

1-1-2007

## Faculty on Writing

Follow this and additional works at: <http://dc.cod.edu/essai>

---

### Recommended Citation

(2007) "Faculty on Writing," *ESSAI*: Vol. 5, Article 6.  
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/essai/vol5/iss1/6>

This Prefatory Note is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@C.O.D.. It has been accepted for inclusion in *ESSAI* by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@C.O.D.. For more information, please contact [koteles@cod.edu](mailto:koteles@cod.edu).

## Faculty on Writing

### ***James E. Allen (English)***

Fundamentally, writing is thought made substantial in text; subsequently, the quality of one's writing reflects the quality of one's thoughts, one's intellect. Thus, being a "good writer" means much more than mastering the mechanics (grammar, usage, punctuation, etc.) of writing; it requires that one be a "good thinker" as well, one who is engaged with the world and critically considers the ideas and information he/she encounters every day.

### ***Robert N. Georgalas (English)***

Iranian born novelist Gelareh Asayesh once said that "language is the self reflected and clothed in nouns and verbs and adjectives." That observation reminds us that writing is much more than the mechanical act of putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. It is instead a journey that involves intellectual and emotional reflection, one that puts us in touch with both our subject and our deepest self. Indeed, it is via the rigors of that voyage that we come to learn not only what we think and feel, but why we uphold certain ideas and values.

### ***Gloria Golec (English)***

One of the great joys I've had during the last several years was telling selected students from my Composition classes that I wanted to submit their papers to *ESSAI*. They were unanimously shocked that I thought their writing was outstanding. They would often later talk to me about how they told their parents, their spouses, and their friends about *ESSAI* and many of them said they were now going to spend more time polishing their writing skills. Whether the students' papers were ultimately accepted or not was less important than the acknowledgement that someone thought their writing should be published, which motivated students to write more and work harder.

### ***Lisa Higgins (English)***

*The master doesn't talk, he acts.  
And when his work is done,  
The people say,  
"Look! We did it all by ourselves!"*

This is what I remember of a passage from Stephen Mitchell's version of the Tao Te Ching. I read it about 17 years ago – back when I was just beginning to teach writing. It reflects my belief that a good teacher of writing is actively involved with her students but doesn't take the center stage. Rather, it is the students' work, and the working process of the students, that is the focus. I want my students to say, "Wow! Look at what I did!"

**Richard Jarman (Chemistry)**

I have always taken great delight in a piece of writing well done as it either clarifies a complex topic or simply entertains by the virtuoso use of language. How dull otherwise are our lives? As a scientist, I am sensitive perhaps to the notion, real or imagined, that writing has a lesser role in the sciences compared to the arts. There generally seems to be greater agonizing over students' preparedness in mathematics than there does over their penmanship. Personally I take the view that math and writing skills are equally important; and in those science courses for the non-science major, achieving scientific literacy is probably more valuable than solving equations with nonchalant ease. There is greater reach to be had with such a skill: the ability to embrace civic responsibility by persuasive advocacy for example, or less altruistically perhaps, the ability to persuade hesitant potential employers with a well-turned resume.

With that in mind, I have appreciated *ESSAI* as a forum for publishing student writing. Each year I have had at least one student represented in chemistry. I include writing assignments in both non-science majors and science majors classes. They may differ in the specifics of their objectives, but the overall super-objective of developing fluent and coherent writing is universal.

**Ellen C. K. Johnson (Anthropology)**

I feel that it is really important in today's world that students learn how to express themselves clearly. This includes knowing how to put ideas into well-organized, well-documented (examples) formats. Thus, I have all my students write essays, and I make extensive corrections and comments on them, so students can learn what they need to do to improve their writing. In fields such as anthropology, evaluating understanding of concepts is best done through having students write essays.

**Chikako Kumamoto (English)**

It is a delight to read student writers' essays that animate with what Richard Rodriguez calls "an attitude of mind, my imagination of myself." In such essays, the writers make their inner convictions and visions desirable and welcome to their readers, revealing their intelligent and meaningful knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world of which they are an intimate part. Indeed, such essays declare and bear witness to their writers' best and eloquent academic "I."

**Chris Petersen (Biology)**

Being the primary way in which a scientist relays findings to the scientific community, technical papers on original research are challenging to write. These papers require good writing skills, but also proficiency in critical thinking and quantitative analysis. Practice in writing helps to achieve a level of competence required in a competitive workplace, hence the need for the science student to develop and hone skills beginning in their first year of college.

***Susan J. Stamler (Biology)***

Reading and Writing ARE truly Fundamental!

I incorporate writing assignments in my science courses because I strongly believe that education is useless unless you can communicate clearly with others. I would like to think that we, as teachers, are helping to develop the next generation of leaders. Leaders must be able to think critically and express themselves clearly, both in oral and written form. Using essay examination questions, as well as requiring my students to write formal scientific papers, helps them to “crystallize” their thoughts and ideas into words. It also helps them to understand how the processes of science work and why scientists must be able to communicate succinctly and precisely. These skills translate well into every aspect of their lives.

***Lois Stanciak (Education)***

“Writing and learning and thinking are the same process,” said William Zinsser. Writing is an inescapable part of the total learning process. It enables the learner to reflect, react, and respond to an individual, a group, or a formal audience. We, as teachers, are all teachers of writing just as we are teachers of thinking. Content is our tool; writing is our process; learning is our product.

***Ben Whisenhunt (History)***

It seems to me that writing history is a difficult if not confining process. Historians face many challenges in collecting, organizing, synthesizing, and analyzing their topics. The challenge of a historian is to create a narrative analysis. It is a combination of telling the story while providing an evaluation of the topic’s meaning. In the past, there were often two camps of historians – those who told the stories and those who analyzed them. This gap has been narrowed some more recently with a mutual acknowledgement that neither can really exist without the other. For the historian, the responsibility is to tell the story and find its meaning. For me, this is the key to studying, teaching, and writing history. It is imperative that historians remember that in the end it is a story that can mean so much.