

WRITE FREE OR DIE

Volume 9, Issue 1

The Newsletter of the UNH Writing Program

Fall 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Tech Transformations	1
Upcoming Events	1-2
Writing Committee	2
Ask Perkins	3-4
The Grammar Box	5
Dangling Modifier	6-7
Spotlight Profile: David Cataneo and the OWL	8
Past Perfect	9
WI Faculty Retreat	10



Tech Transformations in the UWP

Meaghan Dittrich, PhD
Director, University Writing Programs

This year came with many technological shifts in our University Writing Programs, so many that it seemed appropriate to use this space – traditionally the WP director’s opportunity to offer a little insight into the field of writing at large – instead for a few announcements.

First, we have a new website. Our old URL of www.unh.edu/writing is still operational, but has a permanent redirect to the new link, <https://www.unh.edu/student-success/university-writing-programs>. We want to make sure faculty are all very much aware that, despite our site being housed under Student Success, our services and support for faculty are all very much available and accessible through the University Writing Programs pages. The UWP encompasses both faculty and student support, including the Connors Writing Center, which is the main decision behind the site’s location. Rest assured that WI course information, the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, professional development opportunities, and other faculty needs are all included in the UWP website under the “Faculty” and “Resources” tabs.

In anticipation of new website navigation, a group of our astute graduate students have taken on a website usability project, conducting a series of focus groups of different campus populations (both students and instructors from various backgrounds) to evaluate how user-friendly the Connors Writing Center Website is. They are particularly looking at the website’s accessibility and the ease of finding resources and navigating the site.

(continued on page 2)

Future Tense: Upcoming Writing Across the Curriculum Events

Fall Semester WAC Brown Bag: October 20, 2022, from 12:40-2pm in Dimond Library room 352. A round-table event for faculty to share information and discuss writing in their courses. All faculty interested in discussing writing in their courses welcome. Registration will be through [CEITL](#). [Worth 1 CEITL Participation Point]

National Day on Writing celebration: October 20, 2022, from 12:40-2pm in Hamilton Smith atrium.

January Workshop: TBD Look for coming announcements. Registration information available on our [Events](#) page or through the CEITL website. [Worth 1 CEITL Participation Point]

February 28, 2023: Guest Speaker [Dr. Allison Harper Hitt](#) (12:40-2:00pm, via Zoom). Rhetoric and Composition scholar and author of *Rhetorics of Overcoming: Rewriting Narratives of Disability and Accessibility in Writing Studies* joins us for a talk on “Prioritizing Accessibility: Engaging in Inclusive Writing Instruction.” In higher education, there is a tendency to try to diagnose disabled students and default to accommodations rather than crafting more accessible pedagogical environments. Meeting students’ needs require foregrounding accessibility in physical and digital space, curricular and programmatic design, and interactions with each other. This presentation will address how to design writing classrooms and curricula that are truly accessible, rather than simply accommodating of difference. Look for registration information on our [Events](#) page or through the CEITL website. This event made possible by the generosity of the Dey Family Fund. [Worth 1 CEITL Participation Point]

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Writing-Invested White Mountain Faculty Retreat: (June 5-7, 2023 at the Omni Mount Washington Hotel). The UNH Writing Program invites applications for *any* faculty member invested in improving student writing in their courses. (Priority will be given to writing-intensive course faculty). 10 participants design or revise the writing elements in their course(s). Includes lodging with lunches at the Omni Mount Washington Hotel (family members are welcome to accompany participants). Participants then become part of the larger Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Faculty Network. For more information, please contact Meaghan.Dittrich@unh.edu. See final page of this issue for full advertisement. **Applications due by March 15.** This annual even made possible by the generosity of the Dey Family Fund.

WAC(ky) People

UNH Writing Program

Meaghan Dittrich, Director
Cyndi Roll, Writing Ctr Assoc. Dir.
Ashley Barry, WP Assist. Dir.
Nicole Cunningham-Frisbey, WP Assist. Dir.
Caroline Hall, WP Assist. Dir.

University Writing Committee: College Representatives Term End

Paul—Inchan Kim 2024
(Decision Sciences)

COLSA—Davida Margolin 2024
(MCBS)

CEPS—Robert Letscher 2023
(Earth Sciences)

COLA 1—Clara Castro-Ponce 2025
(Literatures, Languages, & Cultures)

COLA 2—Michelle Gibbons 2023
(Communication)

CHHS—Lauren Ferguson 2025
(Recreational Management & Policy)

UNHM—C.C. Hendricks 2023
(English, Director of First-Year Writing Program)

Permanent Representatives

Director of University Writing Programs
Meaghan Dittrich (Academic Affairs)

Director of Composition
Cris Beemer* (English)

CEITL
Catherine Overson (Academic Affairs)

Discovery Committee
Kathrine Aydelott (Dimond Library)

Ex officio (non-voting)

Committee Secretary
Elizabeth Smith (Registrar)

*Faculty Chair

(continued from page 1)

The graduate students will present their work-in-progress project at the International Writing Center Association conference in October, 2022. We are excited for them to complete their work and look forward to their suggestions for making the website easier to use for everyone at UNH.

Along with website changes, we are also attempting to streamline other faculty services, such as how to request classroom visits from a member of the Connors Writing Center Outreach team. Now, it is easy to submit a request by simply filling out a Qualtrics form, now available on our website under "[CWC Classroom Visits](#)." The CWC's best form of Outreach is through these classroom visits and we appreciate the chance you give us by providing a few minutes to make your students aware of our services. In addition, we enjoy working with your students to demonstrate good peer review practices. Feel free to fill out the form and ask our Outreach team to come speak to your students for one of these excellent presentations.

Finally, the CWC now offers a new service for faculty that we're very excited about – feedback on your assignment prompts. Wondering about how your expectations about writing are coming across to a student audience? Our writing assistants can tell you what your prompts are communicating, what questions might come up, and how they interpret your assignments. Students provide anonymous written feedback to any instructor looking to know how their prompts are being read. For more information on this service, please contact the Writing Program Director at Meaghan.Dittrich@unh.edu.

*"Before you become too
entranced with gorgeous gadgets
and mesmerizing video displays,
let me remind you that information
is not knowledge, knowledge is not
wisdom, and wisdom is not
foresight. Each grows out of the
other, and we need them all."*

— Arthur C. Clarke

Ask Perkins:

Your teaching concerns addressed by our very own Perkins Cunningham-Frisbey

As Transposed from Peep to Person by Nicole Cunningham-Frisbey, Associate Director, UNH Writing Programs

Dear Perkins,

My students struggle with deadlines, and I am often left with late submissions, which can delay my grading turnaround time. How can I better manage deadlines for all my students with various needs and for me?

*-Sincerely,
Loopy with Lateness*



Dear Loopy with Lateness,

We birdies often find that some of the flock struggle to keep up in seasonal migratory patterns. Fear not. There is a flexible method that won't fly over your head which allows individual birds to swoop in for a more fluid gathering. *Rolling deadlines* can work toward a better representation of the average college student as a whole person, who, like their instructors, have competing demands on their time in social settings, homelife settings, workspace settings and, yes, multiple classroom settings.

There are some common ways you can incorporate flexible deadlines into your assignment design. *Project management praxis* works very well with the writing process of major assignments in any WI course (or non-WI course) in your discipline. Withington and Schroeder (2017) offers adapting a four-stage theory of project management as praxis in your teaching method to improve warbler work output. For each writing assignment you design, have a startup submission (the brainstorming stage), the planning stage (outlining submission), execution (the drafting stages) and the close-down phase (the final draft). As you design your writing prompt criteria, consider realistically for your students how much time each phase would take for them on average to complete. Create deadlines where they submit a draft or outline of their work or have them provide a short reflective progress report on what they did, what they're doing and what they plan to do next at the midway point through a major writing project. For final drafts, provide students with several manageable dates (for you and them) to decide when they can submit their final projects to you without running a fowl.

Rolling Deadlines, aka flexible deadlines, can best be defined by this comprehensive explanation provided by Hill and Peacock's article "Replacing Power with Flexible Structure: Implementing Flexible Deadlines to Improve Student learning Experiences":

...flexible deadline policies as those that allow all students in a course some degree of freedom over when they submit an assignment, without consequences that could negatively impact the students' learning or grades. These policies should maintain enough structure to support student learning but relinquish enough power to respect students as capable, self-regulated learners'... They should be transparent and equally accessible to all students and avoid requiring that students make requests and disclose personal and private information... these practices allow us to better respect the diverse identities, experiences and circumstances that students bring to their learning...to create equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for all students (2022).

Many scholars in the STEM fields have been arguing for curriculum design that offers flexible and comprehensive assignment deadline methods since as early as 2006, such as Katrin Becker in her piece "Death to Deadlines: A 21st Century Look at the Use of Deadlines and Late Penalties in Programming Assignments." Becker advocated for creating clear criteria in assignment design for computer science degree programs, highlighting that it would provide ownership and responsibility allocated to the student (2006). In addition to empowering students, these benefits extend to the instructor, since students are less likely to turn in low quality work and less likely to plagiarize.

Utilizing flexible deadlines that combine soft and hard deadlines teaches fledglings highly valued workspace skills especially, in the project management sectors of many corporate job opportunities and STEM jobs that often engage in professional collaborative settings at work. Talbert, a mathematics professor who teaches students pursuing STEM and/or business degrees, discusses the importance of offering flexible deadlines in his blogpost "A Real World Approach to Deadlines." His analysis of several case studies conducted in workspace environments revealed that employees who can easily discern between soft deadlines and hard deadlines were more likely to meet many of their deadlines, able to produce higher quality work by the final stage, and less likely to request extensions for hard deadlines from their supervisors. Familiarizing students with flexible/rolling deadlines in your course design will better prepare them for the workspace environment and students will recognize how this will be an important component of their success overall.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 4)

This approach benefits instructors in several ways. It creates a manageable volume of the feedback cycle for grading, which also reduces the brood of emails requesting extensions or excuses for not completing the work on time. Most of all, flexible deadline policies give you opportunities to check-in with your chicks on how they are doing in the course by offering soft deadlines to turn in artifacts representing different stages of their work. This provides occasions to create more meaningful engagement with students during conferences and workshoping sessions.

Rolling deadlines are one part of a multi-part process for parroting accessible assignment criteria. Therefore, a good suggestion on where you can start incorporating rolling deadlines can begin in three common ways that have been used by other WI instructors in the past:

- I. If possible, consider incorporating a broad policy in your syllabus on rolling deadlines for your course: what they are, how you define them, how you expect students to engage with them. Make clear how this will help both you and your student overall succeed in the course.
- II. When you design individual writing assignments, especially high-stakes assignments, consider the following criteria to include:
 - i. Provide a checklist of key elements that each part/stage/phase of the project you want your students to focus and work on, one at a time.
 - ii. Provide soft deadlines for checking in with them; this could be requesting they submit to you their plans for the project/outline, or a 1st or second draft of the artifact.
 - iii. Incorporate peer reviewing sessions either during class or as asynchronous/homework.
 - iv. Offer several final draft deadline options and at least two separate dates for submitting final drafts of their completed work.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, last year the number of students between the ages of 3 to 21 who received special education services under IDEA was 7.2 million (15% of all public-school students). Among them the most common category of disability was learning disability (about 33%). They predict this number will continue to soar as the education system becomes more precise in evaluating, accommodating, and modifying curriculum to meet students' needs. This means currently enrolled students in universities are coming from a k-12 system that nowadays provided them expansive and comprehensive IEPs/504s and other accommodation plans that addressed their learning needs. This means currently enrolled students in universities are coming from a K-12 system that nowadays provided them expansive and comprehensive IEPs/504s and other accommodation plans that addressed their learning needs. Although

there are support services that are optional for such students at many universities, these services don't always sufficiently provide the support and resources that are as robust and individualized in ways these students are used to or had received while they were hatchlings. Even so, there are many college students who do not have legal access to accommodations that could help them succeed in college. Having courses that allow them more agency and control over their workload can be extremely beneficial for students with diverse backgrounds and diverse learning needs.

So, don't just wing it. Giving students rolling deadlines/flexible deadlines in addition to other accommodating curriculum design options means they can choose a timeline that will allow them to showcase their abilities through achievable means. Not to mention the squawking you'll save yourself when you no longer have an inbox full of songs of late submissions!



Works Cited

- Katrin Becker, Death to Deadlines: A 21st Century Look at the Use of Deadlines and Late Penalties in Programming Assignments presented at WCCCE 2006 - *The Western Canadian Conference on Computing Education, Calgary, Alberta, May 4-6, 2006.*
- Hills, Melissa, and Kim Peacock. "Replacing Power with Flexible Structure: Implementing Flexible Deadlines to Improve Student Learning Experiences" *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*. Vol 10. Issue 26 2022.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2022). Students With Disabilities. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved [date], from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>.
- Talbert, Robert A. "A real world approach to deadlines" Blogpost Jan. 19 2022. URL: <https://rtalbert.org/a-real-world-approach-to-deadlines/> accessed: 10/14/22
- Withington, Keri, and Heather Lee Schroeder. "Rolling With the Semester: An Assignment Deadline System For Improving Student Outcomes and Regaining Control of the Workflow" *Journal of Student Success and Retention*. Vol 4. 1-28. 2017.

“Frankly, I wonder who Frank was, and why he has an adverb all to himself.”

— Jodi Picoult

The Grammar Box: Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammar

Caroline Hall, Associate Director, UNH Writing Program (Caroline.Hall@unh.edu)

You know the sentence “Perkins ate an apple for breakfast” sounds right. But “The Perkins ate apple for the breakfast” sounds wrong. If you were asked to quickly order the words “French, girls, the, four, young”, you would probably produce “the four young French girls” (Hartwell 111). Why?

Maybe you winced at the sentence I started with “but”. Or scowled at my split infinitive. You probably learned these sacrosanct and hoary grammar rules in school. You wouldn’t naturally absorb them.

I’ve just given examples of, respectively, descriptive and prescriptive grammar. “Descriptive grammar” observes *how* people talk and write; native speakers typically learn it without being taught, but non-native speakers need to learn cumbersome and imperfect rules. Here they are:

1. Proper nouns (like “Perkins”) rarely use an article. Countable singular nouns (like “apple”) usually take an article. Plural nouns (like “apples”) and most uncountable nouns (like “happiness”) can go either way (Whitman). There are exceptions and complications. “Breakfast” can be a countable or uncountable noun. Yet most native English speakers wouldn’t say “Perkins ate an apple for the breakfast.”
2. The order of adjectives is technically 1) opinion, 2) size, 3) condition, 4) shape, 5) age, 6) color, 7) pattern, 8) origin, 9) material, 10) type, and 11) purpose, as in “the beautiful, too-small, flat-arched, worn-down, decade-old, dun-colored, once-striped, Walmart canvas budget running shoes.” (Now you try!)

Did you know either rule? I didn’t.

Prescriptive grammar is textbook grammar, rules on how speakers *ought to* use language. It is taught rather than absorbed. As such, it reifies (or, arguably, can be used to challenge) class distinctions. Someone who uses double negatives and flubs “I” and “me” is tagged as uneducated, someone who does neither as educated. Plus, readers are likely to notice errors where they expect to find them (e.g., a student paper) but to gloss them over where they don’t expect them (e.g., a professionally published book) (Williams 154, 157). Did you notice, for example, the erroneous “but” and split infinitive in the first paragraph before I mentioned them? You may not have. And some students may get sucked into proofreading and lose track of ideas, organization, and even coherence (Perl).

It is never our intent or desire to critique the informed pedagogical choices of thoughtful educators. Instead, the UNH Writing Across the Curriculum program—which includes the Connors Writing Center—wishes to share its own consistent approach toward grammar, developed in consultation with other similar programs throughout the country. You can read a brief explanation of this approach [here](#). We begin by addressing “higher order” concerns: Does the writing fit the prompt? Does it have a clear argument, where relevant? Is the thinking sharp and unique? Is the writing clear and organized? If we help students proofread before addressing these questions, their corrections will likely be lost in the revision process. When we do address grammar, we look for patterns, so we can teach the rules and conventions, rather than simply correct the error. Hopefully, the student can then understand those concepts for future writing.

Works Cited

- “Adjectives: Order.” *English Grammar Today: The Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, 2022, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/grammar/british-grammar/adjectives-order> Accessed 18 September 2022.
- Hartwell, Patrick. “Grammar, grammars, and the teaching of grammar.” *College English*, 47, 2, Feb. 1985, 105-127.
- LaBate, Jim. “Will you proofread my paper?” *Medium*. 9 Dec 2021. <https://jimlabate.medium.com/will-you-proofread-my-paper-ade579bb9ae3> Accessed 18 Sept 2022.
- Perl, Sondra. “The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers.” *Cross Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader. Third Edition*. Victor Villanueva and Kristin Arola, eds. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2011, 17-43.
- Williams, Joseph. “The Phenomenology of Error.” *College Composition and Communication*, 34, 2, 1981, 152-168.
- Whitman, Neal. “When to use articles before nouns.” *Quick and Dirty Tips*, “Grammar Girl, June 4, 2010, <https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/articles/when-to-use-articles-before-nouns/>



Dangling Modifier: Research, Rescheduled: Helping Student Writers Slow Down

Caroline Hall, Associate Director, University Writing Programs (Caroline.Hall@unh.edu)

As a participant in the WAC program's review of Writing Intensive syllabi, I'm lucky enough to see the outlines of many well-constructed and intriguing research assignments. Your courses are offering exactly what UNH and the WAC program hope for: 1) writing integrated throughout the semester, 2) a combination of small, low stakes assignments with larger projects, 3) a structured, multi-step process for some assignments, and 4) feedback from instructors and/or peers during the early or middle stages of the process.

You probably still get research papers that throw you into despair. I met with Arts and Humanities Librarian Kathrine Aydelott to discuss common pitfalls we notice in students' research processes and brainstormed tweaks instructors can use to encourage authentic inquiry.

The biggest hurdle student writers face is a desire to jump to writing before doing enough thinking, reading, and research. It's hard to help goal-oriented writers slow down. In this issue of "Dangling Modifier," we explore ideas on how to *slow down* research projects.

Top ten ideas for teaching research papers:

1. **Introduce important "task" or "action" words during small assignments early in the semester—and use them consistently.** Words like "analyze" and "synthesize" can vary from course to course. Some instructors may expect analysis to include evaluation or reader responses; others won't. "Synthesize" is a useful and underused term—especially because most term papers ask for synthesis. You may find it useful to draft a list of all the actions (analysis, evaluation, identification, compare/contrast, etc.) students will need to employ to complete the major assignment.
2. **Maximize your small assignments by asking students to practice these key actions.** For example, if your final paper requires analysis, you may have found that many students have difficulty "zooming in" or focusing on an appropriately sized unit or detail for analysis. In an art paper, for instance, they may jump to analyzing themes or messages in an entire portrait rather than focusing on and analyzing the position of the hands or the artist's decision on whether to use visible brushstrokes. Craft discussion boards, reading responses, or other small assignments that shape the way students complete the required task. In the situation above, you might wish to create a discussion prompt asking students to analyze the painting by describing the body language and facial expressions in the picture and then inferring what each detail suggests. In this situation, you would ask students to focus on an appropriately-sized detail, which may help with their specificity in their final assignment.
3. **Design assignment sheets for your users.** Many miss the prompt. A redesigned assignment sheet won't eliminate confusion but may reduce it.
 - a. Write for the way Gen Z reads, not for the way the "perfect" student would read.
 - b. Be clear on the goal of the paper. Keep this statement short and simple and put it in the beginning.
 - c. Consider a bulleted list, plentiful white space, bolded text, and frequent subheadings.
 - d. Think of the assignment sheet and writing prompt as unique genre. Avoid thinking of them as a demonstration of strong writing; your students will get plenty of exposure to exemplary writing as the semester progresses.
4. **Start with background reading.** You need background before you begin researching and writing. Most courses address this need through readings, lectures, and films.




"The very existence of libraries affords the best evidence that we may yet have hope for the future of man."

-T.S. Eliot

(continued from page 7)

5. **Collect terms before beginning to research.** This is one of the key spots to *slow down* the process and an organic way to include ongoing review. If possible, it's ideal to sit with students one-on-one and ask them to write a list of these terms. If the course has shared readings, the group can collaborate.
6. **Remember the library isn't just a place anymore.** Students can access it on their phone or computer even if they're sick or away. They can chat with librarians remotely. Plus, some digital sources increase accessibility: students can change the size of the text, search for words or phrases, or enable the "read out loud" feature.
7. **Research before choosing topics.** If scaffolded assignments ask for an annotated bibliography, consider making this step an early item before identifying a topic, research question, or thesis. This suggestion may be counterintuitive. But if students select their topic before beginning their research, they may see research as a "scavenger hunt" rather than as reading or engaging texts. The result may be a paper that simply reiterates their first notions.
8. **Harness and expand the way students research.** I start with Google and Wikipedia. You might too. These sites provide background that can direct you to reputable popular sources (*The New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, etc.), and these sources may lead you to scholarly sources. In addition, these popular sources can, when used judiciously, be a useful source of key terms to use in research. You may need to be explicate about the fact that students can use the bibliography or citations from one source to lead them to other sources and that following chains of citations is an effective strategy for finding and identifying key work in a field.
9. **Take your time on topic selection; arrange a checkpoint with students.** The checkpoint can be with you, TAs, or peers. In the syllabi we're reviewing, I've seen something I consider particularly brilliant: many instructors engage most directly and intensely with students during the topic selection phase and use peer review for the full rough draft. This approach may be more efficient and effective. Peer reviewers are better equipped to review drafts than to narrow topics and refine search terms. Working with students early in the process—rather than commenting on a completed draft—will save you time.
10. **Have students submit a draft for review before they hand in the final. Remember, feedback does not need to always come from you!** If you can, fantastic! Peer review and workshops are also great options. (Please encourage them to visit the Connors Writing Center, but we ask not to make it a requirement or provide any incentives like extra credit, etc.)

Do you have any strategies for teaching research that you've found effective? If so, send a brief description to caroline.hall@unh.edu with the subject line "Dangling Modifier." 

"Better Ways to Teach Writing"

By Patricia A. Dunn

Excerpted from *Bad Ideas about Writing*

<https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf> (open source text)

Setting aside for a moment the conclusions of future studies, which will no doubt also be ignored, what can teachers do right now to help students improve their writing? They can teach writing in context. They can teach students to write in real-world situations, helping them notice how different writing projects can have very different constraints. No one is arguing here against grammar or against intense, sophisticated language study. In fact, people who know the most about grammar are aware that many so-called rules are not rules at all but merely conventions, which are not universal and can change over time and from genre to genre. The best teachers help their students keep pace with these changes and help them decide when and whether to use a reference from a 1950 or 2016 grammar handbook, or to look online for the most up-to-date guidelines. (The most informed text on language conventions and change is Garner's *Modern American Usage*, which obtains its evidence from a wide range of current usage.)

It goes without saying that everyone appreciates clear, well-edited writing. But teaching grammar won't help because clarity is slippery. What's clear to one reader might be unclear to the next, depending on his or her respective background knowledge. For example, sewing directions would be clear to a tailor, but not to someone who has never picked up a needle and thread. An article in a physics journal would be clear to a physicist, but not to a pharmacist.

Dunn, Patricia A. "Teaching Grammar Improves Writing." *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E Ball and Drew M Lowe. West Virginia University Libraries. 2017, pp 144-149.

Profile Feature: David Cataneo

Ashley Barry, Associate Director, University Writing Programs

Across UNH's campus, students work tirelessly on writing assignments. They draft well in advance of their deadlines, diligently revise their work, and seek out feedback from peers, writing support services, and professors alike. But students working late into the night to complete a draft may find themselves looking for feedback in the wee hours of the morning. They can't make an appointment with the CWC or email a professor or wake up their roommates. They can, however, send their writing to the OWL and sleep peacefully, knowing that an experienced writing consultant will give them feedback in a few days' time.

With no physical location or staff on campus, the OWL may be easy to overlook, but it serves a vital purpose for many students.

OWL Director David Cataneo has worked at UNH in various capacities since 2007. After leaving his journalism career at the Boston Globe and Boston Herald behind, David worked as a stay-at-home dad and writer. Among his many publications are several nonfictional works on baseball history, including *Casey Stengel: Baseball's Old Professor* and *Tony C: The Triumph and Tragedy of Tony Conigliaro* and his 2013 novel, *Eggplant Alley*. David later began a second career at UNH.



David's dog, Ike.

"Every writer needs at least one."

- David Cataneo

Describing himself as a "utility infielder," he describes the various positions he's played throughout his time here. David worked at the CWC as a writing assistant, eventually becoming an adjunct professor, teaching seven different courses in the fields of English and journalism over the course of 10 years. He became a consultant with the OWL and eventually, the director in 2009, a position he continues to hold.

The OWL has shapeshifted a number of times over its history, beginning as a self-sustained website and eventually moving to operating via email. This year, the OWL has morphed once again and now operates through the same portal as the CWC and CFAR, through WOnline. This streamlining will make it easier for students to seek out writing support and will solve issues that the previous system had. In its original form in the early 2000s, the OWL did function more like an editing service. Consultants felt the need to return papers to students without any errors. When David moved from working with the CWC to the OWL, he found he needed to evolve.

The OWL strives to be an online version of the CWC, in that they address the writer rather than the writing, with the goal of helping students become self-sufficient. However, the nature of the OWL provides additional challenges; because they do not work with students in real time, OWL consultants need to be good communicators. David quips that it's not unlike writing instructions for making a sandwich. Precision is key.

It is important for both faculty and students to understand that the OWL is not an editing service. The small but mighty organization walks the fine line between working with students (via written feedback) and working with their papers. The consultants have an impressive 72-hour turnaround time, but this means that students need to plan ahead and submit their papers for feedback in a timely manner.

Although he describes himself as "not a techie," David has rolled with all the various manifestations of the OWL with a seamlessness that would suggest otherwise. When it comes to this "invisible" but indispensable service to students, it's vital to have a great team of writing consultants headed by an equally wonderful and caring director like David Cataneo.

Past Perfect: a report on the June 2022 Faculty Retreat

Meaghan Dittrich, Director, University Writing Programs

Our annual Writing Invested (formerly Writing [Intensive](#)) Faculty Retreat was held from June 6-8, 2022, at the Omni Mount Washington [Hotel](#). Several years ago, the Writing Intensive retreat went through a small rebranding to try and promote a more inclusive faculty experience. Now not just those teaching WI courses are admitted to the program, but any faculty invested in writing for their classrooms, which ensures a more broad-reaching implementation of UNH's writing values.

This year we had a cohort of nine faculty members ranging across the university disciplines. It was a wonderful opportunity to see broad faculty investment and share knowledge about engaging students in the writing process. This annual retreat, paused for the past two years because of COVID, picks up again on our mission to advance writing across the curriculum. These new WAC faculty members will continue the program for the following months and complete their certificates in May 2023. At that point, they will join the larger [WAC network](#), serving as ambassadors for fellow faculty to consult with about writing in their fields. This faculty development disseminates down to students who are impacted by the experience faculty have during the offsite at the Mount Washington retreat.

We have already received glowing feedback from [this year's 2022 retreat cohort](#) :



Aimee Blessing (Senior Lecturer, Theatre & Dance): "The retreat and the program as a whole have informed more than just the way I look at writing in my courses. It has had a huge impact on the way I view course design as a whole and the way I can help students achieve learning outcomes. This is an extremely valuable program."

Jon Nash (Assoc. Professor, Accounting & Finance): "The Writing-Intensive Faculty Retreat... provides both an ideal environment and comprehensive coverage of an important topic. Many professionals that teach at the university have no formal training in writing instruction. To the best of my knowledge, the retreat is the only forum where these professionals can receive advice from accomplished writing instructors and participate in discussions that facilitate the transfer of knowledge across disciplines. My participation in the retreat produced substantive changes in the format and content of my courses. The retreat made me better equipped to provide the type of feedback that improves my student's writing, and by extension, their career prospects."

Kevin Pietro (Clinical Assoc. Professor, Agriculture Nutrition & Food Systems): "The summer, for an academic, needs to be both productive and rejuvenating, which can be especially tricky for those with young children. This writing intensive retreat allowed my family and me to practice life-work integration at its finest! The unforgettable location provided a refreshing break from the routine and offered my family endless fun. During the day, I was afforded the space and energy to think deeply about, 'why I have writing in my courses?' and 'what I can do as an educator to strengthen the writing of my students?' When I reconnected with my family at the end of the day, we were instantly back on vacation. As I turn my attention to the Fall semester, I am more committed than ever to [embrace](#) the writing process in my courses and more prepared pedagogically than ever before. Thank you very much for your support and this fantastic opportunity."

This annual retreat is made possible by the continued support of the Dey Family and their generous donations to the University Writing Programs. Without their ongoing dedication to writing across the curriculum at UNH, we would not be able to provide such a meaningful experience for faculty each year. We are most grateful for their efforts to encourage the legacy of writing at UNH. Our own Brent Bell (Assoc. Professor, Recreation Management & Policy), speaks to our donors' incredible impact: "I am grateful to the Dey family for their support of UNH in many ways. This faculty development opportunity is an effective way to impact the way writing is utilized for learning. I cannot think of a more important way to invest into the UNH faculty that will have a positive impact on the student learning."

If you'd like to learn more about how you can be a participant in the 2023 retreat, see the full ad on final page of this Newsletter.



2023 White Mountain Faculty Retreat

Open to *ALL* Faculty

Applications due March 15

Sponsored by the UNH Writing Programs
through the generosity of the Dey Family Fund

The UNH Writing Program invites applications for the Writing-Invested retreat at the Omni Mount Washington Hotel June 5-7, 2023. Writing-Invested faculty are instructors interested in improving student writing in their courses.

INCLUDES

- **3-day lodging** at the Omni Mount Washington Hotel (participants may be accompanied by spouse/family)
- **Lunch for 3 days** (family welcome)
- **3 follow up sessions** at UNH (in Aug, Dec, and May) to discuss progress of your work and continue the discussion of improving student writing

HIGHLIGHTS

- Learn current, research-based best practices to enhance student writing
- Understand and discuss the multiple roles of writing in the classroom
- Create assignments aligned with the core competencies of your course
- Discuss assessment and revision strategies
- Gain a network of writing-invested faculty colleagues at UNH

TO APPLY

Please send the following information to the
Director of UNH Writing Programs at Meaghan.Dittrich@unh.edu
by **March 15, 2023**:

1. Name, Dept., email
2. Course(s) with writing (WI or other) that you have taught or plan to teach
3. Courses you intend to develop or revise during the retreat
4. A brief statement about what you hope to take away from the experience
5. A brief statement about what you hope to contribute to the experience of colleagues
6. A statement affirming availability for both the June retreat and 3 follow up sessions at UNH (dates TBD)