

The Write News

For Faculty and Staff

We are thrilled to present the inaugural edition of the QEP’s newsletter for faculty and staff. “The Write News” is a means of keeping you abreast of important information and events related to writing and our program. Our aim with the QEP is to improve student attitudes about writing, so that they can improve their abilities and find success in and out of the classroom. This requires the partnership of the entire SSU family. Look for future editions of “The Write News” each semester.

Grammar to the Rescue

Summarized article from *The Chronicle for Higher Education*

By: Trelani Duncan

New Dorp High School in Staten Island experienced a mass rate of students failing the essay portions of the Regents’ exam. While students could write complete sentences, they struggled in compiling those sentences into coherently convincing paragraphs and essays.

Students were tested on coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, *nor*, *or*, etc. The results demonstrated that students did not know how to properly use the conjunctions.

Instructors proposed that the problem stemmed from the way that writing was being taught. Traditionally, students first learned spelling and sentence structure. From there, they learned to build paragraphs and then onto writing essays. This approach was later revised to focus more on creative expression and less on structure and grammar. It was believed that by giving students frequent, fun writing assignments, then they would grasp the grammar rules along the way.

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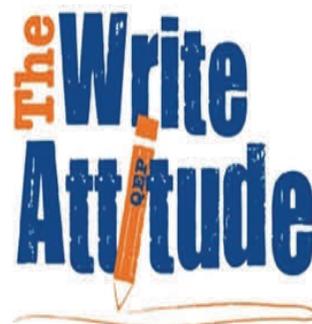
Should you have an idea for future newsletters, please contact our newsletter editor extraordinaire, Ms. Trelani Duncan.

duncant@savannahstate.edu

Look inside for many upcoming opportunities for faculty and staff to get involved!

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Faculty / Staff / Community QEP Events

- July 2013:** QEP Creative Writing Group for Faculty and Staff (see below)
- June 2013:** Writing workshop with Savannah State's Campus Police
- April 27th:** Third Annual Family Day, Health, and Job Fair (St. Joseph's/
Candler African-American Health Center)
- April 23rd:** "Peer Review: The Joys and Pains of Student-Led Writing
Instruction"; Dr. Chante Martin
- April 16th:** "Plato, Politics, and Pyongyang: The Importance of Arguments";
Dr. Geoff Bowden
- March 26th:** "Awakening Awareness about Writing: What's Dialect Got to Do
with It?"; Dr. Rebecca Setliff
- March 21st:** "Creative Journaling—Funny, Fantastic, and Fruitful!"; Professor
Donna Youngblood
- March 19th:** "Developing Survey Instrument Assignments for Social Sciences
Research"; Dr. Deden Rukmana
- March 7th:** "Effective Strategies for Reducing the Grading Load"; Ms. Dee Dee
Botticelli
- February 28th:** "Writing Assignments for Real World Audiences"; Ms. Trelani Duncan
- February 7th:** "Let's Get Intense: Writing in the Freshman Year Experience Class";
Ms. Jessica Eppinger

Calling all Creative Writers!

Join our creative writing group as we help to get your story out of your head, on to the page, and into the hands of readers! Nonfiction, fiction, plays, and poetry are all welcomed. We will stimulate your creativity through writing, sharing, and learning techniques of overcoming writer's block.

For those interested in publishing, we will teach you how to go about self-publishing as well as marketing yourself to an agent and/or publisher.

Even if you just want to write for the fun of it or just to have that dedicated time, then this group is for you as well.

For more information, please contact us at duncant@savannahstate.edu.

Connect with us:

Facebook: [Quality Enhancement Plan for SSU](#)

Twitter: [@WriteSSU](#)



Faculty Writing Fellows—Apply Now for 2013-2014!

Faculty Writing Fellows (FWFs) are faculty members that log hours at the SSU Writing Center to assist students with their writing (a minimum of 75 hours for the term). FWFs work first with students in their disciplinary area of expertise, but are available to help any student in need.

Additionally, FWFs conduct research on best practices in pedagogy and writing instruction in their discipline, and deliver one QEP Faculty Development Workshop to share their findings sometime during the academic year.

We would like to sincerely thank this year's FWFs for their dedication to helping our students improve their attitudes about writing! They were:

Dr. Rebecca Setliff (Management and Marketing)
Dr. Karla Sue Marriott (Forensics and Chemistry)
Dr. Nat Hardy (English and Humanities)
Professor Nicholas Silberg (Fine Arts)
Dr. Geoff Bowden (Political Science and Philosophy)
Dr. Deden Rukmana (Urban Studies and Planning)



NOTE: This is a paid position. In order to be considered, you must be recommended by your department chair or dean.

Please apply [here](#).

Student Writing Fellows—Recommendations?

Student Writing Fellows round out our Fellows Program at the Writing Center. These skilled student employees are paired with interested professors to assist with the writing for their courses. SWFs represent disciplines across the university and collaborate to:

- Design in- and out-of-class sessions on writing to benefit the course curriculum
- Forward reminders and announcements to students via Desire2Learn
- Administer and collect writing-related materials
- Review drafts of major writing assignments, responding to each with suggestions
- Hold one-on-one consultations with students regarding drafts and feedback

Student Writing Fellows must be nominated by faculty members and are required to successfully complete the ENGL 3800: Peer Tutoring course. The SWF must also be classified as a junior or senior.

To nominate a student, please send along a statement of support to
Ms. Trelani Duncan at duncant@savannahstate.edu.

Additionally, please encourage SWF candidates to apply [here](#).

Faculty Development Seminar



“The Write Attitude” Faculty Development Seminar is an 8-week instructional program led by Dr. Lisa Yount designed to teach the best practices in pedagogy and writing instruction across the curriculum.

Candidates are chosen based on their support of QEP initiatives and willingness to enhance student learning through writing.

Participants will be asked to participate in surveys, implement writing in their respective classrooms, give a brief presentation on their teaching experiences, and assess activities over three semesters.

Along with the skills and pedagogical knowledge afforded by the seminar, participants also receive an honorarium for their efforts.

Some areas to be covered during this seminar include:

- How to motivate students’ critical thinking and knowledge comprehension through writing
- How to design effective writing assignments for your particular course/ discipline
- High- and low-stakes writing. Which is best for certain assignments and skill attainment?
- How to give student feedback that balances content with correctness
- Creating assignment instructions that enable students to grasp what it is you want from them
- Productive peer review
- How to manage the grading load efficiently and effectively

We are currently accepting applications for next fall. Six or seven participants representing all academic units on campus will be selected. **The deadline is May 17, 2013.**

Interested? Apply [here](#).

Faculty Development Seminar: Some Testimonials

I am proof positive that you can teach an “ole dog” new tricks. Participating in the faculty development seminar with a focus on writing in the classroom gave me new techniques, and more important, a new way of thinking about writing. The conversations and shared stories with other faculty helped validate my own concerns and gave me new insights to consider. And, along with everything else, the book we were given is great; I use it to this day.

—Dr. Rebecca Setliff, COBA

The seminar was inspirational and encouraging. My favorite part was ‘Assignment Design.’ The mini exercises [Dr. Yount] conducted were very helpful. I look forward to next semester to implement what I’ve learned. [Dr. Yount] was very knowledgeable of the content and ideas of the seminar and I am glad I participated.

—Dr. Samuel Dolo, COST

I would most certainly recommend this workshop. No matter how many years one has been teaching, a refresher is always needed. And for the new teacher, there is a lot of good assessment information.

—Dr. Darryl Thompson, CLASS

I used to think that only the instructor himself/herself had good writing abilities and could teach the students how to write. This course changed my mind. I now know that I should give my students more motivation and less criticism.

—Dr. Jun Wu, COBA

Thanks again for such an awesome class. I am definitely going to miss our Wednesday mornings. It was time set aside for me to just think about how I teach.

—Dr. Tara Cox, COST



Thank you

QEP / Deep Partnership

For the 2013-2014 academic year, Savannah State University is partnering with Deep, a local non-profit, to help bring creative writing to Savannah's public middle schools through the Deep Faculty Writing Fellowship program.

Deep helps 400 middle school students to write skillfully and confidently in order to bring their stories to the community. They do this by establishing 17 workshops that consist of 12 students and two writing fellows. Meetings are 75 minutes per week and there are 11-week series that take place twice per year.

In that year, five books are published and presented during a book release which consists of over 600 community members. The majority of these students win awards for the writings and one student has even been invited to read with the U.S. Poet Laureate.

More about the fellowship:

- It's a nine-month commitment (September-May).
- You'll lead eleven weekly creative writing workshops in a local public school.
- A fantastic leadership opportunity—you will mentor an SSU student who will co-teach with you. (Click [here](#) for more info)
- Open to full-time professors only.
- Must attend a two-day training seminar on September 7 & 8, 2013
- Participating faculty will be compensated by the QEP

Apply [here](#) or contact Dr. Lisa Yount (yountL@savannahstate.edu) for further information.

Deep, founded in 2008, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides free writing workshops for Savannah Public school students. Deep currently serves about 400 students annually, providing 17-21 workshops each semester in schools across the district, including every middle school in Chatham County. Deep aims to encourage a lively dialogue between students, teachers, and the community by helping kids share their stories skillfully, confidently, and courageously. To learn more, visit deepkids.com and you can view a Deep presentation [here](#).



Extrava-Grammar Hot Spot

The “Extrava-Grammar Hot Spot” is a series of workshops designed to assist students with their grammar and mechanics on common errors. Throughout this Spring semester, there were ten workshops that took place once per week, with 138 student visits.

All participants were surveyed and the data showed that students were receptive to what was being taught. Many even become repeat participants!

For further information or suggestions for this program, please contact Ms. Duncan at duncant@savannahstate.edu

Grammar to the Rescue, Continued

However, the “caught not taught” theory may not have been the best approach. Acknowledging this, teachers revamped their curriculums to mesh the two theories. They took the weaknesses in their student’s writing and created fun assignments that would give them more practice to improve, while still focusing on the necessary mechanics.

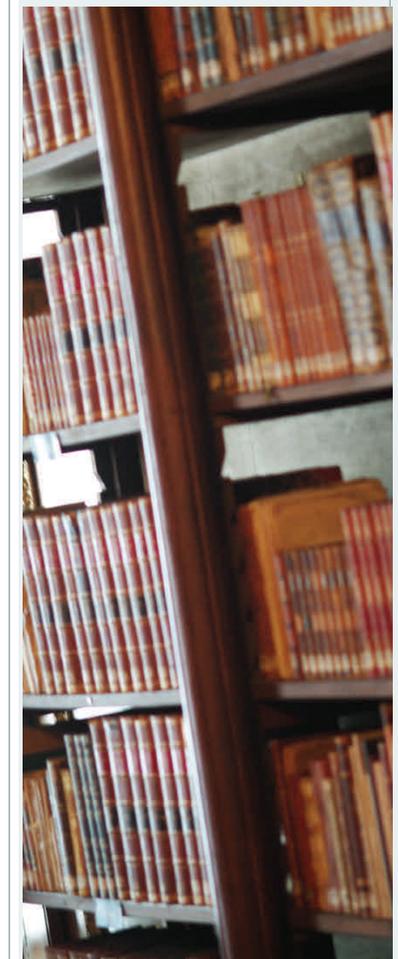
One important change for success was promoting writing in all classes, not just English. Another was giving prompts in writing that involved the coordinating conjunctions. For example, a writing prompt for a chemistry class might require students to use *although*: “Although hydrogen is explosive and oxygen supports combustion, a compound of them puts out fires.”

Increased instruction and practice with these conjunctions assisted in essays taking on a more scholarly tone. They flowed better. Comprehension and writing skills, in general, vastly improved. More students passed the essay parts of the Regents and even better, the drop out rates decreased.

What this experiment proved was that sometimes it is necessary to go back to the drawing board—investigate the problem and find a solution, anew. Teach students the correct way, be creative, and continue giving them the necessary practice to build skills.

For many, college is the last opportunity to strengthen their writing skills, so that is why we are attempting to intervene at all levels, so that our students can acquire “The Write Attitude.”

Original article can be found [here](#).



QEP OVERVIEW

Savannah State University chose “The Write Attitude” as our QEP focus simply because writing is critical to being a well-rounded, educated individual. Writing strengthens your critical thinking skills, reinforces your knowledge of a topic, and allows you to express your unique viewpoint.

Generally, people who are good writers have a positive attitude about writing. It is our mission to see our students foster this attitude. We do this by working with all instructors to ensure many opportunities to improve students writing skills in all classes, regardless of discipline or major. We also plan great campus events to get students enthused to write outside the classroom, in co-curricular settings.

MEET THE QEP TEAM



Dr. Lisa Yount is the QEP Director and Associate Professor of Philosophy. She has been with Savannah State University since 2007. She is a passionate teacher who loves to inspire students think about the world and their role and responsibility within it. She works with faculty to develop activities and assignments that use writing as a tool for learning in their classes, no matter what the discipline. Her job of overseeing “The Write Attitude” allows her to work with interesting and innovative teachers, staff, and students, who all strive to make our campus a place where writing is valued and understood as essential for the rigors of the classroom, success in the workplace, and an orientation toward life-long learning.



DeeDee Botticelli is Administrative Assistant to the Director of the QEP. She graduated with a Bachelors’ of Arts in Sociology from High Point University. Deedee enjoys bringing her experience in Event Planning, Public Speaking, and her love of languages to help make a difference at Savannah State University.



Shante’ Smith was born in New London, CT and raised in Camden County, Georgia. She is an alumnus of SSU, having graduated in 2010 with a Bachelor’s in English Language and Literature. In her free time, she enjoys writing, journaling, poetry, and reading. Shante’ joined the QEP staff in August of 2012 as the Student Outreach Coordinator. She interacts closely with the student body to create, plan, and host writing events for them.



Trelani Duncan is originally from Louisiana and is also an alumnus of SSU. She graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor’s in Political Science. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, reading, writing, blogging, and traveling. Trelani joined the QEP staff in January of 2013 as the QEP Liaison.