....from the editor....

As you'll notice, this is a double issue of the newsletter, a departure offered for several reasons. First, the extra pages allow for some longer articles, and second, the holiday season during December and January leaves us with less time for professional reading. Now you have only one issue instead of two to catch up with during a period of numerous other claims on your time. And third, this is a blatant attempt to hold down costs.

Newsletter expenses have risen at a frightening rate, and since this has to be a self-sufficient publication, we are trying as long as possible to put off the inevitable price increase looming on the horizon. Right now, because of rising costs of printing and mailing, the newsletter has a precarious, touch-and-go existence. So, if you like the occasional double issue of the newsletter, speak up, and we'll try it again some time.

Have a pleasant and happy holiday season. May it include some R & R too!
•Muriel Harris, editor

Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center

The triple focus of my title reflects some problems I've been concentrating on as I've thought about and prepared this essay. I'll try as I go along to illuminate—or at least to compli-cate—each of these foci, and I'll conclude by sketching in what I see as a particularly compelling idea of a writing center, one informed by collaboration and, I hope, attuned to diversity.

As you may know, I've recently written a book on collaboration, in collaboration with my dearest friend and coauthor Lisa Ede. *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives in Collaborative Writing* was six years in the research and writing, so I naturally gravitate to principles of collaboration.

Yet it's interesting to me to note that when Lisa and I began our research (see "Why Write...Together?"), we didn't even use the term "collaboration"; we identified our subjects as "co- and group-writing." And when we presented our first

paper on the subject at the 1985 Conference on College Composition and Communication meeting, ours was the only such paper at the conference, ours the only presentation with "collaboration" in the title. Now, as you know, the word is everywhere, in every journal, every conference program, on the tip of every scholarly tongue. So—collaboration, yes. But why control? Because as the latest pedagogical bandwagon, collaboration often masquerades as democracy when it in fact practices the same old authoritarian control. It thus stands open to abuse and can, in fact, lead to poor teaching and poor learning. And it can lead—as you know—to disastrous results in the writing center. So amidst the rush to embrace collaboration, I see a need for careful interrogation and some caution.

We might begin by asking where the collaboration bandwagon got rolling? Why has it gathered such steam? Because, I believe, collaboration both in theory and practice reflects a broad-based epistemological shift, a shift in the way we view knowledge. This shift involves a move from viewing knowledge and reality as things exterior to or outside of us, as immediately accessible, individually knowable, measurable, and shareable—to viewing knowledge and reality as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed, contextualized, as, in short, the product of *collaboration.*

I'd like to suggest that collaboration as an embodiment of this theory of knowledge poses a distinct threat to one particular idea of a writing center. This idea of a writing center, which I'll call "The Center as Storehouse," holds to the earlier view of knowledge just described—knowledge as exterior to us and as directly accessible. The Center as Storehouse operates as an information station or storehouse, prescribing and handing out skills and strategies to individual learners. Storehouse Centers often use "modules" or other kinds of individualized learning materials. They tend to view knowledge as individually derived and held, and they are not particularly amenable to collaboration, sometimes actively hostile to it. I visit lots of Storehouse Centers, and in fact I set up such a center myself, shortly after I had finished an MA degree and a thesis on William Faulkner.

Since Storehouse Centers do a lot of good work and since I worked very hard to set up one of them, I was loathe to complicate or

critique such a center. Even after Lisa and I started studying collaboration in earnest, and in spite of the avalanche of data we gathered in support of the premise that collaboration is the norm in most professions (psychology, chemistry, engineering, technical writing, etc.), I was still a very reluctant convert.

Why? Because, I believe, collaboration posed another threat to my way of teaching, a way that informs another idea for a writing center, which I'll call "The Center as Garret." Garret Centers are informed by a deep-seated belief in individual "genius," in the Romantic sense of the term. (I need hardly point out that this belief also informs much of the Humanities and in particular English Studies.) These centers are also informed by a deep-seated attachment to the American brand of individualism, a term coined by Alixis de Toqueville as he sought to describe the defining characteristics of the Republic.

Unlike Storehouse Centers, Garret Centers don't view knowledge as exterior, as information to be sought out or passed on mechanically. Rather they see knowledge as interior, as inside the student, and the writing center's job as helping students get in touch with this knowledge, as a way to find their unique voices, their individual and unique powers. This idea has been articulated by

many, including Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow, and Don Murray, and the idea usually gets acted out in Murray-like conferences, those in which the tutor or teacher listens, voices encouragement, and essentially serves as a validation of the students' "I-search." Obviously, collaboration problematizes Garret Centers as well, for they also view knowledge as interiorized, solitary, individually derived, individually held.

As I've indicated, I held on pretty fiercely to this idea as well as to the first one. I was still resistant to collaboration. So I took the natural path for an academic faced with this dilemma: I decided to do more research. I did a *lot* of it. And to my chagrin, I found more and more evidence to challenge my ideas, to challenge both the idea of centers as Storehouses or as Garrets. Not incidentally, the data I amassed mirrored what my students had been telling me for years: not the research they carried out, not their dogged writing of essays, not *me* even, but their work in groups, their *collaboration*, was the most important and helpful part of their school experience. Briefly, the data I found all support the following claims:

1. Collaboration aids in problem *finding* as well as problem solving.

2. Collaboration aids in learning abstractions.

3. Collaboration aids in transfer and assimilation; it fosters interdisciplinary thinking.

4. Collaboration leads not only to sharper, more critical thinking (students must explain, defend, adapt), but to deeper understanding of *others*.

5. Collaboration leads to higher achievement in general. See for example, the Johnson and Johnson analysis of 122 studies from 1924-1981, which included every North American study that considered achievement or performance data in competitive, cooperative/collaborative, or individualistic classrooms. Some 60% showed that collaboration promoted higher achievement, while only 6% showed the reverse. Among studies comparing the effects of collaboration and independent work, the results are even more strongly in favor of collaboration. Moreover, the superiority of collaboration held for all subject areas and all age groups. See Kohn's "How to Succeed Without Even Vying."

6. Collaboration promotes excellence. In this regard, I am fond of quoting Hannah Arendt: "For excellence, the presence of others is always required." Collaboration engages the whole student and encourages active learning; it combines reading, talking, writing, thinking; it provides practice in both synthetic and analytic skills.

Given these research findings, why am I still urging caution in using collaboration as *the* idea of the writing center I now advocate?

First, because creating a collaborative environment and truly collaborative tasks is damnably difficult. Collaborative environments and tasks must *demand* collaboration. Students, tutors, teachers must really need one another to carry out common goals. As an aside, let me note that studies of collaboration in the workplace identify three kinds of tasks that seem to call consistently for collaboration: high-order problem defining and solving; division of labor tasks, in which the job is simply too big for any one person; and division of expertise tasks. Such tasks are often difficult to come by in writing centers, particularly those based on the Storehouse or Garret models.

A collaborative environment must also be one in which goals are clearly defined and in which the jobs at hand engage everyone fairly equally, from the student clients to work-study students to peer tutors and professional staff. In other words, such an environment rejects traditional hierarchies. In addition, the kind of collaborative environment I want to encourage calls on each person involved in the collaboration to build a *theory* of collaboration, a theory of group dynamics.

Building such a collaborative environment is also hard because getting groups of any kind going is hard. The students', tutors', and teachers' prior experiences may work against it (they probably held or still hold to Storehouse or Garret ideas); the school day and term work against it; and the drop-in nature of many centers, including my own, works against it. Against these odds, we have to figure out how to constitute groups in our centers; how to allow for evaluation and monitoring; how to teach, model, and learn about careful listening, leadership, goal setting, and negotiation—all of which are necessary to effective collaboration.

We must also recognize that collabora-

tion is hardly a monolith. Instead, it comes in a dizzying variety of modes about which we know almost nothing. In our book, Lisa and I identify and describe two such modes, the hierarchical and the dialogic, both of which our centers need to be well versed at using. But it stands to reason that these two modes perch only at the tip of the collaborative iceberg.

As I argued earlier, I think we must be cautious in rushing to embrace collaboration, because collaboration can also be used to reproduce the status quo; the rigid hierarchy of teacher-centered classrooms is replicated in the tutor-centered writing center in which the tutor is still the seat of all authority but is simply pretending it isn't so. Such a pretense of democracy sends badly mixed messages. It can also lead to the kind of homogeneity that squelches diversity, that waters down ideas to the lowest common denominator, that erases rather than values difference. This tendency is particularly troubling given our growing awareness for the roles gender and ethnicity play in all learning. So regression toward the mean is not a goal I seek in an idea of a writing center based on collaboration.

The issue of control surfaces most powerfully in this concern over a collaborative center. In the writing center ideas I put forward earlier, where is that focus of control? In Storehouse Centers, it seems to me control resides in the tutor or center staff, the possessors of information, the currency of the academy. Garret Centers, on the other hand, seem to invest power and control in the individual student knower, though I would argue that such control is often appropriated by the tutor/teacher, as I have often seen happen during Murray- or Elbow- style conferences. Any center based on collaboration (which I'll call Burkean Parlor Centers), collaboration that is attuned to diversity, goes deeply against the grain of education in America. To illustrate, I need offer only a few representative examples:

1. Mina Shaughnessy, welcoming a supervisor to her classroom in which students were busily collaborating, was told "oh… I'll come back when you're teaching."

2. A prominent and very distinguished feminist scholar has been refused an endowed chair because most of her work has been written collaboratively.

3. A prestigious college poetry prize was withdrawn after the winning poem turned out to be written by three student collaborators.

4. A faculty member working in a writing center was threatened with dismissal for "encouraging" group-produced documents.

I have a number of such examples, all of which suggest that—used unreflectively or uncautiously—collaboration may harm professionally those who seek to use it and may as a result further reify a model of education as the top-down transfer of information (back to The Storehouse) or a private search for Truth (back to The Garret). As I also hope I've suggested, collaboration can easily degenerate into busy work or what Jim Corder calls "fading into the tribe."

So I am very, very serious about the cautions I've been raising, about our need to examine carefully what we mean by collaboration and to explore how those definitions locate control. And yet I still advocate—with growing and deepening conviction—the move to collaboration in both classrooms and centers. In short, I am advocating a third, alternative idea of a writing center, one I know many have already brought into being. In spite of the very real risks involved, we need to embrace the idea of writing centers as Burkean Parlors, as centers for collaboration. Only in doing so can we, I believe, enable a student body and a citizenry to meet the demands of the twenty-first century. A recent Labor Department report tells us, for instance, that by the mid-1990's workers will need to read at the 11th-grade level for even low-paying jobs; that workers will need to be able not so much to solve prepackaged problems but to identify problems amidst a welter of information or data; that they will need to reason from complex symbol systems rather than from simple observations; most of all that they will need to be able to work with others who are different from them and to learn to negotiate power and control.

The idea of a center I want to advocate speaks directly to these needs, for its theory of knowledge is based not on positivistic principles (that's The Storehouse again), not on Platonic or absolutist ideals (that's The Garret), but on the notion of knowledge as always

contextually bound, as always socially constructed. Such a center might well have as its motto Arendt's statement: "For excellence, the presence of others is always required." Such a center would place control, power, and authority not in the tutor or staff, not in the individual student, but in the negotiating group. It would engage students not only in solving problems set by teachers but in identifying problems for themselves; not only in working as a group but in monitoring, evaluating, and building a theory of how groups work; not only in understanding and valuing collaboration but in confronting squarely the issues of control that successful collaboration inevitably raises; not only in reaching consensus but in valuing dissensus and diversity.

The idea of a center informed by a theory of knowledge as socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and shared, and as collaboration as its first principle presents quite a challenge. It challenges our way of organizing our center, of training our staff and tutors, and of working with teachers. It even challenges our sense of where we "fit" into this idea. More importantly, however, such a center presents a challenge to higher education, an institution that insists on rigidly controlled individual performance, on evaluation as punishment, on isolation, on the kinds of values that took that poetry prize away from three young people or that accused Mina Shaughnessy of "not teaching."

This alternative, this third idea of a writing center, poses a threat as well as a challenge to the status quo of higher education. This threat is one powerful and largely invisible reason, I would argue, for the way in which many writing centers have been consistently marginalized, consistently silenced. But writing center organizations are gaining a voice, are finding ways to imagine into being centers as Burkean Parlors for Collaboration, writing centers, I believe, which can lead the way in changing the face of higher education.

So, writing center specialists are a subversive group. But I've been talking far too long by myself now, so I'd like to close by giving the floor to two of my student collaborators. The first—like I was—was a reluctant convert to the kind of collaboration I've been describing here. But here's what she wrote some time ago:

Dr. Lunsford: I don't know exactly what to say here, but I want to say something. So here goes. When this class first began, I didn't know what in the hell you meant by collaboration. I thought—hey yo!—you're the teacher and you know a lot of stuff. And you better tell it to me. Then I can tell it to the other guys. Now I know that you know even more than I thought. I even found out I know a lot. But that's not important. What's important is knowing that knowing doesn't just happen all by itself, like the cartoons which show a little light bulb going off in a bubble over a character's head. Knowing happens with other people, figuring things out, trying to explain, talking through things. What I know is that we are all making and remaking our knowing and our selves with each other everyday—you just as much as me and the other guys, Dr. Lunsford. We're all—all of us together—collaborative recreations in process. So—well—just wish me luck.

And here's a note I received from another student/collaborator:

I had believed that Ohio State had nothing more to offer me in the way of improving my writing. Happily, I was mistaken. I have great expectations for our Writing Center Seminar class. I look forward to every one of our classes and to every session with my 110W students [2 groups of 3 undergraduates he is tutoring]. I sometimes feel that they have more to offer me than I to them. They say the same thing, though, so I guess we're about even, all learning together. (P.S. This class and the Center have made me certain I want to attend graduate school.)

These students embody the kind of center I'm advocating, and I'm honored to join them in conversation about it.

Andrea A. Lunsford
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

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(Ed. note: This is a reprint of the keynote speech delivered at the 1990 Midwest Writing Centers Association Conference.)

Body Language: The Nonverbal Path to Success in the Writing Conference

Since the start of the peer tutorial program at Hamilton College's Writing Center in 1987, I have been shaping and reshaping our tutorial training program. Now that our training agenda appears to incorporate all of the essentials, I have begun to consider topics that are secondary but still relevant to turning good writers into good tutors. One of these topics is nonverbal communication, or more specifically, the application of some of the extensive social science literature on nonverbal communication to the specific context of the writing center conference. An intriguing question is how can nonverbal signals be used by writing tutors to affect the outcome of a writing conference?

Nonverbal communication is present in every tutor-writer conversation. Unspoken cues can either support, neutralize, or contradict spoken statements; a tutor's sensitivity to nonverbal cues plays a part in determining the success or failure of a writing conference. If the tutor gives inappropriate nonverbal signals, or the tutor fails to respond to a writer's cues, the open, comfortable atmosphere needed for a successful writing conference may not develop.

During tutor training, discussion and role playing can be used to sensitize tutors to the use of positive nonverbal signals to build and maintain a comfortable atmosphere. Once aware of the power of positive and negative nonverbal cues, the tutor has one more way of setting the tone of the conference and, when necessary, neutralizing negative cues given by the writer.

The tutor should be encouraged to use nonverbal cues in *reaction to* the writer's signals. If the writer comes into a conference with an open attitude and projects positive signals, then the tutor needn't spend conscious effort figuring out how to affect the writer's attitude. But if the writer comes in projecting negative cues, then the tutor can employ specific nonverbal tactics as one way of helping the resistant writer feel that the conference can be a productive experience.

I do not mean to overstate the usefulness of nonverbal cues. They are not a substitute for the tutor's positive, welcoming verbal comments; in order to be effective, these cues have to mirror positive spoken statements. In addition, it is crucial to keep in mind that many nonverbal cues are culture- or gender-related; for example, the avoiding of eye contact can have a different meaning depending on a person's cultural background. The tutor should be advised to consider the entire array of cues given by the writer before acting. In other words, one should follow the writer's lead if in doubt as to what is appropriate.

Tutors on my staff have tried to make conscious use of nonverbal cues and have found that the effort is worthwhile. One tutor said that now he always greets writers with opened hand and arm gestures, is sure to smile and establish eye contact, and adjusts his chair at a comfortable conversational angle and distance once the writer sits down. And the good news is that writers respond accordingly.

For their contributions in developing these thought, I thank the following Hamilton College writing tutors: Marisa Lebauer, Kristin Moeller, and Peter Schweighofer.

Sharon Williams
Hamilton College
Clinton, NY

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Positive and Negative Nonverbal Cues in Writing Center Conferencing

Positive Nonverbal Cues

I. **Use of Space**
- chair turned toward the writer
- comfortable conversational distance

II. **Body Cues**
Listener Feedback
- affirmative nodding
- "umm," "ah-ha," "hmmm"

Eye Behavior
- focused attention
- regular eye contact
- raised eyebrows
- behavior consistent throughout conference

Facial Expressions
- frequent smiling

Body Position
- moving, turning toward the writer
- leaning forward
- open position of body, hands, arms
- relaxed, comfortable posture
- approving gestures
- initial handshake

Physical Appearance
- appropriate dress and grooming

Negative Nonverbal Cues

I. **Use of Space**
- chair turned away from the writer
- inappropriate conversational distance

II. **Body Cues**
Listener Feedback
- negative, impatient nodding
- finger or pen tapping
- fidgeting, yawning

Eye Behavior
- looking around the room
- little or no eye contact
- staring past the writer
- shading of eyes
- contact diminishing over time

Facial Expressions
- negative, frowning expression
- hands over mouth

Body Position
- moving, turning away from the writer
- leaning too close or away
- closed position of body, hands, arms
- slumped, closed posture
- negative gestures

Physical Appearance
- inappropriate dress
- overgroomed (e.g.: excessive scent)
- undergroomed
- nail, lip biting
- gum chewing

Call for Papers
14th Annual Conference

East Central Writing Centers Association

April 10-11, 1992
Kalamazoo, MI

"Writing Centers: Collaborative Commitments"

Please send one-page proposals (plus three copies) for 20-min. papers and 45-min. to 1-hr. workshops, including name, academic mailing address, and telephone number, to Siham Fares, The Writing Lab, 1044 Moore Hall, Western Michigan U., Kalamazoo, MI 49008 (616-387-4442).Deadline: Dec. 6, 1991. (Late proposals can be accepted, but call ahead.)

Writing centers are invited to display materials at the Materials Exchange Tables (deadline for requests: Feb. 3, 1992). For display space requests and registration inquiries, contact the Office of Conferences and Institutes, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3899 (616-387-4174).

NWCA Writing Center Directory Available

The National Writing Centers Association now offers a directory, compiled by Pam Farrell, of over 300 writing centers. The cost of $15 includes postage, and since there are no billing or invoice procedures, anyone interested in obtaining a copy should send prepayment (in a check made payable to the National Writing Centers Association) to:

Pamela Farrell
The McCallie School
2850 McCallie Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37404

If you have any questions, call Pam at 615-622-2163.

Invitation and Call for Proposals

3rd Annual Colloquium on Learning Enhancement

April 23-24, 1992
Toledo, Ohio

"Tutoring: Connecting Practice and Assessment

To submit a proposal, provide three copies of a 250-word double-spaced summary. Submit proposal to Committee on Learning Enhancement, Writing Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio 43606-3390; FAX: 419-537-2157. For further information, contact Joan Mullin, Director of the Writing Center, 419-537-4939.

Writing Across the Curriculum: Workshops on Program Planning and Teacher Training

January 24, 25-26, 1992
and
April 3, 4-5, 1992
Troy, Alabama

In January and again in April, the Troy State University WAC Program is sponsoring workshops on program planning and teacher training for writing across the curriculum. The program-planning workshop, on January 24 and April 3, is designed for faculty and administrators interested in beginning a WAC program. The teacher-training workshop will be held on January 25-26 and on April 4-5.

For registration information, contact Joan Word, WAC Coordinator, Wright Hall 133, Troy State University, Troy, AL 36082 (205-670-3349).

Tutors' Column

As a fine arts major usually up to my ears in paint, I found working in the Northern Virginia Community College (Loudoun Campus) Writing Center as a peer tutor a new and challenging experience. At first I questioned my qualifications and abilities for offering assistance and guidance to fellow students, but I quickly realized that my job was not to be an "expert" but rather to be an informed, concerned assistant as well as an informal liaison between the student and instructor.

The Writing Center offers a variety of services, including instruction and use of the computer, but most of my time was spent with drop-in students seeking help with a current assignment. My sessions were usually short and comparatively uncomplicated until a sweet seventeen year-old named Tanya asked for help with a paper that needed to be rewritten. Her teacher was a part-time instructor in English 111, a course in elementary composition. Tanya was having a difficult time understanding the written comments of her instructor and responding to his suggestions for improving her paper. Consequently, we had a number of in-depth sessions trying to work out a solution. I should state that while I and another tutor thought that with a few adjustments her paper would be fine, one of the consulting professors criticized its format. But even though the professor agreed with the given grade, she felt that the instructor's expectations were too narrow-minded.

Tanya's assignment was to develop a definition paper dealing with psychological abuse of women. In the paper she related her personal responses and opinions to the postulated problem. It was apparent from the instructor's written comments that he was an advocate of women's rights, but he became so agitated at Tanya's apparent passive attitude that he, in my opinion, lost sight of his primary position, that of a teacher not a preacher. In his zeal he not only lectured her about her attitude and seeming lack of self-worth, implying that her opinions were wrong and his were right, but he then proceeded to write an introductory paragraph, and strongly suggested she use it verbatim to begin her paper. I had a difficult time restraining my reactions to those of a neutral tutor. Instead, I found myself reacting from the perspective of a fellow student, and most strongly as that of a protective parent. Above all else I was incensed that he put his hand to her work. At one point Tanya commented, "Carol, I'm only seventeen and these are my opinions." Although it was obvious that the instructor was sincerely trying to help this student, I felt his approach was out of line.

This situation not only caused the student tremendous stress during finals, when she had a multitude of other things to do, but it caused a real dilemma for me as a tutor. After a number of discussions with several people, I finally suggested that Tanya give the instructor what he wanted.

It all seemed like such a major effort for a beginning English class, and I am still not happy about my handling of her situation. Although I tried to follow the guidelines of the tutoring manual, I found these sessions frustrating and stressful. I had a hard time coming to terms with my advice because to me it somehow resulted in a kind of subjugation for the student. I am curious as to whether or not other tutors have had to deal with this kind of predicament, and what methods were used to resolve the situation. Please send responses to me:

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Learning Styles: Issues, Questions, and the Roles of the Writing Center Tutor

As writing center tutors, we continually work toward discovering more productive approaches for individualizing the teaching of writing and promoting writing across the disciplines. In many cases, this means that writing is treated as a mode of learning and that writing centers are places in which the individualization of writing-to-learn can occur; therefore, it stands to reason that as writing center tutors, we have access to a rich understanding of writers as individual learners, writing as endless and individual modes of learning, and learning as an infinitely varied phenomenon, unique to each individual.

Years of observation of this individuality has prompted the exploration for and development of assessment tools for the description and definition of individual learning styles. A variety of learning style assessments exist, indicating the immeasurable purposes, means, and focal points of learning style researchers. To choose only one tool for assessing what we would believe to be a "learning style," however, creates the danger of relying on only that tool and its assumptions. For example, modality strengths, hemispheric differences, personality types, behaviors, or cognitive processes are often seen as complete assessments. However, these provide only a limited vision into learning and, alone, are only parts of what could constitute a style of learning. As useful as these tools may seem, using only one tool for investigating these approaches narrows our perception of learning styles and limits our learning experiences.

The Write Place at St. Cloud State University believes that, just as one tool for the assessment of learning styles is not enough, neither is one method of tutoring. Because learning styles vary so greatly from one person to the next, and because writing provides an open playground on which individuals can learn, tutors have the opportunity and, in fact, the responsibility to be open to the endless approaches we can use when we learn. In light of these opportunities and because we feel this responsibility, it is not uncommon for us to seek out what we feel is an accurate tool that will help us learn more about the writers who use our centers. If a narrowed perception of learning styles and a limited learning experience occur when we use only one assessment tool, it would follow, then, that the same would happen if, as tutors, we use only one method when tutoring. For example, if I use only one method as a learner when I approach new learning experiences, I deprive myself of the benefits of other methods and, in turn, other experiences. If I believe that only one method works—mine—then I believe yours will work only if it is the same as mine. If I am your tutor, and I believe in my method (the only one I know), I will expect you to not only understand my method, but also to use it and to use it well, forcing on you not your own method, but mine. This deprives you of the benefits of other methods, other experiences, and other perceptions.

Therefore, danger exists when we limit our perceptions of learning and tutoring styles. But it is important to begin our investigation somewhere—just as it is important to begin tutoring in a way that is, at first, comfortable. Many writing centers have chosen to rely on instruments that define personality types, for example, in beginning their investigation. While studying personality types can be, of course, valuable in gaining a better understanding of individual learners, it is not complete.

Our center is no exception to this need for investigation. We also began our investigation with the Myers-Briggs personality type indicator, but what follows is a brief summary of another assessment tool we have been investigating and how that tool has again reminded us that no one tool provides the clearest look into learning. The learning style inventory (LSI) we have chosen to investigate in The Write Place was developed in the early 1970s by a managerial expert, David A. Kolb. Kolb believed that learning is the result of two activities: perceiving and processing. The unique ways in which we perceive and process information make us individual learners. Kolb asserts that the ways in which we perceive and process information can be measured by two extremes each:

PERCEIVING:

> *Concrete Experience* (CE): hands-on, personal experience with objects, people, or places
>
> *Abstract Conceptualization* (AC): perceiving through informational modes, reading, or viewing

PROCESSING:

> *Active Experimentation* (AE): trial and error, testing, revising, doing rather than watching
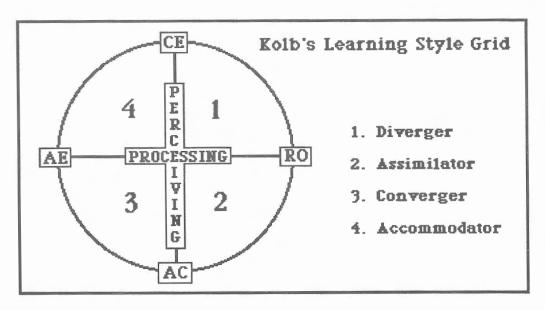>
> *Reflective Observation* (RO): meditating, incubating, watching rather than doing

Using these "fundamentals" of learning, Kolb set up a Learning Style Type Indicator and a Learning Style Profile that plot points on the two grids, basing these points on scores achieved through an "inventory" in which nine sets of four words are ranked on a scale of one through four: 4 = most like me; 1 = least like me. The quadrants of the grids label learning style types and assess learning strengths (see diagram).

individual differences among writers who use the center and how tutors can facilitate the learning of each writer we meet. Interaction among tutors (all having unique learning styles) provides a foundation for the creation of materials, methods, and workshops designed with all individuals in mind. Using what we know about ourselves and other writers has helped make our center more effective in our goal of meeting the needs of all students.

To make an attempt to tell anyone else how to use the Kolb LSI or any other type of learning style assessment tool would be futile. We have found, however, that encouraging tutors to gain a better understanding of themselves is a valuable key to a better understanding of others.

Kolb's Learning Style Grid

1. Diverger
2. Assimilator
3. Converger
4. Accommodator

Bernice McCarthy synthesized Kolb's work and that of others to define the four types of learners Kolb's grid indicates. (See Appendix for characteristics of each learner listed above.) Although these four labels have the potential of defeating the purpose of studying individuals, dividing learners into four types according to Kolb's perceiving/processing model provides a foundation that allows us to begin discussing learners as individuals. Those who take the learning style inventory can "plot" anywhere on the grid within any learning style type, thus maintaining individuality.

Tutors in our center have begun to investigate their own learning styles using Kolb's LSI and observing colleagues. Many staff meetings have been devoted to discussing

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of learning styles and to "test" Kolb's assessment, I gave the Kolb LSI to other tutors in our center at random intervals over the 1988/89 school year, allowing them to see their "results" only at the end of the year. Although this experiment lacked a true scientific design, it resulted in several valuable observations and raised even more questions:

- Tutors' test results were rarely the same. Some tutors who initially tested as Divergers, for example, shifted to Accommodators or Assimilators or both. Only three tutors out of fifteen remained in the same quadrant all year.

- Of the three tutors who remained station-

ary on the grid throughout the year two were graduate students taking courses only in English and specializing in areas that fascinate them.

- Those tutors who consistently tested on the left side of the grid (Active Experimentation) described themselves as writers who go through many drafts. As one Converger stated, "When I feel a paper coming on, my fingers start moving, and I need a computer—now!"

- Those tutors who consistently tested on the right side (Reflective Observation) often described themselves as procrastinating or writing all night before a paper is due. They also described themselves as needing pressure (i.e. an approaching deadline) before they can begin a paper.

- Tutors varied greatly in how they ranked the nine sets of words each time they took the test, thus resulting in varying plots on the grid. The biggest factor in how tutors rated these words seemed to be what was of immediate concern to them. One tutor stated, "Sometimes I think about my job when I take this test; other times, I think about one class or another class or my roommates."

- When the tutors were shown their results, most of them could identify which learning style type was best suited for them or could justify why some variation occurred. Some tutors, however, disagreed with their results.

The variety of learning styles we have seen just among one small sample of tutors begins to indicate the infinite number of styles that walk into our center. Kolb's LSI still doesn't answer the questions surrounding other issues, such as personality types or modality strengths in individual learners. And, if used as the only learning style assessment tool, it is potentially dangerous in that it could result in hasty assumptions that could narrow our perceptions of individual learning styles. For example, suppose you complete the inventory today and test as an Assimilator (using McCarthy's description), finding the inventory to be accurate. You then might say, "I am an Assimilator." But what if, four months later, you test as a Diverger?

The Write Place tutors varied tremendously in their inventory results, some tutors testing as three learning style types throughout the year. But to assert that varying results indicate that Kolb's LSI is inaccurate would be premature. But is it inaccurate just because it yields inconsistent results for the same learner? Or could it indicate just how adaptable we are as learners and, therefore, be an accurate tool? Could we apply the shifting test results to the idea that learning styles also shift?

What variables are at play here? The following are factors that could possibly influence inconsistent results on the Kolb LSI or any other assessment tool:

- interaction with other learners, compatible or incompatible
- working in isolation
- health
- vacation/time off
- new tasks
- new context
- moods
- decreased/increased responsibility

Looking at the experiences of an average college student, for example, would we dare argue that students employ the same affective and cognitive functions when writing a freshman composition essay as when constructing an equilateral triangle? dissecting a worm? listening to Beethoven? Are these students, in these varying situations, working under identical constraints? with the same teacher? the same level of interest? the same experience base? the same goal? The answer to these questions would most likely be "no."

If it is true, then, that in learning new tasks in new situations, our approaches to those situations change, then it would also be true that the results of any learning style assessment tool would also change. Could we then speculate that it is not only the results that change, but that the learning style itself that is also altered?

And if it's true that learning styles change, how do we assess a "true" learning style? or does a learner have just one? As learners in most everything we do, we come in contact with a variety of personalities; meet a variety of challenges; have access to many skills, resources, methods, and experiences;

and hold the capability to create a countless combination of these and other factors that influence what we call learning.

With all of this variability, then, what's a tutor to do? What is our job, and what is the role of the writing center? And how do we fulfill that role effectively?

We can see some writing centers trying to "match" students with linguistically or cognitively compatible tutors. We see others trying desperately to make the "How to Organize an Essay in Relation to a House" handout work for everyone in an effort to "meet and defeat" the learning style issue. Rather than force-feeding one tutoring method or limiting a writer's opportunities to work with a variety of other writers, we should encourage tutors to "see and stretch" individual learning styles; in other words, we should facilitate openness and respect in understanding our own learning styles, those of others, and the results of interaction when two or more learners meet. We could encourage tutors to remember, for starters, some of the following points:

- Just because you enjoy having someone rattle off a vocabulary list when you are searching for a word, it doesn't mean your student will.

- Just because you find it effective to "map out" your paper in the early stages of writing, it doesn't mean your student will.

- Just because you've done your best writing the night before the paper was due, it doesn't mean your student has.

- Just because you need a lot of feedback while you are drafting a paper, it doesn't mean your students do—maybe they're required to see you.

Making assumptions about writing and about writers is one of the most effective ways to encourage a writer to shut down. Instead of statements like, "What works for me is . . ." why not try, "What would work for you?" Understanding ourselves as writers and as learners is a key to understanding other learners and ourselves as tutors. Although one assessment tool—or, in fact, one assessment—could not possibly offer complete insight into countless individual differences, it aids in

beginning the discussions and the investigations that could lead to a more complete understanding and application.

More importantly, any assessment tool provides a springboard for questions: what are learning styles? where do they come from? how do they work? what do they mean? Are learning styles static? dynamic? Are they culturally bound? universal? Are they founded in physiological differences? emotional? cognitive? environmental? How do learning styles interact? What exactly is a personality conflict?

When it comes to writing, do learning styles have a direct impact on writing styles? Or do they simply indicate how a writer goes about handling a writing situation? How does a tutor help writers meet and succeed in a variety of situations? How do we know what to do?

Or do we?

Cindy Johanek
St. Cloud State U.
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APPENDIX

Bernice McCarthy's synthesis of Kolb's LSI and the work of other researchers:

DIVERGERS
- See meaning
- Need to be involved personally
- Learn by listening and sharing ideas
- Absorb reality
- Perceive information concretely and process it reflectively
- Are interested in people and culture; are divergent thinkers who believe in their own experience, excel in viewing concrete situations from many perspectives, and model themselves on those they respect
- Function through social interaction

ASSIMILATORS
- Seek facts
- Need to know what the experts think
- Learn by thinking through ideas; they form reality
- Perceive information abstractly and process it reflectively
- Are less interested in people than ideas

and concepts; they critique information and are data collectors; thorough and industrious, they reexamine facts in situations that perplex them
•Enjoy traditional classrooms; schools are designed for these learners
•Function by adapting to experts

CONVERGERS

•Seek usability
•Need to know how things work
•Learn by testing theories in ways that seem sensible; they edit reality
•Perceive information abstractly and process it actively
•Use factual data to build designed concepts, need hands-on experiences, enjoy solving problems, resent being given answers, restrict judgment to concrete things and have limited tolerance for "fuzz" ideas; they need to know how

things they are asked to do will help in real life
•Function through inferences drawn from sensory experience

ACCOMMODATORS

•Seek hidden possibilities
•Need to know what can be done with things
•Learn by trial and error, self-discovery; they enrich reality
•Perceive information concretely and process it actively
•Adaptable to change and relish it; like variety and excel in situations calling for flexibility
•Tend to take risks, at ease with people but sometimes seen as pushy
•Often reach accurate conclusions in the absence of logical justification
•Function by acting and testing experience

Right Brain Processing and Learning Disabilities: Conclusions Not to Reach in the Writing Center

(A Response to Mary Jane Schramm's *Writing Lab Newsletter* "Tutors' Column")

At the conclusion of Mary Jane Schramm's article "Just Like Joe" (*Writing Lab Newsletter*, Vol. 15, No. 10 [June 1991]) is a "Checklist of Possible Learning Disabled Characteristics" taken from *Learning Disabled Adults in Postsecondary Education* (Washington, D.C.: The National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Handicaps, 1987).

After the study of hemisphericity and learning styles, I am afraid that using this checklist impressionistically on individuals who come to the writing center for help merely propagates a bias in education toward left brainers and against right brainers. While I do not challenge the fact that disabled learners exist and that they possess any or all of the characteristics on the cited checklist, I do dispute the assumption that the demonstration of any or all of the checklist characteristics means the person is learning disabled. The learner may simply be a right-brain processor in a left-brain world. Determination of learning

disabilities can only be made through extensive testing and diagnosis by a qualified professional. In a personal interview, Julian Haber, MD, said, "Labeling can be very pejorative. A descriptive analysis of a person's learning style may be much more helpful in the long run than an LD label. If a writing center tutor suspects a learning style sufficiently deviant that it may handicap that individual, diagnostic help should be sought from a neuropsychologist or a physician knowledgeable in learning development." Dr. Haber is both a former member of the National Committee of Children with Disabilities, American Academy of Pediatrics, and a current member of the sub-specialty section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatrics.

It is not up to us in the writing center to determine learning disabilities and attach labels to our clients. Instead, we need to apply the concept of hemisphericity to explain an often overlooked fact—while we cannot learn anything we have not processed, people do not

process information in the same way. Individuals process information individually.

Hemisphericity can help us mange differences in information processing, and the term specifically refers to the specialized functions by the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Although brain functions are much more complex than presented here, we can simplify them for our purposes to gain insight into the ways individuals process information and help us escape the grave error of mislabeling as learning disabled everyone who processes information differently than we do.

Let's look at a brief overview of the processing styles. Left-brain processors are analytical, deductive, step-by-step, sequential, horizontal, auditory, verbal, logical. These people prefer to deal with problems in an active, verbal, logical manner. They value factual detail and prefer realistic goals. For them, structure, organization, control, and clear assignments have a high priority. Knowing what to do, with emphasis on the work to be completed, they are usually very task and deadline oriented with well-defined goals. They use "intuitive" strategy only when absolutely necessary.

Right-brain processors are holistic, imaginative, simultaneous, multiple, vertical, visual, artistic. Right-brain information processors are generally field dependent, visual learners, global synthesizers of information, oblivious to time, and highly sensitive to color. Being field dependent, right brainers must be able to see what they have to learn on a field (a surface) because they cannot "image" or visualize inside their heads what they hear in a lecture. People with right-brain dominance are not auditory learners; they are often kinesthetic, tactile learners. People in this category strongly prefer to deal with problems in a receptive, spatial (relational), intuitive manner. People-oriented with a concern for broad, overall issues, they focus on humanistic and idealistic goals. They put high priority on self-initiative and prefer loose lines of authority. They will use a "logical" strategy only when absolutely necessary.

Neither information processing style is inherently better or worse than the other. Being left-brain dominant does not confer a badge of better personhood, but it does mean a decided advantage in most classes. Being

right-brain dominant does not doom one to a lifetime of failure, but it may mean a decided disadvantage in many classes. Because hemisphericity is established early in life, it cannot be cast off in favor of a processing style more amenable to working inside the school system. Students don't have a choice about what style of information processors they are. But teachers and tutors have choices about how to deal with non-left brained processors without labeling them learning disabled.

Now let us carefully consider each item in the Checklist cited by Schramm:

• *Demonstrates marked difficulty in reading, writing, spelling and/or using numerical concepts in contrast with average to superior skills in other areas.*

and

• *Confuses similar letters such [as] "b" and "d", or "p" and "q"; confuses the order of letters in words, repeating "was" for "saw" "teh" for "the"; may misspell the same word several different ways in the same composition.*

These two characteristics result from right-brain learners' need for whole concept, their global orientation, and their field dependency; they are often poor readers. They look at the beginning/ending of a work and fill in whatever they think fits. They are less attentive to the details than to the whole picture so their attempts at closure give them reading and spelling miscues. But these are often the folks who are most creative, lively and inventive.

Right-brain processors look at a whole word and do not discriminate between words with similar profiles. Or if the beginning and ending look like some other word, these people are as likely to replace (guess at) the middle letters at will. Because right-brain learners do not see the details of individual letters, phonics fails with these folks. They are so intent on getting the big picture quickly that "b" and "d" as mirror images don't seem important to them. Right brainers are intent on getting their impressions down quickly before they evaporate. Then once those impressions are written down, right brainers are further hampered since they don't see several different misspellings. Because right brainers aren't good proofreaders, word processing spell checkers

are a boon for these students.

• *Confuses similar numbers such as 3 and 8, 6 and 9, or changes the sequence of numbers such as 14 and 41; has difficulty copying numbers accurately and working with numbers in columns.*

This is the same situation as confusing similar letters. Right brainers are impatient, global learners. They get a visual impression of a letter or a number and go on. This does not mean they are learning disabled, but merely differ in processing strategy from detail-oriented, step-by-step left brainers.

• *Omits or adds words, particularly when reading aloud.*

Reading aloud unpreviewed material is a tough task for right brain learners. Reading literature is often defined as requiring a willing suspension of disbelief, but reading anything cold requires another sort of suspension: the reader has to be willing to wait for the printed words to make sense. However, right-brain learners want immediate sense; they want the whole text. Besides, since their lack of attention to detail and inability to sound out words as they read frustrate them, they compensate by making the text "come out right"—reading words they anticipate should be there or omitting words which are printed on the page.

• *Has poorly formed handwriting—may print instead of using script; writes with inconsistent slant; has difficulty with certain letters; spaces words unevenly.*

These days handwriting is a poor test for learning disabilities. Years ago when handwriting was taught and practiced at every level from elementary through secondary school, people were assessed by their accomplishment of a beautiful hand.

For about twenty years handwriting practice, beyond the year of its introduction, has been essentially dropped from school curricula. Furthermore, as graphologists will attest, a preference for printing over script or mixed printing and script or uneven spacing may be more indicators of personality or creativity than of learning difficulty.

• *Has trouble listening to a lecture and taking notes at the same time.*

Again, right-brain learners, as predominantly visual rather than auditory learners, must have an overview of what is coming. They need to see the whole picture before they can see what is important in a lecture to take notes about. Many right-brain learners fare better with a partial outline handout to help determine what's important. The typical lecture note-taking environment is much more comfortable for the left-brain learners who can take information a step at a time and who trust the instructor to make it all mean something later. (Of course, often even the left brainers are left in a lurch by some instructors who merely spew our information and never tie it together later.)

• *Has trouble understanding or following directions; is easily overwhelmed by a multiplicity of directions or over-stimulation; may not understand information the first time it is given and may need to have it repeated.*

This "characteristic" presupposes that good learners will be able to follow spoken directions, which is how most instructors give directions. Good learners, i.e. left-brain learners, are for the most part auditory learners for whom spoken directions, even multiple directions, pose no problem. Left-brain learners can understand information the first time and without repetition because spoken information is their metier. On the other hand, right-brain learners as visual learners *must see* the directions, cannot respond well to spoken directions, and may need several repetitions to process information which is delivered verbally.

• *Is easily distracted by background noise or visual stimulation; [has] difficulty in paying attention; may appear to be hurried and anxious in one-to-one meetings.*

Because right-brain learners are visual learners, naturally, visual stimulation is going to distract them. Because they are not auditory learners, background noises may indeed distract them from concentrating. They're often accused of "not paying attention" simply because they are not responding to the left-brain cues their instructors are giving. They may indeed be paying a great deal of attention, concentrating hard on transmuting the typical left-brain cues to something they can make sense of.

All through their schooling they have

been put down for being different, for not learning "like the other children," for asking questions like "why do we have to know this?" Of course, they're anxious. They expect to be told once again that they don't measure up. Of course they're in a hurry. You'd be in a hurry, too, to be done with one-to-one meetings with instructors or tutors if that were the outcome of all such meetings. Encounters that cause learners to question their self-worth are bound to produce anxiety.

• *Exhibits severe difficulty in sticking to simple schedules; repeatedly forgets things, loses possessions, and generally seems "personally disorganized."*

Right-brain learners are not time bound. They lose, break, or forget to look at watches. There are spontaneous people who will lose themselves in something interesting and "forget" appointments. Schedules, simple or otherwise, do not mean much to these creative folks. Certainly, unscheduled people seem "personally disorganized" to left-brain, linear, sequential instructors and administrators, who constantly check their Daytimers (TM) and their watches to remain on schedule.

• *Seems disoriented in time—is often late to class, unusually early for appointments, unable to finish assignments in the standard time period, or rushes to complete them not using all the time allocated.*

Because time is less important to right-brain processors, their world is organized on other criteria. This inattention to clocks, schedules and appointments drives left brainers crazy.

And who sets "the standard time period" for an assignment? You guessed it—these same left brainers who measure everyone's production by their own. Right brainers, however, do not step to the tick of a clock, yet they may rush to premature completion.

• *Appears clumsy or poorly coordinated.*

Once again bias strikes. Physically as well as mentally, right brainers often rush headlong into the fray, only to stumble, fall, and be called clumsy by those more patient, deliberate left-brain processors. To left-brained educators the right-brain learners may indeed appear clumsy or poorly coordinated simply

because they are in a hurry. Right brainers are terrifically impatient, eager to get on with things, discontented with waiting for step-by-step instructions or logical (read left-brain) organization.

• *Seems disorganized in space—confuses up and down, right and left; gets lost in a building; is disoriented when familiar environment is rearranged.*

Right brainers are field dependent so it stands to reason that changing the field may lose them. They need to see the big picture, so rearranging the details of their environment will make them appear disorganized in space. Right/left confusion is a midline orientation situation that all kids go through; some just take longer than others in finding coping strategies.

• *Displays excessive anxiety, anger, or depression because of the difficulty in coping with school or social situations.*

Anxiety, anger, depression, and difficulty in coping may all be characteristics of right brainers. All through their schooling right brainers have been put at a disadvantage because academe at any level is a left-brained world. Teachers lecture; students listen (auditory). Teachers assign reading; students read (auditory). Teachers assign a theme; students write (auditory). Teachers make up a year-long syllabus, but share it with students step-by-step. Rarely do right-brain processors have any idea of why they are learning something or how it "fits in to the big picture." They never get to see the big picture; it is screened from their view, tiny portions of it exposed during the course of the academic year. This technique works well with left-brained processors, who can be patient with this linear, sequential, part-to-whole approach. The higher the grade level, the greater the chance of students finding themselves in a lecture, note-taking situation. At the university level most of the classes may be of the lecture/note-taking type. And it's true for right-brained processors that lectures are hard to follow without lots of visual aids, overheads, and flip charts. These right-brain processors absolutely require a vision of the big picture so that the pieces will have somewhere to fit in as they accumulate. But what do right-brained processors do? They lose their assurance. School is the students' social situation. And when they feel worthless and

incompetent at school, they feel like social outcasts.

• *Misinterprets the subtleties in language, tone or voice, or social situations.*

The big picture does not lend itself to subtleties. Those people who respond globally, who are not into details, who synthesize lots of disparate bits of information are bound to miss nuances of language, tone, and social situations. Frankly, much of this subtlety may seem petty and unimportant to a right brainer.

In conclusion, an awareness of these processing or cognitive and learning styles should help us as tutors refrain from impressionistically labeling students as learning disabled, or accepting such labels supplied by left-brain biases, as students come to us for assistance in the writing center. This awareness can redirect our focus to the writing itself rather than to some attempt at "fixing" students who are not broken. And at the same time we can help students understand the variety of learning and processing styles so that they can make positive adjustments in their learning and writing habits and in their feelings of self-worth.

Margaret-Rose Marek
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Fort Worth, TX

If you want more grounding in laterality and cognitive styles, here are some works on the subject.

**HEMISPHERICITY
AND LEARNING STYLES**

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Gazzaniga, Michael S. *The Bisected Brain.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

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Jerison, Harry J. *Evolution of the Brain and Intelligence.* New York: Academic Press, 1973.

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Student Learning Styles and Brain Behavior: Programs Instrumentation and Research. Selected Papers from the National Conference sponsored by the Learning Styles Network. Published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. 1979. NASSP, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091.

Labels: Are They Necessarily Evil?
(A Response to a Response)

In response to Margaret-Rose Marek's article "Right Brain Processing and Learning Disabilities: Conclusions Not to Reach in the Writing Center" (printed above), I would like to apologize for any misconceptions concerning my article "Just Like Joe" and the corresponding learning disabilities checklist (*Writing Lab Newsletter* 15 [June, 1991]: 9-10).

It seems Ms. Marek misunderstood my intent. My article is not meant to be prescriptive, explaining how to tutor and diagnose students with learning disabilities. Rather, it is descriptive, detailing one tutor's experience with one student who was tested by a state-certified psychometrist and diagnosed as learning disabled by a state-certified psychologist.

As for labels and biases ("Once again, bias strikes"), the whole purpose of my article is to dispel the notion that people who have been diagnosed as learning disabled are inherently "different" as human beings. While I admit that biases do exist and mislabelling does occur (with damaging effects on students), I do not think that labels—in and of themselves—are necessarily evil.

Certainly, whether or not to use labels such as "learning disabled" in the classroom and writing center is a problematic issue which affects not only the student but also teachers, tutors, and administrators. The very word "disabled" contains an inherent stigma that can injure student self-esteem and propagate teacher/administrative bias.

The issue is complicated further, both because researchers have an imperfect understanding of the underlying causes of learning disabilities and because learning disabilities are "invisible" and therefore harder to understand and diagnose than a disability that manifests itself in physical terms, such as sight or hearing impairment.

Admitting these imperfections, I am not prepared to discard the use of labels altogether. In the tutoring situation I described in my article, the label "learning disabled" created a frame of reference in which I could work. Had I not known that this student was learning disabled, I might have tried techniques that in all probability would have failed. The label, then, provided me with perspectives as I sought to understand both the student's particular learning problems and the techniques that would help him become a better writer.

Our challenge as tutors and educators, then, is to use labels to our advantage, seeing in them an opportunity to increase our knowledge concerning these students who have been diagnosed as learning disabled. A greater understanding of each client's particular writing problems can only aid us in the process of helping them become better writers and self-assured learners.

Mary Jane Schramm
Albany, IN

Calendar for Writing Center Associations (WCAs)

Feb. 14: CUNY Writing Centers Association, in Flushing, NY
Contact: John Troynaski, Writing Skills Workshop, 232 Kiely Hall, Queens College/CUNY, 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, NY 11367-0904.

April 10-11: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Kalamazoo, MI
Contact: Siham Fares, The Writing Lab, 1044 Moore Hall, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5031

April 11: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Emmitsburg, MD
Contact: Carl Glover, Writing and Communications Program, Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

April 11: New England Writing Centers Association, in Fall River, MA
Contact: Ron Weisberger, Bristol Community College, 777 Elsbree St., Fall River, MA 02720

Call for Essay Proposals

Johnella E. Butler, Juan Guerra, and Carol Severino seek proposals for *Writing in Multicultural Settings.* a new volume in the Research and Scholarship in Composition series. This multidisciplinary collection will address theoretical and practical issues of writing pedagogy and research. Of particular interest are proposals on topics such as contrastive rhetoric; writing processes and discourse patterns of ESL, bilingual, and bidialectical students; writing conference dynamics; and the politics of multicultural literacy.

Please send copies of 300-word proposals by January 15 to both Butler (American Ethnic Studies Dept., University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195; 206-543-4495) and Severino (Rhetoric Dept., University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242; 319-335-0179).

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The Kellogg Institute trains faculty, counselors, and administrators from developmental and learning assistance programs in current techniques for promoting learning improvement. For applications and further information, contact Elaini Bingham, Director of the Kellogg Institute, or Margaret Mock, Administrative Assistant, National Center for Developmental Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608 (704-262-3057). Deadline for application: March 16, 1992.

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
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Address correction requested