

Director's Notes

Occasionally students and faculty ask me to recommend useful and reputable online writing resources. Thus, this year's column is devoted to reviewing two that I find to be quite useful.

Like many members of the Siena community, I regularly refer to Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. The Writing Center retains several copies of the latest version, which includes the 2009 MLA and the 2010 APA updates. The online companion site supplements this guide by providing hands-on exercises for both grammar and research, which nicely correspond with the topics in the print version. There is more than one exercise per topic, and the correct

answers are briefly explained. The section labeled "Model Papers" contains sample student essays and annotated bibliographies with commentary, and there are some great links under the "Additional Resources" link as well. The website address at which you can find this supplemental material is: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/pocket5e/>.

I believe that Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is one of the most comprehensive and valuable writing sites for instructors and students alike. While the homepage includes a search function and highlights popular links (such as "OWL Exercises" and "Avoiding Plagiarism"), the "Site Map" contains an exhaustive list of

topics and subtopics. There are the more obvious links, such as "Thesis Statement Tips," "Active and Passive Voice," and "Documenting Electronic Sources," yet there is also information about writing in specific disciplines, generating and analyzing visual rhetoric, and preparing applications, resumes, and cover letters. It is obvious why this is the most widely-recognized site in the field of writing studies, and it can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

If you would like to know about these and other respected online resources, please feel free to contact me.

Dr. Michelle A. Liptak



The Reading Women's Book Club

Again this year, the Writing Center collaborated with the Thea Bowman Center for Women to organize the Reading Women Book Club. Last fall the club met to discuss *Supergirls Speak Out: Inside the Secret Crisis of Over-achieving Girls* by Liz Funk, an Albany native who visited campus this past spring. It also read the *New York Times* bestselling novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, Donna Freitas' *Sex and the Soul*, visiting writer Janisse Ray's *Ecology*

of a Cracker Childhood, and Swedish novelist Linda Olsson's *Astrid and Veronika*. The Writing Center, the Women's Studies Minor, and the Multicultural Studies Minor also sponsored an informal reading and discussion of Eve Ensler's recent publication, *I am an Emotional Creature: The Secret Life of Girls Around the World* on Tuesday, April 27th. Anyone in the Siena community is welcome to join the

book club. Members are provided with a complimentary book, and they meet informally to discuss the selection. Usually the books are collectively chosen, and meetings often take place on a Wednesday during free period. The Reading Women Book Club has attracted many new members this year and is looking forward to another successful semester next fall. Please contact the Writing Center or the Women's Center if you are interested in joining!

Writing Center Student Staff

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- Christine Maccarone
- Lauren Pacifico
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- Rachel Tatarek
- Chantal Warner
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STUDENT-TO-STUDENT

A column written by a peer
writing consultant

Writing Tip: AVOID PLAGIARISM!

You may be reading this right now and thinking “DUH!”, but don’t let the apparent obviousness of this title deceive you. Plagiarism, deliberate or accidental, is a huge problem on college campuses, and it is easy to unwittingly fall into its trap if you’re not paying attention. Plagiarism is easy to avoid, however, if you remember to cite your sources as you write your paper. Here are a few quick tips to keep in mind:

1. **Know your documentation style:**
There are three main documentation styles: MLA, Chicago, and APA, and they are discipline-specific. MLA generally applies to English papers, Chicago to history papers, and APA to social science papers. Make sure you know which style you’re supposed to use and use it consistently throughout your paper. *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker is an excellent resource and provides thorough guidelines for all three documentation styles.
2. **Know when to cite:** The most obvious time to cite a source is after a direct quote, but there are other instances when you will also need to cite your sources. Even if you

you write ideas that are not your own, be it in a direct quote or a paraphrase, you *must* cite the appropriate sources.

3. **When in doubt, cite!:** As the old adage advises, better safe than sorry. If you’re not sure if something needs to be cited, it is better to cite just in case. The consequences for plagiarism are unforgiving, even if you plagiarize unwittingly.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and one that no professor or college takes lightly. So, before you hand in that paper, if you want the credit you deserve, make sure you’ve given others the credit that they deserve, too.

AppointmentQuest, Blogger, and Facebook

2010 Spring Hours

Mon 10am—6pm

Tues 10am—8pm

Wed 10am—9pm

Thurs 10am to 8pm

Fri 10am to 2pm

Sun 1pm to 4pm

ESL Support

Mon 6pm to 9pm

Call for an appointment
783—4125

WWW.SIENA.EDU/
WRITINGCENTER

This year at the Writing Center we have discovered the wonders of technology through branching out to an online appointment scheduler, creating our own blog and even foraying into a Facebook group. With these new forms of technology we hope to improve our student relationships as well as our efficiency while adding some fun to the center.

Our biggest technological addition this year was the implementation of the online appointment manager called AppointmentQuest. This program allows students to make appointments through our website and to receive a helpful reminder email so that there is no threat of accidentally missed appointments. However AppointmentQuest is even

more helpful to us in the Writing Center, for it lets us keep track of our appointments, each other’s schedules, and agendas. In short, it organizes the entire office with just a few simple clicks. By switching from phone or personal appointment making, we have enabled more students to make more appointments. We hope in the future to add a feature which will allow students to make appointments with specific employees.



Another step the Writing Center has taken toward the future is the creation of its own blog. Entitled “The Writing Center,” the blog is a place for employees and students to come together and talk about their experiences, their suggestions or even literature. It is a venue for

the Siena community to express their thoughts on all things pertaining to the Writing Center, and we are excited to see it grow over time.

The last and most culturally exciting technological innovation the Writing Center has implemented this year is our Facebook page. By joining Facebook we have immersed ourselves in a worldwide trend that puts us on the same level as the students we are dedicated to serving.

The Writing Center staff is thrilled to be able to have these new capabilities. They have made our jobs at the center easier, more organized and certainly more fun.