THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

April in many of our writing labs is that interval between recuperating from Spring Break and winding down for the end of the year. It's also the time when students, beginning to panic about final grades, straggle in to the lab seeking the kind of band-aid help we know isn't useful. One member of our newsletter group, noting this phenomenon in his lab, pleads for help: "What do we do--or can we do--with first-timers who should have been here in September?"

What's your perspective on this problem? Do you have any solutions or advice? Let's hear from you. And, of course, keep sending in your articles, announcements, reviews, comments, names of new members, and those much-appreciated $5 donations (in checks made payable to Purdue University but sent to me) to:

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THE WRITING CENTER: BUSINESS OR THERAPY?

Writing centers (clinics, labs), increasingly common in American universities and colleges, might be expected to resemble each other at least as much as university health centers do. In fact, with such terminology as clinic or lab, writing centers might be expected to resemble health centers! In both these facilities, the student makes an appointment, appears, receives a diagnosis, is offered a remedy, and presumably is cured. The client suffers no more wordiness after his visit to the lab just as he suffers no more bacterial infection after his visit to the health center.

Writing centers differ surprisingly, however. A scientific, no-nonsense, business-like approach is characteristic of some writing centers. This kind of management approach will stress recordkeeping, card files, budgets, facilities, evaluation, scheduling, audio-visual and computer-assisted instruction. The writing center becomes a business, as it can be argued that all higher education (and all health care) is a business. The center will need to show that it is cost-effective, that the money spent can be demonstrated to affect performance. Records will proliferate; staff will become more and more concerned with management of records. More personnel will be needed to keep the records. More meetings will be needed to keep personnel in touch with each other. Periodic reports will become necessary. Budget will increase to handle salaries and equipment, such as files, phones, paper, copiers, typewriters, even computers. To decrease ever-increasing expenditures, paraprofessionals may be hired to tutor students. A hierarchy will develop with top management representing the organization, attending outside meetings, speaking for the organization.

Another kind of writing center is the humane center, with less science and more art as philosophy. It can offer a personal response of one human being with specialized knowledge of writing to another with problems in writing. Equipment can be as little as a phone, a file cabinet for exercises, a table, some chairs, some handbooks, and some paper and pencils. Records can be minimal--an appointment book, names of students on cards with reasons for coming. Less concern with accountability (one of the buzz words of our time), less recordkeeping, less evaluation, fewer pieces of equipment, less (or no) secretarial aid, fewer diagnostic tools, a smaller budget, and fewer meetings can allow the writing center to become a kind of counseling center for writers.

Personnel in such a center are only those who tutor students--individually, of course. Budget is largely for salaries for tutors, always well-trained faculty members who teach writing. Most paraprofessionals do

not have the required skills. Tutors need familiarity with grammar and usage, a knowledge of literature, writing facility, and the ability to empathize with students. This last quality is almost as important as the knowledge of the material because the student must trust the tutor enough to reveal his problems. If he does not feel acceptance from the tutor, he will be reluctant to mention his shortcomings.

The only business of such an establishment is to respond to need. Perhaps the student never understood the semicolon and wants a lesson. But more often he wants more extensive therapy. He has a paper for a literature class; he does not even understand the sonnet he is to write about. He is anxious. The tutor will have to guide him through the poem first, then discuss his written response. Such a venture may require an hour session--or several. Assuming the student is not seriously deficient or dyslexic, no testing or diagnostic approach is necessary, just appropriate counsel.

A serious concern, requiring professional judgment, is how much help is appropriate. Obviously no writing center tutor should proofread papers. He can give some broad hints that the spelling in the paper is poor or that the student needs to review comma usage, perhaps supplying materials to help here. But it is best for the student to tell the tutor his problem. "I can never write a good first paragraph. What do you think of this one?" The paper should remain the student's, regardless of its flaws. No doubt the tutor could write a better one, but the student would learn nothing.

At a school where teachers refer students to writing centers, the problem sometimes arises of how much the tutor should tell the teacher about the client. Occasionally, teachers want records of attendance, charts of what was covered, and records of progress made. Tutors, always peacemakers and facilitators, should comply, without sacrificing the confidentiality of their relationship with the client.

If all this begins to sound like a sacred rite, it is actually. The tutor often hears from the student how bad the teacher is, how inconsiderate, how difficult to understand. From the teacher he may hear the same of the student. If he is wise, he keeps all this to himself. He is acting as go-between and confessor, and both sides trust him. He must earn this trust.

Clearly, it is difficult to become a good writing center tutor. Paraprofessionals will not serve. Even some professionals would never do well--or want to! Besides intelligence, ability to empathize, and integrity, patience is required. Repeating the same material hour after hour can be dull, but what always enlivens the process is the individual asking for help.

The sensitivity of human beings to each other is the proper business of a writing center. No one would argue that appointment books or phones or files of exercises aren't useful. But when the recordkeeping and business operations of a writing center exceed the teaching function in importance-- as they do in some cases--then it is necessary to reconsider purpose.

If there is an analogy between health centers and writing centers, the writing center serves the psychological function of the health center. Not that writing center students are deranged--though their writing often is--but that they have come in for an intimate kind of help from a caring professional.

Virginia White Oram
Southern Methodist
University

. . . I think best with a pencil in my hand . . .

Anne Morrow Lindberg

THE WRITING INSTRUCTOR is a journal for composition teachers and tutors looking for practical and tested methods of implementing composition theory in the classroom.

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WRITING CENTER ASSISTANCE TO
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Problems in the writing of students at East Carolina University are, in most ways, similar to problems in student writing confronted by faculty at many other state-supported postsecondary institutions across the country. Statistical as well as informal reports show that many students, upon graduating from college, are only slightly better prepared to perform the writing tasks required of them on the job than they were upon entering college. Attempts have been made to help students become better writers. In fact, large amounts of money have been spent on writing-across-the-curriculum programs, junior-level writing courses taught by English departments, and writing courses taught by faculty in the content areas in the hope of producing graduates who can perform fundamental writing tasks in their chosen fields. Unfortunately, the results of such programs have been disappointing: writing improvements made by students in their freshman-level composition courses have been neutralized by the general inactivity of student-writers during their next three years, junior-level writing courses taught by English departments have asked teachers to teach content-specific writing skills they do not possess themselves, writing skills in content-area courses are taught by teachers who have little if any training in the teaching of writing, and writing-across-the-curriculum programs of national prominence have had but limited success in maintaining faculty involvement.

We have noted that these problems exist in programs at many universities across the country and have studied, as well, the solutions offered since we know, for instance, that at East Carolina, as at other institutions, low achievement at the end of the college curriculum parallels low achievement at the beginning: In fall 1984, approximately 40% of incoming freshmen at ECU (963 students) wrote placement essays demonstrating less than minimal competency. Because 56% of these low achievers come from schools in eastern North Carolina, the secondary writing curriculum in this region is of special concern to East Carolina University as well as what goes on during a student's four years of college. If programs of national significance have not succeeded in substantially improving student writing by increasing the amount and kinds of writing tasks performed during their four years of college, what can we do to provide a solution to poor student writing specifically in eastern North Carolina?

Based on the successes and failures of programs elsewhere, we have designed a three-stage program to be discussed briefly here. The program includes (1) the creation of a campus-wide Writing Center, (2) the establishment of a university-wide Writing Center Steering Committee, and (3) the development of a writing-across-the-curriculum program suited to the needs of East Carolina University students and replicable at secondary and postsecondary institutions with similar student populations.

Stages One and Two

The first two phases of this program have already been completed. In 1983, ECU established its Writing Center which has served through its various programs nearly 7,000 students (by head count) each year out of ECU's 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The Center assists in the teaching of writing to all students by testing incoming freshmen for minimal competencies and offering assistance to those whose deficiencies may cause them difficulty in freshman composition, by offering a referral program through which teachers in all university departments can require their students to seek tutorial assistance in writing, and by giving support to research in the kinds of writing required of students in various disciplines and professions. Additionally, the Director of the Writing Center has spoken formally and informally to various departments in the university on the uses of writing for purposes of learning and has worked intensively with several departments in designing writing assignments to better prepare students for the writing tasks they must perform in the world of work. Thus, there is considerable concern with and commitment to writing at East Carolina University.

In fact, when soliciting faculty for the eighteen-member Writing Center Steering Committee, whose goal is to solidify the Writing Center as the mechanism for establishing writing across the curriculum

at East Carolina University, the Writing Center director received 104 applications. This past year, representatives from each discipline met once each month to focus their attention on issues of major importance to the university, including how to design a writing-across-the-curriculum program at East Carolina and nearby secondary schools and how to assure that each department in the university contributes to the Writing Center's usefulness and success.

Because an eighteen-member committee is sometimes hard to work with, the members have decided to create three subcommittees, each charged with meeting independently and then reporting to the full committee. One committee focuses its attention on governance, operations, and finance, evaluating the way the Writing Center is run, how it is funded, and the possibilities for obtaining outside funding to run a writing-across-the-curriculum program on campus and in the community. A second committee focuses its energies on publicity and outreach, making certain all faculty members know that the Center exists; that it offers free service to all university students, faculty, and staff; and that the Writing Center staff as well as its Steering Committee members are available to give instruction to and provide support for teachers actively using writing not only to evaluate students, but as a mode of learning, in their classrooms. The third committee, Evaluations and Research, takes as its initial responsibility a survey of all disciplines to determine how much writing goes on in the university, what kind of writing takes place, and how that writing is taught and used in the content areas.

We believe this three-stage design will help us overcome some of the obstacles that have caused problems in those nationally recognized writing-across-the-curriculum programs that have operated for the past five to seven years and have long since been evaluated. As Toby Fulwiler, former director of the Michigan Tech program, has written: ". . . ideas that seemed bright and shiny in the workshop light have dimmed considerably after a year or two . . . due to increased teaching loads, large classes, administrative responsibilities, lack of collegial support, pressures to research, publish, write grants, and the like" (119). At East Carolina, we have studied the existing programs in an attempt to answer two questions pertinent to stage three of our program: What are the weaknesses of existing

writing-across-the-curriculum programs? And what changes must be made to improve upon these programs?

Stage Three

From all available reports, it is clear that fundamental flaws exist in the design of writing projects across the country, lessening the impact of those projects. The most glaring indication of these flaws is the high rate of attrition and apathy among participants once teachers return to their schools or departments to disseminate information to their colleagues and make use of writing in their own classes.

Attrition comes about for two reasons. First, according to a formal survey done by the Virginia Community College System Writing Project and informal reports from the writing-across-the-curriculum program at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, attrition occurs because fellows have not been prepared to disseminate information, and because in some cases they simply retreat from the program when forced to make a choice between teaching methods advocated by their colleagues at work and strategies espoused by the project. Second, attrition occurs, according to Fulwiler, because existant programs have not built in a method for rewarding faculty who incorporate writing into their classes. In fact, teaching is so devalued at some institutions that faculty are more apt to concentrate on publication and departmental service-- visible factors in attaining tenure and promotion--than on improving teaching.

At East Carolina, in designing a program for writing across the curriculum, we have focused much of our attention on attrition since it is only through continued faculty interest that a program in writing can affect student writing in any lasting way. We have attended most forcefully to three methods for controlling attrition.

First, we believe it is important to include as active members of a writing-across-the-curriculum program supervisors, principals, and department chairs. The Steering Committee includes several department chairs and the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs as well as a wide range of teaching faculty. By designing the committee in this way, we can counter the tendency among other programs to systematically

exempt supervisors, principals, and department chairs from workshops and dissemination programs. In the next three years we will seek faculty from local high schools to work with university faculty in developing a region-wide writing-across-the-curriculum program, seeking as well the involvement of administrators.

Second, we believe that many faculty who have left writing-across-the-curriculum programs have done so because they suffer high levels of writing apprehension. Daly and Miller have demonstrated that apprehensive students select courses, teachers, and even careers to avoid writing. It seems reasonable to assume that if many teachers in areas other than writing have chosen their areas to avoid writing, then one of the problems to confront and remedy in other writing-across-the-curriculum programs is writing apprehension. In fact, in the next two years we hope to test our hypothesis that 60% or more of our content-area faculty are apprehensive about writing, and that this percentage can be brought down to 10 or 15% through a series of writing apprehension workshops of the sort currently run in the Writing Center for our students.

Third, as Fulwiler has pointed out, most programs in writing across the curriculum have not built in a system of rewards--such as merit pay, improved evaluation of teaching, released time to implement writing strategies in the teaching of a particular subject--sufficient to encourage and sustain faculty participation into the future. In fact, it might be argued that other programs have not received enough administrative support to encourage continued faculty participation. We believe that unless participation in our writing-across-the-curriculum program is viewed each year for purposes of promotion, tenure, and merit the way university faculty and supervisors traditionally view publication in a refereed journal, our writing-across-the-curriculum adventure will suffer in the same ways other programs have, primarily through attrition. We have been fortunate enough to receive administrative support for "a system of rewards for teachers who use writing for purposes of learning in their classes."

The East Carolina University program promotes the institutionalization of the Writing Center as the mechanism for promoting writing across the curriculum in an environment where improved teaching by the various uses of writing in the classroom is rewarded. Only through the system of rewards we plan to institutionalize at East Carolina University and in local school systems can writing across the curriculum satisfactorily meet the expectations and hopes we all hold for it as the means for improving the writing of our graduates.

Patrick Bizzaro
East Carolina University

WORK CITED

Toby Fulwiler, "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work?" College English 42 (1984): 113-25.

Training the New Teacher of College Composition, Ed. Charles Bridges. NCTE: Urbana, IL, 1986. #55057. $13 ($10 for NCTE members).

In this collection of fourteen articles, rhetoricians and writing program directors explain how they prepare new teachers of writing and share their advice about how to be effective in teaching writing. Some of the articles include discussions of what prospective composition teachers need to know, how they can be trained to avoid ineffective methods in the classroom, and how they can deal with writing anxiety. Also described are approaches for teaching all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming for invention through drafting, revising, and editing. While some of the articles deal with structuring training programs for prospective classroom teachers, those of us who are concerned with training tutors will also find relevant and useful suggestions and some bibliographies for further reading.

Student newspapers are too often a glaring example of the need for proof-reading, as is painfully evident in the following example of a notice in a student newspaper reprinted in the Chronicle of Higher Education (Feb. 26, 1986):

"ARE YOU TIRED of writing mid-term papers the night before they are do? The Writing Center can help you get started now. Call x3404."
Thanks, anyway.   —c.g.

CLUSTERING: A NOT-QUITE CASE HISTORY

After Thanksgiving break, and less than two weeks before semester's end, Jerry appeared in the writing center with a paper he'd received back from his instructor. The assignment had been to describe something, and he had chosen to describe his first semester of college. The instructor had written, among other things, "This is not a descriptive paper," and had given it a D-. Jerry's teacher had been advising him to come to us for help for some time, and finally he showed up, at the last minute.

This is part of Jerry's paper:

The new experience of college is making my life very difficult. The change from high school to college is very unique for me. My day starts off with a math class. Math has never been my favorite subject. I have never received a grade higher than a C. My first two college exams I received two As, one being a perfect paper. I slacked off on my study habits only to receive a high C on the next exam. I realize now that in order to make it through my math class I can not give up so easily.

My next class is english. I have never been good in english, but I know I must improve in this area. I have not received a grade above a C and I contribute that to my lack of interest. I try to treat english just like any other class, but I know I have take upon myself to change this. In order to put on paper what you think or feel you have got to develop an interest for english. I am now realizing that writing is something that I am going to want to do.

Economics deals directly with my major . . . .

The paper went on for two more paragraphs to describe Jerry's economics and communication classes in similar ways. Then it concluded:

These new experiences for me have changed my life. I know now what I want out of college. I know that I am in college only for myself and my future. I feel that each one of my classes is teaching me something very different about life. About how to deal with problems and just the realization of life

in general. College is so much different from high school.

We sat down at a table. I asked Jerry what he mainly wanted to say in the paper. He didn't know. All he'd tried to do was to write something to fulfill the assignment. His experience in college was all he could think of to describe. Through questioning, I found out that he had no focus in mind to channel the description, so I set about to teach him how to find a focus by using clustering. The accompanying facsimile of the cluster we produced is in my handwriting; Jerry dictated what to write down and where to write it, while I prompted and took dictation.
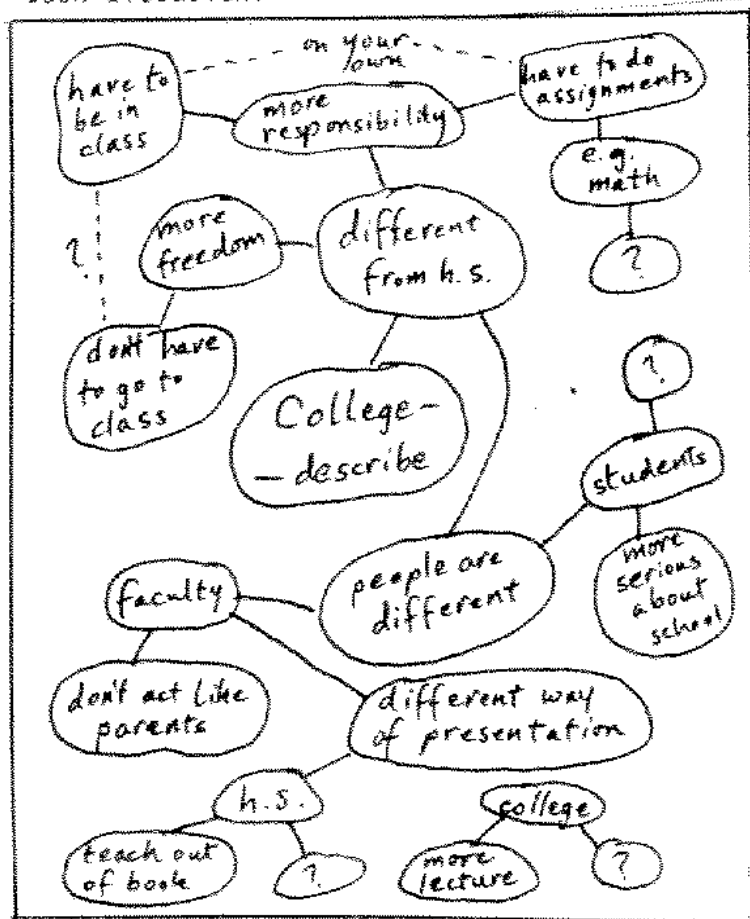
Jerry was fascinated to see the ideas emerge and jostle one another. The focus changed from "college" to "college is different from high school." That provided Jerry with enough of a handle on the subject that he was able quickly to think up ideas for development. (Notice how the center of the cluster shifts to accommodate the new focus.) When we were finished, Jerry discovered that he had said both "don't have to attend class" and "have to attend class." We discussed how he might use both ideas and how they would help him bring out the

relationship between "more freedom" and "more responsibility." After a few minutes we stopped working on the cluster. Jerry would have to leave for a class before long, and I wanted him to write from the cluster while it was fresh in his mind.

Jerry took his cluster and sat down to write. Conditions in the writing center at the time were not good for writing. Several students were being tutored, and the place was full of talk. He wrote for a half-hour and produced the following:

> After just starting college I have found that college is much different from high school. College requires more maturity and has an adult atmosphere. The change from high school is very demanding in such a way that you have more responsibility. If you take a class which is very important, as far as attendance, then the responsibility lies on you to make it to class. Mathematics is one of those classes. You have to do assignments on your own and there is little outside help. An example would be parents holding your hand. With the responsibility of college you also have more freedom in college. Most teachers do not base your grade on attendance so you can miss classes with no penalty.
>
> English is a class in which I have never done well in. The responsibility of college has made me realize that I have got to want to write instead of obligating myself to write.
>
> The people I have meet in college are different from the people I've met in high school. The students in college are there because they want to be, because they have to be. The faculty in college is different from high school teachers, one way would be their presentation. College profs teach more their own style. Most high school teachers teach out of the books. College professors give better lectures and less notes and college professors do not act like your parents.
>
> The new college experience for me is change that has brought about more maturity in me. It requires so much more than high school and the atmosphere is much different.

There are ways in which the second paper is worse than the first. The organization is not clear. The first paragraph tries to be both introduction and development. What was emerging in the cluster as a clear distinction between maturity and an adult atmosphere gets lost. Some of the wording is clumsy ("demanding in such a way that you have more responsibility"; (a)n example would be parents holding your hand"). The opening sentence of the second paragraph is a ghost of the old structure instead of the new. The generalizations about high school vs. college teachers need to be examined.

But for all its shortcomings, it is an advance over the original paper because it has focus. It is a revisable piece of writing, whereas the original was not. The glaring faults did not bother me, because, as anyone working in a writing center learns, a person's writing often gets worse in some ways in the process of getting better.

Still, I wished it were earlier in the semester, so that I could bring Jerry back to follow through on this promising beginning. The tutors in our writing center sometimes express the same wish, when they find that all the wiles they have used to lure students back have failed.

There is hope for some of those students who never come back. Sometimes the first and only contact will plant a seed that will germinate on its own. A week after the meeting I have described, Jerry's instructor sought me out in the writing center and said, "What did you guys do with Jerry? You wouldn't believe how his writing has improved in the past week. Now he really seems to know what he's doing."

Richard Leahy
Boise State University

The Tutor's Corner

For the past semester, I've worked as an English-writing tutor at Graceland College. I accepted the job because I have an English major with a concentration in writing, and it wasn't tough to realize that any tutoring I'd do would help me improve my writing skills. I had little idea about what would be required of me as a tutor or whom I would be working with. In my two years at college I had never called on the resources of a tutor. Oh sure, my Statistics grade could have been improved with the help of one of those "smart people" down in Special Services, but I didn't have the motivation or desire to spend that much time on a subject that didn't interest me. I think I was surprised when, one week into the semester, I was notified that my first tutoring session had been arranged: so people really did use tutors!

There was a period of time--a very short period of time--in which I felt like one of those "smart people" down in Special Services. And then I began to tutor. Any ideas I'd had that I was special or that I was around to give minimal help and reap maximal benefits were dispelled after one hour of tutoring. While the student read aloud the rough draft of his essay, I interrupted for comma misuse, sentence fragments, spelling errors, unclear sentences, ... It wasn't until we had left each other--him feeling more confused than before, me feeling frustrated and inadequate--that I realized I hadn't dealt with his thesis, voice, development or organization. I felt sick.

I'm glad to say that within a week my sessions as "teacher" became less sweaty; I began to feel comfortable with the mechanics of evaluating and improving themes. I don't want to go into detail about the practical writing skills that my tutees and I have developed through the semester; we, as tutors, assume (or at least hope) that we'll provide a base for students' progress, and we can all feel a certain amount of unashamed pride when a C student writes his or her first B paper. I want to share with you some of the more intangible, emotional experiences I've had as a tutor.

Like any tutor, I've worked with a number of students whose skills make up a broad spectrum, from the student who needs practice on past tense verbs to the student who

has a well of creativity and just needs to learn how to draw from it. But there is at least one common characteristic that links the people I've worked with: a willingness to learn. I mentioned earlier that I never sought outside help to raise my Statistics grade. So, can you understand the immediate admiration I felt for the students in composition classes who came to me and said, "This is my first paper; it's due next week, and I want to do good"? These people were frightened of writing for an audience, especially for an instructor with a red pen and a grade book. One student, a man with a wife, three sons and the desire to be an engineer, hadn't graduated from high school and hadn't written anything but letters in sixteen years. Twice a week we met, and I helped him with sentence structure, spelling, paragraph organization . . . everything. And he helped me understand what true determination is.

I worked with a girl who wrote A papers but claimed to hate writing--it scared her: "I know what I'm thinking, but I'm afraid to put it on paper." So we talked. And when she had verbalized her thought in a way that satisfied her, I simply said, "write it down." Often, her verbal brainstorming would become a joint effort for us: one word from me brought three from her, another word from me--more concrete this time--and then a sentence. During those moments as we sat on the edge of our chairs, bodies leaning toward one another, it seemed as though the friction made by our words ignited a fire that engulfed our minds in burning creativity. I could have felt guilty for breaking one of the basic tutoring rules--make the student think for her or himself--but creative experiences like these seem worthy of rule-breaking.

I can't say that I've never been bored during a tutoring session--sometimes spelling drills do get monotonous. But as a whole, my semester of tutoring has not been dull, because learning, at any level, is exciting. Knowing that students value learning enough to come to me, a stranger, and reveal themselves to me through their own words is exciting. I am a tutor. I am a tutee.

Susan Medler
Graceland College
Lamoni, Iowa

CRISIS OF IMAGE: PROMOTING YOUR WRITING CENTER

For the director of a writing center, one important but easy-to-overlook responsibility is promoting the center to the academic community. Training, scheduling, budgeting, and for those of us who also teach, managing the day-to-day activities in the classroom always seem to come ahead of planning to get the word out; publicity is a lower priority because having a top-notch program should, or so we would like to believe, sell itself.

Yet designing and building a fine program is for naught if no one knows about it. One letter in the December, 1984 issue of the Writing Lab Newsletter states the situation well:

> Our problem just now is getting customers. We have a good staff and plenty of space. We've sent out many flyers to faculty and students, and we've had articles in the college newspaper; here we are in the sixth week of the term, however, and we've had a total of sixteen undergraduate clients. Even though several of these have been back as many as half a dozen times, we find the lack of response worrisome.[1]

Marketing the services and staff of a writing center is a five-part, on-going process.[2]

1. Identify an appropriate image for the center. How should the center be known? As provider of revising and/or editing services? As working across the curriculum or primarily with one or two departments? As serving undergraduates or everyone-- students, faculty, and staff--associated with the college or university? As part of this step, develop a goals and objectives statement, if there is not one already, which will help to clarify the purpose of the center. Also, directors will want to consider what the promotion plan is to accomplish: name recognition, knowledge of program offerings, positive attitude toward the program, or referrals.

2. Conduct an image assessment. After defining the image to be promoted, the next step is to assess the image that already exists. Conducting an image assessment will show how the program is perceived by those in the academic community. Even without conducting a formal survey, collecting random comments by faculty and students during the semester gives a sense of the perceived image. Journal of such responses will provide a record of informal, even off-the-record observations. A formal assessment, however, provides a more methodical process for gathering information. Two possibilities are a telephone survey and a written questionnaire.

A. At Western, for example, a management major who tutors for the Academic Skills Center called the last person in each column of the faculty directory. He asked faculty whether they knew of an existing free tutoring service at WMU, whether they referred students, and if so, how often they referred students.[3]

B. The semantic differential technique developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) will enable directors to define the characteristics of image that they believe are desirable and then to determine via responses from questionnaires how nearly the current image corresponds to the desired image.[4] This technique involves listing such pairs of characteristics as high integrity-low integrity, friendly-unfriendly, and knowledgeable-superficial; asking respondents to rank the object of the survey on a continuum of 1-7; then calculating the average response for each pairing; and finally graphing the average response and ideal response.

Once a director knows what the image is and what it should be, the next step is to look at audience needs.

3. Develop a marketing plan. To promote effectively and efficiently, directors should assess the needs of the audience, and then select promotional tools that will reach and sell those needs to the audience. For example, if services are available to clerical staff, how will they find out about the programs? Athletics programs, special services, admissions and recruiting, international students, academic advisors, counselors, campus ministry, students

preparing for the GRE or GMAT, faculty seeking feedback on articles for publication--how will these groups learn of the opportunities available to them? If there is an information center on campus, it is a logical beginning point for distribution of information. But let's look at some promotional tools that could be used to give the program, the director, and the tutors visibility and credibility:

A. Advertising (visibility of program)

   access TV spots
   advertisements in sports programs
   airplane banner
   alumni-celebrity ads
   annual report (an end-of-semester or
      end-of-year report that shows number
      of students and classes served,
      hours tutored, evaluation results,
      workshops)
   badges
   billboards
   blotters
   bookmarks
   bulletin boards--photo display of
      staff and tutors
   business cards
   calendars
   catalogs
   circulars
   hot air balloon
   magazines
   matchboxes
   newsletter (independent study, univ-
      ersity award for new projects;
      mailed to all faculty, department
      and unit heads, supervisors)
   newspapers
   pencils and pens with logo
   posters
   radio
   signs
   skywriting
   T-shirts

B. Personal Selling (visibility of
   program, coordinator, and tutors)

   attendance at orientation,
      nontraditional-student functions,
      recruitment and retention efforts
   co-sponsor visiting lecturer--Writers
      Talking About Writing
   freshman writing contest and awards
      ceremony
   grammar hotline
   grand openings (celebrate Writing
      Center Week, new location,
      redecorated center)

   in-class informational presentations
   integrated effort to become a part of
      classes (removal-of-incomplete-grade
      program at Western, Methods of
      Inquiry class with attendance at
      Writing Center required, plans for
      in-class tutoring in Direct
      Encounter with the Arts program)
   letter soliciting faculty
      recommendations for prospective
      tutors
   radio interview
   lunch-a-week with faculty or staff
      outside department or unit
   news conferences
   presentations by director and/or
      tutors at conferences or at training
      sessions
   presentations in area high schools,
      especially those interested in
      establishing tutoring programs
   professors' announcements to classes
   requests to alumni
   speech topic for tutors in their
      classes
   telephone
   tours of writing center at professors'
      request
   wine-and-cheese circuit (receptions
      for new faculty, board of trustees)
   word-of-mouth promotion by former/
      current clients

4. Plan an on-going campaign that uses a variety of methods to reach the audiences. Throughout the semester students and faculty should be made aware of the services that will help them become better writers. Inexperienced writers who may be reluctant to share their prose need frequent reminders that tutors are friendly and competent, the setting pleasant and nonthreatening, the director easily accessible and willing to help. Faculty should receive information about the tutoring program before the semester begins so they can build a class visit into the syllabus; students should know about the writing center before their first papers are due as well as before and after major testing periods. Everyone should be made aware of the center's location and the times services are available. Not only should the plan be on-going but also multi-media.

5. Resurvey to evaluate progress in achieving the desired image. Keep accurate records of numbers using the writing center; ask people how they learned of the programs. A periodic review of the effectiveness of the promotional plan will enable directors

to modify and strengthen the plan as the need arises.

I began this paper with two assumptions: (1) writing center directors are responsible for the image of their centers and (2) applying a five-part organizational marketing plan will help directors promote their centers effectively.

Writing centers are a people-based business offering professional services; at the same time they are a labor-intensive business with always-present pressure to increase productivity. Writing centers offer benefits that are intangible; service that is unstorable and inseparable from the provider, and variable according to the expertise, trustworthiness, and likability of the director and tutors (Kotler 592-95).

Certainly, developing effective tutoring programs is a fundamental responsibility of writing center directors. Equally as important, however, is developing effective promotional programs.

Writing centers and writing center directors are relatively new in the service professions, but there exists opportunity after opportunity for growth, along with marketing strategies aplenty. Here is, after all, an ideal opportunity to show our mastery of the principles of purpose, problem, and audience that are an integral part of the communication process.

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ENDNOTES
1. Richard Hankins. Writing Lab Newsletter 9.4 (December, 1984): 5.

2. The five-step plan outlined here is based on the discussion of services and nonprofit marketing in Philip Kotler. Principles of Marketing. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

3. Timothy J. Potter. "Increasing Student Awareness of the Tutorial Center." Unpublished paper. 3 December 1983, p. 19.

4. Charles E. Osgood, George J. Suci, and Percy H. Tannenbaum. "The Semantic Differential as a Measuring Instrument. The Measurement of Meaning. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957.

PREVENTING WRITING WRECKS: THE ROLE OF THE WRITING LAB IN TEACHER PREPARATION

Because most teachers are inadequately prepared to teach writing, the majority of students in Language Arts and English classes are condemned to be casualties of writing wrecks. The solitary sense of accomplishment for altogether too many students is a primal feeling of survival; they emerge from a writing assignment or from a semester of writing class like survivors of a plane crash. They weep simply because they have survived, and very few are eager to try flying again.

My experience as a teacher, tutor and Writing Lab director has convinced me that we cannot reduce the number of writing wreck casualties, or honestly expect significant changes in attitudes about writing, or anticipate meaningful improvement in writing skills, until we insist on better education for teachers of writing. Those of us who work in writing labs should argue forcefully for an improvement in teacher education because many, if not most, of the students who come to our tutors are suffering from the writing instruction, from the writing experiences, they have encountered in their classrooms.

College and university instructors are not exempt from this indictment; I do not seek to place blame soley on the over-burdened backs of elementary and secondary teachers. Nor does the fault lie entirely within departments of English. We must work with writing wreck casualties from all levels of instruction and from courses in all departments, and if we want to do more than treat symptoms, if we want to do more than offer simple first aid, then we should take a leading role in addressing the primary cause of student writing wrecks: poorly prepared teachers.

The fact that writing is a fundamentally important part of intellectual growth and of learning has been irrefutably established. The fact that writing skills are a crucial ingredient in the complex mix of factors determining academic and professional success has been demonstrated in a number of studies. And critics from within our profession have persuasively established the fact that most writing teachers are poorly

prepared or are following discredited models of instruction. Our rigorous self-criticism demonstrates the need for immediate and forceful steps to improve the education of writing teachers. Why should those of us involved in writing centers take a leading role in addressing this problem? How can we accept this responsibility when our programs are usually underfunded, understaffed, misunderstood and, at the same time, always overfilled with students needing immediate help with papers due yesterday?

We should accept this responsibility because the job of preparing teachers of composition is not being done effectively in most institutions and because those who are trying to improve the quality of teacher preparation programs can use our help. The training we provide our tutors and the multi-faceted experience to which tutors are exposed should be an integral part of the requirements for undergraduate English Ed majors and for graduate teaching assistants in composition. We should get involved because our training and the experience we have to offer can help teachers prevent three specific types of writing wreck casualties that are demonstrably caused by poor teaching, casualties that we treat on a daily basis in our writing centers.

The first type of writing wreck casualty is the Attitudinal Amnesiac. The primary cause of this casualty is repeated psychological shocks administered by well-intentioned teachers who do not know how to encourage the development of the sophisticated language skills that children bring to school at age five. There are many observable symptoms. The student appears to have forgotten the joy and power of using language, or is apparently concealing his ability and desire. The student either refuses to write or writes perfunctorily for assignments. Resistance to writing is often expressed through statements such as "Writing don't matter, I gonna be a MBA," or "I'm a Double E major, I need numbers, not words," or "I talk good enough, why should I ever need to write?"

The second type of writing wreck casualty we can help prevent is the Predrafting Paralytic. The primary cause is the failure of teachers to introduce and help students practice useful predrafting techniques. Observable symptoms include the classic vacant staring, sharpening sharp pencils, snarling at any intrusion. Student pre-

drafting paralytics often turn in late papers, or sloppy drafts obviously done just before deadline, or papers copied in desperation from the nearest encyclopedia. They often state (many times in tears) that "I don't know where to start," or "I don't know anything about what the teacher assigned." They will always show signs of shock when they learn that nearly every professional writer has the same symptoms at some time. And I have heard about, but have not yet documented, two instances of mass hysterical shock in classrooms where teachers publicly confessed that, yes, even teachers often suffer from predrafting paralysis.

A third type of casualty is the Rhetorical Rheumatoid. The primary cause is the tendancy of teachers to respond only to surface errors and then give the highest marks to writing that is clean, conventional and correct. Student symptoms include excessive, almost neurotic, concern with mechanics and fine points of grammar; questions about work are always about spelling or about neatness of text. Some students begin speaking in what sounds like a previously unrecorded dialect: "Awk," "Frag," "Punct" become key words in their vocabulary. Their writing is usually quite correct and, if it were soup, would be bland enough feed to stomach ulcer patients. Rhetorical Rheumatoids nearly always have a Three T addiction; they cannot write without constant use of Text, Thesaurus and Teacher.

Tutors can be trained to treat these casualties. But we must make every effort to treat causes, not symptoms. If we are to address the causes of student writing wrecks, then we must do so in the classroom. As writing center people we should argue for an integration of our tutor training program with teacher preparation coursework. And our training program should provide tutors with skills for motivating students to write, for teaching predrafting techniques, and for reading student writing.

Tutor training should prepare the tutor to chat, to explore the student's desires and experiences, to introduce the student to the fact that tutors and teachers also write. In our program at Washington State our number one objective for each student tutored is to achieve some degree of positive change in attitude, attitude about writing, about language, ultimately about self. The primary technique for achieving this objective is to encourage tutors to

engage students in constructive talk about language and writing, to find ways of allowing students to feel comfortable with the idea that their writing can be both useful and a medium for growth. Developing this skill in perspective teachers of writing is a step toward preventing Attitudinal Amnesia.

To emphasize the crucial importance of what happens before the writer produces a draft, tutor training should encourage tutors to analyze their own predrafting skills and study techniques published in the literature on composition. To ask tutors to analyze and describe what they themselves do as writers requires them to be writers, to do what they are learning to help others do. While tutor training must include introduction to revision and editing techniques, primary focus should be placed on predrafting, including close analysis of purpose and audience, because many of the most critical weaknesses in student writing can be traced to student ignorance of what can be accomplished during the predrafting stage of the process. Given the limited time available to train tutors, and the necessity of learning to prevent Predrafting Paralysis, the training program should place considerable emphasis on predrafting techniques.

Training tutors to treat and prevent the third type of casualty--the Rhetorical Rheumatoid--is difficult because every tutor and prospective teacher has for years watched teachers mark papers with liberal doses of red and assign highest grades to the papers with the fewest red marks. Modeling is an excellent teaching technique; traditional writing teachers model nothing so much as how to scratch the surface with the red pencil. The first step in training tutors to READ rather than to scratch the surface is to ban the red pencil from the writing lab. The tutor must be taught to respond to the writing instead of the surface errors. The tutor must learn the difference between revision-editing and proofreading for mechanics. The tutor must read as an editor and fellow-writer, putting emphasis on correctness only when major rhetorical considerations have been explored. At the same time, the tutor must learn to recognize and encourage signs of originality and inventiveness, to prod, lead, push and pull the writer toward writing real stuff rather than, to use that perfectly coined word, Engfish.

That this tutorial training approach pays dividends for tutors as they learn to teach in the classroom can best be demonstrated by our tutors themselves, as expressed in evaluative papers written at the end of a semester in our program. The first comment is by a high school teacher enrolled in our comp-rhetoric master's program:

I had reservations about interning in the writing lab, but in less than a month I stopped seeing my internship as a burden and, instead, found it to be a valuable educational experience. In practical terms, the writing lab has given me more practice at what I enjoy doing (writing and teaching writing). Working in the Lab has given me more experience at doing what I consider one of the central elements of my career: helping writers compose.

The second comment is from an undergraduate tutor majoring in education:

Tutoring has been beneficial for me in many areas of my college life. Tutoring has definitely made me aware of, if not strengthened, my writing skills and offered prime opportunities to exercise numerous teaching skills and strategies. One of the biggest lessons the Writing Lab taught me was that I was not only dealing with writing, but I was also dealing with people and emotions. Since working in the Lab has provided me with such a valuable learning experience, I feel that all English Education majors should be required, as part of their major, to tutor for a semester.

And lastly the conclusions of a PhD candidate in Literary Studies who is a teaching assistant in freshman comp:

Although I was initially not too excited with the prospect of devoting a minimum of two hours a week from my already tight schedule to interacting with students who probably did not belong in the university, I have come to see that the Writing Lab provides a significant learning opportunity, not only for the students, but also for the tutors. The experience proved to be as challenging as some of the more arcane graduate studies in deconstruction, as well as perhaps more useful. For me, at least, the Lab has proven to be a learning experience that I can carry into the classroom with me.

Commentary like that is not new to those of us who train and work with tutors; we have the opportunity to share in their experiences and observe the successes--and the failures--they have with their students. But we must not rest on our clear record of accomplishment or be content to let our programs serve only to treat the casualties who come crawling to our doors. We must share our experiences with those who rarely come through our doors, those who complain about the poor quality of student writing and who at the same time are at a loss for constructive ideas leading to improved writing programs. We must convince them that we can play a very cost-effective role in the development of teaching skills which can improve the quality of composition programs at all levels of instruction. We must assume the responsibility of contributing to the education of writing teachers in a way that will prevent writing wrecks and dramatically reduce the number of casualties.

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