

The WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

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For its first nine volumes the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER has functioned with a one-person editorial staff, with--of course--crucial and much appreciated clerical help with typing, collating, stapling, and labelling. Now, I'm pleased to announce that Ronald Adams has gallantly agreed to take on a huge load of responsibilities as assistant editor. With his expertise in business management he will be attempting to log in all your donations, create some semblance of order in the stacks of correspondence that we all generate, handle address changes and a myriad of other requests from our large group. Ron will be doing all this in addition to continuing his doctoral studies in rhetoric and composition at Purdue and handling his teaching duties in our Writing Lab and in the classroom. (And, in a few months, he and his wife will also be learning what parenthood is all about!) Those of you who have had to write to me about donations not credited to your name or about lost checks will no doubt be heaving a huge sigh of relief to hear that Ron is creating order out of chaos. We all wish him well!

In this month's newsletter you'll note several articles on a subject that many of us have complained is not treated sufficiently in the literature on writing labs--the non-native student. At conferences and in informal conversations, we ask the same questions: What materials exist for working with ESL students? What tutoring techniques can we pass along to other tutors? What are the special needs of these students? It is with the hope that you'll find some answers to these questions that I've collected several articles on this topic for this issue, along with reviews of a set of computer programs for ESL students.

It's interesting to note that while some queries from our group don't provoke much response, others seem to tap a strong reaction. The question of using peer tutors in two-year schools (raised by Betty Neumann in the June 1985 issue of the newsletter) certainly seems to be one of those issues

that invites answers. In addition to the replies included in the September newsletter, you'll find more discussion of the topic in this issue. You'll also find some questions from a publisher who requests your suggestions for developing instructional materials.

If there are other questions you have, send them in--along with your articles, announcements, names of new members, and \$5 yearly donations (in checks made payable to Purdue University but sent to me) to:

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TRAINING WRITING CENTER PERSONNEL TO WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: THE LEAST WE NEED TO KNOW

The Writing Resources Center at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is a drop-in tutorial service, open to all members of the university community. Though some faculty and graduate students do occasionally avail themselves of the WRC's services, the bulk of our time is spent working with writers with more basic problems. In fact, close to 50% of our tutor contact hours are devoted to working with international students since no separate writing support facility exists for them.

The WRC is staffed almost entirely by graduate students, seniors, and juniors. Ideally, given the high percentage of international students that they'll deal with, writing center tutors will have completed some coursework in descriptive linguistics--at least enough to insure a grasp of grammatical terminology--so that tutors confronted with a Taiwanese student who wants to know more about modal auxiliaries won't refer that student to RADIO SHACK. Ideally,

writing center tutors will have some coursework in comparative linguistics (or Teaching English as a Second Language), so that they can help set up contrastive analyses for use with an Israeli student who's having trouble with English plurals and possessives.

Ideally, writing center tutors should have coursework in language acquisition, so they can anticipate the reluctance of some students to learn a second language since acquisition of that language implies a rejection of their native tongue and culture. Ideally, writing center tutors will have coursework in sociolinguistics, so that they can properly interpret a Hispanic student's failure to maintain eye contact as a signal of respect rather than guilt or shame.

Ideally, my salary as writing center director would compensate me for the time I spend worrying because tutors have NOT had coursework in any of the aforementioned areas: The reality is that most tutors qualify for their jobs because they are good writers, and even here their skill seems more intuitive than learned. At best, the only prior training tutors have received is coursework in expository writing.

There can be little question that the specialized needs of non-native speakers make preparation in tutoring English as a Second Language imperative (intuitive writing skill doesn't go very far in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Without preparation, tutors do a disservice to the international students who come to them for help; without preparation, tutors of international students will quickly become frustrated and give up. But a real problem comes in HOW to provide such preparation. In many cases, requiring additional specialized coursework is not the solution. There's no room in most students' schedules for such specialized coursework. More significantly, most student tutors don't aspire to become ESL instructors. Requiring intensive TESOL study is likely to discourage many from applying to the tutoring program.

Our solution has been to integrate TESOL training into our tutor preparation program (basically, a credit-bearing course in which all tutors enroll concurrent with their first semester of tutoring). But such integration must occur without threatening to overtake other non-TESOL components of our program. (Therefore, despite the fact that as much as half of a tutor's time may

be spent in working with foreign students, no effort is made to provide 50% instruction in TESOL.)

The objectives of our minimalist TESOL curriculum are:

1. To ease whatever apprehensions tutors have about working with international students (some claim that lack of background would make such work impossible).
2. To raise sensitivities and consciousness of those who feel that TESOL is no big deal (i.e. that writing is writing, that non-native writers aren't any different than any others).
3. To provide minimal competencies in TESOL.

There are three parts to our curriculum: BIBLIOGRAPHIC, ANECDOTAL, and EXPERIENTIAL.

In essence, the BIBLIOGRAPHIC component of our crash-course consists of directing students toward resources for the theory and practice of TESOL. While some students will resist such resources, others won't feel secure until they've done some background reading, or until they know where they can go for some help. At the very least, I'd like my tutors to be aware that the TESOL field exists (25,000 members strong), and that resources are out there. Below is our latest TESOL resource list, based on recommendations made by several authorities in the field:

SELECTED RESOURCES FOR TUTORING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Arkin, Marian, and Barbara Shollar. The Tutor Book. New York, Longman, 1982.

-----, Tutoring ESL Students. New York, Longman, 1982.

Brooks, Phyllis. "Peer Tutoring and the ESL Student." New Directions for College Learning Assistance: Improving Writing Skills. Ed. Thom Hawkins and Phyllis Brooks. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981.

Celce-Murcia, Marianne and Lois McIntosh, eds. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1979.

Crowell, Thomas Lee. Index to Modern English. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Dubin, Fraida, and Elite Olshtain. Facilitating Language Learning: A Guidebook for the ESL/EFL Teacher. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977.

Finocchiaro, Mary. English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice. New York: Regents, 1974.

Friedlander, Alexander. "Meeting the Needs of Foreign Students in the Writing Center." Writing Centers: Theory and Administration. Ed. Gary Olson. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1984.

Kaplan, Robert D. "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education." Language Learning 16 (1966): 1-20.

Krashen, S. D. "The Monitor Model for Adult Second Language Performance." Viewpoints on English Language as a Second Language. Ed. Marina Burt, Heidi Dulay, and Mary Finocchiaro. New York: Regents, 1972.

Labov, William. The Study of Non-Standard English. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969.

LeTourneau, Mark S. "Typical ESL Errors and Tutoring Strategies." Writing Lab Newsletter 9 (March 1985): 5-8.

MacLin, Alice. Reference Guide to English: A Handbook of English as a Second Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

Paulston, Christina Bratt. English as a Second Language. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1980.

-----, and Mary Newton Bruder. Teaching English as a Second Language: Techniques and Procedures. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1976.

Reigstad, Thomas, and Donald A. McAndrew. Training Tutors for Writing Conferences. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1984.

Rivers, Wilga M., and Mary S. Temperley. A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language. New York: Oxford, 1978.

Robinett, Betty W. Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Substance and Technique. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

Saville-Troike, Muriel. Foundations for Teaching English as a Second Language: Theory and Method for Multicultural Education. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Thompson-Panos, Karyn, and Maria Thomas-Ruzic. "The Least You Should Know About Arabic: Implications for the ESL Writing Instructor." TESOL Quarterly 17 (1983): 609-623.

TESOL Quarterly and TESOL Newsletter. Georgetown University.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Lincoln Exchange: News and Views of Developmental Education

Harvester Motel, Lincoln, NE
Nov. 7-8, 1985

Categories of Topics:

*Instruction - reading, writing, mathematics, reasoning, study skills, cognitive learning strategies, computer-assisted instruction, etc.

*Personal Assistance - counseling, advising, diagnosis, tutoring, peer support, financing, learning disabilities assistance, etc.

*Data-related Activities - testing, evaluation, student profiling, computers, etc.

*Management & Support - learning center organizations, professional development, public relations, planning, grantsmanship, faculty relations, computer use, etc.

Contact: Carol Lotven 1308 Seaton Hall, UN-L
Lincoln, NE 68588-0625
(402) 472-3461

MICROCOMPUTERS AND BASIC SKILLS

The City University of New York is sponsoring a conference, "Microcomputers and Basic Skills in College," to be held at the Vista International Hotel in New York City, November 22-24, 1985. Information and registration forms are available from: Geoffrey Akst, Conference Chair, City University of New York, Office of Academic Affairs, 535 East 80th Street, NY, NY 10021.

Wolfson, Nessa. "Compliments in Cross-Cultural Perspective." TESOL Quarterly 15 (1981): 117-124.

Of course, resources in print have their limitations--especially if those resources cover topics that are unfamiliar to readers. For introducing tutors to TESOL, human resources will prove far better than any of the resources on a handout. International students, ESL specialists, foreign language instructors, and former tutors are the tutor trainer's most valuable resource--they carry with them far more credibility and authority than any article or text. In our TESOL curriculum we seek to provide maximum contact with these human resources. And special effort is made to insure that the chief mode of instruction is anecdotal--narratives based on actual incidents--rather than discursive lectures based on theory.

If possible, arrange to have international students speak informally with--or write to--prospective tutors, and have them share their expectations. Below are some statements, offered by international students preparing to matriculate at UNCC, in response to my request for a single piece of advice to pass on to beginning tutors who have had minimal contact with foreign students:

"Iranian students usually have a low sound. American students usually don't understand some words of us, so the person who wants to work with us must be patient."

"Understand the current political situation of my country and help me regardless of my nation, race, or religion."

"Talk Slowly."

"Slang words make misunderstanding for international students."

"I'd like them to have a lot of information especially about the countries or where they are. In other words, if I told anybody that I am Arabic from Jordan, the first question I'll be asked is 'Where is that?' And that's really so bad, isn't it?"

Arrange to have specialists visit classes. In the past, we've had people from International Studies in to talk about such subjects as Guilt vs. Shame cultures (i.e. why moral tirades don't work with some students), differing concepts of time (hospitality vs. punctuality), sex roles (why some

students refuse to work with female tutors), cultural attitudes toward unsupervised work (why some students will not do homework). Christina Paulston suggests tapping the resources of foreign language departments. We've not tried it yet, but I'm convinced that they can provide a methodology we probably never have considered.

More important than specialists are non-specialists, former or seasoned tutors who learned much of what they know by seat-of-the-pants experience. Arrange frequent sessions in which tutors can exchange "war stories" of times when they froze in battle, when their weakness was exposed. My own favorite--one that hammered home to me the point that circumstances in some cultures preclude the use of certain instructional strategies--involves an early experience in an English 101 class. Recognizing the value of fluency above all else, I had introduced to my class the practice of free-writing, letting it all hang out on paper, writing freely without any kind of censorship. As usual, all my students soon got the hang of it, came to enjoy it. All but one. That was the guy from Libya who, when I tried to coax him yet one more time to try it, coolly informed me that "if I would do this in my country, my hand would be cut off."

It is a rare tutor that doesn't have a similar experience to share. Sam Nixon warns us to be certain of a student's degree of proficiency before launching into brilliant and lengthy explanations that will probably fall on deaf ears. Cynthia Parsley urges us to verify frequently a student's understanding by asking her to demonstrate the principles you've explained. Sandi Constantino warns us to watch our language--that idioms can be dangerously misunderstood. Isabel Andrade cautions against jumping to conclusions without making efforts to understand different cultures. Lou Price asks us to learn about the non-verbal signals given in different cultures, to learn that such signals are not universal. Having the tutors available in person to pass on this advice is helpful. At the very least try to have tutors leave a "legacy" by providing some written anecdotal records of their tutoring experiences with international students.

This anecdotal component of our program is helpful in allaying tutors' fears, in sensitizing them to important issues. Nonetheless, their role in this part of

their training is still primarily passive. They need to engage themselves more actively in experiences designed to increase their awareness of the problems of ESL instruction. For the EXPERIENTIAL segment of our program we use a number of activities which are called, or used to be called in "Educationese," sensitivity modules.

The first of these modules, "Newly Grammar," was created by Gretchen Dowling when she was tutor trainer of the Tutoring-Counseling Service at La Guardia Community College, Long Island City, New York.

Newly Grammar

Rules:

1. All past participles are formed by adding -ed to the base form of verbs:
(ex. I have gone = I have goed)
(She has thought = she has thinked)
2. Put an -ly ending on all adjectives
(ex. new = newly)
3. Reverse the uses of at and to
(ex. I often go at the shopping mall where I lunch to the deli.)
4. Reverse the uses of a and the
(ex. A United States is the big country.)
5. Everything else should be standard English.

Readingly Passage: The Tutor's Story

I've worked here to LaGuardia for about two weeks now. So far, it's been very interestingly, but hectically and sometimes frustratingly. I really feel exhaustedly by an end of a day. This happens because I can't seem at help students as much as I'd like at. I go home and stare to a walls and think over what I could have doel in a differently way. I've begunel at notice, however, that a work itself is beginning at get more easily.

Write your answers at a followingly questions, after talking them over with a person nextly at you. Write your answers using Newly Gramar.

- (1) What is a mainly idea of a story?
- (2) What makes a tutor frustratedly?

- (3) Have you havel similarly experiences in your work?

This exercise, because it puts tutors in the role of mediated writers (i.e., those whose focus on subject is compromised by a focus on rules), works well to sensitize them to the problems confronting international students trying to work in an unfamiliar language. The next exercise shows just how complicated some of those problems can be.

TUTORIAL SIMULATION

Malik, a freshman architecture major from Kuwait, comes to the writing center with a referral from his history instructor. In the space marked, "Particular writing problems that you'd like us to work on," Malik's instructor has written "EVERYTHING!" But he then adds, "Please go over the rules governing the use of articles. This student leaves many articles out and uses others incorrectly." Respond to the items below regarding this problem.

1. List, off the top of your head, what you can recall about the rules governing the use of articles.
2. Scan two or three freshman English handbooks (e.g. Short English Handbook, Practical English Handbook, Harbrace College Handbook), and construct a set of rules governing the use of articles that would be useful to Malik.

Pointing to the complexity of some features of English for non-native speakers, this exercise calls into question the claim that the problems of an American-born basic writer and an ESL student are essentially the same. Indeed, most handbooks assigned in composition classes have hardly anything to say about articles; they assume tacit, internalized knowledge of rules governing article use. ESL handbooks, on the other hand, are most explicit and helpful (Crowell devotes seven pages to articles, and Maclin devotes six).

While the former two exercises are designed to raise tutor consciousness of difficulties facing international students, the next exercise helps them to think about dealing with those difficulties. The exercise, and the discussion it generates, drives home the point that a tutor cannot possibly focus on every error, that one needs to examine student writing for certain

patterns of error, that one needs to prioritize instructional concerns, and that priorities may differ, depending upon whether a student is native or foreign.

ESTABLISHING TUTORIAL PRIORITIES

Imagine that you are sitting innocently in the Writing Center and in walks an international student for help on a draft of the following process analysis paper (a paper which describes how to do something). The paper is due in two days. How do you conduct the tutorial? What priorities do you establish?

In these days some people they don't no who they do salad. I don't no why, but this is truth

This is who I made salad befor I do anything. I going to desid what kind of salad I going to do.

After a few mient, I decided to make American salad becous it is very eays but now I have to go the store to by many things liek latuce, tomataes, cucumber, salt, oil, radish and whatever, Now I have everything to make salad but befor I begin to fixed I have to wash every thing.

Now I am going to cout the letuce in the tomatoes a senol slices, and the cucumber and radish to. Now I am going to mix all things together as my mother.

I going to mix the letuce whit oil, and I am going to pout the cucumber, slices tomatoes, radish up on the letuce and after that the sult to than than the salad ready for eat I hop you enjoy me., and liek it. of corse you lief it, do you know whoy becaus it is American salad.

These simulation exercises, and other like them (Arkin, for example, suggests that you have tutors attend upper-division courses taught in foreign languages, or have them write assignments in a foreign language), are valuable. But they are still no substitute for actual tutorial contact with international students. Such experience is the best teacher. I would advise that tutor trainers provide for such experience as early in their tutors' training as possible. To postpone such training will generally do little more than increase students' apprehensions--make them feel as though they will commit irreparable damage unless they

are adequately trained. Allowing students to get their feet wet from day one provides a genuine context and necessity for learning--and there's no better incentive than that.

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REFORMULATION: ANOTHER WAY TO GET FEEDBACK

The Reformulation Technique

The technique of reformulation speaks to nonnative language learners who have a basic curiosity about how they compare to natives in the language forms that they use in their written self-expression--their selection of vocabulary, their choice and ordering of sentence structures, and the extent to which they tie these forms together effectively (i.e., cohesively) in their writing. The technique is meant especially for learners who are interested in seeing the kinds of revisions a native writer--whether tutor, peer, or teacher--would make when revising what they have written. These learners may find that some or even many of the revisions are not the result of an erroneous form being replaced by a "correct" one, but rather a less appropriate form being replaced by a more appropriate one within the given context. In other words, the issue is really one of style, an area for which learners in a second-language classroom may not receive much guidance. In beginning classes the teacher often emphasizes basic vocabulary and grammatical problems, but even at the more advanced levels there may still be a lack of emphasis on the more refined aspects of form.

This technique is characterized by the following steps:

1. The learners first produce an second-language text, usually a short paper of 200-300 words. The learners are encouraged to revise this paper as many times as they see fit until it reflects their thoughts accurately.

2. The learners then give the paper to a native writer--e.g., a tutor or teacher--at least once or twice for feedback, according

to whatever system the reviewer wishes to use. One currently popular system is that of an open, developing dialog between the writer and the teacher, perhaps in the form of a diary (Spack and Sadow 1983).

3. Upon receipt of reviewer's comments, learners revise their paper based on the feedback received. Note that this step is optional, particularly when the feedback is minimal, and rewriting would just be an extra, non-productive chore.

4. Next, a competent native writer is asked to rewrite or "reformulate" the entire paper or a portion of it (say, the first 100 words, since the beginning of the paper is often written with extra attention). This reformulator can be a tutor in the writing lab, a classroom teacher, or friend. Reformulators are told to rewrite the paper so as to preserve as many of the paper's ideas as possible, while expressing those ideas in their own words so as to make the piece sound nativelike.

These native writers are encouraged not simply to rewrite a sentence or two (as a conscientious teacher may do), but actually to rephrase the entire paper so that it reflects their style--their approach to expressing those ideas. This rephrasing or reformulating marks a departure from the best teacher edit of such a paper. It is important for the reformulator to stick relatively close to the original paper in ordering of ideas and in sentence structure so that learners will still feel that it is their paper--only now it has been reformulated. This feature is, in fact, a special

source of motivation in that non-native learners are usually curious to see how their piece has been dressed up to sound nativelike. It is in this same spirit that the reformulator is encouraged to select words, phrases, and grammatical structures that are appropriate to the writing situation without being overly erudite or obscure. Reformulation is intended to challenge their knowledge to some extent, but not excessively. The learners need no more than an average writer to do the reformulating, and do not want a writing sample that is too polished. The reformulator's purpose is, in fact, to shift the form of the message to a form that is more stylistically in keeping with the approach of the average writer, not that of a professional.

5. With the help of a tutor or on their own, learners then compare their original corrected version with the reformulated version. Learners are encouraged to do this in several steps. First, they compare selection of vocabulary, then choice and ordering of syntactic structures, and then the means of linking one idea with another cohesively. Let us look at what these step-by-step comparisons might consist of:

Selection of vocabulary: In comparing the choice of vocabulary words and phrases, learners are to pay attention to whether the native used more precise words, more concise phrases, more/less formal words, and collocations (i.e., which words can go with what other words). Frequently, the changes are slight, representing subtleties of vocabulary use. Sometimes, a tightening up of the

A READER COMMENTS

After my little piece about the ways we market our center here at Davis and Elkins College in the Writing Lab Newsletter (January, I think), several readers wrote and asked for more specific information. I appreciated that, thought it was positive that readers would actually follow up and not be satisfied with the articles alone. More evidence, I guess, that we Writing Labbers are a unique breed

Working on a Ph.D. in rhetoric and linguistics . . . , I am on the lookout for writing-center related topics which need further investigation. I'd be happy to hear any ideas anyone would want to pass along.

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WRITING LAB DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The Writing Lab Directory is a compilation of two-page questionnaires completed by writing lab directors. The questionnaire answers describe each lab's instructional staff, student population, types of instruction and materials, special programs, use of computers, and facilities.

Copies are obtainable for \$13.50 each, including postage. Prepaid orders only. Please make all checks payable to Purdue University and send them to Muriel Harris, Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

use of vocabulary may result in the possible removal of redundant or irrelevant material. Sometimes vocabulary associated with spoken language is replaced by that which is associated with formal written language.

Choice and ordering of syntactic structures: In comparing syntactic structures, learners check for whether the native altered, reordered, or replaced structures--clauses, sentences, or clusters of sentences. If so, they note what structures were used in place of them. It is possible to observe whether the native used more or less complex structures to convey the same meaning. Learners can also see the techniques natives use to avoid repeating the same structure over and over. Learners will see structures that they already know but have failed to use, as well as those that they do not know. By noting new grammatical patterns and imitating them in their own writing, they are likely to acquire them (Sanaoui 1984).

Cohesive links: In comparing markers of cohesion, learners are concerned with ways that the native writer linked together ideas--within and across sentences and paragraphs--to form a text. Such ties or connectors consist of grammatical forms such as conjunctions--either combining ideas together ("and"), contrasting them ("whereas"), showing one causes the other ("so"), or giving a time sequence ("then"), and referential pronouns--personal pronouns ("he," "it," "they," etc.) and demonstrative pronouns ("this," "that," "they," etc.). Such ties are also indicated by the use of vocabulary items--for example, by the repetition of the same noun, by the use of a synonym, or by the use of a more general or more specific word. For instance, after "voting" is introduced in a paper, it could be referred to by a pronoun ("it"), by the repetition of the same word ("voting"), by a synonym ("balloting"), by reference to the general event ("an election"), or by reference to a specific activity ("casting a ballot").

Discourse functions: In comparing discourse functions, the learners are looking for the native's approach to questioning, defining, hypothesizing, asserting, qualifying statements, and so forth. In other words, does the native writer use some other means for indicating the basic purpose of each section of text?

So what, then, is reformulation? It is basically a refinement. It is intended to complement the types of feedback that learners currently receive regarding their second-language writing. It is certainly not meant to replace them. In other words, it does not suffice as a diagnostic tool for determining areas of writing difficulty. It is simply a personalized way of receiving extensive, largely indirect feedback. The issue we are raising here is whether current forms of feedback are sufficient, or whether a further step such as reformulation is desirable, at least once or twice as a potentially diagnostic tool. How diagnostic the reformulation experience is will depend both on the quality of the reformulation (i.e., native but not overly elegant) and on the thoroughness of the comparison that the learners make between the original (with feedback incorporated) and the reformulation.

Furthermore, when nonnatives go about composing text, they often rely on forms which they feel confident with. In other words, they may avoid those forms that they either do not know or do not know well. When a teacher provides corrections, those corrections generally relate only to the language forms that the learners chose to use. Thus, these learners do not get feedback regarding alternative, possibly richer avenues for expressing their ideas. Reformulation is a means for providing this potentially enriching input. The challenge put to the reformulator is to provide a native version that is more or less within range of the nonnative writer, without it being at the expense of accurate communication.

Students' reactions to the technique have been generally favorable (Cohen 1983). Most have "liked it," thought it was "a good idea," "valuable." One even regretted not having used a system like this from the start of her studies. The main contention of students opposed to it is that one needs an advanced knowledge of vocabulary and grammar before this approach can be truly meaningful. For some the task is at first a little overwhelming. One student felt it was possible to get an inferiority complex from it. Another remarked, "It is more important for me to be understood than to be native-like." On the whole, students have found that feedback through reformulation is deeper than that usually obtained through

more conventional means. They have noted that in each instance the student is receiving an appropriate way to write what the student wanted to express, not just an indication that the student's way was wrong. One student commented that often from the limited teacher's corrections, learners would get the false impression that most of what they wrote was fine when it was not. Students see reformulation as contributing to style by demonstrating different ways of saying the same thing--by demonstrating the richness, variety, and subtleties of the language, using the student's own ideas.

An Example of Reformulation

Now let us look at an example, a four-sentence paragraph from an essay by a university EFL student:

One of the severe problems of the social life on campus is the problem of the relationship between Arabs and Jews. It is well known that the mixture of the two cultures causes tension between students, and it especially effects students who live in the dormitories of the university. In my opinion this problem would not have been so severe if unreliable sections from the Students Union did not deliberately wake students to act violently. I therefore suggest that an immediate change of the group which dominates the Students Union will be done by free elections on campus.

The student's instructor was a teacher of stylistics and thus paid special attention to such matters. Her corrections were as follows:

1. "social problems" for "problems of the social life."
2. "better structure than coordination?" (marginal comment in 2nd sentence).
3. problem with the word "effects."
4. "university dormitories" instead of "dormitories of the university."
5. "why a past idea 'would not have been'?" (marginal comment in 3rd sentence).
6. another word for "sections."
7. deleted the plural s in "Students Union" in both places it appeared.
8. comment about tense and choice of verb in "did not deliberately wake"--suggested "provoke."
9. spelling of "immediate."

10. Marginal comment, "Structure!" with regard to "will be done" in the last sentence--suggested "to make a change."

The student incorporated the teacher's corrections into a revised version, and the paragraph in question came out as follows:

One of the severe social problems on campus is the problem of the relationship between Arabs and Jews. It is well known that because of the mixture of the two cultures, tension exists between students, especially those who live in the university dormitories. In my opinion members of the Student Union provoked students and encouraged them to act violently, therefore I suggest that these members must be changed through free elections on campus.

We see that surface mistakes have now been cleaned up. There are no glaring verb tense errors, for example. But if we look closely, we notice several vocabulary problems--"the mixture of the two cultures," "these members must be changed." Also, the noun "problem" is repeated, rather than a demonstrative pronoun, in the first sentence, producing somewhat awkward cohesion in English.

The following is a reformulated version:

A serious social problem on the Hebrew University campus is that of relations between Arabs and Jews. It is well known that cultural and political differences between these groups lead to tension and conflict within the student population, especially among those living in the dormitories. In my opinion, members of the Student Union provoke violence among students. For this reason, I suggest that these members be replaced through new campus-wide elections.

We note that the awkward phrases have been replaced; "cultural and political differences between these groups" for "the mixture of the two cultures," and "I suggest that these members be replaced" for "these members must be changed." With regard to syntax, the second sentence is simplified by eliminating a further subordinate clause introduced by "because of" after "It is well known that . . ." The awkward repetition of the noun "problem" in the first sentence is avoided by use of the demonstrative pronoun "that"--"A serious social problem . . . is

that of . . ." Also, "for this reason" provides a more specific cohesive marker than "therefore," in the last sentence.

Discussion

It must be made clear that some if not many of these changes are matters for discussion. It is no longer a matter of correct or incorrect, but rather one of style. The very operation of comparing a nonnative and a native version stimulates such discussion, a healthy part of working towards mastery in writing a second language.

The technique of reformulation has much promise, although it is not free of problems. It is important to find a native reformulator who writes reasonably well. But even if the writer is only average, the learner is still getting a model of native-language input, which in itself is important. In learning how to say things correctly or appropriately in a second language, we frequently find ourselves turning for assistance to any native we are speaking to, regardless of whether the person is a qualified language teacher. In learning how to write, we could also utilize our native-speaker resources more fully by requesting reformulations of written work from natives around us--in our place of employment or in our neighborhood.

Perhaps a more crucial issue is that of assistance for learners who are unable to make a meaningful comparison between the two versions on their own. There is then a need to elicit the cooperation of either a writing lab tutor, classroom teacher, or another native who is capable of explaining differences. Very often natives cannot really explain why one form is more appropriate than another. They will simply say, "It sounds right."

There is also the issue of whether nonnative tutors or teachers can do a competent job of reformulating. It would probably depend on their language proficiency, especially regarding the subject matter being reformulated. In general, however, it might be expected that the average nonnative tutor or teacher will lack some of the stylistic subtleties of the language that the reformulation technique can tap. Thus, it would pay to find a native reformulator.

Notwithstanding potential problems, there is much to be gained from giving the technique a try. For one thing, there is an opportunity to obtain deeper feedback than in the simple correction of surface errors. The learner becomes exposed to new idioms and more varied ways of expressing ideas of relevance to the learner. The reformulation actually illustrates to learners an appropriate way to express in writing the ideas that they intended to express.

Andrew D. Cohen
The Hebrew University of
Jerusalem

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SYMPOSIUM ON INTELLECTUAL SKILLS AND WRITING CENTERS

A symposium on the role of writing center programs in students' intellectual skills development is scheduled as part of the fourth annual conference on intellectual skills development to be held October 24-25 at Western Michigan University.

Along with an opportunity to exchange ideas on program development, writing center directors and tutors can attend presenta-

tions and workshops on higher order thinking in content-area, writing, and reading courses; evaluation techniques; and developing tests and assignments.

Dr. Lynne McCauley, who heads Western's Intellectual Skills Development Program, is conference director. Dr. Eileen Evans, writing lab coordinator, will chair the symposium.

For further information and registration materials, write Dr. Lynne McCauley, ISDP, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008 or call (616) 383-8062.

The Tutor's Corner

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WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

A PEER TUTOR'S VIEWS ON THE GROUP TUTORIAL

Last semester Grand Valley State College employed thirty part-time peer writing tutors who provided weekly appointments for over 625 students. To meet this demand it was necessary to begin group tutoring two years ago, and this has been very successful. I think my success at group tutoring was due to my students, but in addition, I've discovered a few procedures that are of great help.

In the first meeting of group tutorials it is important to establish an environment where students can be relaxed. To do your job effectively you must provide an atmosphere wherein a client will feel no hesitation or reservation about having his or her work discussed and evaluated by the entire group, and also an atmosphere in which any question can be asked. Such an environment will serve to ease the tensions most tutees feel about revealing their writing problems. There are some simple tactics that can help create a relaxed atmosphere.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance. Group tutoring will not work without everyone's input--both in critiquing and being critiqued. If students feel that their paper is going to be the topic of discussion in the cafeteria by other group members and their friends, obviously they will be reluctant to have their work critiqued. They will be equally reluctant to ask questions. It is therefore the tutors' responsibility not only to keep the discussion confidential themselves, but to stress this point to the group members until it goes without saying. There is one exception to that rule. When you have a problem or question you can't deal with, you will have to discuss it with someone like your supervisor, other tutors, or the class professor, because after all it's your responsibility to get answers and solve problems.

Another aspect of group tutoring is each member's involvement in the group. There are two important reasons for this: the first is the student's opportunity to learn. If clients don't become actively involved, their chances for getting the most out of each session drop considerably. Therefore, if students are to be helped, the tutor must get each of them to participate with the group as a whole. It's all too easy to let a reluctant tutee drop by the wayside. In-

volvement is also crucial when considering the group's "health" as a whole. Someone's unwillingness to participate can often affect the attitude of others in the group. Other members might feel they shouldn't subject their work to hard or embarrassing criticism when someone else is unwilling to take the same risk. These factors can combine to shut down the group's line of communication altogether. Everyone's involvement (tutor included) is essential to the group's learning process, and to the attitude of its members.

Insuring involvement in a group can be accomplished by several techniques. One of the best approaches is the group critique. By this I mean having each student read the paper we are working on or discussing and then having it discussed by the entire group. Each member should listen carefully, be encouraged to take notes, be given time to evaluate the material, and finally be asked to make comments. Group members should be coached to give constructive, but honest criticisms, which usually isn't a problem because each member will go through the same process. Ideally, this approach works to get the whole group involved and also adds significantly to the amount of help the writer receives. Often ideas that otherwise might have been overlooked will be brought up by a member of the group. This technique also aids the writer by getting things suggested in a short time, and time is always at a premium in group tutorials. It is the tutor's responsibility to make sure all points are covered, and the tutor must speak up when others hold back for whatever reason.

One drawback to this approach is that often there isn't time to get to everyone's paper. In that case be sure not to go back to the same person each week for two reasons: first, you don't want the student to feel picked on and second, you want to insure everyone the opportunity to have their papers critiqued.

Despite your efforts some clients cannot function in the group situation. This becomes a real problem not only because the client will get little or nothing from the session, but also because it may hamper the progress of others as well. If you feel that the client simply can't adjust to the

group, then it's probably best that the tutor arrange an individual session for such a student.

At first the validity of a group tutoring session might meet with skepticism from tutors and writing center coordinators; however, it seems to me that whether it is successful often depends on the members of the group itself. There are definitely positive sides to the concept of group tutoring, not the least of which is that it allows us to serve a large number of people. While there may be less time spent with each individual, at least a very constructive effort is put forth. The biggest advantage from my perspective is that groups offer clients feedback from several people rather than just one, and this provides more opinions and more ideas in general.

Group tutoring is still relatively new at Grand Valley, but already we've seen its value in providing our service to as many students as possible. While group tutoring deviates from the traditional one-to-one approach in peer learning, it is still the same basic idea. Though circumstances, strategies, and goals may have to be modified, the ultimate end is still helping clients solve writing problems.

Dan Dillingham
Grand Valley State College

SHOPPING: PEER TUTORS AS CANTALOUPE

At the Kroger, a week or two ago, the first melons of the summer were pyramidded in a sales display, all of them looking very similar and enticing, innocence on the outside hiding secrets on the inside. Yeah, sure, a couple had flat sides and one was particularly ugly and green-tinged, but they were a similar lot. And I was struck with how much they reminded me of my tutoring troop (some of whom have flat sides and, occasionally, green tinges around their eyes).

While I was standing there, examining one cantaloupe, wondering if it looked more like Kathy or Alan, not deciding since it had neither freckles nor a mustache, I noticed a Cadillac woman sneaking up on the pile of lopes (as they're known in these parts). She picked several up, one at a time, very systematically, shaking them three times,

twice up and once down always holding one in her left hand on temporary approval while her right ear auditioned the next possibility. Then a gray-flannel man came along and started rapping on the melons, holding his mouth in a little O as he did. And an older, aunt lady on the other side was pushing on the ends of a cantaloupe with her thumbs while her younger friend weighed the melons on the hanging (for estimate only) scale.

So there I was, in the Kroger produce, Kathy/Alan in my hand, surrounded by shakers and thumpers and squeezers, when I remembered Betty Neumann asking in the Writing Lab Newsletter (June 1985), "How do two-year colleges identify qualified peer tutors?" and I started laughing. The parallels were too obvious; no matter how much you might shake and squeeze and knock, sometimes you get the melon home and discover it's a lemon.

The thumping and bumping and mushing doesn't matter, of course; it's only the flavor of the inside that matters. I think that's an important concept to remember when selecting peer tutors.

And how do you tell who is going to be a good tutor by looking at the outside? You begin by identifying the traits you think she should have on the inside.

First, I think, is compassion. A tutor must care, must be sensitive to others, must be sensitive to herself. Compassion is the highest order concern. I try to get a feel for a potential tutor's compassion by watching and listening. Does she say things to put people at ease? Can she wrap the negative in a positive cloak? An interview can go a long way toward identifying these traits, but they are most easily seen from a more distant perspective, by observing the way the applicant interacts with peers.

Related to compassion and nearly as important is conscientiousness. A tutor needs to be dependable; her work need not be perfect, but it should always be the best she can possibly do. She must not only be aware of her strengths as a student and a person, but aware of her weaknesses as well. I check class attendance records for a potential tutor. I check the appearance of her work. I watch for simple courtesies.

While good writing skills are a plus, good reading skills are a necessity. A

tutor must be able to read quickly and confidently, to pick up the major points of a piece and to weigh the effectiveness of the presentation and supporting ideas. Does the applicant shy away from courses with heavy reading loads? Must she read slowly and recursively? These are not good attributes for a tutor.

When I interview a potential tutor, I check for reading skills by asking her to read a short piece about the writing center. While she reads it, though, I ask her questions about herself, about her course load, about her writing attitudes. Can she read and talk and listen simultaneously? I like tutors who can; a long silence while a tutor digests an essay is an uncomfortable time for a writer.

A tutor needs to be receptive to other ideas and to other ways of looking at the same idea. Will she let me help her be a better tutor? Will she perceive a writer's work in the way the writer wants it to be perceived rather than in the way she would write it herself? Is she aware that there are many better alternatives in writing, but few completely right answers?

Most of the work my tutors do involves responding to the structure of a paper. They can be taught about high order concerns using Tom Reigstad and Don McAndrew's Training Tutors for Writing Conferences (Urbana: NCTE, 1984). When tutors need to teach mechanics, to know low order concerns, I can show them what they need to know, when they need to know it.

With the right combination of personality and basic skills any student can be trained to become an excellent tutor. But an excellent writer who is a social cripple cannot succeed in a writing center. I can teach tutoring; I cannot teach humanity.

By looking closely enough, by looking carefully, I think I can find a good tutor without rapping her on the head, without shaking her, and without squeezing and weighing.

For cantaloupes, though, I'm not quite so sure.

Kevin Davis
Davis & Elkins College

PUBLISHER'S QUERY

The Regents/ALA Company is asking for input from remedial writing teachers on the features that should be included in a three level computer-assisted writing program using a word processor and practice exercises.

The publisher currently offers Grammar Mastery and Vocabulary Mastery for teaching ESL and remedial language arts students. It will introduce Reading Mastery this winter for ESL and remedial reading programs. To round out this product line, the company will create Writing Mastery for introduction at the end of 1986.

Some of the features that will likely be included are process writing exercises, sentence combining at various levels, punctuation, and identifying and creating topic sentences. If you have any suggestions for more types of exercises, or if you have creative ideas on how to present those listed, the Regents/ALA Company would like to hear from you.

Write to:

David A. Tillyer
General Manager
The Regents/ALA Company
Two Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Specific questions he would like answers for are:

- Is peer editing useful?
- Is it necessary to begin with keyboarding (typing) practice?
- Should students have their own data disks?
- What kind of record-keeping is most useful?
- Is the process method efficient for students with writing problems?
- What is the best way to approach style questions with a word processor?

(Editor's note: The Regents/ALA Company's program entitled Grammar Mastery is reviewed in this issue of the newsletter.)

 Review: Grammar Mastery, Series A

Grammar Mastery is a software series which presents the fundamentals of English grammar for ESL students. It is suitable for mid-elementary to mid-intermediate students capable of reading simple English. There are three series, A, B, and C. Series A is divided into six sections, each of which has six to seven lessons: 1) verbs, primarily be, in the simple present and present continuous and with negatives; 2) nouns and pronouns; 3) regular and irregular past tense verbs; 4) yes/no and wh- questions; 5) prepositions and two-word verbs; 6) adjectives and adverbs. In preparing this review, I worked through selected lessons in sections (1)-(5).

Each disk begins with the lesson menu for the section, from which the student chooses a lesson. After "Are you sure?" appears on the screen and the student types Y(es), a rather startling wail sounds and the lesson begins. Each is structured in the same way: 1) instruction, 2) discrete-point exercises, accompanied by the student's cumulative score; 3) review exercises, which are the items in the exercises, that the student missed also accompanied by a score; 4) the student's final score for the review exercises and her "official" score for the exercises. At the end of each lesson, the menu reappears, permitting the student to either go to another lesson, choose another subject, or stop.

Despite some weaknesses, which I will mention below, I was favorably impressed by the program. Its pedagogy is sound and at times innovative. It can be conveniently assessed under three headings: 1) instructional presentation, 2) exercises and feedback, and 3) student control.

As noted above, the lessons are written simply: the sentences are of moderate length and the vocabulary easy, except of course for the parts of speech, knowledge of which is presupposed. Teaching points are carefully segmented so that ordinarily only one appears on the screen at a time. The simplicity of the lessons is advantageous and necessary, given the level of students for which the program has been designed, but it has the drawback of discouraging the inclusion of useful generalizations; at least, the drive for simplicity plausibly explains certain omissions.

For example, the several spatial and

temporal meanings of the prepositions in, at, on are simply listed for each one. The systemic relationships among them--i. e., the fact that in their primary spatial senses they correspond to point, surface, and volume, respectively, and that their directional counterparts to, on(to), and in(to) do the same--go unexplained. (For an appreciation of the complex interrelations among prepositions, consult Quirk et al. 1972.) Another problem springing from simplification concerns the present continuous aspect. Its meaning is not explicitly defined; students are left to infer it from a sentence in a brief dialog in the examples. An inductive approach like this seems to equate meaning and use. But the meaning of the present continuous is not context-dependent, since it remains the same whether it fits its context or not, while its appropriate use obviously is. Thus descriptive rules might be called for in each of these cases.

Where rules are given, the simplifications are sometimes very useful. I liked the reduction of the paradigm for present tense be to three forms--am with first singular, is with third singular, and are everywhere else. The only incontestably incorrect rule I noted was, "Add contractions only to pronouns, not to nouns": John's ill and many others disconfirm it.

Perhaps the most original feature of the instruction is its use of mobile words to illustrate grammatical points. Here is a conspicuous advantage of the computer screen over printed materials. The directional meaning of to is exemplified iconically: the prepositional phrase to South America appears and then the subject and verb John went approach it. Subject-auxiliary inversion in questions and particle shift with two-word verbs are presented dynamically as the moved words are pulled up and jump over the subject or object. Spelling changes with -ing--dropping -e and doubling consonants--are illustrated in a similar fashion.

The exercises for each lesson are the kind one would find in a textbook. Most are fill-in the blank; those for two-part verbs are multiple choice. Students are given two or three tries, after which the correct answer flashes. Plenty of opportunity is given for review. If the student misses the review items, she can practice further with new ones. Particularly helpful are dialogs for the present continuous and for two-word

verbs, which encourage selecting grammar and vocabulary with reference to contextual cues.

Perhaps the most critical part of a grammar program is its feedback. The extent to which it can imitate the responses of an instructor, especially a tutor, determines to a large extent whether it is any more effective than programmed instruction or exercises with an answer key. Whenever the student types in an answer, she receives either positive feedback or an error message. The confirmation messages are thus frequent; they are also varied and adapted to the learner's progress. If, for instance, the student misses an exercise on the first try but gets it correct on the second, the second message might be, "That's much better, Mark."

Most of the error messages attempt to explain errors by repeating the teaching point which the student has incorrectly used, pointing out its inapplicability to the correct choice. The compact statement of rules is very helpful in this process, but their lack of generality proved a disadvantage in the small minority of cases in which the reason an answer was wrong cannot be explained in a few words. In these cases the message is some variant of "No, the answer isn't correct here. Try again," obviously much less helpful. This message is given with an idiosyncratic use of on, with the use of the present continuous, and with some two-word idioms such as look up.

There are missed opportunities, too. In the lesson on subject-auxiliary inversion in questions, I deliberately failed to invert, typing We are in the first group? instead of Are we in the first group? The message that came up was, "Choose a verb in the box," which contained a list of modals. This is the same message I would have received if I had inverted the subject and the auxiliary but chosen a modal not listed, say, might, or misspelled one on the list. To offer the same message for typographic mistakes, semantic incongruity, and failure to invert constituents may inadvertently teach the student a spurious generalization. An equally puzzling omission occurs in the choice between pick it up and clean it up in answer to There's milk all over the floor. The first answer is merely declared incorrect. The fact that pick it up occurs only with count nouns, whereas clean it up typically occurs with noncount nouns, is not

mentioned, even though this could be done briefly, since the count/noncount distinction is covered on a previous disk. Happily, such oversights are exceptional.

The important place accorded to feedback in the Grammar Mastery program not only helps the learner learn without a tutor; it also grants him considerable control over the sequence, pace, and depth of his learning. The student can choose whether or not to go through the instruction before the exercises, escape at any point to review a grammatical rule, repeat the instruction if his score is low, postpone trying items missed more than once, and stop if the exercises seem too hard based on the cumulative score. This transfer of control to the student is one of the best features of the program.

To sum up, Grammar Mastery A would be a valuable acquisition for an ESL program, in particular one that, like ours, requires of its student extensive self-instructional work. Each disk costs \$39.95, and the cost of the series is \$195, plus \$9.95 for a start-up disk. The programs can be ordered from the Regents/ALA Company, Two Park Ave., New York, NY, 10016.

Mark Le Tourneau
Purdue University

Grammar Mastery: A Software Review

The Grammar Mastery software series from Regents/ALA is an excellent example of the potential contribution of CAI to both Writing Labs and ESL programs. Designed for use on Apple IIe, Apple II, and Apple II computers, Grammar Mastery is based on "persistent problems experienced by ESL students." It instructs, drills, tests, and even plays games with each user at his/her own pace. The material in the series is intelligently sequenced and carefully graded. Each unit in each of the three series is a self-contained stage in an integrated sequence of language skills. Furthermore, Grammar Mastery is definitely user friendly. Even first time users will require no more than a few minutes of instruction from a knowledgeable teacher, tutor, or fellow student. If human help is unavailable, the introductory booklet provides step-by-step instructions. Once the General Start-Up diskette has been initiated, the program provides clear instruc-

tions for its own use. (I had never touched a computer, even in passing, before I sat down to review this series.)

The promotional brochure and the introductory booklets that accompany each series of diskettes point out that they are "independent of any specific textbook," and suggest a number of ways in which Grammar Mastery might be used: "CAI as a Required Component of an ESL Curriculum," "CAI as Individual Assignments," and "CAI as a Student Resource." The promotional claim that Grammar Mastery "may be used as the basis of a complete ESL/EFL course" is a bit optimistic, but as supplemental material this series is unsurpassed.

The following discussion covers Grammar Mastery, Series B--Low Intermediate by Laura E. Savely and David H. Wyatt and Series C--Intermediate by Nancy E. Post and David H. Wyatt. (A detailed analysis of Grammar Mastery, Series A--Beginning may be found in the review by Mark LeTourneau, also in this issue of the newsletter.) After reviewing the contents of the individual lessons, I will offer an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the series as a whole.

The first diskette in Series B covers yes-no questions in five exercises of ten questions each. The student practices forming both questions and answers, manipulating auxiliaries, pronouns, and main verbs in the present, simple past, and future (with "will") tenses. The explanation of modal auxiliaries in the second diskette is clear and concise. Exercises E and F on logical conclusions are especially good. Exercise E asks the student to read ten short dialogues and then select the phrase that forms a logical conclusion. In exercise F ten brief paragraphs are presented, and the student selects the sentence with "must" that represents the logical conclusion to what he/she has just read.

Diskette B-3 covers expressions of quantity, contrasting "all" and "whole," "how much" and "how many," "other(s)," "another," and "the other(s)," and "both," "neither," "all," and "none." The introductions to exercise C through E are well done, and the explanation of compounds with "some," "any," and "no" (exercise C) is especially incisive.

Pronouns are reviewed in the first three exercises of the fourth diskette in Series B. The last two exercises on the diskette

introduce the student to relative clauses. The introduction to relative clauses "explains how to recognize relative clauses and how to use the relative pronouns." Exercise E (the last exercise) is based on sentence combining.

Diskettes B-5 and B-6 cover comparatives and superlatives and the present perfect tense. B-5 reviews the spelling rules for comparative and superlative adverbs and adjectives and allows students to complete paragraphs with an appropriate comparative (exercise B) or superlative (exercise E) phrase. Comparatives of equality are also covered in this lesson. The introduction to the present perfect divides irregular verbs into four groups: "participles with -wn; those like the past but with -en; those with a vowel change and -en; and some exceptions." The division is eminently sensible and should serve as an aid to student memory. This introduction is followed by three exercises of increasing difficulty. Of the remaining exercises on this diskette, that drilling the use of "for" and "since" with the present perfect and that demonstrating when to use the present perfect, are especially valuable.

Series C is labeled "Intermediate" but would be appropriate for use in our most advanced ESL composition course at Purdue. The series begins with the past perfect. The pretest on past participles for the past perfect lesson is designed as a game against the computer. It is both an outstanding learning strategy and simply fun. As a first time user, I got caught up in the game and found the necessity of typing in an incorrect answer for the purpose of review positively painful. The explanation of the relationship between the past and the past perfect is very good. I was less satisfied with the presentation of that between the past perfect and the present perfect.

The second diskette covers the information and use of past modals. It begins with a review of present modals, introduces past modals, gives the student twenty sentences for practice (multiple choice among four possible present and past modals), and concludes with a test on present and past modals. ("Example: I didn't see John at all yesterday. He _____ studying hard. ["past" probability]"). Lesson C-3 on the passive is especially good. The first two exercises take the student through recognizing and forming the passive. Exercise C gives instruction and practice in forming

passives in tenses other than the present. The discussion of transitive verbs in this lesson is excellent. The graphics reinforce the concept of transitive in a particularly vivid way that should clarify the term for students and once again emphasizes the special value of CAI for teachers.

The last exercise on this diskette is designed as another game against the computer, much more elaborately programmed than the simple competition for points in exercise A of lesson C-1. This time the temptation to win was overwhelming, and the computer acknowledged that I was "pretty smart for a human."

The fourth diskette reviews noun clauses and introduces verbs and phrases frequently followed by noun clauses. Exercise A covers noun clauses with WH-words, and exercise B gives the student practice transforming questions into noun clauses. The other exercises in the lesson deal with the various types and uses of "that" clauses.

Conditional sentences are presented in lesson C-5. The introduction is lucid, and the final test tells students which exercises to review on the basis of their incorrect answers. The intervening exercises, covering "real" conditions, present/future hypothetical conditions, and past hypothetical conditions, are well designed and graded and quite challenging.

The last unit in Series C is on infinitives and gerunds. Having recently struggled through a unit on infinitives and gerunds in my ESL grammar class, I was impressed with the explanations, examples, and exercises in this lesson. The first exercise reviews adjectives frequently followed by an infinitive. Exercise B reviews the verbs that usually require an infinitive, those that need a gerund, and those that can take either form. The last exercise allows students to practice creating sentences with verbs that take an object followed by a gerund, infinitive, or the simple form of a verb.

This brief outline of the specific points covered in Grammar Mastery, Series B and C is only partially indicative of the series' potential value as remedial/supplemental/enrichment courseware. My quibbles with Grammar Mastery are trivial. For adult students, the programmed responses to correct answers sometimes border on the ridiculous: "You're brilliant," "You're a bright light."

The sound effects that accompany successful completion of an exercise or a test are also somewhat distracting, but these can be changed by the Teacher's Management Program. My second objection is, or was, not to Grammar Mastery in particular but to CAI in general. Interactive as the program is, it still allows students to remain silent. However, when I voiced this objection to a member of the Writing Lab staff, she pointed out to me that working with Grammar Mastery might help to give students the confidence they need to talk more readily with a tutor. The only other disadvantage I perceive in the Grammar Mastery series from Regents/ALA is really a compliment: it is so good that it should be much longer.

Many of the advantages of this software have already been touched upon: it is flexible, interactive, individualized, and beautifully sequenced and integrated. It can be used with a General Start-Up diskette or a Personal Start-Up diskette that allows the teacher to keep a permanent record of students' scores. The series would be an invaluable asset to any Writing Lab or CAI center that serves ESL students whether the software is used as a required part of an ESL class or as an individual student resource.

The cost of one complete Grammar Mastery Series (A, B, or C) is \$195.00. These programs may also be purchased as individual lesson diskettes at a cost of \$39.95 each. For further information or to order, write The Regents/ALA Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

Elizabeth Boyd Jordan
Director, ESL Program
Purdue University

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY'S WRITING LAB

Now in its twelfth year, Western Michigan University's Writing Lab is one of ten programs in the Academic Skills Center, a component of the Intellectual Skills Development Program, which reports to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Approximately twenty tutors, most of whom are undergraduates, come from across the curriculum to provide one-to-one tutoring, helping students revise papers. Because the

lab serves all 17,000 enrolled students as well as university staff, tutors work with all kinds and levels of writing. Last year approximately 660 people received tutoring.

Tutors are recruited from faculty recommendations, tutors' suggestions, and work-study advertisements. Screening includes a required 3.0 minimum GPA, two letters of faculty recommendation, two papers written for class, a completed application form, an interview with the coordinator, and a tutoring aptitude exam one-fourth of which is an impromptu writing. Tutors earn \$3.52 an hour the first year, \$3.63 thereafter, and attend five training sessions a semester.

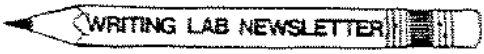
In addition to supervising tutoring, the coordinator also directs the International Student Communication program (ESL conversation and writing classes); serves as liaison between the Intellectual Skills Development Program and the Writing Across the Curriculum faculty; and integrates services with classes--Methods of Inquiry and Direct Encounter with the Arts to name two. Further, she administers the writing-lab component of the Martin Luther King, Jr. program and a program to provide tutoring leading to the removal of "Incomplete"

grades assigned for academic reasons in two basic writing courses, one in English and the other in Business Information Systems.

The coordinator also supervises FOCUS, a first-reading service for faculty; workshops on editing skills; the student-editor of the monthly Academic Skills Center's newsletter; and more than a dozen weekend workshops (GRE/GMAT preparation and how to succeed in college for high school and nontraditional students). During summer sessions, tutoring in spelling and vocabulary becomes a part of the lab's offerings in order to accommodate students who seek those programs, which are regularly offered as Academic Skills Center programs during fall and winter semesters. The coordinator holds a twelve-month professional/administrative appointment.

Visitors are always welcome. Copies of the newsletter are available upon request.

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WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

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