

## Plenary Speakers



### Professor Terry Myers Zawacki

George Mason University

## Engaging conversation(s): What students and teachers say about the challenges of learning to write across languages, texts, and contexts

*Terry Myers Zawacki is an emerita professor of English at George Mason University, where she directed the nationally recognized Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program and the University Writing Center. Prior to her retirement, Prof. Zawacki was the recipient of the David J. King Award given annually to a faculty member who has made significant, long-term contributions to the overall educational excellence of the university; a University Excellence in Teaching award; and a “Students as Scholars” Mentor award.*

*Her publications include the co-authored *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines: Research on the Academic Writing Life* and the co-edited collections *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices* and *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Critical Sourcebook*. Her invited articles include the co-authored “Internationalization, English L2 Writers, and the Writing Classroom: Implications for Teaching and Learning” in the June 2014 *College Composition and Communication*, “Observations of WAC in China” in the 2014 *WAC Journal*, and chapters on faculty attitudes and expectations for L2 writers, writing assessment in the disciplines, writing centers and writing fellows, and writing in learning communities. She has co-edited special issues of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* (November 2015) focused on support for thesis and dissertation writers and *Across the Disciplines* (December 2011) on WAC and second language (L2) writing. Her current research investigates the challenges faced by dissertation writers and their advisers across the disciplines.*

*Additionally, she is lead editor for the book series *International Exchanges on the Study of Writing* and serves on a number of editorial boards and national professional committees, including chairing the CCCC Committee on the Globalization of Postsecondary Writing Instruction and Research.*

My talk consists of three parts with the first part focusing on the fundamental principles and practices of U.S. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and how these are complicated when English is an additional or foreign language. With this foundation, I turn to the complexity of learning to write in disciplinary communities of practice and my own coauthored research on the central concerns of English L1 and L2 writers and their instructors across the curriculum around expectations for “good” writing, the challenges involved in meeting these expectations, and what these imply for our instructional practices, focusing particularly on the importance of reflective practice. In the third part of my talk, I describe “translingual” arguments around valuing students’ multiliteracies and multi-competence as users and writers of English, which is understood to be fluid, dynamic, and always in translation (Horner et al, Pennycook, Fraiberg & You). I situate my coauthored research on faculty dispositions toward student writing that differs from standard written English within these arguments and what they imply for WAC practice. I conclude by suggesting that we have much to learn about how our students—English L1 and L2—transfer,

translate, and transform writing knowledge across disciplinary, rhetorical, cultural, and linguistic texts and contexts. As we investigate this essential question and others around academic literacies and our students’ “translanguaging” practices, it is critical that we engage in cross-national/cross-field (WAC, EAC, EAP, CLIL) exchanges about students’ language and writing development across the curriculum, particularly in the rich biliterate, trilingual educational context of Hong Kong (Evans). ■