

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 29, Number 5

Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing

January, 2005

...FROM THE EDITOR...

This issue of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* offers Jane Auten's study of peer response comments and the insights they suggest for tutor talk; Margaret Mika's review of WCOOnline, a software program designed to help with keeping records, making appointments, and producing data for reports; Peter Moe's exploration of the tool belt metaphor for why students need strategies; Melissa Weintraub's illustration of how useful social work skills are for tutors; and Luke Niiler's revised research study of how tutoring improves student writing.

In addition, you'll find invitations to propose conference presentations, nominations for scholarship awards, application information for a research grant, and an announcement about linking your writing center's Web site to the IWCA site, plus announcements of writing center awards.

All of this is contained in an issue that should reach you in early to mid-January. We've recently learned that some newsletters are not arriving on time, and a few of you have found some shreds of paper in your mailboxes that started out as copies of *WLN*. We're tracking down the culprits, and we hope these problems are getting solved. But let us know (wln@purdue.edu) if you are still having problems.

• Muriel Harris, editor

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Following the script: Peer readers and the language of feedback on writing

"What would you like to work on today?"

It is the top of the hour, midday, and mid-semester in our Writing Center, and one of the 20 graduate-student writing consultants has just begun another session with a well-known writing-center move: establishing a sense of shared purpose, she gives control of the session to the writer/student. It's a kind of scripted opening, although we like to think all Center sessions are unique. "Tell me about the assignment. What are you trying to do in this paper?" They are familiar phrases with which writing consultants work this territory between teaching and conversing, maintaining the stance somewhere between grader and classmate. As Muriel Harris pointed out, writing center consultants are "a hybrid creation—neither a teacher nor a peer"(371). The students who come to work with us in writing centers already know that too: "peer response" refers to a familiar classroom activity. So our stock phrases give both student "clients" and tutor/consultants solid

ground for working together, but they also enter into a conversation about the student's paper that has already started.

Many undergraduates come to a writing center having both given and received feedback on their papers. But while we're accustomed to dealing

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Manuscripts: Recommended length for articles is approximately 2500-3000 words, 1500 words for reviews and Tutors' Column essays, in MLA format. If possible, please send as attached files in an e-mail to wln@purdue.edu. Otherwise, send hard copy and a computer disk or CD-ROM, and please enclose a self-addressed envelope with return postage not pasted to the envelope. The deadline for announcements is 45 days prior to the month of issue (e.g. August 15 for an October issue).

with a teacher's comments, we often neglect to take other kinds of feedback into account as part of the context of the writing center session. Our common ground in collaboration argues for paying some attention to the way classmates carry on peer response. In the discussion that follows, I will show how peer feedback both parallels "tutor talk" and prompts a reassessment of it.

In a study of the way first-year college students critique each other's papers, I found patterns of peer response that share the familiar ground with our "tutor talk." I examined over 200 written peer reviews from seven sections of first-year college composition. While the three writing instructors involved have different teaching styles, all had assigned students to write an out-of-class response to a peer's paper. This "letter of response" was shared with a small workshop group in the next class. The letter assignment included little in the way of structured guidelines for writing, yet most students' responses followed remarkably similar formal and stylistic conventions. As shown in the chart, most students' response letters provided the required feedback within a fairly structured routine—even though their responses were written as narrative comments, not "answers" on a guide sheet. They offered generalized, often *directive* comments that both supported students efforts to "make sense" of a classmate's paper and bore striking resemblance to the general structure of a writing center session.

Patterns of peer response

First of all, most of the students started their response letters with what I call a *Ritual Opening*. I think the now-standard advice to "look for something good about the paper" holds sway even when it's not explicitly mandated. For the opening sentence follows the pattern of a respondent who wrote, "I must first say, I liked it." Respondents usually add a statement of *overall approval* such as "This paper is very good." These are clearly

ritualized openings, however, and bear little relationship to the ensuing content. While they set a tone of helpfulness and support—a strategy that has its parallel in our efforts to start the writing center session on a positive note, these broad labels also show the emptiness of blanket approval. Comments that follow often say the paper is not so "very good" after all.

Such openings give a useful perspective on the moves we sometimes make in the writing center. Perhaps students, used to such locutions, hear our opening compliments as backhanded, the encouraging "you have a good start" as an empty formula. By locating a consultant's comments in between peer support and teacher critique, we can see that "Tutor Talk" needs to avoid the vague "good paper" ritual in favor of a teaching comment such as "I like the way you used visual details here."

Like typical writing center sessions, these peer response letters moved from the opening pleasantries to language that *creates a connection*. Many students brought up their own similar experience, or simply agreed with the writer's views ("I agree with you because this happened to me in high school too"). This personal link helps reviewers make a transition from classmate chat to editorial advice:

I really like your topic because I understand what you're talking about through writing my own paper. In my introductions, I sometimes find myself writing down vague, meaningless sentences just to try and make my paper understandable [too]. . . . Your first sentence . . . seemed really awkward for me to read.

While a writing center session also benefits from the personal, student-to-student connection ("I have a ton of work due this week too"), writing consultants need not resort to back-handed advice about a common problem ("meaningless sentences"). Here a sense of "following the script" can

come in handy, as the session moves into goal-setting and collaborative work on problem passages.

However, the peer response letters show that this transition from colleague to critic makes most students uncomfortable. Many of the peer readers simply shy away from providing concrete criticism, deflecting authority with a disclaimer:

To start off, I just want to say that what I write in this review is just my opinion and please feel free to disregard them [sic] if they don't suit your style. Your paper is your paper.

Some responses continue to evade the role of adviser. In their effort to avoid a directive stance for which they feel unauthorized, the peer readers substitute indirection. One such letter earnestly addresses problems but stays safely speculative:

The interview . . . relates to the basic idea of the paper very well, but it doesn't fit where it is. Maybe it could be placed in the conclusion, but I don't know. I don't know what to do with the personal narrative either. It is a very nice touch, but I'm not sure how it could be incorporated to fit better.

As if still unsure about the reception of this dubious advice, the reviewer finishes the letter with a flurry of reassurance: "and you provide a lot of effective sources and make a lot of interesting points."

Perhaps such deflection creates a safe place from which to launch the crucial next step of the response—one in which they must make judgments on the paper. But "non-directive" identification of problem areas can seem simply evasive. In her article for *Stories from the Center*, Catherine Latterell suggests that writing center tutors need to be careful of such evasions and that we need a more nuanced understanding of the Prime Directive to be "non-directive." These peer responses give us

another reason to think about doing that. If we place the writing consultant's advice on a continuum between peer support and teacher critique, we can see Tutor Talk clearly as more than peer reaction. Writing consultants are namers and explainers. The much-discussed "authority" of training and experience gives tutors an advantage over uneasy peer readers.

The directive moment

In the third segment of the response letter, students come at last to a more directive moment—and peer reviewers try to adopt the language of academic writing, offering prescriptions in the language of composition class. This third element, identifying *highlights and "the" problem*, may occupy most of the response, but it also shows us how students struggle with the challenge of providing honest feedback while maintaining a collegial relationship with a classmate. And here, the teacher's presence is felt as the comments refer to grading criteria or point out problems—a lack of thesis, using sources, attention to the assignment—and mechanical errors. Kenneth Bruffee argues that since "teachers seldom instruct students in how to engage helpfully in the intellectually demanding, aesthetically sophisticated, and socially delicate process of commenting helpfully on the work of peers" (131), the result of peer response may be simply another student "performance before an audience of one, the teacher" rather than helpful guidance to a fellow student.

The excerpt below is a typical combination of response rituals, helpful feedback, and standard phrases from the composition classroom [thesis, support, credibility]. But it manages to stay safely non-confrontational by hedging its advice with qualifiers:

I believe the point of your paper. . . . However, I'm not sure if I see a clear thesis statement of your point (if that was it) and that needs to be worked on a little bit. I like your examples a lot, they're very

useful . . . and support your thesis. However, I think you might need a few more sources (maybe articles?).

There seems to be a lot of opinion in this paper, which I feel is not a bad thing, but a few facts are needed to give the paper credibility. . . . I think you have all the makings here of a really good paper, you just need a little more research and editing. Again, these are all just my opinions.

This letter also illustrates the last, and fourth part of peer response, when students typically return to the language of ritual in their *Closing*. Most of the responses in the sample concluded by going back to *expressions of overall approval* ("All in all, I think you've got a great paper") and then closed with broad assurances of success, almost invariably minimizing the needed changes as minor adjustments ("You just need to clarify your thesis, and then once you write a conclusion, you'll be all set").

Such peer responses offer insight for writing center work by showing how students find ways to fit their authority (as readers and classmates) into what they perceive to be an appropriate style, tone, and form. Authorized by the teacher, peer response can be a way of "domesticating" collaborative learning, as Harvey Kail and John Trimbur put it, "into the established structures of teaching and learning" (209). As we have seen, it is also an exercise in steering safely between the demands of their role as sympathetic classmates and the expectations inherent in this teacher-initiated peer review assignment.

Although in writing centers we position ourselves outside "the established structures," we too must navigate between peers, products, and teachers "outside the normal channels of teaching and learning" (Kail and Trimbur 208). Like peer readers, writing consultants must maintain a companion-

able stance with the student writer while always being aware of the absent participant, the teacher. And while a writing center session may bypass classroom protocols, our intention, too, is a fitting of the student into “established structures.” As theorists like Bruffee have pointed out, writing centers do this by helping students make a bridge “between the knowledge or discourse communities they already belong to and the knowledge or discourse communities they aspire to join” (85).

Reading the efforts of students to create what I would call a “bridging” language in peer responses, I became aware of our own stylized scripts and our own “bridging” strategies in the writing center. Empirical studies have shown that students learning to revise need more than an act of response; it is the quality of explanation and discussion of that response that leads students to productive revision (Chinn et al.). In the writing center, we can go beyond peer response to furnish that key explanation and discussion. But we can also employ some strategies from standard peer response strategies:

- After the initial chat about the assignment and agenda-setting is over, consultants quite genuinely turn to the positive opening: “I really like that sentence”; “What an interesting topic.” But perhaps we could

use more strategies of self-revelation: “I have had the same experience as you have” and shared academic work.

- Sometimes we should add an *explicit* disclaimer: “I’m just giving you my opinion.” “Your paper is your paper.” Perhaps we forget to stake out our position

in the space between student and teacher.

- Writing center sessions focus on identifying and pointing out, asking questions, trying to engage the writer in dialogue, giving some advice. This is our way of bridging between worlds. And like the peer reader, we

Student Comments on Student Writing: A Chart of Peer Response

Section	Characteristic Elements	Examples
Opening	Overall approval Enjoyment Support	"Your paper was... [interesting, excellent]" "I really [enjoyed, liked] your paper" "You've done a good job" "I enjoyed reading this paper" "Great topic"
Connection	personal link self story focus on a strength	"I myself am in the field of communications" "This happened to me" "I liked how you..."
Deflecting Authority	disclaimer reference to assignment	"My comments are only suggestions" "Please remember this is only my opinion"
Identifying and Evaluating	identifying parts identifying content pointing to problems	"The most interesting part of the paper is..." "The choice of words is good" "The 'after' part could use more detail" "I would like to know more about..."
Responding, Directing, & Evading	questions about content advice, suggestions evasions	"You need to fine tune this section to show..." "There are just a few places that need work" "Maybe just figure out what you really want to say, and then you will be set!"
Closing	summary of advice promise of success repetition of approval minimizing problems	"If you can make your first paragraph stronger..." "By the final draft, this will be a great essay" "Once you /./ it will be a great paper" "Overall, I really enjoyed this paper" "All in all, I thought your paper was great" "Other than that, I thought the essay was well written" "But you have a great start" "With just some rewording,..." "If you fix your [conclusion, intro], you'll be all set."

need to have an eye on the student writer and an eye on the academic world we work in. But a writing consultant has a trained and experienced eye and language to *make explicit* the demands of faculty, of assignments, of the academy, and to the terminology of composition—thesis statement, “developing” the paragraph, sentence fragment—the specialized language that students need to translate. So when we say, “I can’t tell you which is best for your paper—what do you think?” we need to help writers make that choice (“but this might work better here”), so that the writer hears help rather than evasion.

We have many truisms in writing center work that stress lack of unifor-

mity: “No two sessions are alike,” “Every student brings a unique problem.” Yes, indeed. But the undergraduate students who come to work with our trained writing consultants are increasingly schooled themselves—however generally—in a language of peer response that serves as a bridge between student culture and classroom culture. We can make use of that knowledge . . . and that language . . . in the writing center as we seek to connect collaboratively with writers.

Jane Auten
American University
Washington, D.C.

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Pacific Northwest Writing Center Association

Call for Proposals
April 16, 2005
Bothell, Washington
“*When the Margin Moves to the Center*”
Keynote speaker: Nancy Grimm

Proposals for 60-minute sessions—individual and panel presentations, facilitated discussions, or workshops—must be received by February 11, 2005. For proposal and registration details, check the Web site or contact Becky Reed Rosenberg, beckyr@u.washington.edu. Web site: <<http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~writepro/PNWCA.htm>>.

Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference

Call for Proposals
March 4-5, 2005
“*Returning to our Roots*”

Conference registration is due by February 14, 2005. The cost is \$20 for students and \$45 for administrators. This cost includes all events during the 2-day conference including the keynote address and an open-mic poetry reading.

The theme “Returning to Our Roots” encourages writing center administrators, tutors, and any who read and write to think about the roots that nourish their love for the written word. It also asks them to consider how best to teach so that the roots of other writers become stronger. Presentation proposals incorporating this theme must be submitted by January 28, 2005. Sessions will include a poster session and 20- and 40-minute presentations.

For more information, registration forms, or proposal applications, visit our Web site: <<http://www.uvsc.edu/owl>>. Contact: Lisa Eastmond Bell, phone: 801-863-8099, e-mail: lisa.bell@uvsc.edu.

Review of WCOOnline

Reviewed by Margaret Mika (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI;
mmika@uwm.edu)

Does this sound familiar? You're a writing center administrator with more projects than time to do them. You've got a job that might easily take up 100% of your time but you're contractually allotted far less than that. Budget crises, political battles, and last minute funding proposals highjack your schedule. Keeping the center running effectively day to day is often trumped by maneuvering to just keep the center open, *period*. In order to better manage your center's present and protect its future—not to mention to free you to do the writing center work you most enjoy, i.e., working with students, tutors and colleagues—you've been researching writing center administration and scheduling programs that will help you organize, manage, schedule and report. After using such a program called WCOOnline for 3 years, I would encourage you to consider it for your center.

The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee (26,000+ students) has a small space and smaller budget, but we have still managed to hold as many as 1500 sessions in 12 weeks. Five years ago when I became director, the Center was still relying on hard copy recordkeeping. Even though we tried our best to keep track, we still usually found ourselves guessing, e.g., the total number of appointments per semester. No surprise, we had no assuredly *accurate* data about anything else either—students' status, course, background, major, first language, etc. Students reserved appointments in person in a book. Panic set in more than once when the book disappeared or when students erased each others' names to co-opt an appointment time. (Well, at least we knew we were popu-

lar.) And the paper load! Sheets and sheets of paper to be counted, filed and/or lost forever. I never felt truly confident in making budget or space requests because I knew how inadequate our recordkeeping was. Here was our Catch-22: I couldn't make strong arguments for staff, space, or materials—including a computerized recordkeeping program—if I didn't know *exactly* know what our numbers and needs were. We obviously needed a better system to manage and record our center's work.

Our solution was WCOOnline. In the interest of complete disclosure, this couldn't have been much easier since four years ago its creator Richard Hay had just entered UWM's rhetoric and composition graduate program and, very fortunately, made a beeline to the writing center, eventually assuming the role of Assistant Coordinator. Richard's involvement in writing centers began at Indiana State University under the direction of long-time community members Pete Carino and Doug Enders. Beginning as a Web consultant at the ISU Writing Center in 1997, Richard slowly began taking on more and more tutoring responsibilities. Tired of entering forms by hand and constantly searching for misplaced files, Richard began working to develop an online database that could be used to contain writing center records. After a presentation at the 1999 East Central Writing Centers Association Conference in Lansing demonstrated that other centers might be interested in such software, Richard began working on a more complete and customizable version of the program. Five years and four versions later, Richard just released WCOOnline 4.0, now a

complete scheduling and record keeping solution to the writing center community at large. The fact that WCOOnline was designed specifically for writing centers by a member of the writing center community is one of its most attractive features.

A second important disclosure: My name is Margaret. I am low tech. Another of WCOOnline's best features? It is made for folks like me. It is extremely user-friendly. It does not come in a box. It is on your computer. It resides completely on the Web, installed, hosted, and supported remotely by the WCOOnline team. Unlike other products that have to be installed locally on each computer in the writing center, WCOOnline is hosted remotely and accessed through the Web from any Web browser, and on any Internet-connected computer. Any customizations, changes, or updates are done instantly by the WCOOnline staff. In other words, instead of wading through lines of computer code, manually editing database structures, or waiting for an upgrade CD-ROM to arrive in the mail and finding someone to install it on each computer, I can simply let the WCOOnline team know what I need and it is implemented as soon as possible, usually within a day, by a professional staff.

Without a doubt, over the past three and a half years and three versions, WCOOnline's planning, scheduling, proposing, and reporting capabilities have been reliable and invaluable.

Planning

Our Center is open approximately 35-37 hrs./week, Monday through Friday during the 9-month academic year.

Our staff consists of 15-18 upper level undergraduates and graduate students. Due to our small quarters, only three tutors have workspace at any one time. I have to adjust the schedule wisely each semester taking in account tutors' availability, students' preferences, and of course, our budget.

As a planning tool, WOnline has been crucial in helping us to easily analyze and then staff those days/times which students most prefer or avoid. Now that I have years of hard data at my fingertips, I can identify increasingly reliable usage patterns. Not only has WOnline facilitated smarter planning, but it has helped with public relations, too. Recently, for example, I was better able to explain to a somewhat annoyed professor why we weren't open the late hours she wished. At UWM, perhaps because we are an urban commuter school, WOnline data indicated that when we offered later evening hours, we mostly sat empty. Those hours were a glaring hole in a schedule that often is filled 70-100% during the day. WOnline informed a tough but necessary staffing/budget decision. Perhaps this professor is still disappointed with the outcome, but at least she knows that I took her suggestion seriously and that our scheduling decisions are not arbitrary.

Scheduling

WOnline allows students to make appointments by simply logging in to a Web page and choosing a day, time and tutor. This means that students can make appointments at their convenience—not just when the center is open. Once they make an appointment, WOnline sends them a reminder 24 hours beforehand—another great feature. No more disappearing appointment books, bottles of Liquid Paper, unreadable scratch-overs or appointment stealing.

Right from the get-go, students used the system with ease. Since we introduced this feature in summer 2004,

online scheduling has been hugely successful. We anticipated a few problems—but had virtually none.

Reporting and proposing

WOnline makes it easy to gather data for all kinds of reports, e.g., daily looks, semester to semester, and/or long-term comparative studies. Acquiring clear, accurate, and current data is absolutely crucial for administrative, political, and budget purposes particularly because, as we all know, we often find ourselves educating other administrators and colleagues about our work. WOnline reporting capabilities provide the picture that's worth a thousand words to multiple audiences whether they are from the arts, business, math or English. It's tough to ignore a pie chart that shows 25% of a center's total population comes from (fill in the blank) school.

WOnline offers several standards reports when a center is being used in multiple ways—by hour, day, tutor, semester, or student. It can provide demographics, major, class standing as well as the course for which the writer is seeking assistance. I really appreciate being able to document that we draw students not just from letters and science but from every school on UWM's campus including nursing, business, education, fine arts, and the graduate school. Clearly, this bolsters the argument that our center is a campus-wide service that deserves campus-wide financial support.

Customizations and upgrades

Another major benefit of WOnline is that it is completely customized for each center—no two centers use the same version of WOnline as the software is extensively tailored to meet the wants and needs of each center. Also, unlike other packages, all upgrades to WOnline are installed automatically by the WOnline staff without our having to do anything.

While our center is not as large as others and currently the sole user on cam-

pus, WOnline can handle an unlimited number of tutors, students, and records. More importantly, one installation of WOnline can service multiple writing centers at multiple locations and all with different schedules. Because TutorTrac, another computer program, has generated much discussion on the WCenter listserv and in a review by Shareen Grogan and Sylvia Whitman (*Writing Lab Newsletter* 29.3 [2004]: 12-14), it might be useful to do a quick comparison. Both WOnline and TutorTrac offer scheduling and recordkeeping capabilities for writing centers, but I see at least three important differences between the two:

- WOnline was designed from the ground up just for writing centers. Unlike TutorTrac which was created by modifying the existing Accutrac program, WOnline programmers looked at what writing centers needed and made a program to exceed those expectations.
- WOnline, unlike TutorTrac, is a web-based program installed, maintained and hosted remotely by the WOnline staff.
- WOnline saves centers from large up-front costs. Centers pay a small monthly fee for as long as they use the software. If they decide not to continue using the software, centers are not out the \$2000+ that purchasing similar software might initially cost. And for the monthly subscription cost, centers are entitled to unlimited training and technical support, with requests usually addressed within a few hours of being submitted. While TutorTrac does offer some limited free support, they strongly encourage the purchase of a "Priority Support Package" costing anywhere from \$250 to more than \$1000.

Wish list

What else would I like WOnline to do that it currently does not? Within the scheduler itself, we would like a feature to track two more statistics:

1) *turnaways* (students who cannot schedule an appointment because we don't have enough tutors/space/open hours; very important numbers for budget arguments)

2) *no-shows* (allows us to remind students to courteously cancel

appointments and to track repeat offenders)

The good news is that as of this writing, I am told that WOnline will make these features available within the next two months.

Simply put, WOnline allows me to do what I most need and like to do much more easily and cost-effectively. Its capabilities enable me to make smarter staffing and scheduling decisions. It has vastly facilitated student appointment-making. It has been cus-

tomized and upgraded with no hassles. Most importantly, its report capabilities have helped me to demonstrate clearly our center's success and to argue compellingly for our center's needs. Based on my experience over time, this program's clear, graphic, and attractive reports have garnered positive attention around campus, in particular from our dean. In fact, he has spearheaded efforts to expand our space and budget. You can see the WOnline demo and find information and purchasing costs at <<http://wconline.therichco.com>>.

International Writing Centers Association NEWS

• Call for Nominations: 2004 IWCA Outstanding Scholarship Awards

You are invited to nominate a book or article for the 2004 IWCA Outstanding Scholarship Awards for Best Book and Best Article. The book and article must have a publication date of 2004.

Deadline: Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Address: Send nominations by e-mail to Jon Olson, jeo3@psu.edu.

Guidelines: Publications may be nominated by the author(s) or by other readers. Nominations must specify—with at least a few sentences but with a maximum of two screens—the reasons why the book or article deserves the

award. Send separate nomination messages for each item of scholarship if more than one are nominated. Nominations will be forwarded to the award committees after the deadline. If a nominated publication is not from a readily accessible publication, the nominator may be asked to provide a copy.

IWCA supports diverse scholarship and publication. If nominators find that deserving scholarship does not fit the conventions found in most paper- or e-based publications, they should explain why the publication is to be considered in either the article or the book category. Please see <<http://www.writingcenters.org/awards.htm>> for nomination policies and criteria.

• IWCA Scholarships

IWCA encourages the writing center research of its members by offering two kinds of grants: one for graduate students and the other for professionals. The Research Awards Committee convenes online biannu-

ally to consider applications following January 1 and July 1 deadlines. If you wish to apply for a grant before the January 1, 2005, deadline, please see the guidelines at <<http://writingcenters.org/grants.htm>>.

Jon Olson, IWCA President

• Linking your writing center to the IWCA Web site

The IWCA Web site offers a new feature to fulfill the request of many folks: a database of links to writing centers online. The old IWCA Web site maintained by Bruce Pegg had a long list of links to writing centers. Unfortunately that list was basically a long *static* Web page and many of the links on it were broken. A static Web page is a page that is created by someone using a Web editing program or basic HTML. Such pages are generally controlled by one person who has to maintain it. Static Web pages are great for information that does not change that often, but is ill-suited for a site that contains links to Web sites

that will change over time. The answer is a *dynamic* Web page which will allow users to create links without the need for one person to go through and make all the links and text of the page. A dynamic, interactive site allows for all writing center folks to suggest their writing centers sites to the database.

If you have an writing center Web page, or a full-blown OWL on the Web, please drop by <<http://writingcenters.org/owcdb>> and submit your link.

*Clint Gardner, Salt Lake Community College
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TUTORS' COLUMN

Helping writers assemble tool belts

Similar to using a tool in any production process, writers use strategies to create an essay. Sometimes though, writers may need to learn how to use a new tool to combat a writing ailment. In a way, the writing center could be thought of as the tool store for frustrated writers. While we at the writing center can help writers by allowing them to use our knowledge of writing tools, a more beneficial conference would be one where writers learn how to use a writing strategy for their own use. The way for assistants to equip students with a new writing tool comes from an amalgamation of modeling the usage of the strategy and allowing writers work alone with the tool, and by doing so we can help writers acquire a strategy tool belt of their own.

A prime example of this type of interactive training comes from a summer job I had working on the grounds crew of a country club. Tim, the course superintendent, had a set procedure he used to train an employee for a new task. First, he would acquaint the employee with the new equipment needed for the job. For example, to familiarize an employee with foreign machinery, Tim would show how to check the engine's fluids, search for mechanical problems, and start the equipment. Tim would then take the employee out on the course and demonstrate how to use the equipment. If the task were a mowing job, for example, Tim himself would make a few passes with the mower and then hop off the machine to allow the employee to give it a try. After the trainee had made a few passes under Tim's supervision, Tim would retreat to the shop and allow the employee to finish the job alone. Once the employee had finished the task, Tim

would return to inspect the completed job. With the employee at his side, the final step in Tim's training procedure was to give suggestions to improve the quality of the employee's work.

There are many similarities in how Tim would train an employee on a new task and how learning assistants ought to train writers to use a new writing tool. First, as Tim did, we need to get writers familiar with the strategy we are introducing. Tim would spend time showing an employee the ins and outs of the equipment, and we need to do the same for writers. We need to show writers how to use a new strategy, why it works, when to use it, why to use it, and so on. Just as Tim did, learning assistants must make sure writers have a knowledge of the rationale behind the writing tool they are learning to use.

Next, we should show writers how to use a new writing tool by modeling its usage. Tim would demonstrate a new task himself for the grounds crew's observation; likewise, we should illustrate to writers the use of the writing tool we introduced. It is not enough, for example, to merely tell writers to "make a descriptive outline." Instead, learning assistants need to help walk writers through the process of making their first descriptive outline. By modeling for writers a new technique, we can give them a feel for how the tool is used. Through observation, writers can see up close the processes of using a writing strategy and get a feel for how the tool is to be used.

The third step in giving writers a new strategy for their developing tool belt is the hard one: stepping away. After Tim had demonstrated the proper

way to accomplish a task, he would leave and let the employee work uninterrupted on the job. For the learning assistant, this action translates into stepping away after modeling a new writing tool and allowing writers to practice alone with the writing strategy. Writers need time to figure out a new tool and develop their skill using it without tutors interfering with the learning of a new writing strategy. Stepping away, however, does not necessarily translate into learning assistants leaving the room during a conference. While we certainly could vacate the room, learning assistants merely need to give writers a little space to hone their skill using a new writing strategy, meaning we could simply be quiet as the writer works, for example.

Finally, just as Tim returned to inspect and critique the quality of an employee's work, learning assistants need to review the writers' work. After observing students' progress with a new writing strategy, we can then further writers' expertise in using a new tool by offering writers some constructive criticism. It is in this final step where learning assistants can offer writers some words of wisdom and helpful hints to take into consideration when working with the newly learned strategy.

Though contrary to how it may seem, properly training students to use a new writing method does not have to be extremely time consuming. There is plenty of time in a conference, even a 25-minute one, to introduce at least one strategy, for this whole training process can take place in just a few minutes. All that learning assistants need to do is briefly explain the ratio-

nale for using a technique, model the strategy, allow writers to practice alone, and finally offer a few more hints to students. In these four simple steps, we can teach writers to use writing strategies on their own.

At the writing center, we have a duty not only to help students craft a better paper, but also to give writers some strategies and techniques to use at their own discretion. While the need for a

reader/audience is always present in the writing process, ideally the writing center should teach writers strategies in an effort to make them more self-sufficient. We ought to teach strategies not in an effort to wean writers away from the writing center, but rather so that writers can become more confident. Once students learn strategies to use when writing, they become more confident and less intimidated by the writing process.

Through a combination of modeling and allowing writers space to practice with writing techniques, we learning assistants can effectively and efficiently equip students with strategies for their own developing writing tool belts.

Peter Moe
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA

The use of social work skills in a writing center

It might seem surprising to consider that we use social work, or therapy skills in the course of our work with writing center students. No, we don't practice therapy (I hope!) with students, but there is a significant overlap in the ways in which we draw information from students, help them to find their own solutions, and maintain boundaries, with some of the ethical dilemma facing us.

I graduated with a Masters in social work in 1991, practicing individual and group therapy both during my training and for several years after graduating. I returned to school to pursue a Masters in English, and, in the course of keeping a journal for credit in my work at Oregon State University's Writing Center in Fall, 2002, I discovered that I was using social work techniques in my work as a writing assistant.

One of the primary actions I engage in with students is talking. First, I spend time finding out their understanding of their assignments and their intentions in their papers. Students often bring the assignment sheet with them, and we read it to discover what the professor is expecting. Sometimes, students will ask questions about what is expected; for example, many students inquire about what MLA style is. Other times, I have questions about the assignment, especially if the paper is

for a field with which I am unfamiliar. This gentle questioning is similar to a first therapy session: a focused discussion which draws in the other person, an initial inspection of each other.

The focus deepens as I move into the actual paper with students. Sometimes, I come across a sentence that just doesn't make sense, or I think I understand what the student means but need to ask to be sure. This act of asking is a skill. I convey to the student that the sentence is confusing and get clarification; in doing this, I help the student find different words to convey meaning. On occasion, I find that the student, too, is unsure of what he is trying to say, and it at those times that I truly utilize the skills of exploring ideas with the student. I might feel like giving the student the "right" words but can only truly provide words when I understand what he wants to say; that comes only after talking, asking, defining, and exploring with the student so as to help him elucidate his own ideas.

Another way that I assist students in discovering what they believe is by allowing them to think. If, for example, I reflect back to a student what I think she is saying, I must give her however much silence she needs to digest the provided words and to see if they match what's in her head. Too, I need to allow students the silence and space to fix their own errors. Admittedly, it's

not always easy to permit that space when I know the answer; the urge to provide the answer or the "right" words and move on preys at me. But, as in a therapy session, learning more likely takes place when students find their own answers, using me just for guidance.

Guidance in writing is what writing centers are for. As Jane Honigs indicates (*Writing Lab Newsletter* 25.5 [2001]: 9-10), students' essays are often deeply personal. Too, they are dealing with various pressures, which spill over into their writing and discussion. Because I am not in the role of a therapist, I need to keep the focus on writing. Providing support by listening and normalizing (for example, when a first-year student says she feels overwhelmed by college expectations, saying that most other new students feel that way too is helpful) is essential. Though Honigs recommends against referring students to counseling, informing students that counseling services are available (even providing the phone number or location if they express strong interest) is appropriate; students are not always aware of all the resources they can access.

Although delineations between writing center tutors and students are not as formal as they are between therapists and clients, these distinctions—called "boundaries"—exist. And, like thera-

pists, however friendly and approachable I might be, many students still see me as an expert, maybe even an authority figure. So, it is incumbent upon me to say when I don't know something and to check that information (if possible). In fact, I am an excellent role model when I pull out a writing reference book to check on comma usage, for example.

Further, although I might have a class with a student who comes in for help, might even be friends with him, when I am in the writing center I need to remain professional. Basically, what this means is keeping the student's needs primary. As a social worker, I never saw any friends or even acquaintances professionally because I might have been unable to remain objective, and my friend or acquaintance would likely have had difficulty being as open with me because I was have been part of his "real" life. Similarly, if a friend comes into the Writing Center and I don't feel that I could be honest in my feedback about his paper, I need to ask another tutor to work with him; his needs in regard to his paper are not being met if I can't tell him what's wrong with it. As another example, if I am tired, busy, and stressed, I need to be careful not to impose that on the student I'm working with. Full knowledge of my problems can make students uncomfortable about "burdening" me with all their writing-related questions and concerns. Refocusing on another person can take me away from my own stress, but if I am too wiped out, then I need to pass the student to another tutor if at all possible or I'm liable to focus heavily on what doesn't work instead of what does.

A wise social worker once told me to find something I like in every client I work with. That isn't easy sometimes, but it is important for me to remember that everyone is complex, affected by multiple pressures, and that people generally respond well to praise. So, too, as a tutor, I must find something positive in every paper I see. A paper

can be rife with errors, have an unclear argument, and I can disagree with the student's standpoint. But I need to point out the sentence that's nicely phrased, the metaphor that's interesting, the vividness of a piece of description—to find something to like, something that's good. Because it *is* there. And students need to hear it.

A final area of overlap—that of ethics—is more complicated, and one that is, most likely, more frequently breached. These breaches are generally unintentional, arising usually because I—and most tutors—want so much to help students. Sometimes, for example, I try to help someone whom I'm not capable of helping. In one instance, for example, I continued to assist an Asian woman whose English was very poor. Because she didn't always understand when I asked for clarification, and because of time limitations, I got into the habit of fixing her paper for her. That didn't help her, of course. Had I discussed my difficulty with others, a solution that allowed this student to improve both her English and her writing could have been found.

Some of the incidents mentioned earlier can be ethical issues in addition to being ones related to ways of working. When I provide the words too soon or too frequently for students, I am robbing them of their voice. They may be loathe to say, "No, that isn't what I mean"—especially if I seem so sure. And when I succumb to the pressure for the student to turn in as perfect a paper as I can make it, I am assuming students' responsibility. As in therapy, the onus of fixing the problems (written or emotional) is ultimately on the student. It helps to remember that most of the work of therapy is done *outside* the session, in clients' real lives; so, too, learning how to write (the process of it) is mostly done each time students write.

In all of what we all do in writing centers, the most important is that we sit with students, are human with them.

We help them to clarify their thoughts and feelings (some of which are intense), listen to their concerns and complaints, and listen to and read what they write. Just as the relationship between therapist and client is important, the one between tutor and student is vital, as well.

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Conference reminder

Southern California

An adhoc group of Southern California writing center administrators is planning their second conference for tutors next year. The conference will be held on Saturday, February 26, from 10 a.m.—3:30 p.m. at Glendale Community College.

Last year's conference was a great experience for over 60 tutors who attended from private and public colleges, two-year to doctorate-granting institutions in the Southern California area. The conference is tutor-centered: tutors decided on the topics for the sessions, facilitated the round-table discussions, and administrators got out of the way and listened (carefully!). Cost (if any) for lunch will be very nominal.

More details on the event (including a Web link) will be announced on WCenter in January, 2005. In the meantime, California listees are cordially invited to join the discussion board for the group at <<http://groups.yahoo.com/>>. Once you are registered, we are listed as socialwritingcenter.

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Conference reminder

South Central Writing Centers Association

Colleagues,

With apologies for adding to your list of things to do, I want to remind all interested parties that the SCWCA conference Web site at <<http://www.scwca.net>> contains all the information you'll need to register.

The Web site, however, does not contain the latest update announcing that Neal Lerner and Paula Gillespie will be

featured speakers with our keynoter, Mickey Harris. Such a meeting!

*Judith G. Caprio
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Harvey Kail wins 2004 Maxwell Distinguished Leadership Award

Harvey Kail, Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of the University of Maine Writing Center, has won the 2004 NCPTW Ron Maxwell Award for Distinguished Leadership in Promoting the Collaborative Learning Practices of Peer Tutors in Writing. The award was presented October 30 during the 21st Annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) hosted by Centenary College in Hackettstown, NJ.

The award recognizes dedication to and leadership in collaborative learning in writing centers, for aiding students in together taking on more responsibility for their learning, and, thus, for promoting the work of peer tutors. The award also denotes extraordinary service to the evolution of the conference organization.

Individuals who wrote letters of nomination for Harvey praised his "brilliance and compassion"; his "unassuming manner and deep insightfulness"; his skill at working with

his tutors to create "zany and thoughtful presentations"; his "way of hearing, of listening deeply to issues, thinking broadly, and then posing solutions that would satisfy a wide range of needs"; his ability to "take a long-term perspective and follow an idea through to its conclusion"; his work connecting writing centers locally, nationally, and internationally; and his success in training tutors to become "models of peer consultant brilliance." "He is a model of supporting (rather than supervising) collaboration and peer interactions."

Harvey is also appreciated for how he "has helped to build the core body of literature in our field, and this has done a lot for the sense of community we have."

An awards committee of previous winners reviews nominated candidates and chooses an annual recipient. A plaque and cash prize are funded by an endowment from Ron and Mary Maxwell.

CCCC Writing Program Certificates of Excellence

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) awarded two of the eleven Fall 2004 Writing Program Certificates of Excellence to writing centers—the Community Writing Center at Salt Lake Community College, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Purdue University Writing Lab, in West

Lafayette, Indiana. This CCCC award, established in 2004, is presented to twenty writing programs each year. The recipients of these awards will be honored for their achievement at the CCCC Conference on March 18, 2005.

“The numbers speak” again: A continued statistical analysis of writing center outcomes

This article follows up on my article that appeared in the *Writing Lab Newsletter* in 2003. In that essay, “The Numbers Speak: A Pre-Test of Writing Center Outcomes Using Statistical Analysis,” I indicated that statistical analysis confirms what we already know in more qualitative terms about tutoring: it improves student writing. I also indicated several shortcomings in the methodology I employed in that study. Now I wish to provide a brief re-cap of a research project I recently completed at the University of Texas at Tyler, where I direct the writing center. In the current project I used a stronger research design, which lends greater credibility to my central claims from the 2003 article: that statistical analysis enriches the way we describe our work; helps us understand how tutoring impacts the writing process; confirms what we already know through more qualitative means; and helps us communicate what we know to be true about our work to those outside the discipline.

I should note, however, that there are several risks with regard to using statistical analysis to study writing centers. The learning curve is indeed steep. I’ve had to rely on the assistance of colleagues with strong backgrounds in statistics, as well as exercises from statistics texts, to help me design and implement this study. Appropriate instruments are also required, as some forms of analysis are not appropriate for some forms of data. Using numbers alone can be misleading; I would suggest that quantitative forms of analysis be used within a richer framework of qualitative analysis

(more on this below). Further, quantitative research is still new to this field. Not much has been written, or attempted, in these terms—although I should note that studies by Peter Carino and Doug Enders, Casey Jones, and Neal Lerner are significant in their own right. It’s difficult, too, to design a sound experiment, as separating writers into “control” and “experimental” groups for the purposes of examining the impact of writing center intervention on their writing may compromise the amount and quality of tutoring they receive. Finally, there are issues of assessment to consider whenever embarking on a study of this nature. If, for example, during one year I study my writing center and discover a given rate of improvement, but the following year I discover a lower rate of improvement, I risk undermining the credibility of my center.

To the new study: here, as I did in the previous *WLN* article, I asked two questions. The first: How much are student essays impacted globally and locally by writing center intervention? Note that I have focused here on writing, not writers, per se; I have collated data generated by independent ratings of student essays. More definitions: by “global” traits I mean qualities related to purpose, or the extent to which the writer is focused on a given writing assignment; organization, or the writer’s coherent sequencing of ideas; and development, or the extent to which those ideas are explained or elaborated upon. By “local” traits I mean grammatical and mechanical conventions appropriate to a given essay assignment. This was the first of

several modifications of last year’s pre-test. In last year’s study, a multiple-trait based assessment, I explored seven traits: claims, development, organization, citation/format, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. I shrunk the list to two items because I worked with faculty raters from outside the writing center, who had much less time to devote to this study than did my raters from last year, who were tutors. The second question I asked was the following: How consistent are independent, expert raters in evaluating writing center performance? By “independent, expert raters” I mean three faculty members, two from English, one from History, who were asked to complete a blind read. Unlike last year’s raters, these individuals had extensive experience with regular evaluation of student writing assignments. Moreover, to ensure greater validity, none of this study’s faculty raters were in any way connected with any of the classes being studied.

The study was an outcomes-based assessment—that is, I sought to measure student writers’ mastery of the specific criteria noted above. I did this, moreover, without impacting, influencing, or compromising the work of any faculty member or student at any point during the study. The 38 students involved in the study were not asked to write to specific prompts, nor were faculty members instructed to change their assignments or teaching styles in order to accommodate my work. I studied four classes, two upper-division (Art History and Political Theory), and two lower-division (first year composition). On the day a pro-

fessor was ready to turn back graded papers to her students, she instead gave them index cards with their grades written on them. On the basis of those grades, students self-selected: if they felt they could improve through continued drafting, they could take a clean copy of their drafts to the writing center and receive tutoring. If they were content, they received their marked, graded papers back, and were not included in the study. I was provided with clean copies of drafts from students who chose to visit the writing center. (Clean copy was vital to this study, as it did not bias me, the writing center tutors, or faculty raters; I was not interested in, nor was I aware of, any grades any student received during the course of this study.)

Tutors, who were unaware of the specific classes being studied, tutored students according to their own best practices. (In this iteration of the study, the typical tutorial ran for an average of 36 minutes; tutees were 54% female and 46% male; 52% were first-time visitors, and 48% were repeats. Two drafts each (a total of 76) from the 38 students who chose to be tutored were studied. After the tutoring was complete, students re-submitted their drafts, again with their professor providing me with clean copy. I now had two stacks of drafts: a pre-intervention pile, or “A” stack, and a post-intervention pile, or “B” stack.

I then provided the three faculty raters with both piles in a randomized, blind read. Each pile was coded and randomly ordered. All drafts had all names removed—both the student’s and the professor’s. The only specific marking related to the course was the assignment sheet that I included with each stack of papers; I did this to provide a richer rhetorical context for the raters, so that they knew what was being written and for what reason. Unaware of each other’s identities, faculty raters read at different times and in different places in order to minimize the chances that they would bias each

other’s ratings. Raters assigned scores ranging from one (lowest) to five (highest), both globally and locally, for each draft. Faculty were not told that one pile was comprised of pre-intervention drafts, and the other of post-intervention drafts. This marked a major shift from last year’s pre-test, during which time raters knew which drafts had been tutored, and which hadn’t.

As I gathered data, I calculated the mean average of pre-intervention and post-intervention scores, or ratings; this helped me gauge improvement. I then constructed frequency distribution graphs of global and local ratings, which allowed me to see how the distributions of scores were clustered; drafted a descriptive statistics table, which indicated range, mean, and standard deviations—or variances from a norm—for each rater; and ran correlation coefficients between each rater, which indicated consistency, hence reliability, of scoring.

As with the 2003 study, raters gave higher ratings to post-intervention drafts. From “pre-intervention” to “post-intervention,” both globally and locally, the distribution curve of ratings actually moved from left to right. Global ratings moved from a mean of 2.52 to 3.55, as local ratings moved from 2.58 to 3.13. Put another way: for nontutored drafts, global and local ratings sat below the median of “3,” while on tutored drafts, scores sat above the median.

Next I calculated correlation coefficients, a measure of the amount of consistency between individual raters’ ratings. For each paper evaluated, raters 1 and 3 demonstrated the strongest correlations—ranging from .57 to .76, scores that are considered “mild” to “strong positive.” Rater 2, however, demonstrated weaker correlations that generally ranged between .20-.49. I am pleased that raters 1 and 3 showed such strong correlations, as these statistics suggest the possibility of a consistent and reliable means of independently assessing tutees’ essays. Yet I

would have liked rater 2 to have demonstrated stronger correlations with her colleagues: and this, of course, suggests the need for stronger rater training. Indeed, future training will need to take into account the fact that raters are unaware of each others’ identities and work in different places at different times—factors that may have ensured a true blind read, but also may have contributed to rater 2’s weaker correlations. Willa Wolcott writes that in one assessment she directed, twelve “highly experienced” scorers rated essays at home. “Several readers expressed . . . hesitation about the scores they sometimes assigned, and the results also showed a tendency for some readers to [rate] higher as they scored independently” (64). Such a tendency would only seem to underscore the need for stronger training.

In my conclusions from last year’s pre-test, I noted that numbers provide us with a unique window into what actually occurs during tutorials. I noted that, for example, on the basis of the sample studied, the writing center I direct was having a greater impact on lower-division writers. I was able to fold this knowledge back into an ongoing program this year, an initiative called “Tutor the Tutors,” during which faculty teaching advanced or upper-division courses visit with the staff during regular meetings to share their expectations of student writers; the meetings, in turn, have opened powerful communications channels for the writing center across the disciplines. I have also discovered that the improvement noted above has its own remarkable character: it’s primarily global. In fact, we see a mean improvement of 1.03 from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Local improvement runs approximately .6. This suggests to me quantitatively what I already know to be true through experience: that our writing center provides more guidance at the level of thesis and argument rather than punctuation and mechanics. I have, in turn, begun work on a stylebook for our writing center, a grammar

guide featuring patterns of and errors in usage that we see frequently, as well as updating our online grammar review materials to make them more accessible to even the most casual Web surfer. More than this, though, my staff and I can deliver our regular “we’re not an editing center/ we won’t write your paper for you” mantra with increased confidence.

This data can also provide me with more information as I do what has become routine: defend the writing center against well-intentioned colleagues who repeatedly question why student X was tutored, but nonetheless turned in an imperfect draft—imperfect, I should note, primarily at the sentence level. I now have firm evidence that writing center tutoring produces incremental results, and those primarily at the global level. Significantly, this form of statistical analysis enables me to communicate with others outside the discipline about what goes on inside the discipline. My colleagues outside the discipline don’t quite know what to make of the well-worn adage, “it’s the writer, not the writing.” So with my stats in tow, I can state a variation on that theme: we help writers make “better writing,” and I can explain exactly what I mean.

I would think, too, that demonstrating through regular assessments such as this one that incremental improvement is in fact possible (and often after only half an hour!) constitutes a strong component of a year-end report. That component is made even stronger when we consider the overall consistency of raters’ scores in this study. If independent raters can verify our claims of performance, we’re doing something right. And if this sounds like I’m being unduly defensive, or protective of turf, it’s because I am: I am very much concerned with the impact of ongoing budget cuts on the writing center. So I understand the value of numbers in justifying the ex-

istence of the writing center.

I begin my conclusion by noting that my claims from last year’s study have to date been confirmed by more sound methodology. In sum, statistics help me describe, understand and communicate the work of the writing center without compromising more qualitative, anecdotal findings. In a future study I would like to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously in order to better understand not only outcomes, but how those outcomes are achieved. What, for example, is the profile of an “effective” tutor? What distinguishes a “more effective” tutor from a “less effective” tutor? What behaviors, what methods, what strategies do “more effective” tutors employ that can contribute to stronger outcomes? And how can such strategies be incorporated into ongoing tutor training and professional development?

I should note in closing that quantitative analysis gives our field a powerful means of theorizing our work. Statistical analysis is enormously portable—we can begin to replicate studies such as the one I’ve described above in many writing centers. Our field needs to complement its abundantly rich supply of qualitative research with work that can be transferred from one site to another. Perhaps statistically-grounded research will begin to move us in that direction.

Luke Niiler
University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, TX

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Conference reminder

New England Writing Centers Association

Hi folks,

Patricia Stephens and Ann Larson from LIU/Brooklyn asked that I pass on this gentle reminder for NEWCA 2005, to be held at LIU-Brooklyn, on April 15-16. In addition to all their hard work planning the conference, they’ve also launched a conference Web site: <<http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/newca/>>. Please think about attending.

Cheers,
Harry Denny
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, NY
hdenny@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

February 10-12, 2005. Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference, in Charleston, SC

Contact: Trixie Smith, Middle Tennessee State University, Department of English, P.O. Box 70, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. E-mail: tgsmith@mtsu.edu; Web site: <http://www.swca.us>.

March 3-5, 2005: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Baton Rouge, LA

Contact: Judy Caprio, B-18 Coates Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA: 70803. Phone: 225-578-4438, e-mail: jcaprio@lsu.edu. Web site: <http://www.scwca.net>.

March 4-5, 2005: Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference, in Orem, UT

Contact: Lisa Eastmond Bell, Utah Valley State College, MC-176, 800 West University Parkway, Orem, UT 84058-5999. Phone: 801- 863-8099; e-mail: lisa.bell@uvsc.edu.

April 1-2, 2005: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Adrian, MI

Contact: April Mason-Irelan, Siena Heights University, 1247 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, Michigan 49221. Phone: 517-264-7638; e-mail: amason@sienahs.edu. Web site: <http://www.sienahs.edu/~eng/ECWCA/ecwca.htm>.

April 9, 2005: Mid-Atlantic Writing Center Association, in Frederick, MD

Contact: Felicia Monticelli, e-mail:

FMonticelli@frederick.edu, Frederick Community College, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD 21702. Phone: 301-846-2619; e-mail: FMonticelli@frederick.edu. Conference Web site: <http://www.english.udel.edu/wc/staff/mawca/index.html>.

April 16, 2005: Pacific Northwest Writing Center Association, in Bothell, WA

Contact: Becky Reed Rosenberg, beckyr@u.washington.edu. Conference Web site: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~writepro/PNWCA.htm>.

April 16-17, 2005: New England Writing Centers Association, in Brooklyn, NY

Contact: Patricia Stephens, English Department, Humanities Building, Fourth Floor, Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, One University Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Phone: 718-488-1096; e-mail: patricia.stephens@liu.edu.

June 10-12, 2005: European Writing Centers Association, in Halkidiki, Greece.

Contact: Conference Web site: <http://ewca.sabanciuniv.edu/ewca2005/>.

October 19-23, 2005: International Writing Centers Association, in Minneapolis, MN.

Contact: Frankie Condon e-mail: fvcondon@stcloudstate.edu. Conference Web site: <http://writingcenters.org/2005/index.html>.

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