

Research associate post goes to WPCC director

George Fouts, director of composition at Western Piedmont Community College, has been appointed research associate of the University of Iowa's Institute on Writing.

Time magazine recently referred to this institute as "the nerve center of writing reform and the source of the renaissance of clear collegiate prose."

Fouts attended the Institute on Writing last year and as a result began an innovative composition program at Western Piedmont that has drawn attention from college English professors throughout the state.

Part of the change in teaching includes the concept "sequencing," or providing steadily more complex writing assignments that build up the student's knowledge of language.

"Writing isn't just an abstract skill," Fouts said. "It's a way of looking at the world. What we find quite often is that due to lack of experience with writing, college students lack some very basic intuitions. Sequencing addresses this linguistic innocence."

At Western Piedmont, Fouts said the program is different than the average composition course. "We're simply adopting the most recent and the best research to help our students excel as writers. I think it's interesting that students not only improve as writers in these experimental courses, but they report that the experience of writing is more rewarding now."

As a research associate, Fouts is expected to carry out research on the WPCC campus, and make his findings available to the Iowa Institute on Writing. Part of his work involves consulting with instructors in other area colleges and institutions.