, procedures, slide shows. I think the course met those objectives. I did enjoy the oral presentations we had to make - prepared team presentations and individual improvised oral presentation. The course was actually a business communications course - both writing and oral professional communication.

One day for class we went outside and described the world we saw in detail. It was a new way to look at day to day things and by that means I found another way of writing.

One day, in my writing class, we read parts of a story about a group of people that live in Ireland. The speaking in the story sounds out the accents of the people in the story. we went into a deep discussion of Irish authors and what goes into a good Irish accent.

Our class was tasked with interviewing a relative stranger and then crafting said interview into a short piece of writing. As we had the assignment explained to us I could already envision the stranger I was going to interview; the guy in the white suit who plays trumpet on the side of the Hawthorne bridge. It would've been perfect, except for the simple biological fact that I'm terrified of meeting new people. I'm extremely shy and tend to make a poor first impression. Thankfully, however, my instructor had given a bit of an outline to consider for doing the actual interview and, while it didn't alleviate my social anxiety, it did give me structure to fall back on. Once I got out on the bridge I may not have been Jon Stewart or Oprah, but I did get my interview with the trumpet player (his name is Kirk) and it was an experience I will not forget.

Overall, my educational experience at PCC has been awesome. My 121 instructor did help me to improve my writing ability, even though he cramped my writing style by trying to impose his own style in the corrections. My experience in 122 was poor. The required textbook was undesirable to read. The papers were so specific and uninteresting. The instructor did not respond to any emails or questions so that I could get help and try to find out what it was she was wanting from my paper. I ended up with the first 'C' I have ever, in my life, gotten in a writing class. I felt like I learned much more about the 122 subject in my speech 111 class.

Practicing reading and writing enhances my communication skills.

[INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] had an assignment on communicating with people from other cultures. It also covered presentations and memos. I am starting a nursing program in the fall and I believe I will use these skills in my profession.

Since taking WR 121 and 122, I've certainly seen an improvement of my writing and communication skills in the workplace. I have a professional position and interact with other professionals in my industry as well as a diverse group of clients. Aside from technical writing skills, I believe discussion, reading and writing about social, economic and cultural issues has helped me improve my sensitivity to and interaction with people of varying personality types, social status and cultural background.

Some people have test-phobia. I have paper-phobia. In fact, I'm taking this survey to procrastinate; I have a three page paper that I need to finish by tomorrow. Writing is not something I've ever felt came easily to me, although I recognize it's importance, love to read, and enjoy language. That said, taking writing courses has been helpful to me. I tested into WR 121 and opted to take WR 115 for the practice, particularly sentence structure and grammar. I'm not perfect yet. My experience with WR 121 was exceptional, because my instructor chose really engaging and thought-provoking reading. The analysis was on a higher level than I'd been used to, or really have done since. (I'm an engineering student, and so don't take many humanities

courses.) I'm answering the question obliquely, because the experience that has been most positive for my subsequent coursework and work was WR 227. (The experiences during the course are discussed above in Question 7's response re: group work.) This term I wrote or co-wrote 15 lab reports. Understanding tone, passive voice, format, formal report style, along with working toward my personal goal to be less verbose (ha!) - were extremely helpful to putting together effective lab reports. Even if a huge blunder occurred in the lab and the data was meaningless, the labs were A's because they were well-written and I could describe the procedures in detail, explain my understanding of the material and the significance of the results.

The class that I think best has improved my communication skills has been Wr. 227 technical writing. Although Wr. 122 taught me the most about basic writing, technical writing enforced a higher professionalism and variety of subject.

The memory that sustains me the most is one from ENG 204. There was a complication with my group's final, and for whatever reason, it wouldn't play, and despite that, our professor ([INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED] --still hands down the professor I respect the most out of every school and discipline I've encountered) allowed us to offer an oral presentation, rather than the short movie we'd made, and met with us individually to be sure we'd understood the material we were responsible for. I hadn't expected that level of generosity and understanding from a professor, and it has influenced my belief that the myth is true---professors do just want their students to succeed.

Very recently, I read an article about Obama announcing intentions of education reform. He focused on getting rid of bad teachers and making schools more accountable for their students, and spoke of plans to retool the 'No Child Left Behind' program started by the Bush administration. I was disappointed in the article and the president. Last fall (2009), I took the WR122 course by [INSTRUCTOR'S NAME DELETED]. For one of my final papers, I chose to write on problems in the public education system. I have a 13 year old son, and had run-ins with bad teachers myself, and decided to focus mainly on how to get rid of bad teachers, thinking that tenure was far too powerful and getting bad teachers out of the system was too difficult. While researching for the paper, I learned quite a bit about what tenure actually is, how it works and why and how it came about. I also learned about teachers' unions and how, when combined with tenure, make for the impossible situations parents and community members encounter when trying to get bad teachers out of schools. The focus of my paper changed with my point of view, and ultimately I came to see that unions and the lawyers (and the threat of legal action) they provide cause a lot of the 'bad teacher retention'. Rates of teacher termination compared to any other job is astronomically low, and creates an environment that doesn't encourage teachers to do their best, and provides situations for dissention among teachers, particularly from those who do strive to do their best right next to those that seem to care little for anything more than their paycheck. I concluded that the public k-12 education system would benefit from less union intervention and a more localized control in staff, similar to that of private schools. Teachers in private schools are judged far more on their merit and performance, rather than whether or not they've acquired tenure and/or if they're a member of one or more unions. Private school teachers are terminated for bad job performance and not meeting standards far more than public school teachers -- making them accountable for their actions. I still have the paper, and I've considered sending it to the president with a letter expressing my disappointment. I often feel actions like these are futile however, and don't know if I should be bothered. I'm disappointed because he seems fairly intelligent, his words surprised me because he seems like someone who would not make statements that seem like knee-jerk responses to what you see on the surface. At the same time, I made my own assumptions and had to do research to discover I was wrong in my approach. Anyway, this was the first thing I thought about when asked to relate a real-life story while considering writing courses I'd taken at PCC>

When I took both Creating Writing - Poetry and Advanced Creative Writing - Poetry, we were required to

write our own original pieces, and bring them to class to read aloud and critique as a group. Poetry brings up a level of emotion not present in many other college classes, and because of that I really had to hone my communication skills so I could critique the work and not the person who wrote it. To do this, I was required to put myself in that person's shoes for a moment and consider how I would feel about the advice I was about to give. Having the privilege of hearing the personal thoughts and concerns of fellow students also made me more aware of the problems people in my area deal with every day. It makes you think about life in your community. I think it should be a requirement for college students to take a poetry class because of how it makes you step into other peoples' shoes and learn how to become vulnerable in a group setting. The fine tuning of these skills have also been beneficial to me in my personal life as well as at work.

While enrolled in WR121, the stories I read opened my eyes to others perspectives. This in turn created some degree of understanding.

While in my writing class I was taught the implications and consequences of advertising language. Because of this, I am now able to look at a product or commercial with a different view, a more informed and cautious view.

while taking the editing and publishing class, i realized that book publishing was what i wanted to do with my education. through the class i was exposed to the iprc and the more independent side of publishing that portland has to offer. this exposure has helped me to paint a picture of where i see myself and how i want to proceed.

While writing my papers for WR 122 I chose to write about our school nutrition program. It gave me the opportunity to speak with some of my superiors and co-workers in a different light. It now, to this day, allows me to help others see the rest of what goes on when there's a problem instead of letting them think people are being allowed to do something wrong.

## 7) Distance Learning

### Section 7: Distance Learning (DL) Program

#### APPENDICES

##### A. Advising

(no appendices)

##### B. Delivery Methods

###### Fall 2009 Enrollments

CLWEB	WR 115	33
CLWEB	WR 121	98
WEB	ENG 104	23
WEB	ENG 105	22
WEB	WR 115	100
WEB	WR 121	430
WEB	WR 90	46

#### Fall 2008 Enrollments

CLWEB	WR 121	100
WEB	ENG 104	21
WEB	ENG 105	22
WEB	WR 115	59
WEB	WR 121	295
WEB	WR 90	15

#### Fall 2007 Enrollments

CLWEB	WR 121	76
WEB	ENG 104	47
WEB	ENG 105	23
WEB	WR 115	42
WEB	WR 121	177

#### Fall 2006 Enrollments

CLWEB	WR 121	92
WEB	ENG 104	24
WEB	WR 115	44
WEB	WR 121	114

#### Fall 2005 Enrollments

WEB	ENG 104	16
WEB	ENG 105	20
WEB	WR 115	48
WEB	WR 121	203

See <http://www.pcc.edu/ir/surveys/dist-learning/DLSurveyresults2009.pdf>

### **C. Enrollments**

#### Fall 2009 average Withdraw Percentages: On-Campus/DL

WR 115 on-campus = 9% (range = 0% - 30%), DL = 15.5% (range = 0% - 43.5%)

WR 121 on-campus = 10% (range = 0% - 46%), DL = 10% (range = 0% - 23%)

WR 122 on-campus = 7% (range = 0% - 18.5%), DL = 19% (range = 0% - 33%)

WR 227 on-campus = <1% (range = 0% - 4%), DL = 12% (range = 0% - 21%)

### **D. Resources**

#### Library Services

The PCC library staff is here to help students and faculty with homework, research and information needs. Whether the student is at school or off campus,

the PCC library is here to help. The following links may be of special interest to online students.

Distance Students

Information about library services for distance students

Ask a Librarian

You can ask a librarian a question in person, via email, through online chat or by phone

Course Reserves

Many online classes have electronic material reserved that you can access through the library website

E-books

Free books available on the internet and through the library website

Library Research Class

Take a one credit class online and learn how to use library and internet research resources

Subject Guides

The library has prepared a collection of subject guides which include websites, books, study guides, videos and more to help with your research and study needs.

Class Pages

Some PCC classes have helpful webpages that librarians have tailored specifically for their projects. Check to see if your class has a research guide.

How to Search the Library Catalog

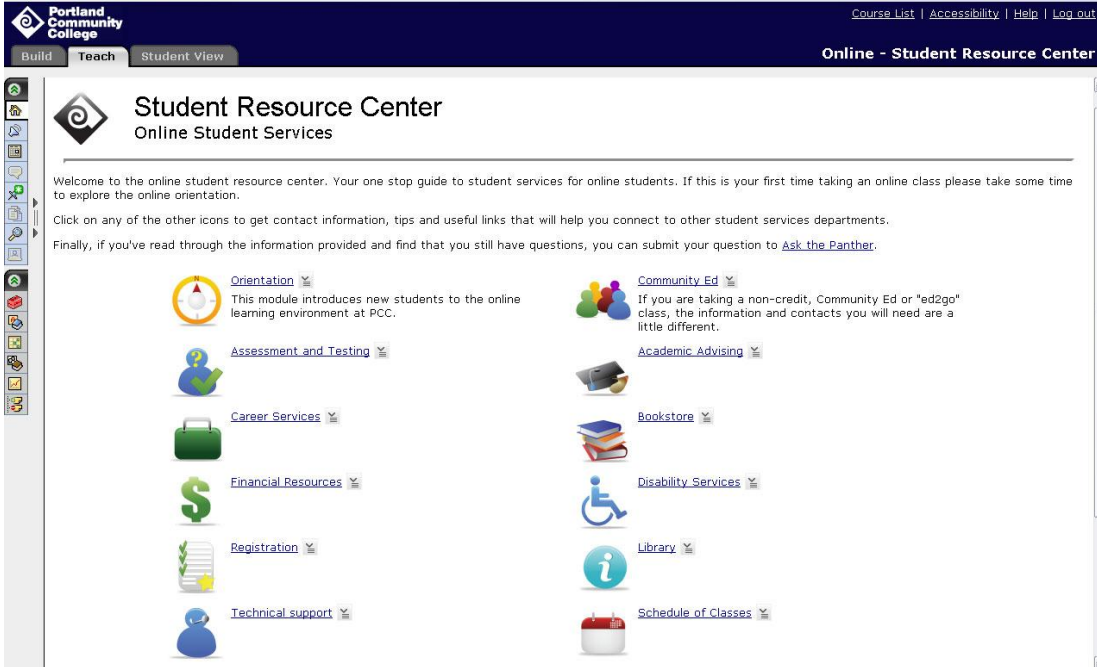
A tutorial video about how to search the PCC Library online catalog

Other Libraries

The PCC Library partners with many other academic and public libraries to give you access to materials at your local library. You can also borrow materials the library doesn't have through Interlibrary Loan.

Here is a chart of library services and resources listed for traditional classes and distance learning classes.

	Traditional Classes	Distance Learning Classes
Instructional Services	Face-to-face library instructional session	Discussion board Phone conferencing Camtasia (video demonstration) Particular RSS feed messages with text, links, and/or tutorials delivered to your WebCT course page.
	Research guides for a department, course, or assignment.	Research guides for a department, course, or assignment.
	Information literacy instruction over multiple sessions	Weekly RSS feed messages with text, links, and/or tutorials delivered to your WebCT course page.



	Online tutorials	Online tutorials
Library Resources	Film Booking	Streamed videos
	Reserves	e-reserves
	Coursepacks	e-coursepacks
Reference Services	Reference desk	Discussion board Phone reference Chat / text reference (PCC faculty) 24/7 virtual reference (statewide service)

PCC has initiated the Online Student Resource Center. The following information is provided by Carey Larson, Online Student Services Facilitator.

Online Student Resource Center

**History**

The Online Student Resource Center in Blackboard began as an effort to promote some of PCC’s online student services that can be hard to find on the public web site. The vast majority of the content in this “course” is informational and related to student services as indicated in this screenshot of the home page:

The SRC contains modules for the following student services:

- Online Orientation
- Community Ed
- Assessment and Testing
- Academic Advising
- Career Services
- Bookstore
- Financial Resources
- Disability Services
- Registration
- Library
- Technical Support
- Schedule of Classes
- Tutoring
- An RSS feed from a blog called “Tools & Tips for Online Students”

Each of these modules contains the contact info (phone & email) for the relevant department, a link to the department web page and a list of relevant links to information and services that can be accessed on the web.

All students who are enrolled in a course with an online component (fully online or hybrid) have access to the SRC. Students are added to the course the week before classes start each term. This gives students an opportunity to explore how Blackboard works and become familiar with the student services available to support them before classes start. They also use this time to chat with each other in the discussion forums where experienced online students help to answer questions and relieve the anxieties of new students.

The student responses to the SRC were grateful and excited. Apparently, many of them had been hoping for something like this. The discussion forums quickly grew to be a social venue for online students who had always wanted a way to connect with other students.

In the discussion forums, the most popular topics tend to be technical support issues, and how to handle the unique demands of being an online student. More recently the popular discussion threads are about dealing with the delay of financial aid disbursement, and students over the age of 40 looking to connect with other older students to talk about what it’s like to be an online student with a family and a full time job.

### **Dealing with issues:**

Because the discussion forums were extremely active, a plan was developed to deal with the potential of controversial posts. Whenever a controversial comment appears in the discussion forums the student code of conduct is reviewed to determine if there are any violations. Action is taken if necessary. The discussion forums are monitored daily

**Benefits of the SRC:**

- Students are more aware of the student service resources at their disposal and usage of these resources has increased
  - Online students are excited that they are being listened to; they have expressed that in the past they felt isolated and ignored
  - Online students feel like they are part of a community and have support from each other and from PCC where they need it
  - When issues arise, we are able to intervene and address them quickly, rather than wait until the end of the term when a negative course evaluation is received or a grievance is filed
  - Help for students is available after hours when they need it most (refer them to 24 hour library services, help them to login to online tutoring. Students feel more comfortable asking "stupid" questions in this forum where their instructors (i.e. authority figures who grade them) aren't watching
  - It helps online students in ways we weren't able to in the past
  - It's one of the most efficient ways to assist students when enrollment exceeds support capacity
- 

**Stats and Student Feedback:**

Summer 2009 total discussion forum posts: 286

Fall 2009 total discussion forum posts: 568 and growing daily!

**Students say... (direct quotes from the discussion forums)**

"Whoever thought of this idea is wonderful! I've taken online classes before, and it sure would have been helpful to be able to interact with the other students."

"This is awesome!"

"About time! jk jk, it's great there is a place us students can come online to receive assistance."

"Thank you, where was this a few years ago . . . grateful for it now"

"I think this is awesome. I wish this was here when I started with my first online class. I will be monitoring this a lot."

"This is great! I'm taking my 6th on-line course and every once in a while you have a question. This will be wonderful for those times!"

"This would have been so helpful when I started taking online classes. Thank you for creating it and helping those in the future. I am sure this was a lot of hard work and it will be much appreciated by online students."

"Hi! What a relief! This is my first online class and I think I am over-stressing myself about it. I am depending on the school computer lab and a friend's computer to complete this course, as I do not own a computer. So far, so good, but it is good to know if I hit a snag or get stuck, that I have this option. Thank you!"

"This is my first online class, I been so anxious to start, but since I have started I'm nervous. Thanks for the info, I hope that I do not ask to many questions.:)"

"This looks pretty cool. I am taking all online classes this summer, and this forum and the info could help a lot. Look forward to learning more! Good luck to everyone."

### Tutoring services

The FAQ for the online tutoring service is here:

[http://spot.pcc.edu/css/etutor/online\\_tutoring\\_faq.htm](http://spot.pcc.edu/css/etutor/online_tutoring_faq.htm)

The writing tutors for PCC who staff the service are the same part time instructors who ran the OWL: Kris Fink and Catherine Landwehr. Following is a report for the student usage of eTutoring for Fall term from the beginning of classes until November 18.

### **Portland Community College - eTutoring Student Account Activity Summary**

The following shows your institution's student activity for each interactive type for the given date range.

**Date Range: 09/20/2009 - 11/18/2009**

**New Accounts Created This Period: 13**

**Total Active Accounts: 174**

**Total registered eTutoring Accounts: 38314**

#### **Interaction Types**

#### **eQuestions Posts Time (hh:mm)**

**Accounting 9 3:00**

**Anatomy and Physiology 1 0:20**

**Biology 3 1:00**

**Calculus 1 0:20**

**Chemistry 2 0:40**

**Math 44 14:40**

**Spanish 2 0:40**

**Statistics 2 0:40**

**Writing 6 2:00**

**Total 70 23:20**

#### **Breeze eChat Sessions Time (hh:mm)**

**Total 79 58:56**

#### **eWriting Submissions Time (hh:mm)**

**Writing 158 118:30**

**Total 158 118:30**

**Overall Sessions: 307 201:46**

## **E. Quality Assessments**

(no appendices)