



Jeanne Marie Rose

Campus Celebrations of Student Writing
(WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 7)

June 2010*

Writing programs have long acknowledged their students' successes through "best of" publications and essay contests. In recent years, programs have identified new venues for showcasing student writing, including poster sessions, performances, online anthologies, and commemorative videos. Developed to help WPAs promote student writing on their own campuses, this bibliography features scholarship on and representative examples of celebrations of student writing.

When integrated into writing programs, campus celebrations have the potential to serve multiple pedagogical goals. Programs at schools like Eastern Michigan University and Texas A&M-Commerce link their celebrations of writing to their first-year composition curricula; WPAs at these universities recommend basing campus events on students' original ethnographic research. Several sources document the sense of authority and expertise students glean from sharing their writing and research in a public forum. In addition to providing students with an audience that extends beyond the confines of an individual writing course, campus-wide venues—whether publications or live performances—can also catalyze students' creativity. The poster presentations commonly associated with campus events are particularly notable in this respect, as they often motivate students to create multimedia representations that make extensive use of visual rhetoric. Student anthologies and literary magazines can similarly elicit student engagement, especially when students play a role in their editorial process. Indeed, although the sources cited below represent a range of institutions and celebration formats, students' active inquiry and eager participation emerge as consistent themes.

Many sources note that such celebrations enable diverse student and faculty constituencies to participate in a shared activity (see Adler-Kassner; Adler-Kassner and Estrem; Boese, Byrne, and Silverman; Carter; Melnikoff and Munroe). As these sources observe, planning and producing campus events and publications can foster programmatic or departmental cohesiveness as multiple faculty members and the students enrolled in their courses work toward a common end. Ideally, campus celebrations make use of instructors' unique skill sets; one may serve as a videographer, for example, while another composes an occasion poem to commemorate the event. Other sources note, however, that sustained collaboration can be more utopian than realistic (see Hay; Melbye and Tassoni). In some cases, individual faculty members carry the burden of execution, a trend more often associated with campus publications than events. Not surprisingly, composition programs staffed with graduate teaching assistants report the broadest instructor participation.

*Cite as: Rose, Jeanne Marie. (June 2010). Campus Celebrations of Student Writing, WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 7. *WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies*.
<http://comppile.org/wpa/bibliographies/Bib7/Rose.pdf>. Date of access.

With today's writing programs facing significant public relations challenges in the face of calls for accountability, campus celebrations also pose an opportunity for WPAs to pursue the "story-changing work" that CWPA President Linda Adler-Kassner advocates for in *The Activist WPA* (87). By publicizing students' writing accomplishments—and creating forums in which students can speak to and about their writing experiences—WPAs may be able to revise dominant narratives about students' purported lack of preparation for college and/or propensity toward plagiarism (Adler-Kassner). In many cases, writing programs encourage community members to participate in their celebrations, either by inviting visitors to campus events or distributing campus publications to neighboring businesses or agencies. Sources suggest that, in addition to garnering positive publicity for writing programs, this inclusivity can be a valuable form of outreach to local high schools. Meanwhile, directed toward internal administrative audiences, publicity efforts can yield institutional support for writing programs; when administrators see concrete evidence of student learning, the literature suggests, they become more open to dialogue with WPAs and potentially more committed to funding program initiatives.

Adler-Kassner, Linda

The activist WPA: Changing stories about writing and writers

Logan, UT: Utah State University Press (2008)

With reference to activist organizations' messaging techniques, Adler-Kassner uses Eastern Michigan University's Celebration of Student Writing to illustrate how public events "can have a powerful effect" on perceptions of writers, both on campus and beyond (153). Campus celebrations, Chapter Five explains, work to change dominant narratives about writing (i.e. students are underprepared for college-level writing) by showcasing students' accomplishments. As Adler-Kassner discusses, such events enable WPAs to communicate proactively. Celebrations foster dialogue with administrative audiences because they highlight shared commitments to student learning; they also allow WPAs to collaborate with university spokespeople to attract local media coverage that can support this 'story-changing work' (87).

KEYWORDS: student-publishing, campus-celebration, FYC, messaging, program, public, research-project, term-paper, storytelling, narrative, WPA

Adler-Kassner, Linda; Heidi Estrem

Rethinking research writing: Public literacy in the composition classroom

WPA: Writing Program Administration 26.3 (2003), 119-132

<http://wpacouncil.org/wpa26n3>

Adler-Kassner and Estrem discuss how Eastern Michigan University's Celebration of Student Writing promotes their goal of developing "a shared language for talking about

first-year writing” among the diverse populations taking and teaching writing at EMU (122). The celebration complements English 121, EMU’s second-semester writing course, by giving students an occasion for researching communities of interest. Adler-Kassner and Estrem provide examples of representative projects, such as inquiries into campus perceptions of race and gender, studies of time management in the dorms, and ethnographies of sites ranging from a fishing boat to a Nation of Islam temple. The article also includes testimony illustrating students’ newfound awareness of their expertise as writers and researchers. Such events, the authors indicate, create a public forum in which multiple stakeholders participate in positive discussions about students’ writing.

KEYWORDS: FYC, research-writing, research-project, public, literacy, WPA, curriculum, program, program-design, campus-celebration, student-publishing

Boese, Peggy Mary Ellen Byrne; Louise Silverman

The rewards of a publication of student writings

Teaching English in the Two-Year College 24.1 (1997), 42-46

This article describes PEN, an Ocean County College publication featuring student writing from all levels of the English curriculum. Concerned that two-year college students are “unrecognized and seldom praised for academic accomplishments” (42), faculty members developed the publication both to motivate students and to provide models of peer writing for classroom use; they also see the publication as a vehicle for high school outreach. The authors describe their selection criteria, which involve instructor nomination and holistic scoring, and they include a chart linking each English course to representative PEN essays. Publications like PEN, the authors point out, effectively showcase students’ development as they move through English curricula.

KEYWORDS: student-publishing, two-year, student-anthology, campus-celebration, publish

Carter, Shannon

Worth celebrating

http://www.ncow.org/browse/video/carter_worthcelebrating.html (2008)

Modeled on Eastern Michigan University’s celebration and related film, this video documents Texas A&M-Commerce’s Celebration of Student Writing. As Carter’s narration describes, the celebration serves as the culminating event for the university’s two-semester composition sequence. The film begins with footage from the actual celebration, at which students display research findings gleaned from literacy ethnographies. Students’ projects feature multiple literacies, including faith-based literacies, workplace literacies, gaming literacies, and academic literacies. Carter then provides an overview of the composition curriculum that informs the celebration, explaining that its emphasis on literacy ethnography

allows students to pursue original inquiry-based research while also cultivating transferable rhetorical knowledge.

KEYWORDS: campus-celebration, curriculum, ethnography, FYC, program, public, research-project, term-paper, WPA, student-publishing

Eastern Michigan University First-Year Writing Program

The celebration of student writing

<http://www.emich.edu/english/fycomp/celebration/index.htm> (2003)

This site offers information about Eastern Michigan University's pioneering Celebration of Student Writing. The site follows a "frequently asked questions" format, explaining that exhibits range from poster sessions to videos to websites to multimedia displays. It gives information about the attendees, which in Winter 2005 included over 1400 faculty, staff, administrators, students, prospective students, area high school students, and other visitors; it also showcases composition students' overwhelmingly positive response to the event. Of particular interest is the short film, *Celebration of Student Writing: The Movie*, produced by Steve Krause and Steve Benninghoff. The film illustrates the energy and scope of the 2006 celebration, in which students represented the communities they studied through innovative displays such as a campsite and a boardwalk with storefronts.

KEYWORDS: campus-celebration, student-publishing, Eastern Michigan University, FYC, program, public, research-project, term-paper

Fishman, Jenn; Andrea Lunsford; Beth McGregor; Mark Otuteye

Performing writing, performing literacy

College Composition and Communication 57.2 (2005), 224-252

Reporting on the Stanford Study of Writing, this article stresses the significance of performance to students' development as writers. The authors suggest that "the act of embodying writing through voice, gesture, and movement can help early college students learn vital lessons about literacy" (226), and they recommend that composition courses incorporate students' extracurricular performances in order to foster creativity, spur collaboration, and facilitate the transfer of literacy skills. To that end, Stanford students McGregor and Otuteye discuss how they learned to use their habitual performances as, respectively, an actor and a spoken-word poet to inform their academic writing. The article's illustration of students' engagement when performing for public audiences speaks to campus celebrations' potential to bridge extracurricular and academic literacies.

KEYWORDS: performance, 'Stanford Study of Writing, literacy, data, case-study, development, response, pedagogy, assignment, campus-celebration, extracurricular, student-publishing

Hay, Victoria

To boldly go . . . : Launching a campus literacy magazine on the internet

Teaching English in the Two-Year College 31.1 (2003), 51-59

This article describes the shift of Arizona State West’s literary magazine *Palo Verde*—which publishes multiple genres of writing by faculty, staff, and students—from a print- to web-based medium. Hay charts the logistical challenges associated with the print version, explaining how the institution’s “hidden agenda” of using the publication “as a public relations tool” necessitated a professional quality that involved cumbersome production deadlines (51). She then details how the move to online publication brought cost savings, wider circulation, web design skills for student editors, and “enhanced credibility for the writing program” (55). The article offers an instructive discussion of the faculty labor inherent in campus publications, noting that an online format, while still labor-intensive, allows for greater scheduling flexibility.

KEYWORDS: two-year, student-publishing, magazine, online, internet, computer, Arizona State University West, campus-celebration, public

Melbye, Eric; John Paul Tassoni

The student literary magazine on a two-year campus: Where politics of place meet politics of literary representation

Pedagogy 06.2 (2006), 289-308

This article discusses Miami University-Middletown’s student-edited literary magazine in relation to the politics of place at a two-year institution. Advisors for the publication, Melbye and Tassoni describe how the selection process helps editors to consider diversity of representation and accountability to the institutional mission: editors must weigh submissions’ aesthetic merit while simultaneously choosing pieces that responsibly characterize the multicultural student body. The authors consequently encourage readers to view campus literary journals as opportunities “for students to reflect on the politics of selection, representation, and reception that attend literary study” (290). The article offers useful information about soliciting and negotiating student involvement in campus publications, stressing that two-year colleges face particular challenges because their populations often hold competing responsibilities.

KEYWORDS: campus-celebration, creative-writing, diversity, literature-course, pedagogy, poetry, public, student-publishing, two-year

Melnikoff, Kirk; Jennifer Munroe

Seasoning the sonnet, playing poets: The “Sonnet Slam” as extrapedagogical event

Pedagogy 07.2 (2007), 251-257

This article describes the authors’ creation of an on-campus “Sonnet Slam” as an accompaniment to their British literature courses. The annual event focuses on literature and creative writing, yet the article offers a useful model for department-wide events. With the assistance of student volunteers, Melnikoff and Munroe promote the event through campus flyers, class announcements, and listserv posts, and they commission sonnets from creative writing faculty members. Held in the campus coffeehouse, the three-hour event begins with an hour of prearranged readings by students and faculty, followed by collaborative impromptu sonnet-writing. In detailing the experiential learning inherent in the poetry slam, the article illustrates how extracurricular writing events can create opportunities for playful and productive student-faculty interaction.

KEYWORDS: campus-celebration, collaboration, creative-writing, experiential-learning, literature, pedagogy, performative, poetry-writing, public

Sullivan, Roanne L.

Celebrating student research: Campus-wide student research events

In Miller, Richard L.; Robert F. Rycek; Emily Balcetis; Steve T. Barney; Bernard C. Beins; Susan R. Burns; Roy Smith; Mark E. Ware (Eds.), *Developing, promoting, and sustaining the undergraduate research experience in psychology*; Society for the Teaching of Psychology (2008), 234-236

<http://www.teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/ur2008/ur2008.php>

Included in a volume on teaching psychology, this article encourages campus exhibitions of undergraduate research across the disciplines. Sullivan presents three case studies, one from the historically black Xavier University and two from Bellevue University (one of which focuses on a writing-across-the-curriculum event). The article sketches different models for campus celebrations, including half- and full-day poster sessions, performances and debates, and events integrated into family weekends. It doesn’t favor any particular model, but it does stress interdisciplinary participation so that students in all majors can develop the communication skills derived from presenting their research. Implicit in Sullivan’s discussion is the notion that undergraduate research is “especially helpful in the engagement and retention of first generation, minority, and low income students” because it instills a sense of academic membership (295).

KEYWORDS: campus-celebration, public, research-project, term-paper, student-publishing, WAC, case-study, Bellevue University, Xavier, posteropinion