That’s So WAC: “Speaking Life as a Second Language”
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WACommunities at UNM Mission Statement
Writing Across Communities at the University of New Mexico supports, connects, and enhances the intellectual life of students and faculty engaged in the academic mission of creating and circulating knowledge. WACommunities asserts that literacy education is both a civil right and civic responsibility. WACommunities promotes student-faculty engagement through writing for the benefit of diverse disciplinary, cultural, civic, and professional communities.

About Writing Across Communities at UNM
The goal of the WACommunities is to engage and help University faculty, graduate teaching assistants, administrators, and staff understand the many contexts in which students need to read and write effectively, and to provide instruction to meet those needs. UNM students come from many backgrounds with communication practices that reflect differences of language, ethnicity, culture, class, and generation. As a federally-designated Hispanic-serving institution, the presence of diverse communities represents a source of strength in our classrooms as we educate students for global lives in the new century, lives in which the ability communicate fluently across boundaries is essential. Through conversations with stakeholders across the university system, and among New Mexico communities, we continue to build our knowledge about the language and communicative backgrounds students bring to UNM so we can provide writing instruction that will increase student success in negotiating academic and professional literacies.

Writing Across Communities: WAC—with a Difference
The aim of the WACommunities initiative is to facilitate recruitment, retention, and success of New Mexico's diverse student populations through enhanced literacy education at every level of their college academic career (including, but not limited to, the First Year College Composition sequence). Toward these aims, WACommunities calls attention to issues related to student access, authority (authorship), awareness, and application of effective literacy practices. WACommunities promotes literacy education across diverse cultures; learning styles; ethnolinguistic groups; knowledge-making systems; genre conventions; disciplinary discourses.

Dimensions of Literacy
Writing Across Communities recognizes the diverse ways of reading (interpreting) and responding (writing) to the world. Literacy practice is always embedded in ever-shifting sets of economic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic factors.

To map these complex factors, WACommunities coalesces the dimensions of literacy at UNM into three components:
• Civic/Community Literacy (bridging students’ home communities and cultures);
• Academic Literacy (inviting students into academic disciplinary discourses);
• Professional Literacy (facilitating entrée into the work place literacies that they seek to learn and the professional communities they will join after graduation).

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Books


Articles
“Writing Across Communities: Diversity, Deliberation, and the Discursive Possibilities of WAC.” Reflections (Special Issue: Exploring Diversity in Community-Based Writing and Literacy Programs) 6.1 (Spring 2007): 87-108.


Chapters


