



WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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Effective communication is an important part of any occupation, career, or business. No salesperson

can survive without it. Bankers, service personnel, and even farmers rely on written and oral communication to stay informed on the latest developments and make informed decisions about their business.

The Pennsylvania State University believes it is vital for students to develop skills in written and oral communication. Several years

ago, the University adopted the concept, Writing Across The Curriculum (WAC). A relatively new idea in higher education, WAC strives to make writing a visible part of the entire undergraduate program, from the freshman year until graduation.

WAC includes traditional elements such as basic grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, but it goes even further. It emphasizes the organization of writing and the application of basic writing techniques to each student's area of study. Consequently, WAC builds written communications into the framework of the entire educational process.

Incorporated into all majors by a graduation requirement in the summer of 1990, WAC requires all



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students to complete at least three credits in a writing-intensive course within their major or college before they graduate. These courses are selected from a list of designated writing-intensive courses.

Dedicated to improved communication for many years, the Department of Dairy and Animal Science requires that its students complete a course in writing and speaking skills in addition to other university requirements in language arts.

The department offers two writing-intensive courses, signified by a W in the course number: Animal Science 331W and Animal Science 431W. These courses were approved for this designation on the basis of the number, types, and focus of writing assignments included in each course. Both courses teach students aspects of animal reproduction, but have distinctly different emphasis. Dairy and Animal Science students must complete one of these courses, and students in other majors may take them as electives.

Animal Science 331W emphasizes applications of reproduction in farm animals and is intended primarily for juniors and seniors interested in dairy or livestock production and management or in careers in business. Animal Science 431W covers a wider group of animals, including laboratory animals, and is intended for students interested in continuing their studies in graduate school or pro-

fessional school, and for those students who plan to work in a science-related area. Students enrolled in the writing-intensive courses ordinarily have already completed English composition, speech communication, and technical writing.

Writing-intensive courses are intended to build on the skills gained in the earlier courses. To learn how writing is applied to their field of study, students complete a variety of written assignments. These assignments may include preparation of a term paper according to the style of a particular scientific journal, completion of laboratory reports in the form similar to that used for reports at scientific meetings, or communication through a computer electronic bulletin board.

Students enrolled in WAC courses often submit their writing assignments first as a draft, which is critiqued by the instructor without a grade penalty. The student then rewrites the piece, incorporating the suggestions from the instructor. This helps students realize that writing is a process, organized in a particular way, with certain expectations. In this way, these courses should help students improve their writing.

As they progress through the writing-intensive course, students generally gain an appreciation for the types of writing in their area of study. They also should realize that the skills they learned in previous courses are still important.

As might be expected, not all students appreciate the emphasis on writing. Some are uneasy about their skills and may have had relatively little practice writing. Others may think that written communication is not important or may be inadequately prepared for such a "learn-as-you-go" course.

The writing assignments associated with writing-intensive courses add to the demands on the instructor's time and require additional effort. But faculty who make the commitment to this type of course also learn from the process.

Penn State hopes that even those students who do not appreciate the need for writing skills will one day realize how their writing-intensive course helped prepare them for their careers.

Top Lancaster DHIA Cows

(Continued from Page D4)

CLAY FARM									
CHARIT	RH	5-2	303	24,500	3.2	781	3.3	818	
LLOYD B SENSENIG									
IRIS	GR-H	5-5	305	23,243	3.4	781	4.1	943	
S & A KREIDER & SONS									
30	RH	7-0	288	24,904	3.1	780	3.5	876	
LEONARD J STOLTZFUS									
DAMA	RH	3-5	305	23,858	3.3	780	4.1	990	
TITUS B STOWER									
AVA	RH	7-1	305	24,218	3.2	780	4.1	991	
GERALD MARTIN									
SHANNO	RH	4-2	305	26,077	3.0	779	3.0	784	
DAVID D ZIMMERMAN									
MAUDE	RH	6-9	305	24,953	3.1	776	4.0	1000	
BURNELL W NOL*									
123	GR-H	6-1	305	25,619	3.0	776	2.9	749	
DALE L ZIMMERMAN									
DUTCHS	RH	5-3	292	25,383	3.1	775	4.0	1019	
SAMUEL B SNUCKER									
POLLY	RH	6-0	305	25,475	3.0	775	3.0	755	
PHILIP HORST									
NAUD	GR-H	4-4	305	25,653	3.0	774	3.5	901	
EARL S WEAVER									
ROXY	RH	4-1	305	26,531	2.9	773	3.0	795	
WEAVER HOMSTEAD FARM									
39	GR-H	5-5	305	26,884	2.9	771	3.7	988	
JEFFREY L AUNGST									
IRA	RH	9-9	305	27,907	2.8	770	2.8	789	
EDGEFIELD FARMS									
ELSIE	RH	4-5	305	24,113	3.2	770	3.5	845	
ANDREW G MILLER									
141	RH	4-6	305	22,995	3.3	770	4.2	958	
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24	RH	7-5	305	23,092	3.3	770	4.1	957	



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