



# WAC+ OVERVIEW

W.A.C.+ , as a college-wide emphasis, includes both writing and thinking. It provides a multi-disciplinary approach to writing as a mode of learning—a way of organizing thoughts, understanding concepts, discovering connections, and articulating and communicating ideas. **Writing, thus, is a powerful tool that can assist understanding of course content and improve critical thinking.** But writing does not exist in a vacuum. It is intimately connected with other aspects of language use—reading, speaking, and listening—and has a social as well as individual dimension. Instructors from Liberal Arts and vocational programs are encouraged to integrate writing, reading, and thinking strategies into their their course objectives and activities. (“KCC Definition”)



LET US WORK TOGETHER AS A WAC-KY  
BUT CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY TO IMPROVE  
WRITING HERE AT K.C.C..

## W.I. Hallmarks: <<http://www.mwp.hawaii.edu/>>

**1. The course uses writing to promote the learning of course materials.** Instructors assign formal and informal writing, both in class and out, to increase students' understanding of course material as well as to improve writing skills.

**2. The course provides interaction between teacher and students while students do assigned writing;** in effect, the instructor acts as an expert and the student as an apprentice in a community of writers. Types of interaction will vary. For example, a professor who requires the completion of one long essay may review sections of the essay, write comments on drafts, and be available for conferences. The professor who requires several short papers may

demonstrate techniques for drafting and revising in the classroom, give guidance during the composition of the papers, and consult with students after they complete their papers.

**3. Writing contributes significantly to each student's course grade.** Writing assignments must make up at least 40% of each student's course grade. If not, the course syllabus must state that students must satisfactorily complete all writing assignments to pass the course with a "D" or better.

**4. The course requires students to do a substantial amount of writing--a minimum of 4000 words, or about 16 pages.** This may include

informal writing. Depending on the course content, students may write analytic essays, critical reviews, journals, lab reports, research reports, or reaction papers, etc. In-class exams and drafts are not counted toward the 4000-word minimum.

5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, **the class is restricted to 20 students.** Professors who team teach or who are assisted by a teaching assistant may request that the enrollment be higher as long as a 20-to-1 student to faculty ratio is maintained.

1. \*Prewriting, reflective journaling, brief written assignments, as well as longer, formal pieces, are employed to provide comprehension. *Smaller assignments between large assignments can be used as scaffolding tools. (SCAFFOLDING)*

2. \*The instructor **ACTIVELY** plays a direct role in guiding and giving advice for the writing task.

2., continued: A) preliminary drafts are assessed; B) drafting and revising are promoted. (GUIDING, REVISING)

3. \*On a mandatory basis, writing factors into the student's grade. (GRADING)

4. \*Writing must be done in a substantive fashion, at least 16 pages worth. Small assignments count. (Gauging LENGTH REQUIREMENTS)

5. \*There is a cap of 20 students for a W.I. class. (Course Capping)



# Examples of main principles

## 1. Excellent example of scaffolding: Collete

Higgin's Three Part Writing Process: **(Demonstrating scaffolding, assignment-design pathways, and varied modes towards assignment comprehension)**

**Part I** (25 points) This will be an **exploratory paper** where you will explain why you chose this topic, what you've uncovered so far, and what you hope to find. This first paper is like a journal entry where you're "talking to self." I'm looking for insight into your thought processes, and a narrative of your quest so far. Don't worry about grammar, spelling, and organization for this part. *Format: one side of a page, single spaced, one inch margins, 300-500 words. \* Late papers will not be accepted. Due: Wednesday, February 11th*

**Part II** (50 points) This will be a **letter to a fellow history detective** explaining what you've learned to date about your subject, and what you still need to find out. Ask for feedback on the path you have taken, and solicit advice for the journey ahead. Share any fascinating and unexpected discoveries. You could even express your frustrations since this is someone who could sympathize with your struggles. Try to identify anything that would make the search meaningful to you. How does knowing more about this topic alter your understanding of our modern world? Since this is a letter, you may use first person references (i.e. I, me, my). You will be graded on organization, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. *Format: double spaced, one inch margins, 500-700 words. \* Late papers will not be accepted. Due: Wednesday, March 18th*

**Part III** (worth 75 points) **Write an essay, a dialogue, or a vignette.** In this final paper you will demonstrate a deeper historical understanding.

If you choose to write **an essay**, you will develop a thesis and support it in a typical research paper format. Imagine that you're writing for a scholarly journal and the theme for that edition is: People & Places in History. You will develop a thesis statement, then support it with data uncovered through research.

If you choose to write **a dialogue**, you will need to identify two people who will have an imagined conversation (one being a person connected to your research). It will read much like a script for a play, or a transcript of an interview. Imagine that your written dialogue will be performed as a two person live play at a high school or middle school. The curriculum objective is to have students appreciate the value of learning about people who came before us.

If you choose to write **a vignette**, you will be telling a story. You could describe behaviors, thoughts, and events from your historical character's perspective. This format also provides the option of a narrator's voice (i.e. someone telling the story, but not necessarily involved in it). Imagine that your vignette will be published in one of KCC's student journals and your audience knows nothing about Hawaiian history.

## 2. Examples of guiding:

A. Teacher gives student a "feedback" index card. On the card, the student is encouraged to write questions regarding the assignment, without putting their name on the card. The teacher answers the anonymous students' questions and puts up the answers up on an open forum, e.g., a blog, so as to promote transparency in the classroom.

B. Teacher makes two drafts mandatory, and accepts one of the drafts. Later perusing one of the drafts, they email a student a **brief** commentary focusing on the basics: purpose, audience, structure. They rarely focus on the grammar and clarity of the paper and encourage mentoring services or as a small-scale intervention, circle the most FREQUENTLY occurring grammar problem for the student.

C. Teacher returns the paper and makes a conference session mandatory with that student; OR, they use 20 minutes of class time to discuss the paper with the students and are receptive to student questions about written feedback, grading, or revising. In an ideal situation, they allow the student to revise the paper during the ENTIRE CLASS PERIOD, with attention paid to big-ticket items rather than small-ticket issues. (PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, STRUCTURE rather than clarity of content) They make the session into one that promotes the importance of revision.

## 3. Examples of revising:

A. Teacher allows students to revise major work TWICE. During the initial grading session, they make comments that are substantive, often asking content-specific questions about the work rather than offering vague praise or criticism such as "Nice," "Vague," or "Needs Work." After the revision comes back, they focus their attention towards content-based recommendations rather than sentence minutiae.

B. Teacher encourages students who score low on minor assignments to revise, giving one or two points on the revised assignment; the student thereby learns the value of "Striving for the highest," per our school's motto.

## 4. Examples of satisfying page requirements:

A. Teacher uses smaller assignments to successfully scaffold the larger assignments, rather than having 'one-off' assignments that are randomly assigned, largely serving no real purpose for the class. The smaller assignments are germane to the main assignment (in which the class competencies are embedded) and fully support the student's comprehension of the main assignment task.

## 5. Examples of assignment-design pathways or discipline-specific instruction:

A. Teacher allows for a variety of means to meet course competencies, thereby broadening the range of how students with different skills and talents can satisfy the parameters of a given requirement: CTE skills, liberal arts skills, HOST-specific, NURS-specific skills, etc.

B. Teacher successfully models discipline-specific writing and teaches students precisely about the expectations of writing in that particular discipline: conventions, best practices, proper formatting styles. Oftentimes, the instructor will provide explicit information about the discipline-specific purposes behind the assignment on a clearly expressed assignment sheet.

C. Teacher posts relevant weblinks in Lualima or via email, to discipline-specific writing samples that may clearly indicate genre, style, and formatting conventions.