

The Write Way

"Master the Word and You Shall Master Your World"

A Northwest Vista College Publication from the Staff at the Centers for Academic Reading and English Support (CARES) in Juniper Hall

November 5, 2012

Vol. 1 Issue III

... And So Comes an End to the Fall 2012 Semester at NVC. . .

HAPPY
Thanksgiving

Indeed, the end of the 2012 Fall Semester here at Northwest Vista College is close at hand, and that means it will soon be time to demonstrate what you as students have worked so hard to learn and retain in your brain. In other words, "It's Showtime!"

However, now is also the time to take a moment to reflect on the professional or personal reasons you are seeking a degree in higher education. Recognizing those goals and realizing how hard you have worked this semester to attend class, do the assignments, study for the exams, and balance the rest of your life should motivate you to finish what you boldly started at the beginning of this

semester; to make a better future for yourself and your family.

From the faculty and staff at NVC's Centers for Academic Reading and English Support (CARES) we wish you the best of luck in writing those final essays and research papers as well as studying for final exams. Our tutors are standing by to assist all of those students currently enrolled in all English courses with their writing. Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving Holiday!



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... from the Reading Faculty

Lessons Learned in the Classroom Make For a Better Future

Professors are human too! Sometimes when you go to class and sit in front of your professor's desk, it's hard to imagine that they were once in your very shoes. The struggles you face as a student may seem a million miles away from what you think your professors may have ever gone through. Well, I'm here to let you in on a little secret; we weren't always so worldly.



Valerie Gomez

We've all seen our share of struggles and dilemmas in life, and that's what makes us so interesting. If you peel back the layers of our outer façade, you will see that we were once just like you; full of questions, hopes, and fears about how to make it all work despite the challenges. The difference is that we've had more time to see all of our efforts come to fruition through the years. I'd like to share with our students some pearls of wisdom I've learned

journey as a college student. Hopefully, you can gain some insight from someone who's been there, done that, and lived to tell about it.

Don't Be Afraid to Work Hard

College life can be a great experience. You meet so many different kinds of people, and just partaking in class discussions can really open up your mind to new ways of thinking.

However, as exciting as college can be for you, it's also filled with many challenges. Studying for exams and reading loads of material can sometimes make you feel like your brain is going to explode. Believe me, there were times in college when I felt like I just couldn't take it anymore; some of my classes were so tough that I often wondered what I had gotten myself into. The reality is that college is nothing like high school. In high school

(See Gomez, Pg. 6)

The CARES Labs

The College English Center

JH216 Mon -Thurs: 8AM-9PM

Fri-Sat: 9AM -2PM

Developmental English Lab

JH229 Mon -Thurs: 9AM-9PM

Fri - Sat: 9AM -2PM

Developmental Reading Lab

JH110 Mon -Thurs: 9AM-5PM

Advocacy Center

JH308 Mon - Thurs 8AM - 5PM

Visit us at:

<http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/cares/>



Marty is Snake Bit by the Need to Attend Class

How dedicated are you to your class attendance? What would you endure to make sure you are never absent here at Northwest Vista College—lions and tigers and bears and snakes? Oh my! Mauricio Marty did.

Last semester while mowing a lawn, Mauricio felt a sharp pain on his leg. Assuming it was a bug bite or a

small stick flying from the mower, he kept mowing.



However, when he got inside he inspected his leg and he realized he had been bitten by a snake! However, rather than miss class, Mauricio went to school because he did not want to miss his Reading Class with Ms. Upshaw.

After arriving at school with a purple leg and sharing the news of his misfortune with some of his classmates, he filled Ms. Upshaw in on the story. Shocked that he was in class with this injury, she begged him to see a doctor immediately. He promised to see one after class, but didn't feel right about leaving class.

Recipes for Success

The End is Near! Prepare Yourself for the Close of the Fall Semester

Now that midterms are over and the semester is beginning to wind down, you may find yourself feeling burnt out when it comes to schoolwork. You've studied so hard for your midterms that the last thing you want to see now is another homework assignment, but this is not the time to relax. You only have a few weeks left, so why not put your best effort into finishing up the semester and preparing yourself for finals? Here are some tips to help you avoid all of the pressure and also help you stay on track while completing the semester right.

* **Keep a calendar.** If you do not already have one, it is now especially important that you keep a calendar with you with all of your upcoming tests and due dates so that you can keep track of how much time you have to prepare yourself for your assignments. Always allow yourself more time than you think you need to begin preparing.

* **Keep up a good attendance record.** Attending class is vital for understanding your course material. If you are not in class, you will not receive the same instruction as your classmates, which will easily cause you to get behind and will also probably affect your grades at the end of the semester.

With his brown, curly hair and sweet smile, he shyly said, "It was no big deal." Thankfully, the doctor was able to get rid of the venom, clear up the infection that had started, and gave Mauricio a

"It was no big deal."

Mauricio Marty

clean bill of health. He returned triumphantly to his classes, especially his Reading Class.

Meanwhile, Mauricio is not only dedicated to his class attendance, but is also a wonderful student. He works full-time while attending school, and he plays soccer every week with a city league. One of his wishes is to see the San Antonio Scorpions play in a game.

With his genuine smile, easygoing personality, and dedication, Mauricio displays the kind of leadership that will ensure his success. He plans to study medicine and become a traumatologist so he can help people who have experienced an extreme trauma and need emergency care. You need nerves of steel to work in an emergency room, and by the way he handled his snake bite, I would say he is perfect for the job!

* **Don't forget to take breaks!** It's easy to get overwhelmed and exhausted with so much studying to do, so it is important to take breaks. This will help you take your mind off school for a little bit while doing something that you enjoy, either by yourself, with family, or with friends.

Put some time aside to catch that funny movie you have been waiting to see, play a game of basketball with your friends, or just relax at your own leisure, but the important thing is to take some brief time away from your studies. Doing so will refresh your mind and help you identify errors in your assignments that you hadn't seen or realized before.

Remember to try to stay ahead of your final essay assignments so that the semester-ending stress factor doesn't overwhelm you when it is time to turn them in or at final exam time. Try also to balance your studying for finals among your other classes. Failing to do so will cause a panic, and the end may truly be near. Study hard and good luck on finals!

Health and Wellness Tips For Students

November is recognized as a time for giving thanks, so why not give our bodies thanks by treating them right? It has been proven that working out at the gym isn't what sheds pounds; it helps, but it is how you eat that plays a huge role in keeping a healthy waistline.

During this time of the year, with the weather cooling off, it may seem comforting to warm up with a cup of cappuccino or enjoying a slice of pumpkin pie, but you pay for that comfort with high calorie consumption. Let this month be a month of food consciousness. Keep a journal or be very aware of what you put in your mouth. Stay away from fast food and vending machines.

The following healthy recipe will keep that waistline in check over the holidays. It is called Skirt Steak and Bok Choy Stir-Fry.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1 pound skirt steak, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 large head bok choy, cut 1 inch thick crosswise
- 4 medium carrots, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced on bias
- Cooked rice, for serving
- 1/4 cup peanuts, chopped

Directions

In a small bowl, mix soy sauce, vinegar, peanut butter, honey, and garlic. In a bowl, toss steak with cornstarch and season with salt and pepper. In a large nonstick skillet with a lid, heat oil over medium-high. Add half of the steak and cook for a minute or two while tossing until browned and then transfer to a plate. Repeat the process with the remaining steak.

In the skillet, add soy mixture, bok choy, and carrots. Cover and cook for about five minutes while tossing occasionally until tender, then add the rest of the steak and cook thoroughly until it is all heated. Serve over rice, sprinkle with peanuts, and add salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy this healthy treat without the waistline guilt and have a happy holiday season!

“Bond, James Bond” Returns to the Screen in *Skyfall* This Month

The new James Bond film, *Skyfall*, opens in San Antonio on November 9, and this year marks the 50th anniversary of the first Bond film, *Dr No*, in 1962. This was the first film, but not the first book, as *Casino Royale* was published in 1953. With the release of the latest and 25th Bond film, a review of the character’s history would be a great way to prepare for the next Bond mission.

British journalist turned author Ian Fleming created Bond in 1953, and the character has appeared in 12 novels and two short story collections. *Casino Royale* was so well-received that the first printing sold out within days. Fleming created Bond in the image of all the secret agents and commandos he met during World War II. He worked in the office of British Naval Intelligence during the war.

Many of James Bond’s traits are patterned after Fleming’s and include the same golf handicap, taste for scrambled eggs, love of gambling, and use of the same brand of toiletries. In a 1962 interview in *The New Yorker*, Fleming explained, "When I wrote the first novel in 1953, I wanted Bond to be an extremely dull, uninteresting man to whom things happened; I wanted him to be a blunt instrument ... when I was casting around for a name for my protagonist I thought by God, James Bond is the dullest name I ever heard."

Fleming also described Bond as an anonymous, blunt instrument wielded by a government department, and it is a description used in several movies. Two examples are, in the 2006 movie version of *Casino Royale* where M, Head of MI6 British Intelligence, asks Bond if he is a blunt instrument, and in *Die Another Day* (2002), where Miranda Frost, a double agent, describes him with the same phrase.

Meanwhile, *The Times of London* rank the Bond novels among the best-selling series of fictional books of all time with over 100 million copies sold worldwide. Fleming also wrote the children’s story *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang* and two works of nonfiction. In 2008, *The Times* ranked Fleming 14th on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

Unfortunately, Fleming was a heavy smoker and drinker who suffered from heart disease, which eventually claimed his life in 1964 at age 56. Two of his Bond books were published posthumously, and a further five authors have since produced 33 Bond novels. Fleming’s creation has appeared in film 24 times, and been portrayed by seven actors. If you’re looking for entertaining and

interesting books, you can’t go wrong with any of the Bond novels, either by Fleming or his successors.

After 24 films, Bond has been ingrained into pop culture from the way he introduces himself as “Bond, James Bond;” to his preferred drink, a gin martini with a splash of vodka, shaken, not stirred; to the kind of car he drives, a silver Aston Martin.

The attractive women in Bond films have also become iconic along with the coolest gadgets, including a jet pack in *Thunderball* (1965) and a car that’s also a submarine in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). Musical scores for the Bond movies have also garnered fame, such as Carly Simon’s “Nobody Does It Better” from *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Paul McCartney’s “Live and Let Die” in 1973, and in the latest movie the song “Skyfall” by Adele.

A question asked by many is which actor was the best Bond. The first and classic Bond is Sean Connery, who set the standard. He did the first five movies and one, by an independent production company, *Never Say Never Again* in 1983 is based on the 1961 novel *Thunderball*. Another actor who was a popular Bond was Roger Moore. He did eight movies, but was more of comic Bond, always ready

with a witty one liner. An actor who tried to fit into Connery’s shadow was Pierce Brosnan. He did four movies, and he definitely had his own style, but he was not Connery’s Bond.

Two actors who didn’t last long as Bond were George Lazenby and Timothy Dalton; both gave adequate performances, but were tame in comparison to the other actors. Lazenby played Bond only once, in *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* in 1969, but during the making of the film, he decided to portray the role only once. Dalton was Bond in two movies, *The Living Daylights*, 1987 and *License to Kill*, 1989. Dalton’s darker portrayal of Bond led to the violence being increased and made more graphic.

The latest Bond, Daniel Craig, has his own unique interpretation; dark and tortured, but still droll. *Skyfall* is Craig’s third Bond movie. His first two Bond movies were *Casino Royale*, 2006 and *Quantum of Solace*, 2008.

This is the first time in the Bond movies that the story line continued through two movies. The only plot point currently provided in *Skyfall* is that Bond is killed, but it’s not the first time he has died. Bond was killed in *You Only Live Twice*, 1967. However, if you absolutely really feel the need to know more, you’ll have to see the new movie to learn what kind of twist Bond’s death is.

FREE! GRAMMAR and ESSAY HANDOUTS

It seems these days that there are fewer things in life that are free, but in all of our *CARES* writing and reading labs here at Northwest Vista College, we have free grammar and essay handouts available to all students enrolled in English courses. Topics range from tips on getting started on various essay assignments to listings of common spelling errors and words often misused in our sometimes complicated English language.

In our Developmental labs, the handouts can be accessed through our tutors and they’ll be happy to help you select the ones that will help the most. Because there can be sometimes a lot of tutoring activity in the Writing Center and the tutors get busy, students can help themselves to the handouts located in the center of the lab sitting above the book cases. If there is no one handout that answers your questions, please ask one of the tutors and they’ll help you find the answer.

Come Prepared to the CARES English Writing Center and Save Some Time

Because you might have a hectic class schedule along with work commitments, it is important to watch how every minute of your time is spent on campus. One way of using time effectively is being prepared when seeking help in the Writing Center.

When you come to the Writing Center, be prepared to fully explain to the tutor what your assignment is and what any additional requirements from the instructor are. If you are not quite sure you understand the assignment, bring either the course syllabus or the assignment itself so that tutors can read, interpret, and explain what is being required. Once the tutors are aware of what the assignment is, they can also help brainstorm an idea and get you started. **Remember: Bring your assignments when coming to the Writing Center for clarification of what is expected of you!**

Students sometimes come to the Writing Center with an assignment paper that has either been graded by their instructor or peer reviewed by their fellow classmates. In either case, all corrections must be incorporated into the assignment before asking a tutor for help. Obviously, things can get very messy, complicated, and confusing for the student and the tutor when corrections are not made or when additional corrections are needed on top of the corrections already pointed out. See what we mean? **Remember to incorporate all corrections made by**

instructors or peers into your paper before seeking help from a tutor!

Also remember that your paper needs to be typed. It is sometimes very difficult to work with handwritten assignments impossible to determine if correct MLA formatting is being used. **Remember: The Writing Center will not work with a hand-written copy of your assignment!**

When working on an essay that requires research citations, you must conduct the research first and then formulate a Works Cited page before sitting down to write. By first conducting the research, you become familiar with the subject matter being addressed in your assignment. **Remember: Never write about anything that you are not familiar with, so do the research first and become an informed writer who understands the subject matter, and it will be reflected in your writing and your grade!**

Meanwhile, when you do find research information that can be used to support your thesis or claim, begin

formulating the Works Cited page. When you sit down to work on an assignment and start incorporating your research sources to support your thesis, there will be no doubt how to cite your sources in-text because they will already listed on the Works Cited page. **Remember: it is your responsibility to get the reader from in-text citations to the Works Cited page, and if you have not cited your in-text sources correctly, instructors will not find them until they hunt for them, and precious points will be deducted!**

Finally, when you come to the Writing Center, give us your undivided attention; no incoming or outgoing phone calls, texting, conversations, etc. If you are coming to the Writing Center for help with an assignment that is due that same day or in a couple of hours, do not expect a good grade. While we sometimes do perform writing miracles, we cannot help a student earn a good grade if they do not put in the necessary time to complete the assignment. **Remember: The grade you receive will always reflect the amount of time you put into it!**

OMG!

WHERE'S MY FLASH DRIVE?

Pretty scary feeling, huh? Well, it's past Halloween and now is not the time of the semester to forget your flash drive anywhere because it has all of your hard academic work saved on it.

Before you leave any of our CARES labs, please remember to make sure you have properly removed your flash drive by using the eject icon in the bottom right task tray on the screen. If you do not use this procedure and just pull out your flash stick, you also run a high risk of zapping all of your files away. Try inserting your flash drive in either of the two USB ports on the left side of the computer's monitor so that you won't forget it.

If you do happen to leave your flash drive behind in any of our labs, please see any of the tutors and they'll direct you to our Lost & Found box.



Gather Your Resources Before Starting Your Essay

Have you ever started a project and soon come to realize that you've not gathered all of the materials you need for completion and success? It is the same thing with writing a research paper; you have to complete and record your citation resources before attempting to write the first draft.

We'll assume that you've already developed a thesis as well as an outline that will serve as a roadmap for your essay. Remember that supporting and defending your essay is akin to attorneys proving a case before a judge and jury. Think about it; an attorney uses case law, testimony, evidence, and witnesses to prove a case. As a student you are doing the same thing, but using your research to support a thesis claim, and instead of proving your case to a judge, you will make and defend your claims to an instructor with your class peers serving as jury members.

As you begin to research your topic, keep in mind that you'll want to use credible sources to give your paper validity. An instructor will not pay much attention to a source that is coming from *Ask.com* or *Wikipedia.com* (most do not accept the latter at all), but will take notice of cited material if it stems from an .edu website that indicates the source is from a college or university. Other credible sources come from academic databases such as ERIC or JSTOR as well as the .gov websites that are from the government agencies and the .org sites, which are the nonprofit organizations like PBS or NPR.

When you begin to incorporate cited sources into your essay, it is best to introduce your source to add weight to your assertions. If you begin a quote without introducing it and the instructor finds out at the end that the information is coming from a source like Wikipedia, they will feel cheated because it is not a credible source, and this will only serve to detract from your essay.

However, if you introduce a source with a phrase such as; "According to Harvard Economist Paul Krugman . . .," the reader is aware that the information being provided is from a credible source, and that will lend credence to your work and go a long way towards proving your thesis.

One of the main reasons to compile your Works Cited page before writing your research essay is that when you begin using your sources in text to prove the thesis claim, you can cross reference it with the Works Cited page to ensure you have

cited it correctly as it is listed. Remember: it is the student's responsibility to get their instructor from the in-text citation to the Works Cited page, and if this is not accomplished, points will be deducted.

Students enrolled in English or developmental classes are welcome to come to the appropriate lab and let our tutors help with your assignment and the coming finals. We'll help you develop your thesis and outline as well as directing you to research sources that will help prove and defend your thesis.

A Little Bit of Momma

It happens just a few times a year,
But it's Thanksgiving that I like the best.
To dig up and decipher the old recipes,
To break out the pots and pans,
To make the cornbread dressing, bake *los* pecan pies,
And smile while remembering a little bit of Momma

During Thanksgiving holidays gone by when family ties were strong,
When the South Texas weather was cold enough
For papá to bag a big deer, *un venado*,
Momma would rise before the dawn's yawn
To begin her special culinary magic,
To soon fill our home with pleasant aromas,
To make me stop even today in my graying days,
And still remember a little bit of Momma.

It always seemed like time stood so still,
The meal, my older sisters and I worried
Would never be done. Is it ready? *¿Ya mero?*
Ah, but when it was all done, our table stood and strained with
The Lord's bounty and Momma's great cooking.

The special coleslaw with bits of apple and pecan was my favorite,
But the smell of a golden roasted turkey
Attended by majestic mounds of cornbread dressing
Will always be a pleasant memory, a nostalgic yearning,
And my special way of always remembering a little bit of Momma.

So now it's me who gets up before dawn's yawn
On sometimes warm South Texas Thanksgiving Days,
To recreate those special recipes,
The ones she handed down to me before she died,
To make her cornbread dressing, and bake *los* pecan pies,
To fill my own roaming home with delicious aromas,
And of course, to always remember a little bit of Momma.



I was a “star” student, but college kicked my behind.

So what did I learn? College is about challenging your own understanding of the world and opening yourself up to new ways of thinking. Learning new ideas and critically thinking about history, philosophy, literature, and technology can fundamentally change the way you see the world and your place in it.

Yes, the road is mentally hard and demands a lot of your time and attention, but the journey through it will someday pave the way to new medical discoveries or further insight into human behavior, just to name some examples.

The bottom line is that even though college is demanding, we shouldn’t be afraid to work hard at everything that is thrown our way. You don’t have to be a genius in calculus, but if you know enough to determine that you need extra help, don’t be embarrassed to get help at the tutoring center. Just dive into everything, do your best, and work hard to get where you want to be. NO EXCUSES!

Show Up for the Game

I attended a private college where I would occasionally have clerical brothers and sisters teaching my classes. I wasn’t particularly fond of one of my classes, and so I decided to skip it one day and have lunch with a group of friends in the cafeteria.

BIG MISTAKE! Right after class, who do I see coming my direction as I was biting into my beloved Philly cheesesteak along with fries? You guessed it; my professor, Sister Ann. I felt like shrinking into my seat or hiding under the table, but I couldn’t.

A thousand excuses came flooding into my head all at once, but I was so nervous and startled that I couldn’t decide which one sounded most reasonable. Then I realized she was a woman of the cloth with direct access to God Himself and

thought it would probably be a mortal sin to even think about lying to a nun. Sister Ann was kind, but firm, and she said to me, among other things, “I missed you in class today!”

I’ll never forget her words. From that day on, I knew my decision to not show up for the game put me in a bad light in Sister Ann’s eyes. It also meant that I missed some important information that could have helped me do far better in the class. Showing up for the game is the first step in heading in the right direction. You are always needed in class, and it shows that you are a team player. Believe me; your professors truly take notice when you are absent from class. I should know because I certainly do.

Say “Yes” to Challenges

It was in my freshman year in college when I decided I wanted to study abroad for a semester. I was filled with excitement at the prospect of immersing myself in the culture and welcomed the challenge it would give me to struggle through the language.

Accepting the challenge of a study abroad experience actually became one of the best decisions I ever made. It was an experience that shaped my identity and allowed me to grow in so many ways.

Saying “yes” to challenges is one way towards not only gaining valuable knowledge that will become useful to you in the future, but it also sets you apart from the pack because it shows others that you are not afraid to waver. Being open to change and being flexible are key components to successfully navigating through tough times. We all know that change is inevitable and with those changes come *challenges*.

The next time you are confronted with a difficult decision or are presented with difficult options that have promising benefits, choose the path least traveled. If there’s an end benefit to your challenge, then you

know the reward will be very sweet.

Be a Team Player

I have to admit this; I was never really a big fan of group assignments in college. Inevitably, there was always at least one person in the group who wouldn’t pull their weight, and I resented that. However, today when I work with students in the classroom, group activities seem to be the ultimate way to get students to discuss their ideas and fully engage in the lesson. I have come to understand their value in the educational experience because they promote cooperation and social understanding, elements that are incredibly important in our global economy.

Let’s face it; no man is an island. Every career that you plan to take on will inevitably require you to work with others unless you’re a monk living in a cave taking a vow of silence, but that’s another story. Every employer out there in the real world wants to hire an employee who not only can do the job well, but who can also work well with others. Lessons learned from working in teams in college allowed me to be a better employee even as a work-study working my way through school.

Even though I was a college work-study who didn’t work more than 15 hours a week in my academic department, I still managed to impress a few people who helped me land my first full time job working on campus after graduation. I attribute my hiring to meeting the needs of my department by working hard and getting along well with my co-workers, and that meant being a team player. You never know who may be part of your team; one of those people could end up being your future best friend or contact person for a new job.

Think about how well you get along with your co-workers, classmates, customers, and friends. Are you being fully engaged in what they are doing and saying? Are you aware of social cues and are you working to improve your relationships with others? Being a team player doesn’t

mean you have to ignore your own goals and desires.

Being a team player means that you should think about yourself in the bigger picture of relationship-building and service. In order to move organizations or big ideas forward, we need others to feel invested. It’s great to have a big idea and think you’ve solved a big problem for your company, but if others don’t understand you or feel that they have had no input in its progression and development, then you may find some difficulty in making those lofty ideas a reality.

Accept Advice and Pay it Forward

So, the next time you feel like you need someone to talk to about your goals in life and your place in the world, talk to one of your professors. More than likely they have plenty of advice to share with you. It’s amazing to me that some students feel shy or hesitant to speak to their professor during office hours.

Don’t ever feel that way; you pay enough in tuition and fees to get the very best out of your entire experience in college. Take these morsels of wisdom and use them to improve or enhance your personal journey through college life and beyond. One day it will be your job to do the same for someone else.

The CARES Newsletter Staff for November 2012 was comprised of English and Reading instructors and tutors:

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