Summary of Online Writing Support Service

During Phase 2 of the Moodle Migration in Spring 2012, access to the OWC was made available to all COM students and instructors. A self-registration system was added to the Moodle OWC, facilitating user access for all students and faculty. The number of enrollees grew to 368; most significant, however, is that all but 4 of these enrollees made use of the service once enrolled. When the Moodle OWC moved to self-enrollment for Spring 2012, 98.91% of enrollees used the site. In other words, active use of the OWC increased by more than 45% when students had to self-enroll for the service rather than receive it as an automatic extension of their English courses as was the practice in Fall 2011.

The OWC is accessible 24/7 to help students with writing assignments for all college subjects. Students can get help with grammar, idea development, and organization, as well as with research and essays. The OWC also assists students with transfer, scholarship, and job applications, including resume and cover letters. Instructional Specialists respond to forum posts within 24 hours.

Staffing

Faculty Coordinator:
Alisa Klinger (1.5 units)

Instructional Specialists (ISs):
Jo Muilenburg (4 hours), Meagan Plumb (8.5 hours), Beth Sheofsky (4.5 hours)

- 1 Faculty Coordinator
- 3 Instructional Specialists
- 17 hours of coverage Monday to Sunday
- Response time: within 24 hours; almost always same day response

The OWC provided service 7 days a week with a response time of no more than 24 hours. In most cases, ISs responded in less than half of that time, and often within just a couple of hours. Every student who posted to the OWC received a timely and thorough response. However, we did not promote the OWC as aggressively to students as we had planned to do this semester because of staffing limitations.

We began the Spring 2012 semester with 2 ISs and a total of 10 hours of coverage. With the OWC open to all students regardless of campus and discipline, such
limited staffing was untenable. By week 4 of the semester, we were able to get an increase in IS hours from VP Ken Meier, as well as hire an additional IS. However, we did not use our total new allotment of 22.5 hours because of our inability to get more qualified ISs in place so late into the semester. (All the ISs already had maxed out their hours, but Susan Andrien was able to hire Meagan Plumb from the Tutoring Center to work in the OWC for 8.5 hours. Beth Sheofsky reduced her hours at the same time because she was assigned to teach an additional English course.)

In future, funding and staffing need to be in place as classes begin, so publicity can begin and demand can best be met. Week 1 is crucial for training IS and doing publicity. Week 2 is prime for in-class orientations. By Weeks 3 and 4, students are posting with much greater frequency, and ISs need to devote their time to responding to students’ work. Typically, it is the first assignment of the semester that is due in Week 3 or 4, and success on that first assignment can often set the course for a student’s success in subsequent weeks. We want students to make use of the OWC from the beginning of the semester, particularly before they experience failure. And we want students to keep returning to the OWC after the first visit. For these student success reasons, it is crucial that ISs be in place right from the semester’s start. Since the OWC coordinator does not do recruitment or assignment, it is imperative to the OWC’s effectiveness that those in charge (Chair of English, Dean of Arts and Humanities, Director of Learning Resources, and the VP of Instruction) develop a sustainable staffing plan and implementation schedule for it.

**No OWC Services for Summer 2012**

At this point, it appears that Summer 2012 online students will not have the writing support that was provided last summer or throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. Presently, as of June 6, 2012, there is no plan in place for the OWC Summer 2012 session, starting in just two weeks. There is neither a coordinator appointed to prepare a summer Moodle shell and promote the OWC, nor ISs appointed to provide writing support to students. That COM summer students might not receive the same opportunity for writing support as their counterparts in the fall and spring sessions is very regrettable. Distance Education students in 4 online summer courses are at a particular disadvantage since they typically seek services online rather than on-campus.

**Recommendations**

- **Sufficient funding to meet staffing needs.** Increased access to the OWC by self-registration for all students requires increased staffing. Staffing levels are about the same as they were before the OWC expanded its service to all students by self-registration. While efforts were made not to publicize the OWC too aggressively in Spring 12 because of limited staffing, sufficient
staffing is needed to keep pace with the OWC’s growth as a result of its migration to Moodle.

- **Staffing plan needed.** The OWC was under-staffed during the Spring 2012 term, and as a result, publicity about the service was curtailed. It is vital that a staffing plan be in place so that ISs can be assigned for the semester’s start and so that more publicity to student groups and classes can occur during the first weeks of the semester – the target period for letting students know about campus services for their support and success. Publicity for the OWC needs to begin at the semester’s start since this is also the time when ISs are least busy responding to students, using their hours to provide orientations and outreach until active tutoring of students is underway in week 3 of the semester.

- **Integration into planning cycle.** These recommendations, along with past recommendations, to support and fund the OWC and the DE program at COM have been noted in previous reports and Program Review requests; however, these reports have not been integrated into the system for funding in the program review cycle. A feedback loop is necessary to insure that recommendations get forwarded to the appropriate committee to be included in the funding cycle.

- **Sustainable infrastructure.** The OWC currently exists as a grass roots effort born of faculty persistence and grant support. In order for this important student service to continue in a sustainable way, a permanent funding source is needed for staffing and coordination of the site. Each semester, including summer, the OWC needs to be restored and groomed for student use, ISs need to be assigned and trained, and data collection and reporting need to be performed. These tasks are routine, and they are dependent on a sustainable infrastructure for online student services.

- **Organizational plan.** Presently, the OWC is in numerous people’s area, since it is part of the English Department’s Writing Lab (John Sutherland and David Snyder), Learning Resources (Susan Andrien), and Distance Education (VP of Instruction). It also has its own faculty coordinator. The OWC coordinator attends to the Moodle site, trains and schedules ISs, monitors and assures quality, and performs publicity and reporting functions. The roles of the chair, dean, director, and vice president need to be streamlined so that staffing is funded, hours of staffing are set to meet the demand, and ISs are assigned when the semester begins. Creating an organizational plan with responsible parties for action items would make operations smoother and the OWC more sustainable.
• **Provisions for Summer 2012 semester.** It behooves the College to provide online students in particular and all students in general with writing across the disciplines support during the summer session, as it does during the academic year.

**Publicity and Training**

• Provided a FLEX Training Session, January 18, 2012, noon to 1 p.m.: “Discover Online Writing Support for all COM Students in the New Moodle OWC.”

Did you know free online writing tutoring is available to all currently enrolled College of Marin students in the Moodle Online Writing Center? Attend this session and discover the new Moodle OWC available to all students in all disciplines beginning spring 2012. Find out how to direct your students to this vital, free student support service, as well as how to use the OWC to enhance your instructional goals for students’ writing in your discipline. Presented by faculty members Ingrid Kelly and Ali Klinger. A pizza lunch will be provided to those who register.

• Conducted training for instructors and their classes by request (HIST 117, POLS 201, ENGL 120, ENGL 150, ENGL 151, Tutoring Center, New Faculty Academy Session 2): request form can be found on the penultimate page of this document.

• Provided introduction and orientation to the OWC at each of the following Moodle Training Sessions:

1. Thursday, March 29, 2012
   2 p.m. to 3 p.m.: Moodle Basics
2. Friday, March 16, 2012
   12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Moodle Open Q & A Session
3. Friday, March 2, 2012
   1 p.m. to 2 p.m.: Moodle Grade Book
4. Friday, February 24, 2012
   12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Moodle Communications
5. Friday, February 10, 2012
   11 a.m. to noon.: Moodle Open Q & A Session
6. Friday, February 10, 2012
   10 a.m. to 11 p.m.: Moodle Basics
7. Wednesday, February 1, 2012
   3 p.m. to 4 p.m.: Moodle Basics
• Implemented new self-enrollment feature in Moodle, commencing Spring 2012 (Log on and self-registration instructions can be found on the final page of this document.)

Over 100 students self-enrolled without any publicity before the start of classes, suggesting the success of the self-enrollment tool before any marketing has even begun.

• Announcement of new self-enrollment tool sent via e-mail to all faculty and included in the President’s Weekly Bulletin

• Flyers placed in faculty mailboxes and in LC 120, the Campus Writing Center

• IS Meagan Plumb publicized the OWC to the AGS Honor Society: “One of my tutors in the TLC is an officer in the AGS honor society. I asked her to give a short presentation this week to their general meeting to let students know about the OWC. She took some of the flyers about how to get started, and basically let them know that it is available to all COM students for any writing project they’re working on. If there are other student groups who might be interested, this could be a good way to keep spreading the word.”

• OWC promoted by Moodle Poster Students Hongtham Nguyen and Paul Byrne on the Moodle Homepage

• Susan Allan of Essanay Films made a film about the OWC for screening at the President’s Circle Breakfast on May 1, 2012

From Susan Allan of Essanay Films

Password: OWC for https://files.me.com/smgallan/wolfyi.mov

or

http://vimeo.com/43158952

OWC
http://vimeo.com/43158952
Password: OWC
● Submitted proposals for presentation at two professional conferences—MoodleMoot and the Online Teaching Conference—sharing and explaining COM’s creation of an online writing center. Both proposals were accepted for presentation.

● A story about the OWC for students was featured in Echo Times, Vol. 10 Issue 7 (Feb. 11-Mar. 2, 2012):

From C J McCormick
Echo Times Vol. 10 Issue 7
Mar 2, 2012 – Internet options allow for greater By C. J. McCormick ECHO TIMES
The start of each semester is the busiest time at the Kentfield campus …

http://issuu.com/comechotimes/docs/v10i7_final

OWC Activity Report for Spring 2012

The Moodle OWC provides a number of support resources, including links to relevant research, documentation, composition, grammar, and punctuation sites, instructional videos, and Instructional Specialist (IS) tutoring. The data collected for usage patterns indicates, however, that students seek IS support more than other kinds of self-help support. In essence, students use the OWC for tutor feedback more than for any other tool available on the site.

The column for views on the following grid indicates the number of participants who accessed a particular OWC feature. Forum discussions in Topic 2 indicate requests made to ISs for writing help. Topics 3 & 4 are self-help features related to grammar, punctuation, composition, critical thinking, research, and documentations—all accessible 24/7.
Usage Patterns
The usage patterns by English students in the OWC appear to reflect the sabbatical absence of two full-time English instructors, Win Cottle and Ingrid Kelly, as well as changes in the English and English Skills programs. Whereas the OWC served 12 English 98 students in Fall 2011, it did not serve any in Spring 2012. English 98 students can certainly benefit from the services of the OWC, but their instructor must not be advising them to use the OWC as actively as they did when the English 98 courses were part of the English Department. Additionally, the two English instructors on sabbatical during Spring 2012 (Win Cottle and Ingrid Kelly) have both strongly encouraged their students to use the OWC in past semesters. With their return to teaching in Fall 2012, OWC usage by English students is expected to grow.
The English 120 forum witnessed considerable growth in Spring 2012 with 57 new discussions in the forum folder compared to Fall 2011, when there were only 8 new discussions in the forum. Similarly, the English 151 forum saw growth from 18 new discussions in Fall 2011 to 23 in Spring 2012. English 150 remained relatively stable, with a drop from 46 new discussions to 40 in Spring 2012. Again, this small decrease might be a result of Ingrid Kelly being on sabbatical, since her online students have been frequent users of the OWC in the past.

The Writing Advice for All Other Classes forum saw a significant increase in usage in Spring 2012, even without aggressive marketing of the OWC. For example, in Fall 2011, only one student used the forum. The forum witnessed 18 replies posted during the Fall 2011 period. In Spring 2012, however, 8 students used the forum, with 48 replies posted. We expect the demand for writing advice for all other classes to experience considerable growth as word of the OWC circulates by word-of-mouth and with increased publicity in future semesters.

The discussion column in the chart below indicates the type of help students are seeking, ranging from course papers to job and transfer applications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Started by</th>
<th>Replies Unread</th>
<th>Last post</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtitle introduction paragraph</td>
<td>Rafaella Pedroso</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rafaella Pedroso Sun, 20 May 2012, 06:09 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving 10 Pages Paper</td>
<td>Rafaella Pedroso</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rafaella Pedroso Sun, 13 May 2012, 09:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper - First Paragraph Review</td>
<td>Rafaella Pedroso</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sheofsky Thu, 10 May 2012, 06:14 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology Essay</td>
<td>Amreen Banu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jo Muilenburg Thu, 26 Apr 2012, 12:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC scholarship essay</td>
<td>Alissa Orgel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meagan Plumb Sun, 22 Apr 2012, 10:38 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Started by</td>
<td>Replies Unread</td>
<td>Last post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Studies Research Paper: Critique Request</td>
<td>Jeri Barnhill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sheofsky Fri, 30 Mar 2012, 10:21 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Appeal Letter</td>
<td>Paul Byrne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meagan Plumb Tue, 20 Mar 2012, 05:35 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gallegos</td>
<td>David Gallegos</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jo Muilenburg Fri, 2 Mar 2012, 10:53 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA Formatting</td>
<td>Viviana Lletget</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meagan Plumb Tue, 28 Feb 2012, 12:51 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Application for Nursing</td>
<td>Jill Minus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sheofsky Tue, 21 Feb 2012, 02:53 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>review of transfer application essay</td>
<td>Jill Minus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sheofsky Mon, 20 Feb 2012, 10:44 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Studies Essay: Please Critique</td>
<td>Jeri Barnhill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sheofsky Thu, 16 Feb 2012, 10:28 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover letter and Resume</td>
<td>Paul Byrne</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jo Muilenburg Fri, 10 Feb 2012, 07:27 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Instructional Specialists’ Work Experience and Suggestions for the OWC**

From: Alisa Klinger  
Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2012 7:36 PM  
To: Meagan Plumb; Jo Muilenburg; Beth Sheofsky
Hello, Beth, Jo, and Meagan.

The OWC is winding to a close for spring 12, so I just want to confirm two things with you before I write the end-of-semester report. Please reply to the following 2 questions:

1. How many hours a week did you work in the OWC? (I realize in some cases that your assignment was for more hours than you were able to perform; so please let me know how many hours a week you actually worked in the OWC.)

2. Do I have your permission to include your work with students as samples in the end-of-semester report? If you would prefer to send me the samples you want me to use, that would be perfectly fine too. With your permission, I would just select samples that best testify to the variety and excellence of support provided to improve students' writing success.

Finally, if you have any suggestions for how we might improve the OWC in Moodle, please feel free to send them to me to put in the report and to discuss with Ingrid as we tweak the OWC design over the summer in preparation for fall.

Thank you for serving over 350 students this semester, providing a remarkable level of expertise and encouragement in your posts!

Cheers and Gratitude, Ali
Alisa Klinger, Ph.D.
Instructor, English Department
Distance Education and Online Writing Center Coordinator

From Jo Muilenburg
As for hours put in, I did not document, but I have been right up to the full number of hours most weeks, with some weeks demanding more. I had 4.5 hours a week assigned. Those were not always adequate to compose the responses I needed to post. This is high-concentration, high-skill work, with many posts requiring more than an hour to develop. The OWC does need to be allotted sufficient hours so that work can be covered with some breathing room built in.

Years ago the English department offered IS ‘outreach’ hours in the library to make tutoring available to students campus-wide; today we need only a computer interface to reach most everyone we’d like to serve. Developing an on-screen tutoring mode for the OWC would not only widen our delivery options, but might
also increase our appeal. I don't think the OWC would necessarily have to procure additional IS hours to make this fly; a portion of those allotted could be slated for on-screen tutoring. But I think I'm hearing you say that at present we don't have enough IS hours to tinker with.

Yes, we do have the Writing Center for face-to-face teaching, but many students cannot come to the WC and could nonetheless benefit from conversation-style tutoring. If we can't provide face-to-face on evenings or weekends, or to students who cannot come onto campus, then screen-to-screen instruction may the next best thing. I think it's a great idea. But I may have an ulterior motive here: It could be fun!

Our work in the OWC at present is slowed and weighted by the need to create, virtually, a written composition in response to each student's post. I like to write, and I value the service that written responses provide, but writing well--and we must do so in our replies--is time-consuming in itself; add to that the initial time required to read through and assess the student's post (some entail full essays, pages long), identify main issues, and conceive an organized, written response. This is high-concentration, high-skills work and can be quite tedious. My sense is that for certain kinds of questions and needs, conversation-style tutoring is peerless--fluid, dynamic and creative. We have the capacity now to offer that kind of tutoring online, not to replace the written work we currently do in the OWC, but to supplement and enrich it.

I first asked about this option 4 years ago. We back-burnered it while we were still with Blackboard. Everyone likes the idea, but nothing comes of it. I hope we don't have to postpone it longer. I understand the accreditation and incomplete migration issues--that things are not settled out yet, that funding is insecure. Even so, online classes and online tutoring are here to stay and the ISs are part of that reality; I hope we can find a way to bring 'live' tutoring to the OWC.

From Meagan Plumb
I am committed to work 8.5 hours per week. There were a couple of weeks when responding to students' posts didn't fill up that time, but there have also been a couple of weeks (like this week), when there was more to do than that.

You are welcome to use any of my responses for your report this year or in future trainings, etc.

As for planning improvements, I do have a few ideas. The first, which I mentioned recently to Susan, is that it would be great to have a "Meet the Staff" section on the page, with pictures and introductions. When recommending the OWC to students in person, I have heard from several of them that they were nervous to try it because
they didn't know who would be reading and replying to their posts. When I explained that I would reply, or that colleagues like me would, they were visibly relieved.

Secondly, to make sure students hear about the service, I think it is vital to keep as many departments/offices/support services informed about it as possible. For example, I have referred many people to the OWC from the Tutoring Center. I will not be working there after this semester (so that I can focus on teaching), so I want to make sure that the TLC continues to be “in the loop,” and that other offices are well-informed as well. Counselors, EOPS staff, the transfer center, etc. would all be great places to keep informed so that they can encourage students to take advantage of the OWC’s help. Along the same lines, keeping student groups informed about it is useful (for example, this semester I spoke with AGS, an honor society on campus, and had a student give a presentation about it to their members).

Then, of course, services beyond asynchronous replies would certainly be worth exploring - appointments by video or by chat would be great.

Finally, I would add that I have very much enjoyed working in the OWC, especially in helping students over several weeks and several papers. This is a fantastic service, and as more students try it out, I am confident it will continue to grow. The best testament is that students who visit once, tend to return again and again. In addition, I think the OWC offers benefits to staff as well as the students. Since the posts are shared with everyone, we have the chance to see how other instructors reply to various dilemmas. I am often inspired and boosted by the wonderful support I read in other posts. Many thanks to all of you for including me in this project, and for your hard work to make it successful.

*From Beth Sheofsky*

I was scheduled to work 4 hours/week in the OWC, and I’d say I generally worked between 2 and 5 hours, depending on the number of posts. There were a couple of weeks toward the beginning/middle of the semester when there were very few posts, but other times (like the past two weeks, and just before my own students had papers due) when I’ve spent more than my four hours.

There are some technical issues that I think could be improved, but I’m not sure that the changes can be made in Moodle. One thing that would be nice is if there were a "save" button in Moodle so that we could periodically save our responses as we write them, before we post. I know that I’ve lost a couple of long responses - and other tutors have too - because I either was typing too quickly and hit the wrong key or left my computer for too long in the middle of the response and the program "timed out." When I remember, I try to write my responses in Word and then copy them over, but I then lose formatting that I created in Word (plus, I don't always
remember to do this). I've also posted my response before I'm done and then gone back into "edit" to finish it, but this isn't a good idea as the student may possibly view the unfinished post before I have a chance to complete it. So, a "save" button would be extremely helpful.

I agree with Meagan's idea of having a "Meet the OWC Tutors" section on the OWC homepage where we can post photos of ourselves, as well as some information about who we are, in order to personalize this service. This could be part of the OWC tutors' work in the first week of classes, since there usually aren't any posts at the very beginning of the semester.

**IS Training and Moodle Tips**

IS Training & Moodle Tips

Alisa Klinger

Sent: Sunday, February 05, 2012 12:10 PM

To: Jo Muilenburg; Rion Smith; Beth Sheofsky

Attachments: Sample OWC responses.doc

Hi Beth, Jo, and Rion,

Thank you for serving in the OWC this semester!

Please find the OWC IS Training Guide Beth Sheofsky has created attached. It includes 6 sample OWC responses: 2 each from English 98, 150 and 151. In the interests of brevity, it does not include the original text of the students' essays before the IS responses for the longer 150 and 151 essays. Beth provides a nice range of responses, suggesting how we can help students with constructive writing advice delivered in a friendly manner.

You may well want to keep a record of your own responses to students, especially if you find yourself repeating the same things to students. Then, you can copy and paste from your "master" document and save yourself some keystrokes along the way.

The OWC is a College English environment, where instructional staff should model clear and correct prose. While our students might not use College English, we need
to attend to the rules of grammar, syntax, capitalization, and the like, spell checking as we go. The ABC with a check mark in the Moodle forum tool bar allows users to spell check their responses to students before submitting them. You can also edit subsequently, if need be. We are all keyboarding in haste much of the time as we try to respond quickly to students, so it is inevitable that we will make mistakes. I am sure all of us would appreciate it if you corrected any typos you find when you reread your own work or the work of others, so what lives in the OWC is as correct as possible a model for students. (Of course, if you do not want other OWC staff to edit your work as need be, do let us know.)

Know that I really appreciate your work to support students online, saving them time and expense as they seek success as writers.

If you have any suggestions or concerns, you can email me or speak with me live in the OWC on Thursdays from 3-5 when I am not assisting a student. I can also meet with you on campus, as your schedule requires. If you wish any additional suggestions about how to be effective in Moodle, know that I am also very happy to give you Moodle training, sharing what I know and seeking out information about things I don't.

Cheers, Ali

PS. You can most easily find all the forum posts by clicking on Forums in the Activity Block on the left side of your screen under the Self-Registration Block. Another way to navigate is to click on Topic 2 in the Navigation Block on the left side of your screen. Then, just select the forum you want. Finally, you can locate all the forums under Topic 2 down the middle block of the OWC Moodle page. I like to get into the forums this way because I can view right away how many unread posts I have. To set your preferences for the forums, got to the Forums in the Activity Block and make your selections to track and subscribe at the top right of your screen. I click yes for tracking so that I know what I haven't read. I do not subscribe because I do not want all the posts copied to my MyCOM email. Instead, I just check the Moodle site itself to check for activity.

Alisa Klinger, Ph.D.  
Instructor, English Department  
Distance Education and Online Writing Center Coordinator

Sample Instructional Support (IS) Feedback

The following samples indicate a range of student help requests from students at various levels. Students seek assistance with specific class assignments across the disciplines, as well as with transfer, scholarship, and employment applications. ISs’
responses indicate a variety of approaches, including feedback in paragraph format, enumerated suggestions, insertions in students’ texts, and combination approaches.

Prepared by Beth Sheofsky as an IS Training Document posted in the OWC

Sample Online Writing Center Responses

English 98

Question A:

Hi, I’m doing a research paper on Veganism. I want to be sure that my Thesis is strong, clear, to the point.. and if it needs any revising. Some feedback would be great! Here is my Thesis Statement: A healthy and well-balanced vegan diet ensures many life improving benefits from a much healthier way of eating free of hormonal/chemical additives to disease prevention and even to an improvement of our environment and animal rights; while making us feel better from the inside out and making positive choices for everyone and everything involved.

Response A:

Hi (Student),

From reading your thesis, it looks like you are going to be including some interesting and thought-provoking points in your essay! Your thesis contains a lot of information, and I do think it can be organized more clearly. Here are the main points that I see:

A well-balanced vegan diet can lead to many life-improving benefits, such as:
- disease prevention (this comes from "a healthier way of eating free of hormonal/chemical additives," so I read these as the same topic)
- an improvement in our environment
- an improvement in animal rights
- an overall improvement in the way we feel/our well being

I divided "environment" and "animal rights" since these are really two different topics; do you have enough to say about them separately?

Also, the last topic that you listed, "making positive choices for everyone and everything involved," is very broad, and I think that if you cover the above 4 points, you will automatically be explaining why veganism is a positive choice for individuals, animals and the environment. I suggest leaving the last part out of your thesis.

So, how about this for a more streamlined version of your thesis:
A well-balanced vegan diet can lead to many life-improving benefits, such as freedom from disease, an improvement in our environment, better treatment of animals, and an overall greater sense of well-being for a person who chooses this lifestyle.
Hope this helps!

Beth

**Question B:**

* Is my structure clear? Do I have enough details? Should I take anything out that is unnecassary?

I believe in helping my mom around the house. I like to help her by cleaning the house. This includes taking out the trash, washing dishes and putting them away, doing my laundry, cleaning my room, cleaning the bathroom, or cleaning the kitchen. I help in the mornings before school, when I come from school before I begin my homework, or on the weekends. They’re rewards for helping. I receive a little bit more money than my brother and sister. My mom gives me permission to go out a little longer. She makes my favorite dishes because she’s in a happy mode. She talks proud of me to other moms about how I help around the house, and I even get a workout out of it. Why do I believe in helping my mom out? I believe my mom deserves help she comes home tired from cleaning one or two houses and for her to come to a clean house, it relaxes her and she has free time for herself. I also believe that it will prepare me for when I move out of get married.

When my mother arrives home from work she is exhausted. She starts early in the morning like around 8:30 and she leaves at usually 2:00 pm. It also depends on how many houses she has a day. One day when I went to work with her we did two houses and one of the houses was new to us. It was very messy, had a lot of dust, and a very sticky floor. So we had to work a little longer because the lady was explaining what needed to be done, what products she wanted to be used, and what were we not supposed to do. We divided the house. My mom gave me the kitchen and living room while she did bathrooms and bedrooms. As we left the house we were exhausted! Our feet were aching and our hands were worn out. We just wanted to go home and pass out. When we got home the house was a mess because my brother and sister didn’t help pick up. When they came from school they decided to watch TV. My mother was angry and so was I. My mother likes waking up to a clean house and if it isn’t she wakes up all cranky because she has to clean up the mess. So she started cleaning right away instead of taking a nap and I decided to help her so she could take a nap faster. In the end, the house was fresh and I felt good about helping her and when she woke up she made us my favorite dish, lasagna. She also thanked me for helping her throughout the day and she told me the day went by faster with my help.

On her free time she enjoys taking walks, watch TV, and read. She also has time to spend some time with me and my brothers. Cleaning the house is not only beneficial for my mom but also to me for when I get marry. I will have the skills and will to have a clean house and if I have children then I will pass it on to them.
I believe that children who live at home with their mom should be able to help out around the house it’s the least you can do. Especially if you don't work and all you do is go to school. My mother always says, "A clean house brings happiness and peace." If you have never helped around the house you should give it a try and see the results for yourself.

Response B:

Hi (Student),

I enjoyed reading your essay, and I like that you've included some specific details to support your claims about why helping around the house is important to you. One of your questions was about structure, and I do think that the structure of your paragraphs could be improved so that you focus is always more squarely on WHY you believe in helping your mom out around the house. For example, your second paragraph starts with a description of your mother's work day and also describes a time when you helped her out at work. Here, you're providing your reader with concrete examples to show how tired your mom is at the end of the day and hence, why she needs and deserves some help around the house. I'd suggest starting this paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces the main idea (something along the lines of "My mom deserves help around the house because she works hard all day in order to support us...”). Then, at the end of the paragraph, explain why helping her out is important to you. Why did it make you feel so good? Do you believe in helping out a person who loves and cares for you? Do you believe that the parent shouldn’t be solely responsible for the upkeep of the house? Do you believe that it's only fair for everyone to pitch in? Do you believe that a hardworking person should have a break every day, and that you’d like to be the reason she gets that break? WHY do you have this belief?

The next paragraph, starting with "On her free time," is very brief and actually contains two main ideas. If you expand the previous paragraph with more explanation of your belief, then you will have already covered why it's important to you to help out your mom; I suggest making this paragraph entirely about what you get out of helping around the house - having the skills to have a clean house, which will be helpful to you in the future. Can you expand on this idea and say more about what you are learning (not only how to clean, but about the importance of having a clean house) and how this will benefit you in the future?

Finally, be sure to proofread for errors such as run together sentences. Here is one example:

I believe my mom deserves help she comes home tired from cleaning one or two houses and for her to come to a clean house, it relaxes her and she has free time for herself.

Notice that there is no punctuation between "help" and "she comes home," yet these should be two complete sentences as they both contain a subject and a verb. There are a few other run-ons throughout this essay that you should work on correcting as well.
In Support of the Oakland Board of Education Resolution
Life is full of unexpected challenges. Most of these challenges we face every waking hour are the result of how we have been educated. The more educated we are, the more tools we have to face reality and its circumstances. Due to the continuously poor scores and school performance from African-American students on standardized tests in the Oakland Unified School District in California, the Board of Education decided to include African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as part of the school curriculum in 1996. The resolution adopted by the Board of Education on behalf of AAVE and thus providing funding towards the development of this educational goal would improve the standardized test scores of many of the children of this district and also would allow students to improve their cognitive skills in the mainstream culture. Consequently, including African American Vernacular English will greatly increase their chances of success in adulthood by increasing their cognitive abilities due to a bilingual education. Despite the controversy that AAVE would possibly produce a generation of substandard students that would lack the abilities of their counterparts at other school districts, and an increasingly biased perspective from the media and its audience, research clearly shows how this resolution would lead to better scores. Evidently, children in every country, while being socialized, are subject to local policy regarding education. Education is one of the tools that shapes social behavior in society. Each district, region or country sets the rules and the community must accept them in order to create social stability and prevent chaos. We grow up learning a non-arbitrarily imposed set of linguistic codes that varies in nature and that is the result of certain historical and political variables. Adopting African American Vernacular English is another tool towards closing the gap between African-American students and students from other districts is a pragmatic approach that would ensure a way to suppress a suboptimal situation in this disadvantaged district. Including AAVE in the school curricula will vastly improve the scores (Rikford). It is not only an efficient way to broaden the students capabilities, but also entails a path towards the attainment of a public individuality that will eventually open doors in seeking their own rights and opportunities as functional members of an American mainstream society. Therefore, adding AAVE as an additional subject and/or teaching method in school would create a smooth transition between a poorly performing student and a successful one by increasing vocabulary during their elementary and secondary education.
Another important issue to take into consideration is how to turn an erroneous, opinionated and misinformed public opinion into a well-informed audience. This stigmatized public view, conveniently indoctrinated via the main networks, is the consequence of superficial coverage of the media (Rikford). This creates a biased perspective that affects the entire Oakland community and reaches the extreme of Ebonics being perceived by the audience as a dialect and therefore “bad English” or “bad use of the language.” This problem needs to be addressed by turning a misinformed audience into a more skilled one. In other words, the root cause of such a negative environment is simply prejudice derived from a pattern of misinformed public opinion. Despite the difficulties imposed by the public perception and the perpetuation of such distorted views that affected the community during the early years after the Ebonics resolution, including lack of federal funding (Harris), numerous scientific studies have been helping to correct this deviation from the obvious benefits of bilingual education (Wolfram).

On the other hand there is enough scientific evidence to clearly show a correlation between the use of nonstandard vernacular forms and school success in the official language. In other words, students that were first taught in their vernacular variety learned more quickly and more efficiently by doing the transition from the nonstandard form to the mainstream version of the official language (Osterberg). In these studies, a control group was separated from the experimental group in order to obtain enough data to compare. The study showed how the experimental group outperformed the control group in reading comprehension and assimilation speed in the subjects they were taught during the extent of the experiment. Another study showed similar results in Chicago and raised the issue of how students belonging to an experimental group with an increased amount of vocabulary, as a result of such bilingual education, had the tendency to increase their metalinguistic index through contrastive analysis and hence rapidly attaining mastery of the English language (Taylor).

Rather than using inefficient policy tools and suffering from insufficient media coverage and lack of federal funding, we should pay more attention to the recent developments in linguistic research and include these in the public arena in order to facilitate a better and broader view for the audience to understand Oakland’s scenario. The resolution adopted by the Board of Education not only emphasizes the need to pay close attention to this issue and to improve public perception but also addresses the urgent need to allocate federal and state funding to improve the writing and reading comprehension on standardized test scores of this already segregated African American population.

Response C:

Hi (Student),
This is a strong draft of your essay! You've done a good job of including specific and relevant research to support your claims. I've made some comments below about each of your paragraphs:

Intro: You could use a smoother transition between the first three introductory sentences and the following sentence where you start to address the specific argument of your essay: “Life is full of unexpected challenges. Most of these challenges we face every waking hour are the result of how we have been educated. The more educated we are, the more tools we have to face reality and its circumstances. Due to the continuously poor scores and school performance from African-American students on standardized tests...”

I think your thesis is clear and makes some important points that you go on to explain in the body paragraphs. My only comment about your thesis is that its direct focus is on the two major opposing arguments that you will address, and then you only very briefly mention your argument (better scores). This isn't wrong, but you might consider making your thesis a bit more balanced by developing the last part of the sentence to be a bit more specific. I'd also recommend changing "the media and its audience" to "the media and the public."

Body paragraph #1:

This paragraph starts off with some pretty broad, somewhat vague ideas; you begin to address the specific argument of your essay in the fifth sentence. The paragraph needs to begin with a focused topic sentence that directly states one particular reason that using Ebonics as a teaching tool would be beneficial to students. Can you crystallize the main idea that you want to get at in this paragraph into a one-sentence topic sentence right from the beginning? (I'm wondering if the last sentence in this paragraph is actually your topic sentence, though it may be too specific to be a t.s. as it seems to focus only on vocabulary.)

This sentence needs some revising: "Adopting African American Vernacular English is another tool towards closing the gap between African-American students and students from other districts is a pragmatic approach that would ensure a way to suppress a suboptimal situation in this disadvantaged district."

BP #3:

You argue that the public view of Ebonics is erroneous because most people believe that it is a dialect, but you haven't refuted this incorrect idea and provided the correct information. Are you arguing, then, that Ebonics is actually a language, not a dialect, and that the public needs to be made aware of this? And if it is a language, why does that mean that it should be used in teaching? You need to go further in
this paragraph to educate your readers on 'the truth' about Ebonics and to explain why this means that Ebonics would lead students to more success (in other words, connect the ideas in this paragraph to your thesis).

The following sentence at the end of the paragraph is packed with information that needs more explanation. Can you elaborate on these points before you end the paragraph? “Despite the difficulties imposed by the public perception and the perpetuation of such distorted views that affected the community during the early years after the Ebonics resolution, including lack of federal funding (Harris), numerous scientific studies have been helping to correct this deviation from the obvious benefits of bilingual education (Wolfram).”

I know that the next paragraph will go into detail about the scientific studies, but I'd suggest saying more here about lack of funding, how the negative public opinion has harmed this cause, etc.

BP #4:

You have some good information here, but you need to relate the outcomes of these studies to the Ebonics controversy at the end of the paragraph so that you can directly show how using Ebonics would benefit students in the Oakland school district. Also, you seem to hint at the cognitive benefits that would be achieved through a sort of bilingual education (as you had mentioned in the intro) - can you elaborate on this idea?

Were these studies that you refer to done with students who speak Ebonics, or were they done with students who spoke a different language/dialect? I'm wondering if the term "vernacular" is more closely related to a dialect or to a language. I'm bringing this up because if if vernacular=dialect, then using this term would seem to contradict the point you alluded to in the previous paragraph, that Ebonics is not a dialect but a language. Just something to think about... I'm not sure how easy it would be to answer this question, as it seems that linguists define these terms differently.

Conclusion:

A good start, but it could use a powerful concluding sentence that emphasizes that using Ebonics as a teaching tool will lead to improvements in education for these students, better test scores, etc.

Hope this helps!

Beth

Question D:
Hello, I would like some help with the paper I am writing for my English 150A course. Can you please let me know if my thesis is clear? I didn't list out the topics that I used in the topic sentences to follow it, is this ok?

Also, how can I cite the Oakland Unified School District's resolution? I used the web address to access it, do I use that?

(see text of essay below)

Response D:

Hi (Student),

I enjoyed reading your essay. You've included much good, relevant evidence throughout your essay, but the focus of much of the essay isn't on the assigned task: to argue the reasons that Ebonics should be used as a teaching tool in schools. It is fine not to list all of your reasons in your thesis, but your thesis does need to make a more direct argument about Ebonics in schools, and then each body paragraph should focus on explaining one specific reason to support the general claim you make in the thesis (so, your topic sentences should also focus on reasons why Ebonics is a useful teaching tool).

Right now, your essay explains some common misconceptions about Ebonics and gives its history, and then, toward the end, turns to an argument of why it can be useful in teaching African American students. I'd suggest reorganizing your ideas so that all of the information you include serves the main argument about why Ebonics should be used in schools. This means making sure that each paragraph starts with a clear topic sentence that supports the main purpose of the essay and then explaining in detail how your evidence connects to your purpose.

As for citing the resolution, you should look up the proper way to cite this source in an MLA handbook or on this website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/

Though I don't know this source, I believe the proper citation style would be under "In-text citations for print sources with no known author."

I've made some comments, in all caps, throughout your essay below. Hope this helps! Feel free to write back with any questions.

Beth

In 1996 the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) adopted a resolution accepting the use of Ebonics, aka Black English, to be used as a tool to teach their students Standard English. The resolution was made based on the recommendations made by the African American Task Force to improve the English-language acquisition and improve test scores. Unfortunately, both the resolution and the history and meaning of Ebonics have been widely misinterpreted and therefore have endured a great deal of unjustified criticism. (ARE YOU ARGUING THAT EBONICS, THEN, SHOULD BE USED AS A TEACHING TOOL? YOUR THESIS SHOULD STATE THE
ARGUMENT THAT YOU ARE MAKING ABOUT THE USE OF EBONICS IN CLASSES

One major misconception of this resolution is that teachers will be teaching Ebonics in school in place of Standard English, this is not the case. This resolution allows teachers of the OUSD to use Ebonics as a tool to teach Standard English. Be it further resolved that the Superintendent in conjunction with her staff shall immediately devise and implement the best possible academic program for imparting instruction to African American students in their primary language for the combined purposes of maintaining the legitimacy and richness of such language whether it is known as “Ebonics,” “African Language Systems,” “Pan African Communication Behaviors” or other description, and to facilitate their acquisition and mastery of English language skills (resolution). By using Ebonics as a tool, the OUSD is able to provide equal opportunities for all of their students, including African-Americans. This point needs further explanation. Why are the opportunities not equal for all students when classes are taught in Standard English? How and why would teaching with Ebonics help African American students to be more successful?

Even though Ebonics has become increasingly popular in American mainstream culture people still don’t appear to be very educated on what it is or where it came from. Many people will refer to it as “bad grammar”, “lazy pronunciation” or “slang” when it is actually much more than that. Dell Hymes, a linguist defines language as much more than grammar and pronunciation and Ebonics as even more than a language since it includes “semantics, intonation, favored genres, sociolinguistic rules, speaking style, learning and teaching style, and the world view/themes” (Hoover). People have either been misinformed or forgotten that Ebonics has been in existence since the arrival of Blacks in the United States (Hoover). The term Ebonics was created by a group of black scholars in 1973 who did not like the negative connotations that came with terms such as “Nonstandard Negro English” (Hoover). John R. Rickford at the Linguistic Society of America defines Ebonics as “black speech (a blend of the words ebony ‘black’ and phonics ‘sounds’)” (Rickford). "Whereas, judicial cases in states other than California have recognized the unique language stature of African-American pupils, and such recognition by courts has resulted in court-mandated educational programs which have substantially benefited African-American children in the interest of vindicating their equal protection of the law rights under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution". (resolution) Ebonics is not bad grammar, lazy punctuation and slang,
it is a part of our culture recognized as the predominately primary language of African-American students of the OUSD. (WHY DOES THIS MEAN THAT EBONICS SHOULD BE USED AS A TEACHING TOOL?)
The policy of the Oakland Unified School District is that all pupils are equal and are to be treated equally, even those with difficulty speaking, reading, writing and understanding the English language (thrivingstudents.org). Teaching African-American children in both their primary language, Ebonics, and English will assist in raising the scores of standardized tests and grades in reading and language arts; which are areas that at one time, before this resolution, were well below the state and national norms (thrivingstudents.org). It is often noticed when people, including children are not performing at the same pace as their peers (THIS SENTENCE ISN’T CLEAR – CAN YOU REPHRASE AND EXPLAIN MORE FULLY?). These children in the Oakland Unified School District are performing at the same pace as their peers, but not as those in schools where English is the native language. English is not the native language of these children, Ebonics is. (GOOD – IN THIS PARAGRAPH YOU BEGIN TO FOCUS ON THE TOPIC, THAT EBONICS SHOULD BE USED IN SCHOOLS. I’D SUGGEST COMBINING THIS PARAGRAPH WITH THE NEXT ONE, AS THE NEXT ONE LOGICALLY FOLLOWS FROM THE POINTS YOU MAKE HERE AND IS PART OF THE SAME ARGUMENT)

It only makes sense to teach a language to a group of people in their native language so they are able to understand it. The resolution makes note of the fact that the Federal Bilingual Education Act mandates educational agencies to “build their capacities to establish, implement, and sustain programs of instruction for children and youth of limited English proficiency” (federal bilingual education act). It is known that a college education is the key to obtaining a well paying job and passing English 1A (reading and composition) is a prerequisite to graduating college (THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE NEEDS TO BE RELATED TO YOUR ARGUMENT MORE CLEARLY – WHY DOES THIS MEAN THAT EBONICS SHOULD BE USED IN SCHOOLS?). By not taking the time to teach these children English in a way that they can understand it, teachers are depriving them of excelling in life.

THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH IS STILL MAKING AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR ARGUMENT, SO IT SHOULD BE A BODY PARAGRAPH, NOT A CONCLUSION. YOUR CONCLUSION SHOULD WRAP UP YOUR ARGUMENT AS A WHOLE.

**English 151**

**Question E:**

Good morning,

We have been tasked with rewrite of our first essay attempts, I have completed a version and would appreciate some feedback. [The comments in blue below are the student’s, not the tutor’s.)
“I proved that you're wrong, and if you're wrong, I'm right.” – Nick Naylor

In the movies *Kinsey* and *Thank You For Smoking* (*TYFS*) both protagonists, Nick Naylor in *TYFS* and Dr. Alfred Kinsey in *Kinsey*, are dedicated, hard working and very good at their jobs mainly through the use of argument. These are qualities that allow us, the viewers, to quickly become invested in each character’s method of argumentation. Though Kinsey and Naylor both rely on argumentation to communicate with others, they differ in their use of scientific evidence, their appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos, and the degree of success they achieve, especially in regards to financial goals.

Although While Dr. Alfred Kinsey is a scientist and Nick Naylor is a lobbyist for tobacco companies, both characters make use of science in their arguments attempting to sway public opinion. In *TYFS*, The Academy of Tobacco Studies conducts studies in attempts to disprove the harmful effects of cigarette smoking; this academy employs a scientist from Germany with enough moral flexibility to have “been testing the link between nicotine and lung cancer for thirty years and hasn't found any conclusive results. The man’s a genius, he could disprove gravity” (*TYFS*), according to Naylor. Naylor uses the lack of conclusive results from the data collected during these studies to support claims on behalf of tobacco companies to support his arguments that smoking has not been proven to be harmful. Conversely Dr. Kinsey meticulously, and in an unbiased a manner as possible, collects data through extensive questioning of individuals. This is the major difference in how scientific methods are utilized in the two films. Kinsey is vested in collecting facts, going so far as to establish in his questioning “building […] little trip wires to catch lies and inconsistencies” (Kinsey) in order to increase the accuracy of information rather than methods designed to provide inconclusive results, while In contrast, Naylor uses the lack of facts to support his case for people choosing to smoke.

Pathos, logos and ethos are used differently in each film, and lead to varied success in arguments. In the film *Kinsey*, greater use of logos and ethos in the collection of facts are displayed while *TYFS* relies more heavily on pathos and ethos to sway public opinion. Both characters make use of ethos in distinctly different ways; Naylor displays a tendency towards the freedom to make choices for yourself as well as the necessity to advocates for people to “think for yourself, you have to challenge authority” (*TYFS*). In his personal life, Naylor has very clear, strong ethical boundaries; it is his ability to recognize the rights of others to choose for themselves that allows him to effectively “pay the mortgage” (*TYFS*) with his career choice in lobbying for large tobacco companies. Personally Kinsey’s personal ethics are not as clearly defined; however, his use of logic and ethics he employs during the meticulous collection of data during the research for sexual behavior studies seems almost omnipresent in the film. From a pathos perspective, Kinsey claims to primarily have a scientific approach to sexual acts, even within his own marriage; it
is evident in the film by his reaction when Clara and Clyde begin a sexual relationship that he has far stronger emotions around sex than he admits to himself. On the other hand, Naylor often appeals to his audience’s emotional side; this is very useful in persuading people to become more responsive, either in support of, or opposed to, his message, further illustrating Naylor’s ability to effectively make use of pathos during his employment as a lobbyist for tobacco companies. Each character is astute in using pathos, logos and ethos in different ways to make their arguments.

There is a need for both characters in the two films to have their arguments surrounding the use of money to be successful, Kinsey for continued funding and Naylor to purchase silence. As public opinion and support for Kinsey’s research into sexual behaviors, specifically how they relate to women, wanes, so does financial support for his project. Dr. Kinsey feels that asking an individual for financial support “is an exercise in futility” (Kinsey); however the funds are desperately required to cover, what some might feel, are unjustified legal charges regarding the collection of images, films, and sex toys. At this point within the film, Kinsey’s name as a scientist “has been dragged through the mud” (Kinsey), and Kinsey has been subject to criticism from various groups including the University and the general population. Unfortunately, as Kinsey has had to endure circumstances that depict his research studies in such a way that he no longer has “the same rights other scientists take for granted” (Kinsey) making the argument for funding and support fruitless. Tobacco companies, without concern for the cost, have Naylor offer the Marlboro Man, Lorne Lutch, a large sum of pay off money to keep his fight with cancer out of the media. In this scene Naylor argues the reasons for Lutch to accept a large sum of money with the implied exchange of silencing his campaign against tobacco. Naylor offers suggestions for how to Lutch could use the money to his advantage, either by donating it or by approaching the news media; in the end Lutch accepts the money and keeps it for himself. There is a need for both characters in the two films to have their arguments surrounding the use of money to be successful, Kinsey for continued funding and Naylor to purchase silence. Naylor is far more skilled in appealing to pathos. Thus he is able to leave the Marlboro Man’s home having achieved his financial goal. In contrast Kinsey is not as persuasive with financial arguments, and therefore is not successful getting adequate funding.

To some degree both Nick Naylor and Dr. Alfred Kinsey are similar in their ability to recognize and relate to their audiences using varied methods. Naylor knows where his clients are from and chooses to travel with them on a business trip to The Academy of Tobacco Studies stating, “I like to ride with the people, know your clients” (TYFS). One of the key benefits of his choice to do so being able to get a glimpse into their lives, furthering his ability to appeal to the tobacco industries customer base on an emotional level. Although less skilled in persuasion, Kinsey recognizes the usefulness in “putting yourself at their level” (Kinsey) and creating a
There is no question that both Kinsey and Naylor are passionate about their pursuits. Given the two very different topics, sexual behavior research and lobbying for tobacco, a viewer might expect the arguments to be significantly different. However, the basic roots of the arguments are not really all that dissimilar. Overall, the delivery and skill in the way the arguments are presented effectively sway large segments of population to either fully support or denounce these two morally debatable topics.

Response E:

Hi (Student),

Thanks for including the original essay instructions here. Did your instructor give you any guidelines for the revision? I'm wondering if there is something in particular that she is looking for, or if she made particular comments on your original essay to help guide you as you revise. It would be helpful to know this so that I can tailor my comments to your specific needs for this assignment.

I can give you a few general comments, though. One way that you could strengthen your body paragraphs is by including additional examples from the movie that support your main ideas. For example, your first body paragraph focuses on the characters' use of science in their arguments. You explain that a scientist in TYFS (not Naylor) is able to shed doubt on the link between tobacco use and lung cancer through his possibly questionable scientific experiments; Naylor's role is to deliver that information to the public. But you haven't said much about HOW he uses science in his argument or HOW he delivers this information to the public - can you expand on these points? You then have just one sentence about how Kinsey uses science - can you say more about HOW his method shows that he is unbiased and HOW he uses extensive questioning to collect accurate data? What "trip wires" does he incorporate?

In the next paragraph, I'm a little unclear on Naylor's strong belief in allowing people to choose for themselves if he seems to be giving out incorrect, misleading or biased information. Can people truly make an informed choice if the information they have isn't accurate or based on real science? I'm a little unsure of Naylor's ethos. You then say that Kinsey's ethos, when it comes to the collection of data, is almost omnipresent, but can you include an example to illustrate this?

I'm not sure what you are saying in the following sentence:

"From a pathos perspective, Kinsey claims to primarily have a scientific approach to sexual acts, even within his own marriage; (BUT?) it is evident in the film by his
reaction when Clara and Clyde begin a sexual relationship that he has far stronger emotions around sex than he admits to himself."

What are you saying here about the contrast between what Kinsey claims to feel and what he actually feels? Are you saying that he doesn't understand himself as well as he should? Are his deeper emotions a negative or positive thing? I'm not sure what your argument is here. Also, this example isn't clearly about how Kinsey uses pathos to make an argument; this seems to be more about how he feels as a human being. How does this statement support your thesis?

Can you include an example or two of how Naylor appeals to his audience's emotional side?

Your final body paragraph contains more specific and well-explained examples - good - but make sure to use a transition when you switch from focusing on Kinsey to focusing on Naylor.

Hope this helps! Write back with any specific questions you may have.

Beth

Question F:

Do you have time to review my draft essay on World View? This is an assignment for our English 151 class and this essay is due on Sunday, Oct. 2.

I know I am over the word count requirement and need to eliminate some words. The word count is 500 and you can stay within 25 words of the assigned length. Your suggestions would be greatly appreciated. I started with the ideas of this paper and am concerned that my thesis is not clear.

My World View: Daddy’s Perfect Daughter

Growing up, I was always lectured to not follow in the footsteps of my older brother and sisters. I was one of seven children growing up in Portland, Oregon. Out of the seven, I was the only girl to graduate from high school. My father worked and was a merchant marine and was away often. When I came into this world, my father changed careers to repairing boat motors. My mother was a homemaker and raised the children. My mother began driving when my father changed careers. She stated working part-time in restaurants. However, she was home when we left for school and when we came home from school. We were a large family, four brothers and three sisters, and I was the youngest daughter, number 6. My older brother and sisters got into trouble often. My father told me that I had to be perfect, smarter and the stress of that pressure created my worlds view. My father was the controller of the television in our house. We watched what he watched, news, documentaries, sports and family entertainment. He had a strong view of politics and was a democrat. Those views and beliefs were reinforced and taught to us. We were respectful and worldly. He believed no subject was taboo in
our house. In order to make a point or an opinion, you needed to back it up with arguments. My father taught me to stand up tall and not be afraid to voice your opinions.

Whenever there was trouble, and there was lots of trouble in our household with seven brothers and sisters, the youngest children were sent upstairs. Our world in those troubling times became an air vent between the floors. It was 12x12 and it became our world view. We could see all directions for about 6 feet each way and whoever walked under the vent. We could not always see, but we could hear everything that happened downstairs: the arguments, the fighting, the shouting, the quiet and the crying. It was our world until we became older. My life was shaped by those events of always hearing, but never seeing. Never making quick judgments based on impressions and listening to every detail, verbally and non-verbally.

The day the police came for my brother was an earthshattering day for all, and we were immediately sent upstairs to watch the events unfold in our 12x12 window. Growing up in that household taught us to use our hearing skills in making decisions. We learned the art of eavesdropping. To this day, my hearing is excellent. It also taught me that not all things appear as they seem. I learned never to make a judgment based on first impressions. I learned to be open-minded and to remember that some things happen that are totally out of your control, and all you can do is watch from afar, through a small window or air vent.

At home, I was always told, you have to be smarter than your brother and your sisters, you need to stay away from crime and drugs because you did not want to be like your brother and sisters. You have to act properly, fall the rules, never talk back and support all your arguments with facts. Most importantly, I was told I had to succeed above all others. I became the “good” daughter, graduated high school and became successful, and love news, sports and politics.

Response F:

Hi (Student):

I enjoyed reading your analysis of the ways in which your upbringing helped to shape who you are today. However, I think your focus is just a bit off from what the assignment is asking for. You tend to focus more on what your father believed than on what you believe and why, and you tend to focus more on examples than on explaining or analyzing the forces that shaped you. I’ll give you some general comments, paragraph by paragraph:

I think the background information in your first paragraph could be condensed quite a bit, and then refocused. The most important point that you make in this paragraph is in the last sentence: “My father told me that I had to be perfect, smarter and the stress of that pressure created my world view.” Yes, you need to include some explanation of your siblings’ experiences in order to set up this point, but
some of the more general information about your family isn’t necessary to an understanding of this point (so, here’s a place where you could cut some words). But I’d also suggest refocusing this paragraph so that you are explaining HOW your father’s expectations shaped your world view; you haven’t explained this point. Did the stress affect you negatively – or did it push you to always work hard to be the best you could be? Did it affect your beliefs about family? How did it shape your feelings about yourself and the importance of success and hard work in life?

Your second paragraph focuses more on your father than on yourself; it needs some explanation of how your father’s political points of view have helped to shape your own. You say that his beliefs were taught to you, but can you shift the focus just a bit to explain how your beliefs were shaped by him? You then say, “He believed no subject was taboo in our house. In order to make a point or an opinion, you needed to back it up with arguments. My father taught me to stand up tall and not be afraid to voice your opinions.” Okay, this is good, but it is also quite general. As a reader, I’d like to see a brief example to illustrate this point.

In the third and fourth paragraphs, the particular worldviews that you are explaining aren’t totally clear. If the beliefs that you are analyzing are your belief in being non-judgmental and open-minded, you should state these at the beginning of the paragraphs and then explain more clearly what influenced you to hold these beliefs. These paragraphs are built mainly on examples and only touch on the worldviews briefly at the end; I’d suggest reversing this structure by stating the worldview first, then including a brief example and explaining what influenced you to hold this worldview. Your final paragraph, too, should focus more on explaining the forces that shaped you.

Overall, I’d suggest working on articulating the things in your life that have shaped you – perhaps your father’s political beliefs, your siblings’ tendency toward trouble, your father’s desire to shape you into the perfect child, etc. Clarify these forces, and then include examples to illustrate how they have affected you.

I hope this helps!

Beth
Instructor Request Form for Online Writing Center (OWC) Orientation

The OWC is Open 24/7 to help students with writing assignments for all college subjects. Students can get help with grammar, idea development, and organization, as well as with research and essays. The OWC also assists students with transfer, scholarship, and job applications, including resumes and cover letters. In order to best support students with their writing needs, we need your help getting the word out and customizing the OWC for your students.

1. Please fill out a request below for an orientation for your students, so they can find out about the OWC and how to access it. Orientations can range from 10-30 minutes, depending on your class schedule and your students’ needs. An OWC instructor can come to your class, or you can bring your class to an orientation in a smart classroom.

2. If you assign writing to your students and you would like to have a course forum with your assignments in the OWC, please make a request below. The OWC can provide a forum dedicated to your particular course, so your students can access your materials and post their drafts in an easily identifiable location.

Once Alisa Klinger receives your request, she will be in touch with you to schedule an orientation, create your course forum, and/or upload your writing assignments to the OWC.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the Spring 2012 OWC Coordinator: Alisa Klinger, alisa.klinger@marin.edu. Please return your completed form electronically to Alisa, or put it in her on-campus mailbox.

Instructor’s Name: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________

Course Name & Number: ____________________________

Number of Students: _________

Date & Time of requested training:

_____________________________ 1st choice
_____________________________ 2nd choice
_____________________________ 3rd choice

This orientation requires access to the Internet. Please mark the appropriate boxes below:

_____ Please schedule the orientation in my smart classroom (which includes a computer and projector with Internet access). Room/Building # _______

_____ Please schedule the orientation in a smart classroom.
Yes, I would like to place my assignment materials in the OWC for students and tutors to access in a discussion forum assigned to my class.

**Online Writing Center**

The Online Writing Center (OWC) is now available to all registered COM students in all courses!

The OWC is open 24/7 to help students with writing assignments for all college subjects. Students can get help with grammar, idea development, and organization, as well as with research and essays. The OWC also assists students with transfer, scholarship, and job applications, including resumes and cover letters.

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**All COM students and faculty can self-register to access the OWC by completing the following 5 steps:**

1) Login to your MyCOM account using your username and password.
2) Click on the “Distance Education” tab.
3) Click on “Log into Moodle directly,” (on the right side of your screen).
4) Click on the “My home” link. (If you don’t see the link, click on the + sign in the Navigation block on the top left of your screen.)
5) Click on “XLOWC.201210” in the Self-Registration Block on the left side of your screen.

If you need help accessing the site, please send an email to moodlehelp@marin.edu or visit the Writing Center, LC 120.