

## The Literacy Link, Then and Now

by **Jim Geistman**  
(former Literacy Link editor, 1993-2002)

I guess it all began in S329.

That's what we called Science West 329 back then. "S" Stood for "Science," as in Science Building. Gary Thompson waggishly suggested the building was named after the fictional NPR character Dr. Science, not a Tri-City millionaire, as nearly all of the other buildings on campus are.

It was here that Sally Cannon turned over the reins of the Literacy Link to me one fateful autumn day in 1992. I remember Sally—ever the rhetorician—downplaying the difficulty of the job. All I had to do, she said, was to collect about five articles per semester from faculty members—preferably not English faculty—on how they used writing in the classroom.

No problem.

Piece of cake.

Yikes!

As with most major undertakings in my life, I began by making several mistakes in quick succession. The first was the email I sent to all department chairs, requesting that they urge their faculty members to submit articles to Literacy Link.

This, I was certain, would have me swimming—nay, drowning—in manuscripts in no time. Alas, as the

deadline date neared, I was still high and dry.

In a panic, I turned to a tried and true method: begging and pleading.

I scurried to faculty members I knew in other departments.

"Could you write an article for Literacy Link?" I begged.

"For what?"

"Literacy Link."

"What's that?"

At this point, I made a mental note about the efficacy of sending email requests to chairs. After offering an explanation—the one I was confident their chairs had given them—I was pleased that some showed interest, and they seemed pleased that I showed interest in how

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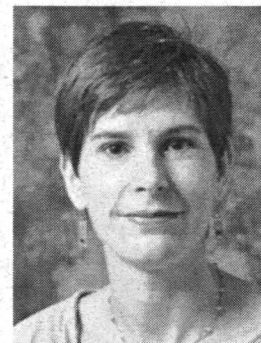
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# From the Editors' Desk(tops):



**Lynne Graft**



**Helen Raica-Klotz**

In our last issue, we brought back several past Literacy Link writers with excerpts from their contributions. This time, in the second half of our two part commemorative issue, we highlight several colleagues and students, each revealing an important activity here at the university, all embracing in some way various applications of literacy.

of the discipline or medium, isn't this what literacy is all about? These are the kinds of people who make it worthwhile to bring the Literacy Link to life twice each academic year. We hope the success and enthusiasm you read about here will contribute to your own energy and new ideas.

Whether in the classroom, the meeting room, or the university at large, these activities and applications run the gamut from programs to competitions to individual artistic endeavors. Each of these individuals possesses a unique energy and way of connecting that in turn has enabled her or him to ignite enthusiasm and creativity in others. Each has managed to bring about change, to offer new ideas, or to contribute a new lens through which others could re-envision their world. Regardless

Helen and Lynne



*"Artifex Seven," Howard Miller*

Lynne Graft

Helen Raica-Klotz

Tammi Waugh

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The SVSU *Literacy Link* is published two times per academic year. Those interested in submitting articles may contact either Lynne Graft at x4030 or lrgraft@svsu.edu, or Helen Raica-Klotz at x6062 or klotz@svsu.edu. Articles may also be mailed to SVSU Dept. of English, 7400 Bay Road, Brown 326, University Center, MI 48710.

Special thanks to the Office of the Vice-President for funding and support of the *Literacy Link*.



## *Then and Now, from page 1*

they used writing in their classes. I remember especially a piece by Enayat Mahajerin on his effective use of writing in an engineering class.

*I looked forward to talking to faculty members outside of English .... And I came to see how much we all could learn from one another.*

So began my sojourn as Literacy Link editor, one I was to come to enjoy each semester, not only for the educational value the articles provided the campus community, but for the connections it allowed me to make around campus. I looked forward to talking to faculty members outside of English and getting their insights into how writing worked for them. I discovered how much reading most had done on their own about the efficacy of using writing in their disciplines. And I came to see how much we all could learn from one another.

Of course, there were occasional glitches. In one winter semester, I was having difficulty getting contributors. Then, just when I thought I had conned—er, convinced—three writers to turn in lengthy pieces, two backed out at the last minute. I made the unilateral decision to cancel the Literacy Link for that semester. Now, this was years before the current presidential administration revealed the wonders of unilateral decision making, and my forward-thinking

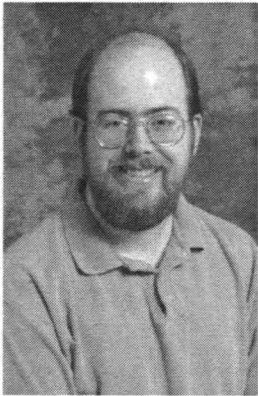
decision was met with mild displeasure by Dr. Yien.

Luckily, Diane Boehm, who had just come on board as Writing Center Director, knew of some writers with pieces ready to go, and the issue was salvaged. Diane has since become a mainstay in the Literacy Link, and I can't count the times she offered leads to faculty members who were willing and able to submit interesting and informative pieces.

In those early days, getting the Link ready for printing involved sending to Tim Inman, who would labor over the various articles and somehow get them ready for the printer. Remember that this was before the user-friendly technology that we now enjoy, and importing documents into a graphics program often meant all sorts of surprises: strange spacing, new characters in interesting places, and, sometimes, gibberish. Tim always managed to handle each surprise and set up each issue in a clear and attractive manner. I was grateful then, and I still am.

I like to think that the Literacy Link issues I produced—and those Lynne Graft and I did together—offered sound advice and clear insight into the use of writing in the classroom. Certainly, the issues produced by Lynne and Helen Raica-Klotz have done so. The Link has grown along with the university's writing program, serving to both disseminate what's new in the study of writing as well as to archive past practices. I hope it will continue to do so.

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# The English 111/080 Program: Writing the Path for First Year Students

**By Dr. Eric Gardner**  
**Associate Professor of English**  
**English 111/080 Coordinator**

At almost every community college and four-year university in the nation, first-year composition represents a massive undertaking: large numbers of students and faculty, significant resource needs, and great importance to students' introduction to college-level writing and the academy in general. During AY 2005-2006, for example, more than 1200 students enrolled in English 111 (Composition I.); another 250+ signed up for English 080 (Writing Skills). Over thirty SVSU faculty—both full and part-time, some with significant experience and some fairly new to college teaching—taught these courses. The students in English 111 and 080 were, of course, all moving to complete their SVSU Basic Skills requirements in writing; from English 111, they will move toward not only their General Education Category 10 course in writing, but also their Communication-Intensive GE courses and various forms of writing in their majors and minors.

Over the past decade—and especially the last five years—SVSU has paid more and more attention not just to recognizing the importance of first-year writing but also to creating concrete ways to place instructors in dialogue, regularize key components of students' course experiences, assess student learning, and aid students in their transition to college writing. In short, we've made English 111—and, more recently, English 080—a program rather than a loose set of different sections with the same course number.

That multi-year move to see first-year writing as a program represents a key moment in cooperation

between the University's administration and faculty. The initial steps in this process centered on bringing together teachers of English 111, comparing course goals and approaches, and drafting, in 1997, a "framework" for the course. Over months of revising, talking with a range of parties (full and part-time teachers, administrators, students, faculty from other disciplines, staff in Writing Programs and the SVSU Writing Center, etc.), and examining programs at other universities, the English 111 Committee brought a document to the English department for approval—and this also brought about revisions to the catalog description of English 111.

A key component of the English 111 Framework was the course rubric—an instrument designed to guide evaluation of student writing in the course. That rubric has since become a living document—actively used in all English 111 classes, key in developing faculty teaching 111, and constantly being discussed (and even, occasionally, as assessment data builds up, revised). One of the central uses of that rubric is the English 111 norming process. Twice each term, all teachers of English 111 (both full and part-time) come together, use the rubric to evaluate sample papers, and discuss their evaluation. This norming then feeds back into classrooms: many teachers share normed papers and grades with their students as a way of helping them begin processes of self-assessment and revision. One of the wonderful outgrowths of these norming

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## *English 111/080 Program, from page 4*

sessions beyond the classroom, though, has been the ways in which they have offered a clear and regular chance for dialogue between full-time faculty and part-time faculty (whose participation in the sessions is supported by the University, in part through compensation). Because all teachers in the program are regularly talking—comparing notes, raising concerns, trading ideas—we help ensure not only that students in all sections of English 111 receive similar basic experiences but also that the program improves.

As suggested by the above, it became clear quite early on that a program could not exist through documents alone. Working cooperatively, the English Department and the administration constructed the role of English 111 Coordinator to administer the program and to work collaboratively with program participants and interested parties. Aply filled by Mary Harmon between 2000 and 2005, the coordinator's role eventually became, among other things, one of the models for the most recent contractual structures for departmental course release beyond chair time. As the program grew and matured, compensation structures for part-time faculty—including issues tied to requiring training and participation in activities like norming—were also revisited, with real and tangible support from both Academic Affairs and the College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences. Program faculty and administrators also learned that we should take advantage of other campus resources, and so all sections of 111 were gradually scheduled with some computer lab time and all were required to visit the University Writing Center and the University Library at least once.

Beyond the growing community of faculty teaching the course—and administrators supporting that teaching—though, it became clear early in the construction of the 111 Program that we also needed to recognize students, and so we built a number of assessment mechanisms into our processes. (Several of these were praised by the

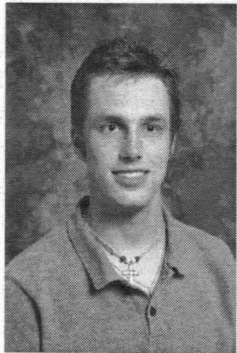
recent HLC visitors.) Equally important, through the generosity of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, we also started the English 111 Writing Awards, a competitive recognition program for first-year writing students that offers some of the best-funded prizes in the state as well as publication alongside winners of the prestigious Braun awards.

English 111 students—and, more and more, English 080 students—now walk into a course setting where creative instructors offer a course clearly articulated in goals and approaches, well-supported in terms of institutional structures, and continually assessed and revised to improve student learning. That such has happened in less than a decade—and I can say this, having been outside of much of the process until I recently assumed the coordinator's role—is nothing short of amazing.

So where now? We hope to better articulate our relationship to others in the area teaching writing. To this end, English 111 faculty recently met with their counterparts at Delta College and hope, later this term, to begin a series of dialogues with area high school teachers. Both of these conversations will hopefully be not only moments when we can share what we're doing at SVSU, but also moments where we can learn from the wider world.

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# English 111 Student Reflections: What Winning the English Award Has Meant to Us



**Ryan Essenmacher**  
2004-2005  
English 111 Writing Award  
Third Place

English 111 is a "dare to be great" situation that many students never realize. Many students simply travel quietly through English 111 and never realize their potential as writers. I almost ended up as one of those students. Luckily for me, Dr. Lesko encouraged me to rework one of my papers for submission for the Freshman Writing Award. I really invested some effort in strengthening that paper; I visited the Writing Center, talked with my professor and had multiple people proofread it. Later on when I found out I had placed in the Freshman Writing Contest, I

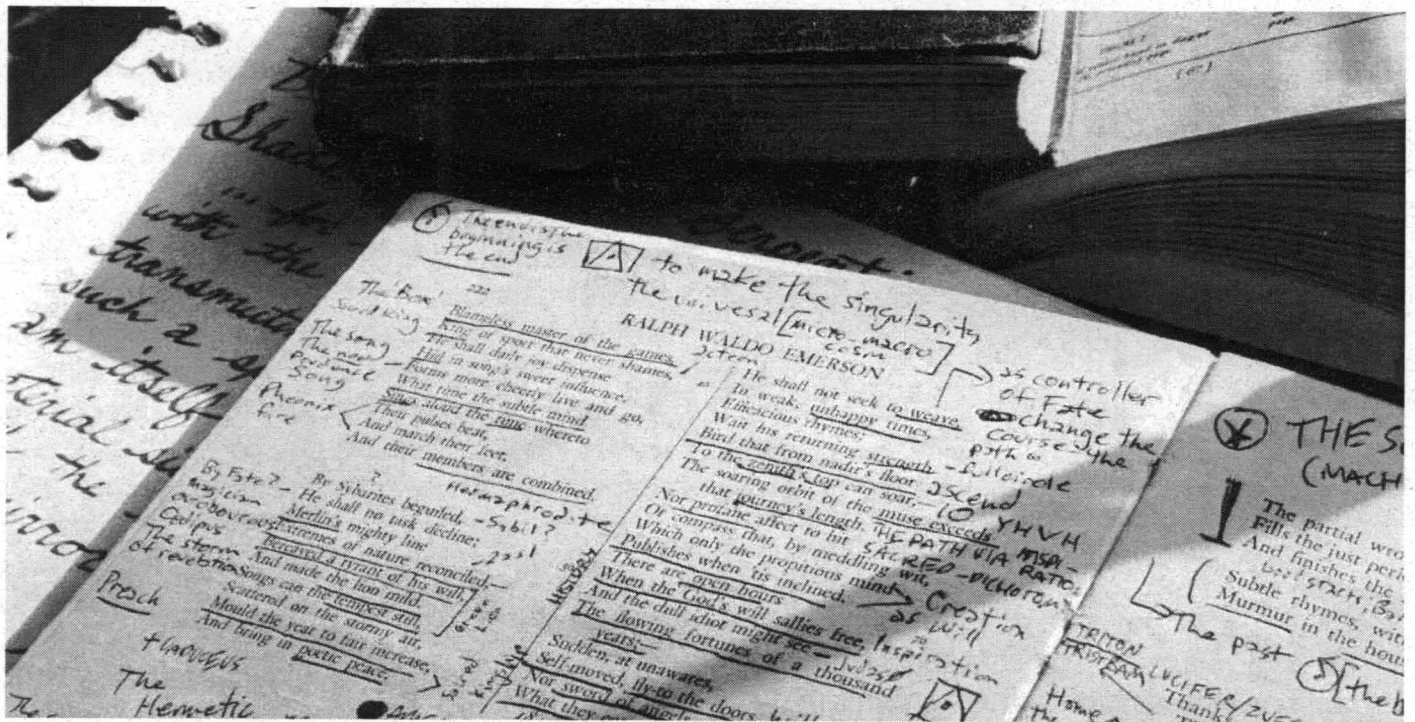
was motivated to apply that same sort of effort and achieve that same kind of quality in all my writing. The Freshman Writing Award was an excellent opportunity for me to further develop as a writer, and I encourage all interested students to participate in this worthwhile program.



**Elizabeth Lemon**  
2004-2005  
English 111 Writing Award  
Fifth Place

I learned about the Freshman Writing Award in my English 111 class with Dr. Wolff. She encouraged me to submit one of my pieces, and I chose the research paper we were currently working on. When I found out that I had been

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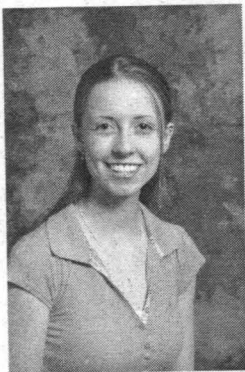


*"Artifex Eight," Howard Miller*



## Reflections, from page 6

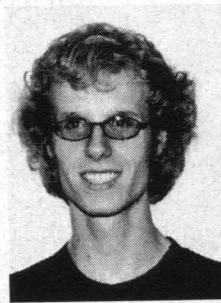
awarded fifth place, it really made me proud. It was a nice feeling to be recognized for my work. The ceremony that all of the winners were invited to was beautiful, and it really encouraged me to write better. I took more writing courses, and they all helped me to improve my writing skills. I had already declared to be an English major before I won the award, but after I was acknowledged for my writing, it solidified my decision. The Freshman Writing Award is a great way to integrate freshmen within the university and help them feel welcome and accepted. It helps students get to know a member of the faculty and see if writing is something that the students might want to pursue more in their own chosen field of study. I would encourage all freshmen to submit something for the English 111 Writing Award because not only does English 111 help with writing skills and the process of submitting a literary piece, but it also encourages more involvement on the campus of Saginaw Valley State University.



**Jenna Zulauf**  
**2003-2004**  
**English 111 Writing Award**  
**Third Place**

It was difficult as a freshman to understand what benefits my effort in a mandatory English class would create for the future. However, after submitting one of my essays to the English 111 Writing Contest, I realized that there are in fact many advantages to participating in this contest and others like it. I'm not just talking about the nice prize money either! At the award banquet I met teachers and directors that encouraged me to apply to work at the Writing Center, which

has in turn provided me with many valuable opportunities. Also, since placing in the English 111 contest, I've felt confident enough in my work to submit to other campus-wide writing competitions. The experience has been great practice for composing scholarship applications for my study abroad program and for other courses in general. I encourage others to participate in the English Writing Contest. There really is nothing to lose, and there is always something to learn.



**Scott Lahmann**  
**2003-2004**  
**English 111 Writing Award**  
**Fourth Place**

When I first entered Saginaw Valley State University, I first thought of majoring in Biology. My experience in English 111 first sparked an interest in considering an English major, especially after winning fourth place in the English 111 Writing Contest. This award helped focus my writing more academically, specifically by working on the language and organization. Subsequent English classes reinforced my decision to work towards an English Literature major; analyzing masterpieces by Dante and Thomas Mann steered me toward this branch of English. The early combination of reading and writing in English 111 (rather than strict writing) helped hone my analytical skills. SVSU English courses have helped prepare me for the literary world, changing my viewpoint about taking a course merely for a grade, to taking courses that will enhance me as a writer and a student.





## "Conscience vs. Popularity:" 2004-2005 English 111 Writing Award First Place Essay

**Stacy Barnard**

The summer was short, yet fulfilling in a way; though it wasn't quite over yet. During this particular summer, I had managed to escape the confinements of both my glasses and my braces. With this came a whole new world of confidence. Summer was rounding up; I was about to enter the eighth grade. So very close was my turn at being one of the big kids in the junior high it eroded away at any remains of common sense I had left with a false sense of maturity. I could hardly wait to take my place as an upper classman with my fresh new look.

However, there was still one last excursion before the summer vacation was over. My dad, the Boy Scout leader of many of the boys in my grade, was planning a trip to Canada, to hunt for fossils with his troop, and he was dragging me along. Reluctantly, I climbed into the huge white van that resembled what people refer to as a "re-re van" and took my assigned seat next to a short, stout seventh grader named Adam. This kid looked overly happy to be on his way to look at some rocks. He represented everything I wanted to escape, everything I felt like I had just overcome. He was the underclassman. He was the nerd with the glasses and a metal smile, but he was happy being just this. I didn't understand, and I didn't like it. His comfort challenged mine, grinding my own insecurities into the sentient. Now I was stuck for the next four hours with him in my elbow space.

In the seats behind me, some of the boys from my grade were sitting. They had also come with the "all too cool to be here attitude." They were

the ones I had to impress. I was much more concerned with what they thought than this seventh grader! I spent the majority of the car ride making my existence clear to them, mainly by making Adam's existence seem more of an annoyance. I thought to myself, "If I can get them to think I'm cool now, I will surely have a place with the popular kids when class starts." So for hours I taunted poor Adam stabbing at his good spirit about everything. He was known for his bad jokes. I knew the boys would be impressed if I were to come up with some good put downs to his comedy acts. Their approval was essential to my self-esteem. I remember saying to him at one point, "Adam, why don't you shut the hell up? The only joke here is you." His eyes looked towards me, sort of glazed over, but I could still count his teeth.

Adam must have been a strong boy. He was able to keep his head high throughout most of the torment the other kids and I were providing. However, as the trip wore on so did my negative attitude. Adam found the most fossils and took this with pride. I found the most soft spots on an innocent victim and took this with pride. On the way home, Adam wasn't himself. He stopped the jokes, explaining when pestered that, "They were never fun for anyone but me anyways."

Thriving off Adam's discouragement, I would reply, "It took you this long to figure that out?!" Adam still smiled, but it was just enough to know he was still holding on. The corners of his lips were slightly raised, but he no longer ap-

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## *Conscience*, from page 8

peared to be in a constant state of laughter. I could tell I had finally gotten to him.

Impressed with my "hard case" attitude, I was now accepted into the group of kids I had always striven to please. It wasn't quite as "cool" as I had once dreamed. The trip was over, and it was the day before school. I couldn't stop thinking about the hint of sadness I had brought to Adam's smile. I couldn't understand what had come over me, but I wasn't about to give up my spot with the "cool" kids to make some nerd from the seventh grade feel good about himself. I had no future apology in mind. Still, the thought of it haunted me nonetheless.

The morning eighth grade started, I was eager to take my place at the top of the chain. I woke up early to dress in my new name brand clothes and ran over to the mirror. I peered in, running my tongue over my smooth bare teeth. I didn't have to peek around thick frames to see them either; I loved them and I was sure everyone else would too. Besides, I already had made friends with some of the popular boys on the trip. I was guaranteed some friends to be waiting for me. I imagined myself walking in and the guys running up to me with excited greetings, this catching everyone else's attention. Soon everyone would notice my new look and confidence; I'd be loved by everyone.

On the first day of eighth grade, this was not the case at all. Instead of walking into a room glowing with excitement that I could finally share, I walked into a nightmare reeking of sorrow. The halls were crazy with silence as I moved towards my room. The air was thick with moisture and heavy on the chest. And when at last I reached room 108 of the eighth grade hall, kids were not jumping up to greet me; they were crying. Teachers were unprepared with lesson plans, and instead encouraged kids to just murmur in groups. There were clusters everywhere of people mourning. I went up to one such group and asked, "What

happened? Is everyone that sad about coming back to school?"

My humor was not admired here. I was not answered, just flashed a dirty look from one of the wet faces. Then I found the boys in my dad's Boy Scout troop who were also crying. I tried my joke again; they would surely find me as amusing as they had before. I was wrong again. They just ignored my ignorant comment and explained to me what the fuss was about. "Adam Thomson was killed last night, and it happened in a horrible way," one of the boys uttered through sobs. I could just about see the story written in the terror on his face.

Late one night Adam and his little brother were riding their bikes down a dirt road to their grandmother's house. It was a dark road surrounded by trees and usually pretty deserted. A couple older boys from my brother's grade had been drinking that night and decided to drag race for some thrills. Thomas Moore, age seventeen, plowed right over Adam at a very high speed. Adam's bike was smashed through the windshield, his body stuck under the truck and torn to shreds. His young brother watched all this in horror. Adam was dead, and too mutilated for an open casket.

My heart instantly sank, I could hardly breathe. My conscience was choking me! I didn't know what to do or how to feel. I cried. We all cried for days. School never really got started; it couldn't, not without one of its members. Adam was a nuisance to some, but a friend to everyone. The town we grew up in consisted of around 400 people all together and the school only a small fraction of that. Everyone was close with everyone, whether you liked him/her or not. He was a part of the school, and he was gone. Still, we were all expected to move on with a piece missing. We dragged our feet as long as possible, but eventually the days

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## *Conscience*, from page 9

melted into a working system again. Though it never ran as smoothly, school went on. Thomas, unable to deal with the guilt, was driven mad by his flashbacks and admitted to a mental institution. Sentenced for unintentional man slaughter, a life in prison was all he had to look forward to when leaving the institution. Adam's young brother, also tormented with traumatic images and memories, had to undergo intensive therapy and still suffers many side effects of witnessing such a traumatizing event. Everyone could feel the impact of Adam's death, but only most of us could move on.

My conscience ate me alive that year, and still does when I recall it. Thomas was one of those "cool" kids I dreamed of being. He had a carefree, "don't give a damn" attitude. Now his worries are so many that they have to be diluted with medications and therapies. Thomas unintentionally murdered Adam Thomson. Yet Adam was already dead in a sense. I had knowingly murdered his spirit. It was too late; I couldn't take it back. The doors to hell were locked, and I was on the inside. All I could do is mimic everyone else in their tears. Hoping that no one remembered my heartless ways, I tried to blend in. Still, I couldn't help but wonder if the others and I cried for Adam, or if we selfishly cried over the results of our own soul's reexamination that this event required.

The day of Adam's funeral, the majority of the town was present. All school absences were excused on that day. Everyone went; all his worst bullies were there, shedding tears and saying grace as if they had lost their best pal. Somehow, burdening themselves with an absence in school to attend his funeral must have justified their cruel treatment while Adam was still alive. I chose a different path to self security. Unable to look anyone in the face who may have truly cared for him, those whose tears were justified, I decided to go to school and avoid the funeral. Maybe it was time for me to avoid the subject al-

together. I suppose in my grasping for a justifiable reason for missing his funeral I came up with the idea that you shouldn't miss school for anything. Therefore, I was doing the right thing by going. I had my priorities straight; a pathetic excuse, but a settling one nonetheless. I remember watching the Boy Scout awards where the boys received their badges and patches. Adam had received so many and was clearly proud of every single one; they meant a lot to him. The only person I recall coming to support Adam at the awards was his grandmother. Hundreds attended Adam's funeral.

I started college this fall. This means I'm finally an adult, and I must meet lots of new people. Unlike my first day of eighth grade where I sported a costly outfit and a grim look of importance, on my first day of college I wore an outfit that cost a total of four dollars and fifty cents, my thick rimmed glasses, and a big goofy smile on my face. I still made my sarcastic remarks, but they weren't made at other's expense. I am just as carefree as I had ever hoped to be, but I am no longer careless.

LL





# The University Writing Committee

**By Diane Boehm  
Director, Instructional  
and Writing Support  
Programs**

An interesting way to gain insight into the work of colleagues is to ask them about student writing in their courses. I have yet to engage in a conversation on this topic with anyone who didn't have a lot to say! That conversation has been ongoing for as long as most of us can remember, and concern about the effectiveness of student writing led to the establishment by Dr. Yien of the University Writing Program, begun eleven years ago.

Nearly all University faculty incorporate writing into their courses, either formally or informally. The group most directly concerned with this aspect of university work is the University Writing Committee (UWC), a group of faculty representing every college, with a lot of shared expertise concerning student writing across the disciplines.

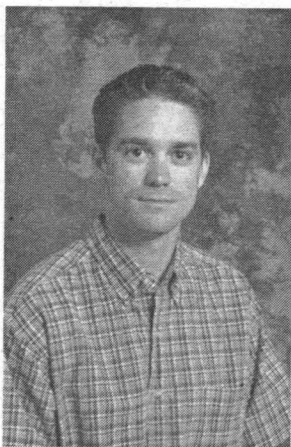
The work of the UWC is perhaps most visible during the annual nominations for the Braun Writing Award, culminating in the annual Writing Awards Reception, which this year will be held on Tuesday, April 11. This Award, endowed by Ruth and Ted Braun (Ruth is a member of the SVSU Board of Control), was established to provide an incentive for student writers to be recognized beyond the confines of the classroom. Ruth Braun herself established the rationale for the award: "Our ability to write well is our ability to think well." Now in its ninth year, this award recognizes undergraduate student writers in all colleges, as well as graduate students. The University Writing Program, in

collaboration with University Communications, publishes both a print and online collection of their work each year. Past recipients have often leveraged their award into graduate school admissions, teaching assistantships, or similar opportunities, demonstrating that good writing brings recognition.

Last year the UWC initiated a new faculty award, the Innovative Teaching in Writing Award; Andrew Chubb of the Chemistry department was the first recipient. A recent new initiative is the Why Writing Matters website ([http://www.svsu.edu/writingcenter/index.cfm?doc\\_id=4321](http://www.svsu.edu/writingcenter/index.cfm?doc_id=4321)). Each department is invited to outline for students the important considerations for writing in that discipline—typical writing assignments, qualities that are most important, what counts as evidence, which documentation format is used.

Writing well is rarely effortless. Dr. Yien's support for the University Writing Program has assured that students and faculty will have available the resources they need.



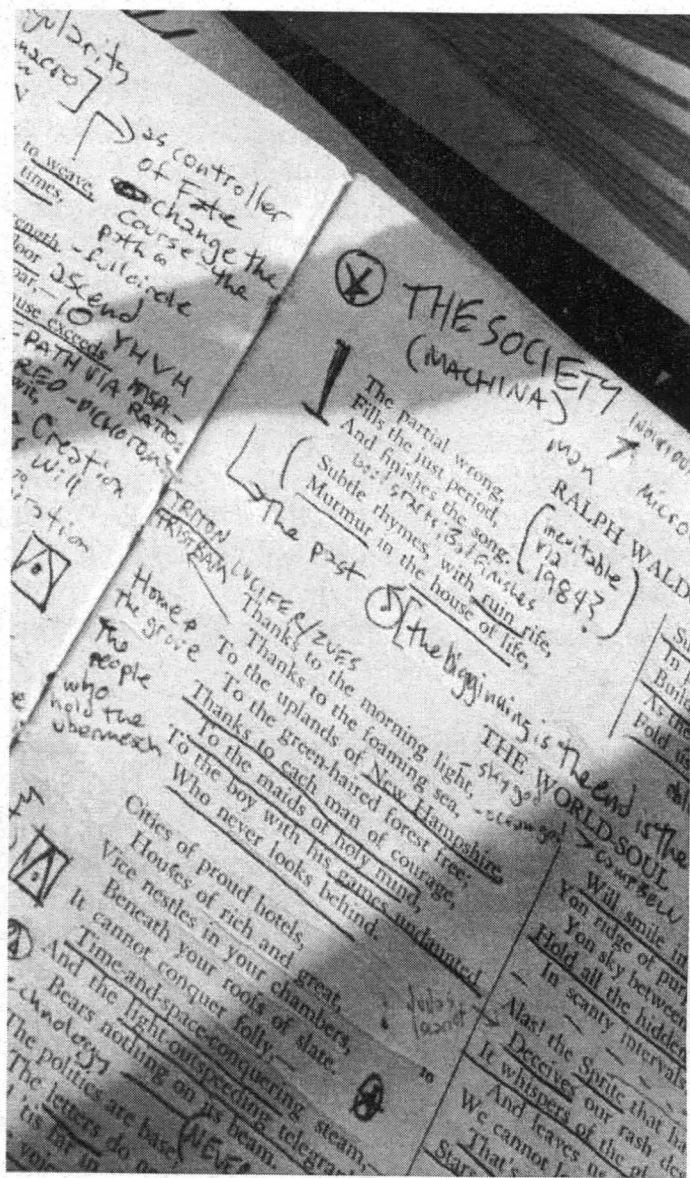


# UWC 2005 Innovative Teaching in Writing Award Winner

By Andrew Chubb  
Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Effective communication is a vital component of any discipline. This certainly is no less true in the sciences, where it is crucial for precise documentation and accurate transmission of data. However, the incorporation of writing exercises in science classes, which have a strong quantitative foundation, often can be a difficult task. To address this need and to enhance the students' understanding of key concepts, I have changed to the structure of the Organic Laboratory courses to include a more formal writing component. The traditional focus on purely quantitative results no longer is used to measure the quality of work and depth of understanding. Instead, the emphasis now is on the students' own interpretation of both the data they collect and the experimental results they obtain. Formal typewritten lab reports, similar to those that might be required in post-graduate settings, provide a framework for the students to summarize and analyze their data and to provide an explanation for the results, whether or not the experiment was a numerical success.

I am proud of how well the students in general have responded to these changes, which, in most cases, represent a complete shift from the way they have become accustomed to thinking and writing. I look forward to the continued success of these SVSU students as they pursue their careers in the sciences.



"Artifex Nine," Howard





# Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable

**By Diane Boehm**

**Director, Instructional and Writing Support Programs**

Nothing in my lifetime has so transformed teaching as the advent of the computer. Students laugh when I reminisce about what it was like to insert footnotes into a manuscript manually and then have to calculate how many lines of space would be required at the bottom of the page, knowing that any serious miscalculation would require retyping of the entire page. Cutting, pasting, auto-formatting, font choices, spell check and grammar check—do any of us still write without these tools?

Computers have also dramatically changed many aspects of class management. Students now check their grades 24/7 via the Blackboard course gradebook; Discussion Boards generate extended dialogue about course topics that could not be achieved in normal classroom interaction; instructors send email to the entire class or to several students with a few clicks; faculty link to authoritative websites or library databases with minimal effort.

Effective integration of technology, however, requires more than hardware and software, essential though these are. It also requires expertise and collaboration beyond the boundaries of our own classrooms. That is the purpose of the TLTR, the Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable, founded by Dr. Yien with Dr. Crystal Lange, its first chair, in November 1997, after a group of us had attended a TLT event in Dearborn and saw immediately the value of such an organization. Since its inception, Dr. Yien has supported the TLTR in multiple ways, assuring that faculty have access to new tools and options for classroom instruction.

The TLTR was established in response to a need:

the need to bridge the artificial boundaries that separated faculty, administrators, and technology staff, so that all units could work together to achieve the common goal of integrating technology to enhance teaching and learning. Dr. Yien often compares the TLTR to an NGO (non-government organization), since it does not exist exclusively within any single governance unit, but works to ensure that all units collaborate to appropriately support technology to enhance teaching and learning. From year to year the agendas may vary. It was the TLTR who recommended initial purchase of the Blackboard technology. At the time, many people predicted that only a few early adopters would find such technology appealing. Now, five years later, the Fall '05 statistics indicate that 700+ course sections (about half) used Blackboard.

Jean Houghton, former Director of Zahnow Library, followed Crystal Lange as TLTR chair. The TLTR can claim credit for many other technology contributions to teaching and learning during her tenure: the annual Technology in Teaching Award, now having had six outstanding recipients (see [http://www.svsu.edu/tltr/index.cfm?doc\\_id=1082](http://www.svsu.edu/tltr/index.cfm?doc_id=1082)); a collaborative Master Plan for technology upgrades and renewal cycles; the impetus to make technology podiums widely available in classrooms; a technology symposium to showcase instructional innovations.

Since I was appointed chair in 2001, collaborative initiatives have continued, including the development of a Student Technology Center, spearheaded by the library staff; a site license for Turnitin.com; further technology enhancements,

*Please see TLTR, page 14*

## *TLTR, from page 13*

such as the Remark survey function; extensive technology training for faculty and staff; policy statements for the wide range of technology applications used by students and faculty; and ongoing dialogue across units about what is and is not working in our continual quest for excellence.

TLTR conversations are initiated in four Action Teams, each co-chaired by a faculty member and a member of the technology staff. These co-chairs, along with the library director and other staff who supervise technology or rely on technology to remain current in their field, meet monthly to carry out the TLTR Mission:

*The TLT Roundtable seeks to achieve the best in teaching and learning through:*

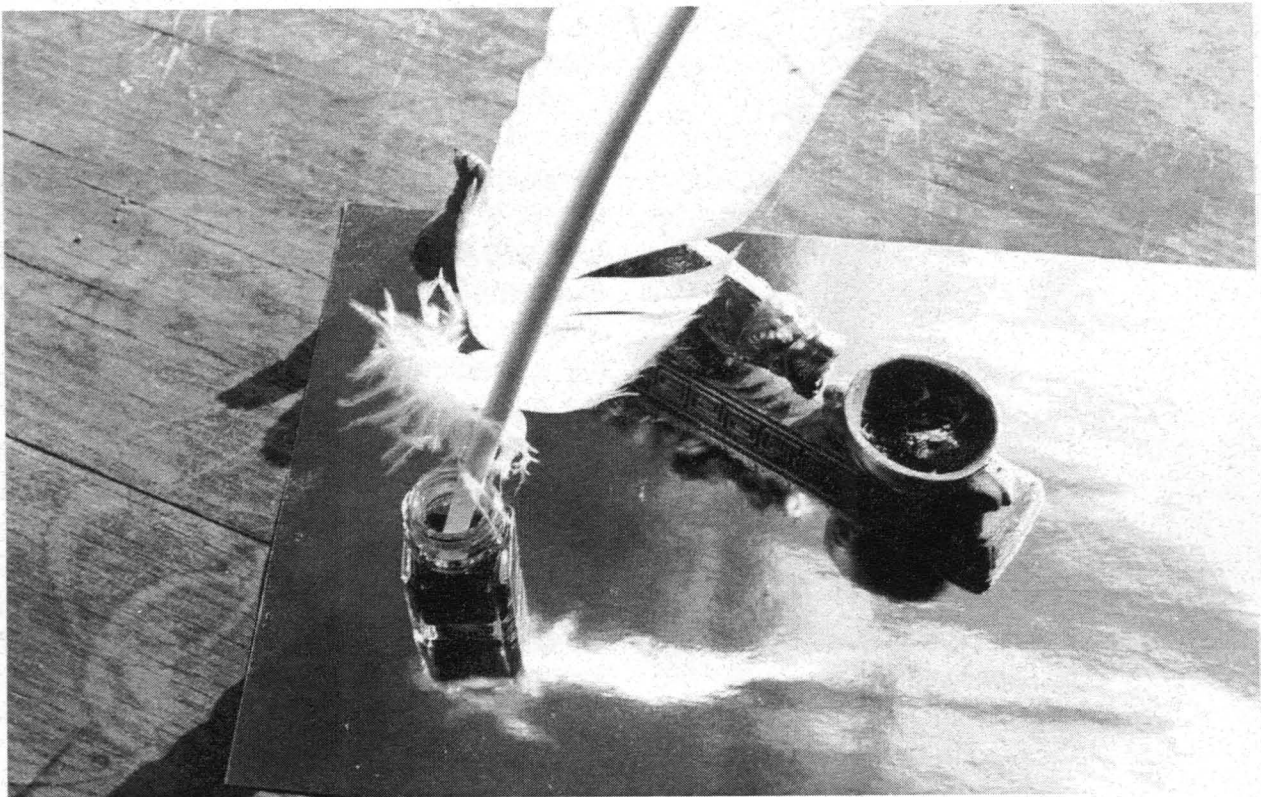
*a) The integration of instructional technologies into teaching and learning to create varied, collaborative, "information rich" learning environments*

*b) The development of necessary technology and support infrastructure that is responsive to diverse learning modes and changing instructional requirements.*

*Thus the TLT Roundtable will make appropriate recommendations to guide long-term and short-term institutional technology planning.*

Neither Dr. Yien nor any of us could have predicted the dramatic range of options technology would bring to our profession. But without his leadership and support, it is unlikely we would have the well-equipped classrooms that attract new hires, the many training options that keep us current, or the wide range of teaching innovations that we now take for granted. The Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable that he has supported has not only enhanced the learning environment for students; it has given all of us opportunities to continuously expand our own horizons as well.

LL



*"Artifex Ten," Howard Miller*





## TLTR 2005 Teaching with Technology Award Winner

**Sally Shepardson**  
**Lecturer of Biology**

Last year's "Teaching With Technology" Award Winner, Sally Shepardson, was nominated by a student for her regular integration of technology into her lectures and lab sessions.

Shepardson not only incorporates PowerPoint visuals into her standard lectures but also illustrates various concepts using experiment-specific software via laptops during her labs. Shepardson has taught at SVSU for 13 years. "There were two compelling reasons why I started using these technologies about six years ago," Shepardson explained. "I found my GenEd students often came in with minimal background in Biology and needed the type of visuals I could easily integrate into PowerPoint, which helped them to better comprehend the terms specific to this field and build the necessary vocabulary." Presentation software, she added, also helps organize her lectures with simultaneous text and illustrations so students subsequently become less overwhelmed by the concepts presented in the class.

The hands-on software she uses in her labs has also led to better understanding of the topics she covered. "While I have only anecdotal evidence to point to, it became obvious the best way to help students understand vital concepts such as cell division was to show the movement of chromosomes with specialized software." Static images from a textbook, she discovered, were not nearly as effective. Other subjects, such as biodiversity loss and air pollution, cannot be easily replicated at the lab bench and require computer simulations to fully study the relevant dynamics. "I quickly learned that this provided a much better learning experience for my students." In the future, she

would like to add software which will allow nursing majors, pre-med and pre-dental students the ability to conduct physiological experiments.

Shepardson exposes her more advanced students to the Electron Microscopy Research lab, a unique opportunity for students at a teaching institution such as SVSU. Here, once electron micrographs are generated using the microscopes, her students can use computers to digitize the images, quantify data, and conduct image analysis.

Shepardson encourages other faculty to "get started" with whatever tools might be specific to their curriculum, adding that there are a number of dedicated IT staff willing to assist in the process. "I was really hesitant at first," Shepardson explains, "but I found that students are forgiving and are willing to overlook the inevitable glitches that occasionally occur." Besides, she says, "There's a great deal of expertise on this campus to assist faculty."

LL

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*"Artifex Eleven," Howard Miller*