Call for participation: Understanding University Writing

Shelley Staples and Bradley Dilger ~ Purdue University Dept of English ~ Fall 2015

With support from the Technology Initiatives Working Group and the Corpus Club, Professor Shelley Staples and Professor Bradley Dilger are leading a team of researchers who are developing an online platform, tentative called "Understanding University Writing," which will support research and professional development in the Department of English. This multi-year project will seek to provide sustainable methods for three related activities:

1. Building a corpus of student writing for research in applied linguistics;
2. Building a corpus of student writing, articulated with course materials, for research in rhetoric and composition;
3. Providing instructors a platform to share course materials for professional development.

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) is providing IT support for the project and helping us locate developers who can assist us. We envision integrating off-the-shelf database software with customized web-based interfaces to provide a user experience which satisfies our diverse needs. Over the next five to ten years, we hope to develop the UUW into a project which can not only be valuable for our programs at Purdue, but can raise the visibility of our work, and be extended into a service or installable software suite which will invite collaboration with others.

We invite participation from interested undergraduate and graduate students in second language studies and rhetoric and composition. (We will invite everyone to join us in the future, but for now we wish to limit the scope of the project.) A variety of roles are possible:

- Active engagement in design and development, including both coding, prototyping, and documentation, considering both technical and content-focused issues;
- User experience testing, reviews, and analysis;
- Coordinating collaborations with CLA IT staff and other units at Purdue;
- Conducting pilot studies using the research infrastructure;
- Coordinating with ICaP mentors to test and improve professional development;
- Providing assistance with grant writing.

We are applying for internal grants which will enable us to offer financial support to collaborators, targeting not only travel to present our work and to meet with potential partners, but research assistantships and part-time employment. We are open to supporting both undergraduate and graduate students working on the project.

This work builds on a prototype developed by Scott Partridge and Heejung Kwon in AY2014–15 and the Collaborative Online Instructors' Network (COIN) developed by Kristen Seas Trader and Alexis Ramsey-Tobienne in AY2006–07. See also these projects created by other universities:

- [Digital Repository for Academic Writing](#) (DRAW), from Iowa State University;
- [Pedagogy Toolkit](#), from University of Victoria;
- [Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Papers](#), from the Michigan Language Lab.

Interested in working with us on the short or long term? Contact Professor Staples <slstaples@purdue.edu> or Professor Dilger <dilger@purdue.edu> or 309-259-0328 to discuss a possible role and the time frame which works for you.