Writing and Reading Center Mission

The Writing and Reading Center (WRC) at Moreno Valley College supports learning in reading and writing for all registered Moreno Valley College students at all levels and at any stage of the writing process. The WRC provides faculty and peer writing consultants for one-to-one instruction. The WRC primarily supports the lab requirement for English composition courses, giving students supplemental learning opportunities to practice the reading and writing skills they are learning in their English, ESL, and reading classes. By supporting all student writers at their individual levels, the WRC promotes literacy education and the democratization of higher education. We provide a safe, supportive learning environment for all students, especially for students traditionally marginalized within higher education, with the goal of increasing access to and success in higher education for all students. The WRC positively encourages students’ growth as writers, their attitudes toward writing, and their overall academic success. The WRC also provides access to our resources and faculty expertise for students writing in courses across the curriculum.

Writing and Reading Center Resources

The most important resource in the WRC is human – instructors, reading paraprofessionals, peer writing consultants, lab aids, and other students. The WRC provides students with opportunity for one-on-one assistance with their writing that typically is not possible in the classroom. In addition to human resources, the WRC offers computers and printers for word processing, computer-assisted instruction, and internet access. Many print materials are also available in the form of handbooks, dictionaries, thesauruses, and Directed Learning Activities (DLAs).

Although the Writing and Reading Center provides computer-based resources, it is not a computer lab.

Writing and Reading Center Philosophy

The WRC instructional staff form a team with the classroom instructors and students, providing personalized attention that classroom instructors see as desirable but do not have time for in class. Classroom instructors, WRC instructional staff, and students collaborate to fulfill the lab requirement meaningfully and productively. Together they work to increase students’ understandings of reading and writing skills. How successfully the WRC fulfills this mission is largely dependent upon both the classroom instructors’ presentation of the WRC and the Instructors’-on-Duty interaction with students in the WRC. Classroom instructors must communicate clearly in their syllabi how students must fulfill the lab requirement. Classroom instructors should also help students communicate their specific needs and goals to the WRC instructional staff. Instructor Conference Confirmation Sheets, tutor conference confirmation sheets, and DLAs offer occasions for instruction and communication. Students should understand why they are going to the WRC because their understandings are critical to their success.
Fulfilling the ENG Lab Requirement in the WRC

In order to insure that students fulfill the 18-hour lab requirement according to state regulations, classroom instructors must require students to do the following (and communicate these expectations clearly to students):

- login to the WRC for a complete lab hour by census (a weekly lab hour should be a minimum of 64 minutes and a maximum of 72 minutes to fulfill the 18 hours through 15 weeks of attendance);
- attend the WRC “weekly” and “regularly”—which means attending for one full lab hour on the same day and at the same time, once each week for the entire semester;
- complete one authorized lab activity each time they attend (see below for list of recommended lab activities);
- turn in a lab activity each week to their classroom instructor to show regular fulfillment of the lab requirement;
- ask Instructors-on-Duty and peer writing consultants for help whenever they have a reading or writing-related question.

Classroom Instructors are expected to:

- Include information in their syllabus explaining how students can fulfill both the 18-hour requirement AND the specific lab activities students must complete during that time;
- Spend class time explaining the requirements so students understand the requirements;
- Collect completed “Lab Agreement” forms from each student;
- Check WebAdvisor regularly to track their students’ weekly attendance;
- Require 15 Lab Activity Assignments to be completed during the semester (one for each week of the semester);
- Collect a lab activity assignment from each student each week;
- “Grade” the completion of lab activities;
  - Completing 10 or fewer lab activities should be considered unsatisfactory (it is up to each individual instructor to decide how severely to evaluate a student who fails to complete a minimum of 11 activities and how much to count lab activities as part of the final grade).

Recommended Lab Activities

A lab activity should take one full lab hour for students to complete. There are 5 different categories of activities:

- Reading in one of the WRC-approved books and taking active reading notes for one hour;
- Writing a summary/response paper on a previously completed reading;
- Consulting one-to-one with a WRC instructor or peer writing consultant;
- Attending a WRC scheduled workshop;
- Completing a Directed Learning Activity (DLA) – Classroom instructors must insure that students can complete a DLA or set of DLAs during a lab hour; similarly, the classroom instructors requiring the DLAs must insure that completing a DLA will fill a lab hour.
  - (Note: Please do not require that students get signatures on DLAs; rather, communicate that students should ask for assistance when they need it.)

Note: Please do not assign regular homework for students to do in the WRC, and do not ask WRC instructors to grade or check homework or DLAs. The WRC instructor is there to provide instruction.
Writing and Reading Center Instructor Guidelines

A teaching assignment in the Writing and Reading Center is an instructional assignment, no less important and vital than a classroom assignment. Following are protocols for Writing and Reading Center instruction at Moreno Valley College, approved by the Communications Department.

1. Working with Students

Have students sign in using the Instructor Consultation Sign-in Sheet, and use it as your waiting list. If there is a line of students, you may want to let them know about how long their wait will be. You could also direct them to the other instructor on duty or to a tutor on duty if one is available.

a. Please do not appropriate student writing. A student’s essay should remain in front of the student so that the student remains in charge of writing and revising her essay. Our job in working with students is to teach a new skill or talk students through their ideas, not to proofread. When students are not sure what they want out of the consultation, engage them in conversation about their writing to determine what you can teach the student in the time they have before the paper is due.

b. Student consultations should last between 15 and 30 minutes depending on the assignment, the student’s need, and the busyness of the WRC. Assess the student’s need and then determine a reasonable length of time for constructive conversation.

c. Have a vacant chair available for students and keep the student's area of the tabletop clear, so that the students can work without you having to move something.

d. Many instructors find it productive to keep the student chair on the same side of the table as the instructor. This allows student and instructor to look at the essay together, right-side up.

e. Wear your nametag in a prominent place every time you are on duty.

f. Your home base should be one of the designated instructor tables. Do not work with students at the front counter as this is a work area designated for lab aids.

g. You should circulate periodically through the room if there are no students waiting to talk to you at the instructional table. Circulating may allow students more opportunity to seek your help. Similarly, if no students are seeking your help and you are doing work at your table, please periodically look up from your work so students feel invited to sit down.

2. Signatures on Conference Confirmation Forms and DLAs:

Confirmation Forms and Directed Learning Activities are tools for instruction and communication. WRC Instructors are part of a team with the classroom instructor and the student. The Directed Learning Activities offer an opportunity for instruction and constructive conferencing to take place. These activities are designed to target a specific skill that the instructor has identified as needing greater attention than class time allows.
A WRC instructor’s signature on a WRC form or DLA signifies

a. personalized instruction has taken place

b. the student has satisfactorily achieved the instructional objective of the DLA.

WRC instructors should not sign a DLA unless these conditions have been met.

c. After a consultation, please review with the student (or have the student review for you) the main points that have been covered. It is useful to communicate these points—to the student and the classroom instructor—through specific comments on the Confirmation Sheet or the DLA.

d. Please write your name legibly on all DLAs and Confirmation forms so that the classroom instructor knows who you are.

3. Instructor use of the computers in the WRC:

a. The instructor’s computer is located in the middle of the room and is labeled: **Reserved for Instructor on Duty.** Instructors should not seat themselves at this computer as it gives the appearance of unavailability; however, it is there for use in preparing instructional materials and to assist students with writing and research assignments.

b. Computers should be used for instructional purposes and not personal use such as personal emails or searching the net for personal needs. Remember you are the “Instructor” on duty and your purpose is to instruct and assist students present in the WRC.

c. The computers situated at the front counter in the WRC are reserved for aids and tutors. They are equipped with programs necessary for the tutors and lab aids to accomplish their jobs. One computer is used to monitor the lab and must not be tied up for more than five minutes --- this computer is the only one loaded with the SchoolVue software used to monitor the lab. The lab aid’s computer is used for census and other work as assigned by the WRC coordinator. Finally, the tutor’s computer is used for tutoring and various assignments given to them by the WRC Coordinator – researching sites, creating worksheets and flyers, updating signage and other projects as assigned.

d. Instructors providing workshops may print their workshop-related documents in the WRC; however, instructors should not use the instructor or lab aid computers for printing. Please remember to use the Faculty Workroom located on the first floor in the Science and Technology building for printing or teaching prep purposes.

4. Facilitating workshops

a. The WRC Coordinator will schedule all workshops and will notify the instructors of the topic, the date, and the location.

b. Instructors who accept WRC hours to facilitate workshops are expected to provide to students a mini-lesson on the topic (10 to 15 minutes), guided group practice on
the topic (10 to 15 minutes), guided individual practice on the topic (10 to 15 minutes), and workshop time to practice the new skill/knowledge on their own papers (10 to 15 minutes).

c. If there is a class being held in the classroom where your workshop is scheduled, please give preference to the instructor finishing the lecture class.

d. Instructors needing workshop materials (overheads, PowerPoint presentations, computers, handouts etc…) must submit a written request to the WRC Coordinator five days before the scheduled workshop.

e. Instructors who are unable to fulfill a workshop they have previously agreed to should contact the WRC Coordinator as early as possible. If you are absent on the day of a scheduled workshop, contact Peggie., the WRC Coordinator, and the WRC lab to let each of them know you had to cancel a workshop.

5. **Proofreading and Editing Policy:** WRC instructors, tutors, and staff are not supposed to proofread the students’ essays, in the sense that we are not supposed to correct them ourselves. **But we should teach students to proofread their own work.**

   a. Allow the student as much autonomy as possible to find and correct the error. You might consider marking where some of the errors are (eg. with a tick in the margin) without actually correcting them yourself.

   b. You might then guide the student through a few specific corrections, giving the student a mini-lesson on focused concepts. But once that has been modeled, encourage the student to practice the skills you have taught.

   c. Help the student find the pertinent section in a handbook.

   d. Ask the student to explain the rule to you, and then have him or her correct the following paragraph on his or her own.

6. **Holding class in the WRC:** Space constraints in the Writing and Reading Center and California Ed Code do not allow instructors to hold class in the WRC. Instructors cannot hold lectures, class-directed research, final exams, or in-class writing exams in the WRC. Although instructors may leave materials for students to pick up and drop off in the WRC file cabinet, the WRC staff do not proctor tests, exams, or in-class essays.

7. **WRC Orientations:** Instructors wanting to introduce their students to the WRC in the first week of class should contact the WRC front desk (951) 571 – 6128 to schedule an orientation given by a staff member. The instructor may facilitate the orientation, but the center must be notified at least 24 hours in advance.

8. **Absences**
   a. If you are going to be absent from the WRC, contact Peggie Negrete at (951) 571-6325 or peggie.negrete@mvc.edu and Jeff Rhyne at jeff.rhyne@mvc.edu and the WRC at (951) 571 – 6128.
b. If you find yourself alone on duty in the WRC, call Peggie Negrete at (951) 571 – 6325 to see if a sub has been arranged to work with you during your scheduled time.

c. Lab aids are instructed to close the lab when an instructor is not present for more than 10 minutes. If you are going to leave the lab, notify the lab aid on duty and let him/her know your approximate time of return. The lab must be closed if there is no instructor on duty.

d. Coordinate with the instructor before you or after you if you have to leave early or show up late because of your class schedule.

e. You may occasionally need to alter your schedule for contingencies. If so, arrange for a swap ahead of time with the other instructors involved, and inform the dean’s office and the WRC Coordinator. Please do not inconvenience the other instructors by unilaterally switching your hours around, even if the hours in question are ones when two instructors are scheduled in the lab.

f. Any unscheduled time you put in at the WRC will be considered volunteer work.

g. The lab is open during finals week, and you are contractually obligated to work your lab shift. Please consult your final exam schedule well in advance of exams week, and seek out a switch with another instructor if your exam schedule conflicts with your WRC scheduled hours.

9. **Engage in reflective professional development.**
   a. Read some of the many professional articles and books about teaching, tutoring, and composition that we have available in the WRC.

   b. Exchange ideas with your fellow instructors, and learn from the assignments that the students bring you.

   c. Become acquainted with the resources available in the WRC. We can always learn more. Sit among the students when working to become familiar with programs such as Word 2010 – the students can teach us quite a bit and it opens the channels of communications. When we sit among the students, we also make ourselves more approachable, and we model good computer etiquette and study techniques.

10. The Writing and Reading Center Coordinator at Moreno Valley College may develop additional guidelines as needed and will present such guidelines to the Communications Department for approval. The WRC guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Communications Department at Moreno Valley College. In between the annual reviews, the WRC Coordinator has the right to enact discretionary adjustments to these guidelines, so long as those adjustments are made known to all WRC instructors and are consonant with the general spirit of the existing guidelines.