



# The Writing Center Newsletter

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## Beginning the Research Paper

By Julianne Arthur, WC Tutor

Research writing can be an intimidating assignment. Because research papers are long and require many citations, it is easy to become overwhelmed. However, there are easier ways to deal with a research paper so that it is not so stressful. If the project is broken down into smaller chunks, the whole assignment is easier to manage.

Having a working thesis statement from the start is highly advisable. It gives a direction for what to research, and it allows for revision should the research not support the original statement. It is easy to change the wording just a little bit so that the statement matches the research.

While researching, try putting all the information on note cards with only one quote/statistic/paraphrase per card. On the back of the card, write down the information for the source (author, title, publisher, etc). If this is done from the beginning of the research, there will never be a question as to where any particular information came from.

Finally, when it is time to start writing, organizing the cards is easy. They can be spread out on the floor and moved into their proper places. Read through them a few times and be sure that the statistics seem to flow. Then, stack them one on top of the other, put them by the computer and start writing! For more help with research papers, see our helpful links page at [http://www.utoledo.edu/centers/writing\\_center/resources/links.html](http://www.utoledo.edu/centers/writing_center/resources/links.html)

## Handing Out Help: Online Sources

By Heather Elliot, WC Tutor

Can't remember how to correct a comma splice? Stuck on brainstorming? Have an essay with no thesis statement? And no time for a Writing Center appointment? No problem. The UT Writing Center now has a range of online handouts covering everything from brainstorming to conclusions to run-on sentences. Just go to the Writing Center homepage and click on Stu-

*Visit the Writing Center's  
Handout Page at <http://www.utoledo.edu/centers/writingcenter/handouts.html>*

dent Resources. The handouts are available as Microsoft Word documents, so you can access them right then or save them to your computer for future reference. If the handout you want isn't up yet, send us an email at [Anthony.Edgington@utoledo.edu](mailto:Anthony.Edgington@utoledo.edu). We're constantly adding to our collection, and we need to

## Did You Know...

*That over 1700 students met with a UT Writing Center tutor during the 2006-2007 academic year??*



## Focus on Faculty: Charles Beatty Medina

By Michael Brooks, WC Tutor

The University of Toledo has a long tradition of promoting the pedagogical approach known as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). The History Department at UT has a strong WAC component, and regularly offers a Methods course that prepares students for the work of historians.

Dr. Charles Beatty Medina teaches the writing intensive course this semester, and he offered his thoughts on the department's WAC philosophies. "Our goal is to improve writing, not just at the basic level, but also helping students express ideas," he said. "We use in-class writing exercises to help students organize thoughts and conceptualize ideas, so that the process of writing is less mysterious."

Beatty Medina said that the WAC course uses a variety of approaches to familiarize students with historical thinking. "We begin with the conceptualization of historians, asking how their views of history

are shaped," he said. "We next examine the process of undertaking research – taking raw data and turning it into comprehensible writing, while analyzing the past through the eyes of the present."

More importantly, he noted, the Methods course has larger aims beyond the disciplinary training. "Simply put, we try to get students to understand why history matters, and why is it important in this post-modern world," he added. "The past gives us vital information about where we are going as a human race, and highlights the interconnectedness of cultures and civilizations."

Beatty Medina took issue with those who might see the teaching of writing as the sole province of composition instructors. "Every instructor in the university should be dedicated to teaching students about expressing themselves in the larger

world and understanding the standards of communication," he said. "There are many ways to communicate, and we need to provide students with the idea that excellent writing is one language of many that they can master."

Finally, Beatty Medina added, students interested in history as a major should consider taking the Methods-2000 course early in their academic career.

"Taking the Methods course as a senior is kind of like putting the cart before the metaphorical horse," he said. "The skills students develop in this course lay the foundation for the work that they will encounter in other history courses and in other core requirements."



## From Brainstorm to Polished Essay: The Art of Drafting

By Brad Bethal, WC Tutor

Procrastination is the academic crime every student has committed. Many students wait to write papers until the night before, consequently producing only one draft.

Such a strategy might work during one's first couple years of college, but the demands of a senior-level paper usually prevent one from composing a quality essay in such a hurried fashion.

A good paper needs to be not only articulate but should also demonstrate the student's comprehension of the subject matter and ability to develop coherent ideas about the topic. What prevents many students from accomplishing this is their insistence to finish the paper in one draft.

Every paper should go through at least three drafts. A first draft should simply involve brain-

storming, with no concern for grammar and structure. Once you have your ideas developed, you can begin to rearrange them in the most logical order—this would be your second draft. Lastly, go back to the paper and inspect it for grammar. Now you should have a well-written paper.

Yes, you'll have to plan ahead, but at least you'll have the night before your paper is due to relax and rest assured that you've done a good job.

## Message from the Director

By Anthony Edgington, Associate Director

Welcome to the first UT Writing Center newsletter!!! Our center is committed to helping students develop as writers while also assisting teachers in creating writing practices that will guide students in their development. This newsletter provides us another way of offering this assistance. You will find articles designed to help students as they encounter common writing assignment (the research paper) or problems while drafting (such as finding ways to start writing a paper and then to keep going). We have also provided an overview to one of our newest additions to our webpage: a collection of handouts that students and teachers can use while writing. Finally, readers will find information on a bibliography website along with an interview with one of our faculty members regarding writing in the discipline of history.

So, enjoy this first newsletter. Feel free to contact us with suggestions for future articles. And, as always, feel free to stop by the writing center at any time to meet with one of our professional tutors, to talk with one of the directors about writing in your classroom, or to just relax, read a book, or work on a writing assignment.

### Writing Center Staff:

**Director:** Dr. Barbara Schneider

**Associate Director:** Dr. Antony Edgington

**Secretary:** Barbara Baker

**Staff:** Justin Jordan, Sasha Cruz, Samantha Bigford

**Professional Tutors:** Russ Sprinkle, Marcia Harrington, Leslie Neuendorff, Holly Greenfield

**Graduate Tutors:** Brad Bethal, Michael Brooks, Rabiyya Smith, Teri Green, Heather Elliot, Danielle Donelson-Sims, Cristen Bartus, Teneice Delgado

**Undergraduate Tutors:** Brittany Alabunda, Julianne Arthur, Matt Desmond, Christopher Rudski, Alex Walch, Jenna Agnew

**ESL Tutors:** Brooke Musser, Jack Crist, Huihui Liao, Rachel Valleroy, Kelly Whenley, Wu Ying, Lijie Zhou

**Presentations:** Teri Green

## Writing Website Review: Easybib.com

By Holly Greenfield, WC Tutor

*Easybib.com* is exactly, and only, what its name suggests. The site offers free formatting of MLA style Works Cited pages. Its user-friendly, fill-in-the-blanks approach is quick and straightforward; just add your information and keep pressing "next," and you'll eventually have a correctly formatted, alphabetized Works Cited page you can save and print. However, the site is limited. If you need MLA in-text citations, you're on your own.

*"Its user-friendly, fill-in-the-blanks approach is quick and straightforward..."*

For anyone needing more than the basic MLA bibliography, or for those who need APA format, *Easybib.com* offers one week's free trial of *Mybib Pro*, a far more thorough and useful engine that costs 7.99 per year. User testimonials suggest it's worth the price, but you may want to use the one week free trial to make sure this service is for you.





**Writing Center**  
**1005 Carlson**  
**Library**  
**Hours: Monday-**  
**Thursday 10-8pm**  
**Friday 10-5pm**  
**Phone: 419-530-4939**



## Writing Center Mission Statement

*The Writing Center* at the University of Toledo provides one-to-one assistance to all members of the academic community who want to discuss and improve their writing. As the core of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, the Writing Center staff also provides the necessary resources which enable faculty to use writing as a means of learning in their content areas. By providing these consulting services to students and faculty, the Writing Center provides key initiatives for improving undergraduate and graduate education.

### *Guiding Philosophy*

- We believe that writing is a recursive activity involving several steps that include generating ideas, organizing thoughts, developing a first draft, rewriting, and editing.
- We believe in non-directive tutorial styles that provide the opportunity for writers to maintain ownership of their own papers; writing consultants serve as an audience instead of as editors or proofreaders.
- We believe in the importance of being responsive to the individual needs of a student at whatever cognitive level s/he may be as a writer.
- We believe that writers develop writing skills best when they are in a supportive environment surrounded by other writers who seek to encourage clear expression of ideas.
- We believe that writers should learn to use the vocabulary, organization and format specific to the academic discipline in which they are writing.

## Writing Center Tutors

**By: Katie Arnold, Graduate Assistant**

Many University of Toledo undergraduates, graduates, and faculty visit the writing center every year. They meet with the tutors who are dedicated to improve the writing skills of their tutees. While all of the tutors are knowledgeable and trained on various writing strategies, there are four types of tutors employed by The Writing Center to help those with specialized needs.

The undergraduate tutors in The Writing Center are all trained in various writing strategies to help writers with development and organization in their papers.

The second group of tutors are the English as Second Language Tutors. The ESL tutors are trained to help ESL students with language barriers when it comes to their written work. They can also help with reading and comprehension work if it is necessary.

While ESL and undergraduate tutors are knowledgeable, graduate tutors make up the majority of tutors in The Writing Center. Many of the graduate tutors have a some experience teaching which helps them to identify problems in papers. While undergraduate tutors and graduate tutors do many of the same things, graduate tutors work primarily with graduate students.

Professional tutors are tutors that hold advanced MA or PHD degrees. They primarily serve primarily graduate students and faculty.

The Writing Center tutors have backgrounds in different areas to assist with MLA, and APA citation so that they can meet the needs of a diverse community of writers. No matter what needs or concerns are brought to the Writing Center, the knowledgeable and diverse staff is able to meet them.

For more information, see our website:  
[www.utoledo.edu/centers/writingcenter](http://www.utoledo.edu/centers/writingcenter)