Statement of project:

A cluster of faculty from across the college’s academic divisions—including members of the Biology, Chemistry, Classics, English, Mathematics, Music, Physics, and Sociology departments, as well as the Women’s and Gender Studies program—is requesting a Teachers Teaching Teachers grant of $30100 to fund a set of faculty initiatives focused on strengthening the teaching of writing at Kenyon: a summer seminar to discuss the teaching of writing across the college; a fall 2010 visit from an expert in the teaching of writing; and a series of cross-departmental teaching collaborations that will support pedagogical development throughout the 2010-11 academic year. Ultimately, we hope that these initiatives will stimulate campus-wide conversations about the multifarious ways we use—and the multifarious ways we might extend our uses of—writing in our various courses, departments, programs, and divisions.

Sarah Heidt (English) and Chris Gillen (Biology) are the lead proposers of this grant. Other faculty who plan to participate are

- Scott Cummings (Chemistry)
- Laurie Finke (Women’s and Gender Studies)
- Ivonne García (English)
- Karen Hicks (Biology)
- Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky (English)
- Marla Kohlman (Sociology)
- Victoria Malawey (Music)
- Ted Mason (English)
- Kim McMullen (English)
- Bob Milnikel (Mathematics)
- Amber Scaife (Classics)
- Paula Turner (Physics)

If this grant is funded, we will extend a general invitation to all faculty in order to fill the summer seminar and round out our list of participants for the 2010-11 academic year collaborations. Because of leave schedules and preexisting commitments, some participants in this grant may opt to attend the summer seminar or take part in the teaching collaborations. If more than twenty faculty members express a desire to participate in these initiatives, we will investigate the feasibility of expanding the summer seminar and/or the teaching collaborations.

This TTT grant began taking shape in fall 2009, when Laurie Finke shared the results of the collegiate writing assessment cosponsored by RAAS and the Reaccreditation Task Force in 2008-09; this assessment was an attempt to obtain a more detailed understanding of our students’ abilities and difficulties with writing than what had emerged from previous years’ General Education Assessment Reports (GEARs). Only a few days before the Common Hour event at which faculty and members of the administration met to discuss the 2008-09 writing assessment, a group of faculty from English (Ivonne García, Tom Hawks, and Sarah Heidt) had held a Common Hour panel discussion, sponsored by Judy Holdener under the auspices of her John B. McCoy-Bank One teaching chair, on experiences with using the writing textbook Writing
Analytically in 100-level English courses, as well as in the expository writing portion of the Kenyon Educational Enrichment Program (KEEP) summer workshop. At both of these events, discussions among faculty members attending from across the college suggested that many of us are mulling over and working through similar questions:

- How do we conceptualize the place and the work of writing in our individual and departmental curricula?
- How does the role of writing change at various levels of our curricula?
- How do we go about assigning and assessing writing?
- How do we teach writing—whether through implicit or explicit instruction?
- What exactly do we mean when we worry about our students’ “inability…to express themselves in writing” or when we express “disappointment with aspects of student writing,” as RAAS informed us in the March 2009 FacPac that several departments’ 2007-08 GEARs did?
- How might we better help students make connections across disciplines (or distinguish more critically among disciplinary bodies of knowledge) as they write their ways through Kenyon?
- How might the college better support the learning and teaching of writing?

Many of us have continued talking through such questions in department meetings or in small groups. Nor are our conversations the first of their kind at the college: in 2003, Ted Mason, under the auspices of his McCoy-Bank One teaching professorship, held a three-day workshop on writing at Kenyon, “Authority and Intervention: Local Culture, Discourse Communities, and the Teaching of Writing.” Particularly given Provost Samhat’s recent calls for curricular review and possible reform, as well as our ongoing reaccreditation process and imminent site visit in October 2010, we believe that it is now time to reinvigorate these earlier discussions and create a fuller, more sustained discourse about the teaching and the very culture of writing at Kenyon College. Most of our peer institutions across the country have already instituted programs or requirements designed to address the intellectual and pedagogical issues our questions about teaching writing have raised. And at least some of our students are—even this month—beginning to request more explicit instruction in writing (see Appendix A for “Teach Us To Write,” the Collegian staff editorial from February 18, 2010).

Perhaps most importantly, even in our informal conversations about how and why we teach writing, we have already discovered unexpected commonalities that have helped us begin reshaping collegial relationships, leaving us confident that this grant will renew (or even generate) a sense of shared intellectual and pedagogical mission, a richer understanding of ourselves as learning and teaching within a community, rather than in atomized divisions and programs. Trends at Kenyon and beyond—including increased specialization, greater emphasis on scholarship, technologies that connect us to peers across the globe, and an expansion of our faculty—conspire to distance us from our colleagues on campus. Ongoing discussions about writing at Kenyon will counter this distancing by encouraging genuine discourse among faculty from diverse disciplines. Writing is the ideal topic for stimulating cross-disciplinary conversations, and our common purpose in teaching writing will serve as a touchstone for discussion. At the same time, exploring writing will serve as a window into our disciplinary practices and priorities, thereby promoting authentic exchanges across disciplinary boundaries.
We plan to hold our summer seminar over four half-days in early June so that its conversations can figure into our summers’ course preparation, scholarly work, and involvement in various on-campus summer programs that involve or are centered on writing (including KEEP, KAP summer workshops, the Writing and Thinking at Kenyon Program, the Summer Science Scholars Program, and the Adams Summer Legal Scholars Program); we also anticipate that our seminar discussions might prove even more broadly useful if Provost Samhat calls a faculty retreat later in the summer. During the seminar, we will primarily endeavor to take stock of the ways we are currently teaching writing in our courses. We will seek to articulate the role of writing in our own disciplinary work, as well as to educate one another about the shapes that our disciplines’ writings typically take. We will discuss the role that explicit writing instruction plays in our courses, as well as the ways in which we may imply writing lessons during class sessions that are otherwise not “about” writing. We will also discuss what our actual writing assignments (whether major or minor) are now; how we integrate them into our course designs; how we prepare students for them; how we distribute and/or conduct them; what we expect students will produce in response to them; and how we communicate to them our assessments of their performances. We will discuss the role technology currently plays (or might come to play) in our teaching, assigning, and assessing of writing. We imagine that these discussions will occupy the better part of our seminar, and we hope that they will repeatedly and organically lead into discussions of ways we might build upon or even transform our current practices.

Our primary texts for the seminar will be our own substantial bodies of syllabi, assignment sheets, and assessment mechanisms, which we will assemble in advance of the seminar in order to facilitate discussions. But to ground our conversations and encourage each other to broaden our pedagogical ranges, we will also read three supplemental texts: John C. Bean’s Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom (Jossey-Bass, 2001); David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen’s Writing Analytically (Thomson Wadsworth, 5th ed. 2009); and Gerald Graff’s and Cathy Birkenstein’s They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing (Norton, 2nd ed. 2010). We hope that around this core of texts, we will be able to create a database or bibliography of other resources, both theoretical and pragmatic, upon which we (and the rest of the Kenyon community) will be able to draw in 2010-11 and beyond. We plan to reinforce our understanding of how such resources might inform our 2010-11 teaching through reconvening for one half-day in mid-August, as we work on finalizing course syllabi and assignments.

By the end of the summer seminar and our reconvening day in August, we hope that all participants will have a strengthened sense not only of what writing is or could be within their own courses but also of how writing functions within other disciplines. In this cross-disciplinary vein, we are proposing our second initiative for this TTT grant: a series of modestly funded teaching collaborations to take place during the 2010-11 academic year. These partnerships will take shape across disciplinary lines and will be flexible enough to accommodate specific pedagogical goals or projects that participating pairs may develop. Collaborations will not extend to formal team-teaching (though that possibility may grow out of an individual collaboration). They might include, but will not be limited to, activities such as collaborative assignment or syllabus design (or redesign), classroom observations, cross-grading exercises, ongoing pedagogy discussions, or even short-term teaching exchanges (wherein collaborators might swap class sessions for a day). In spring 2011, we will hold a public forum at which we will report on our experiences with these collaborations and discuss future directions for them;
we imagine that this forum will be a Common Hour event followed by a discussion during a Faculty Lunch, and our budget includes funds for about forty-three lunches so that we can welcome not just collaborators but also faculty who attend the reporting forum and want to know more about the collaboration project. Our aim for these collaborations is to create a healthy, constructive, non-evaluative discourse about pedagogical practice and teaching excellence at Kenyon that can take place beyond (and, crucially, prior to) the faculty review process, currently our sole site of formalized observations of or even sustained conversations about colleagues’ teaching. If they prove as enriching and supportive as we imagine they might be, such collaborations could become a part of the formal mentoring process for new faculty members, thereby creating further ways for new faculty to build productive relationships with colleagues across disciplinary boundaries. We hope that the TTT grant might even, in part through these collaborations, create new possibilities for interested faculty to produce scholarly work focused on pedagogical practice and theory.

To inform our ideas about how to communicate this grant’s results to the faculty and about how our initiatives might expand in future years, as well as to continue broadening our individual horizons of scholarly and pedagogical possibility, we plan to invite an expert in writing pedagogy to speak to and/or hold a workshop with the Kenyon faculty community sometime in fall 2010. One promising possibility is Jenn Fishman (Kenyon ’94), a rhetoric and composition specialist who holds a Ph.D. in English from Stanford University and is currently an assistant professor of English at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Professor Fishman has been involved in the Stanford Study of Writing (a five-year longitudinal study of student writing at Stanford University from 2001-06) since its inception. In 2005-07, she was the Co-Principal Investigator for the Embodied Literacies Project, a two-year study of college writing at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville that specifically focused on how emerging multimedia, multimodal, and multidisciplinary first-year writing curricula shape the acquisition and transferability of academic literacy. As the co-founder and co-editor of The Research Exchange, a database of contemporary writing research and a space where writing teachers and researchers can network, she is well poised to assist Kenyon faculty in thinking critically about where the study of writing fits into our work as teachers and scholars. Professor Fishman has served as a consultant in earlier discussions about writing at Kenyon (during the creation of the Writing and Thinking at Kenyon Program in 2006) and was also invited to participate in a symposium-based external examination of Haverford College’s writing requirements and programs in April 2009.

This first Writing at Kenyon grant will almost certainly open up far more questions than it will answer regarding the place of writing within our disciplines and the college’s overall curriculum. We conceive of it as an exploratory and mutually supportive endeavor, one through which we will at the very least build bodies of knowledge that will invigorate our own pedagogical practices, enabling us to communicate more effectively both with students specializing in our disciplines and with students coming into our classrooms from other parts of the college. But we believe that this project will ultimately have an impact far beyond our core group of participants, strengthening the college’s faculty community and sense of intellectual and pedagogical mission.
Detailed timetable:

**June 1-4, 2010:** Four-day summer seminar (half-days plus lunch each day)

**Mid-August 2010:** Half-day follow-up seminar (focused on preparing for fall 2010 semester)

**2010-11 academic year:** Cross-disciplinary teaching collaborations

**Fall 2010:** Visit from outside scholar of writing research and teaching

**Spring 2011:** Public forum and Faculty Lunch to discuss teaching collaboration experiences and the collaboration program’s future directions

Detailed budget:

**Summer seminar (calculated for twenty participants):**
- Stipends (@ $750 each for eighteen participants; $1000 each for two organizers) $15500
- Books $2347
  - David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen: *Writing Analytically* $64.95 (x18 copies)
  - John C. Bean: *Engaging Ideas* $40 (x19 copies)
  - Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, et al.: *They Say, I Say* $22 (x19 copies)
- Printing, photocopying, and assembly of teaching materials $600
- Food $2000

**Visiting speaker:**
- Travel, food, lodging $1000
- Honorarium $2500

**Teaching collaborations:**
- Stipends for twenty collaborators / ten pairs (@ $300/collaborator or $600/pair) $6000
- Faculty lunch following end-of-year forum reporting on collaboration results $153

**Total funding requested:** $30100

A note from Sarah Heidt, regarding participation in multiple TTT grants:
I am one of this grant’s lead proposers and am also a participant in the TTT cluster/faculty initiative grant focused on Transnational Approaches to Teaching Race and Feminism, submitted by the Transnational Collaborative. If both of these grants are fully funded, my total grant monies for 2010-11 will be $2908.50 (which includes my share of the money allocated in each grant for food and photocopies/materials), well under the $10000 cap mandated by TTT guidelines. I also want to note that the presence of cross-disciplinary teaching collaboration proposals in these two grants is a product of my involvement in each, rather than a coincidence (much less something illicit). My hope is that having two sets of such teaching collaborations running on campus next year will both enable us to gauge their utility in multiple pedagogical and faculty community contexts and create a greater possibility that such collaborations could, if successful next year, become an even more widespread feature of Kenyon’s culture of teaching.
The Kenyon Collegian

Teach Us to Write

Anyone who has heard of Kenyon knows it for its excellent English program and its well-regarded literary journal, The Kenyon Review. As a selective liberal arts college, Kenyon has many excellent academic programs, but the English Department clearly stands out as the College’s gem. So why can’t all Kenyon students write?

Many can write. Many live to write. But there is a not-insignificant portion of students whose writing truly does not meet the standards a selective college like Kenyon should set for its students. In papers sent to the Online Writing Lab, pieces published in certain campus journals and, yes, articles submitted to this publication, it is a shame to see basic principles of English grammar so abused or writing so formulaic that even brilliant ideas are obscured. That is why good writing is so crucial: without a mastery of the basics of grammar and syntax, without sufficient practice, students are unable to adequately express their ideas, and the unique insights of bright young minds go unnoticed.

To remedy this embarrassment, Kenyon should institute a required first-year writing seminar. Most colleges have some sort of writing requirement, whether it is that all first-semester students are automatically enrolled in an “intro to writing” lecture or that all students must at some point take a writing-intensive class in any discipline. Kenyon’s writing requirement should be modeled after its quantitative reasoning (QR) requirement, whichmandates

that students take one class from among the diverse offerings that fulfill it. Principles of Microeconomics, Surprises at Infinity and Biology in Science Fiction are popular QR courses, and writing seminar offerings could be just as diverse. Political science, history, English, religion, anthropology, international studies and sociology all offer ample opportunities for interesting, writing-intensive classes, and first years should be required to take at least one.

High-school seniors applying to Kenyon are judged on many aspects of their academic, extracurricular and personal profiles, and writing skills rightly are only one criterion of many. Not all intelligent, academically accomplished people are destined to become great writers—but all have the capacity to become good writers. Kenyon does a disservice to its students by not even attempting to improve their fundamental writing skills in a systematic way.

This is a controversial proposal, and even among Collegian editors there is dissent. Yet we, some of the editors of the Collegian, propose a first-year writing requirement because we sincerely believe that all new Kenyon students, regardless of previous writing experience or innate writing talent, would benefit from a course focused on improving clarity and eloquence in written expression, taught by one of Kenyon’s many distinguished humanities and social science professors.
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EDUCATION
Ph.D., M.A. Cornell University English Language and Literature 2003
B.A. Kenyon College English Literature and Classics 1997
"Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Highest Honors in English, Distinction in Classics"

PUBLICATIONS
“‘Up-to-date with a vengeance’: Teaching Nineteenth-Century Novels with Multiple Film Versions,” for Adaptation: British Literature of the Nineteenth Century and Film (ed. Abigail Burnham Bloom) (book collection forthcoming from Cambria Press)
Review of Life Writing and Victorian Culture (ed. D. Amigoni; Ashgate, 2006), Victorian Studies 49.3 (Spring 2007)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS
Co-organizer and panelist, “Integrating Writing into Our Liberal Arts Curriculum (Or, How to Get Better Papers from Students),” Kenyon College (September 10, 2009)
“Film Adaptation as Autobiographical Work,” The Work of Life-Writing conference, Centre for Life-Writing Research, King’s College London, UK (May 26-28, 2009) (also Kenyon Seminar, November 19, 2008)
“‘Missing Symonds Autobiography’: Determining Text and Context in the Archive,” Archive Fervour/Archive Further conference, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK (July 9-11, 2008)
“Touching Pages: On the Materiality of Victorian Life-Writing,” Nineteenth-Century Graduate Seminar, Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK (February 5, 2008)
“‘Missing Symonds Autobiography’: Quests for the Memoirs, 1889-Present,” Arts/Social Sciences/Humanities Colloquium, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge (December 11, 2007)
“Tips for Critical Writing,” hour-long presentation to and discussion with Summer KAP students (June 26, 2007)
“Designing Challenging Assignments for Real Students,” Teaching Writing Panel, Cornell (September 25, 2000)
Member, Cornell Faculty Panel on First-Year Writing Seminars, Cornell Consortium for Writing in the Disciplines (June 23, 1999)
“Those move easiest who have learnt’d to dance’: Training Undergraduate Writing Center Staff Members,” Fourth National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, Cornell (June 3-5, 1999)

SELECTED HONORS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS
Whiting Research Grant (for summer research and travel) 2008-09
Life Membership, Clare Hall (University of Cambridge) 2008-present
Visiting Fellowship, Clare Hall (Cambridge) 2007-08
Whiting Teaching Fellowship (year-long research sabbatical at full salary plus stipend) 2007-08
Teaching Initiatives Grant, Kenyon College (to attend Rare Book School in 2006-07) 2006
Kenyon Campus Community Development Grant (to host Kenyon Poetry Salon) 2005
SELECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
“Writing Teachers Writing: Deepening Our Passion for Our Own Writing” all-day workshop, Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) 2010 convention, Louisville, KY [March 17, 2010]
“Promoting Critical Thinking and Creativity through Cooperative Learning” all-day workshop with Barbara Millis (Director of Teaching and Learning Center, U Texas San Antonio), Kenyon College (May 13, 2009)
Preparing Future Faculty Program Mentor (in conjunction with Ohio State University) (spring 2006)
Feminist Theory Workshop, Kenyon College (August 15-19, 2005)
Dickens Universe, University of California at Santa Cruz (July 31-August 7, 2005)

TEACHING
Kenyon College (Assistant Professor 2005- ; Visiting Assistant Professor 2004-05)
Seven honors theses mentored (2004-10)

Courses taught: ENGL 453 George Eliot (spring 2005); ENGL 413 The Panoramic Novel (spring 2006); ENGL 392/358 Victorian Ghosts (spring 2009, fall 2009); ENGL 359 Writing and Ruling: Literatures of Empire (fall 2004); ENGL 357 The Victorian World (spring 2006); ENGL 356 Victorian Poetry and Poetics (fall 2005); ENGL 354 Page, Stage, Screen: Nineteenth-Century Novels Transformed (fall 2006, 2008; spring 2010); ENGL 211 Selves, Lives, and Stories: Auto/biographical Theories and Practices (spring 2005, 2010); ENGL 210 Proper Ladies and Women Writers (fall 2004-06, 2008-09) (& Women’s and Gender Studies); ENGL 104 Moments, Memories, Mementos (spring 2005, spring 2006, fall 2006, spring 2009, fall 2009); ENGL 99 Writing for the Humanities: Toni Morrison’s Beloved (Silverweed/KEEP, summer 2006, 2007, 2009)

Cornell University (First-Year Writing Seminar Instructor 1998-99, 2000, 2001; Reader/Grader 2002; TA 1999)
Teaching Writing Facilitator, Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines (Summer 1999, 2003)
First-Year Writing Assessment Reader, Writing Workshop (Fall 2000, 2001, 2002)

SELECTED DEPARTMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE
Secretary/Treasurer, Beta of Ohio chapter of Phi Beta Kappa (2009- )
Committee on Academic Standards (and CAS Fellowships Subcommittee 2008-09) (2008- )
Committee member for Dean of Students search (2009), biology department faculty search (2010)
Kenyon Educational Enrichment Program (KEEP) writing instructor and mentor (2006- )
English faculty member for Kenyon Academic Partnership (KAP) (2005-07, 2008- ); English coordinator (2009- )
Various English department subcommittees (2004- )
Women’s and Gender Studies Advisory Board (2004-06, 2008- )
Member, Transnational Collaborative (2009- )
Faculty speaker to Academic Affairs Committee of Parents’ Advisory Council (“What do students (and their parents) expect from a Kenyon education?”) (April 3, 2009)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND SERVICE
Book reviewer for Victorian Studies (2006- )
Christopher M. Gillen  
Associate Professor, Department of Biology  
Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022  
(740) 427-5399  
gillenc@kenyon.edu

**Education**
Honors thesis with Charles Holliday: "Sodium pump activity in the gills of the green crab, Carcinus maenas."

Yale University, Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Physiology, 1994.  
Thesis with Ethan R. Nadel, "Role of albumin in blood volume regulation in humans."

**Academic positions and experience**
Associate Professor, Department of Biology, Kenyon College, 2003-present.
Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Kenyon College, 1997-2003.
Postdoctoral Research, with Bliss Forbush III, Yale University, 1994-1997.
"Biochemical and molecular approaches to the study of ion cotransport proteins"

**National grants**


**Teaching and pedagogy publications ( * denotes Kenyon student)**


Gillen, C.M.  Criticism and interpretation: teaching the persuasive aspects of research articles.  CBE: Life Sciences Education 5: 34-38, 2006.

Recent research articles (* denotes Kenyon student)

Recent service activities
Chair, Kenyon Natural Science Division, 2008-2010.
Member, Ohio Teagle Grant Committee on Critical Thinking, 2006-2007.
President, Ohio Physiological Society, 2006.
Chair, Department of Biology, 2005-2008.
Staff member, Great Lakes College Association Course Design and Teaching Workshop, June 2002.

Synergistic activities
Summer Communication Groups. Organized small group meetings with summer science students and faculty members from different disciplines with the goal of improving cross-disciplinary communication skills. Wade Powell and I have recently received a GLCA New Directions grant to focus and strengthen these communication groups. 2008-2010.
Online Tutorial on Reading Research Articles. "Information literacy in biology: a tutorial that teaches students how to read, analyze and critique a primary article from the biology literature." (with Librarian and Technology Consultant Jasmine Vaughan). Funded by the Mellon Information Literacy Program. 2002-2004.