

Barbara Jones

Curriculum Vitae

English Department

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### Old School

Everything I know about composition, grammar, and mechanics came through seemingly never ending drills, exercises, and diagrams from my seventh grade teacher, Mrs. Maxine Crutchfield. Little did I realize then that her lessons in that old school methodology would shape my career forty years later as an adjunct instructor in English.

I had no interest in a teaching degree as an undergraduate in the early 1960s at The University of Texas in Austin where I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interior Design with a minor in Organic Chemistry. After marrying and raising two children, I returned to school in 1992 to pursue a Master's Degree in English. After presenting an oral interpretation of a poem in his course, Dr. Gene Young commented that I would make a good teacher. Later that week, I inquired about and accepted an adjunct position in the English department.

My first two courses as an instructor in the fall of 1992 focused on remedial studies and freshman composition. As I relied on my Crutchfield background to see me through those first anxious weeks, I discovered teaching writing involved more than *my* understanding of the basics of composition. I had to help my students understand. This idea has become my passion.

I went to work. I began with Dr. Douglas Krienke, then the director of freshman English, who taught me grading techniques to which the students could relate. I continued with Dr. Diane Dowdey, who succeeded Dr. Krienke in that position in 1993, who focused my attention on content and process writing. She recruited me for the Freshman Writing Committee in the fall of

1997 and in the spring of 1998. After meeting with the author, I helped select our composition textbook for the ensuing few years, Dr. Peter Elbow's *A Community of Writers*. I co-presented an information seminar on the English 164W syllabus for that book.

The freshman composition program then addressed a new challenge. After a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) evaluation, our program faced incorporation of a research methods second semester freshman English offering. Dr. Dowdey asked three adjuncts to explore possibilities for textbooks; I taught an experimental English 165 during the spring and fall semesters of 1996 while using a likely candidate. We later decided to compose our own book to funnel additional funds into the English department. We collaborated with Ann Holder and Gary Church in the Newton Gresham Library for the research section of that text. That effort, a publication by Simon & Schuster in 1998—*To Research, To Read, To Reason, To Report: An Introduction to Research Writing*—resulted from my collaboration between Dr. Dowdey and Katie Pannell. We introduced our textbook on a panel to freshmen English instructors on January 13, 1998; I later designed a PowerPoint presentation to clarify any potential problems.

During that same period, I also made two discoveries that progressively enhanced my pedagogy: the computer and the writing center. When computers arrived at Sam Houston State University, I knew that I wanted my students to compose during class on that equipment. I saw written drafts as wasted time; they needed to learn to think on computers, as the large majority of their careers would involve this new technology. Methodology became a problem. Equipment has improved from the chunky 286s that filled our labs in the beginning to the sophisticated Dell monitors, towers, and keyboards that fill the classrooms today. But we needed composition software. Dr. Dowdey introduced *Connect* in 1996; I assisted her in a training session on

September 13, 1996. Dr. Tom Chasteen promoted *Web Course in a Box* in 1997 until *Blackboard* became available. While teaching additional courses at the North Harris Montgomery Community College System, I qualified at the level II of *WebCT*. Today I remained devoted to *Blackboard*, using every facet of that software in my teaching.

My involvement in The Writing Center developed progressively. I first became involved by attending numerous *Across the University Writing* programs. They included “Browsing the Web for Writing Resources,” by Jeannine Hirtle on September 24, 1996; “Teaching Writing-Enhanced Courses: Time Saving Tips,” by Jerri Burris on September 30, 1996; “Responding to and Evaluating Student Writing,” by Dr. Teri Lesesne and Dr. Diane Dowdey on November 11, 1996; “Successful Writing Assignments and Evaluation Techniques,” by Dr. Carol Holder, on November 15-16, 1996; “A Symposium: Technology in the Classroom by Dr. Victor Sower, Dr. Jo Ann Duffy, Dr. George Walker, and Dr. Gerald Kohers on January 30, 1997; and “Four Tough Questions about Teaching (and Some Answers)” by Dr. Barbara Walvoord on March 10, 1997. I also attended two College Teachers of English (CCTE) conferences in Baytown and in San Antonio, Texas.

I attended conferences to present and to glean information about the various aspects of writing. For example, on February 7, 1997, I presented at the *Third National Writing across the University Program Curriculum Conference* in Charleston, South Carolina. Then on February 13, 1998, I participated in a panel presentation, “Linking Technology and Writing: Perspectives from Faculty,” at the Writing across the Disciplines Conference *Making Connections VI* at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. Three years later, on March 1-3, 2001, I attended the Texas Writing Centers Association at the meeting of Conference of College Teachers of English, “Assessing Writing Centers: For Whom, By Whom,” in Amarillo, Texas.

On March 3-5, 2005, I attended the South Central Writing Center Association “Writing Centers and Time” Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; the next year the association met in Little Rock, Arkansas, on February 23-26, 2006 under the theme “Looking Back, Looking Forward: Writing Centers as the Center of WAC.” The Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference of the College English Association followed in San Antonio, Texas, on April 6-8, 2006. I plan to assist at the upcoming International Writing Center Association Conference at the University of Houston in April 12-14, 2007, where the focus will center on “A Space for Writing: Writing Centers and Place”.

Conferences continued to supplement my skills. I attended the Ninth across the University Program Retreat at the Waterwood National Resort and Country Club on October 3-4, 1997, with Barbara Walvoord and the Tenth on November 13-14, 1998 with Dr. Rick Straub. Each time, I reaped different lessons from different presenters. I particularly remember the late Dr. Rick Straub noting that we should—as instructors—beg, borrow, or steal anything to make our instruction more efficient. One of my best resources involves fellow instructors. To that end, I have audited four courses under Dr. Lee Courtney (English 265), Dr. Pease (English 363), J. J. Dent (English 333), and Dr. Chris Trombold (English 265). I enrolled in Computer Science 138, *Multimedia & Network Computing*, to improve my computer expertise. I evaluated high school essays through *Writing Evaluation Systems*, a private company in College Station, Texas, on April 6, 1996, and January 11, 1997. I judged a UIL Essay Competition (March 24, 1998, in Groveton School District) and the UIL Academic Spring Debate Meet at Sam Houston State University (March 28, 1996). I served on the Committee on Assessment Strategies with Dr. Patricia Williams, Dr. Richard Wood, Dr. Wes Johnson, Dr. Steven Cuvalier, and Dr. Diana Cardenas in 1998.

During 2000 and 2001, I took a first hand approach to tutoring, working under Dr. Patricia Williams at the Academic Enrichment Center. I began requiring that my students consult a tutor at least once on each of their essays. The results were astonishing. While I appreciated the results that one-on-one contact generated, I found the students found the service indispensable for other papers as well as mine. The results improved under the directorship of Dr. Diane Dowdey. I have a 98% positive response rate; I do not think I could teach as effectively without that service.

To further enhance my communication with students, I have participated in various student activities. For example, I mentored students in 1997, 1998, and 2006. I presented programs in Jackson-Shaver (November 4, 1996), Belvin-Buchannan (September 15, 1997, and February 25, 1998), Elliot (October 11, 1996 and November 24, 1998), and Departmental Resident Assistant Programs (November 5, 1997 and April 24, 1998). I accepted invitations to teacher appreciation socials at Tau Kappa Epsilon (December 1995), Alpha Delta Pi (April 1996 and November 20, 1997), Chi Omega (April 15, 1998), and Alpha Chi Omega (April 16, 1998). I served as faculty adviser for Alpha Delta Pi Sorority for a year; I was especially impressed with their emphasis on academics.

During the spring of 2007, I completed an Adjunct Certification Program at Montgomery College in the Lone Star College System. I continue to teach courses in composition and literature (Introduction to Literature and Literature in Western Civilization) at both campuses.

While I have taught six online courses through the Lone Star College System, I am embarking on my first two offerings in Composition II this spring. In this endeavor, I completed my certification on December 11, 2009.

I particularly have appreciated individual gestures of recognition. For example, Vanessa Marlow submitted my name to the Texas Omicron Chapter of Alpha Chi, recognizing my part in her academic success. Larry Behrens and Kimberly De Shields also recognized me at their graduation. My teacher evaluations have remained in the top ratings.

After all this training and participation, eighteen years later I still grapple with my effectiveness in the classroom. I promote excellence, presenting nominations to the writing award ceremonies each year. Carolyn Tatum, a student in my second semester composition-research course won the A. J. Koimn Award for Outstanding Writer this year (2009). I work very closely with students, in the classroom, by e-mail, and through appointments in my office. I want my students to write A papers as they tackle other assignments in moving through the university setting. And yes, I return to the drills, exercises, and diagrams similar to those Mrs. Crutchfield promoted years ago. I am her legacy, the grammarian.