

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER



Vol. VI, No. 10 (June, 1982)

For many of us June brings both the end to the academic year--and the promise of some summer leisure in which to catch up on all those projects we couldn't get to during the year. As you compile your list, please consider adding the following:

1. Write an article for next year's newsletter

Although the stack of articles waiting to appear is huge--and excellent, there are hundreds of newsletter readers we haven't heard from. Why not consider sharing with the rest of us a description of your services, programs, instructional techniques, problems, interests, etc.?

2. Send a yearly donation to the newsletter

The newsletter, published by Purdue's Department of English, is an informal "spare time" publication. With over 1100 readers, we can't begin to send out bills, invoices, or reminders. Instead, we rely on your conscience to send in \$5/year to help cover duplicating and mailing costs. (Of course, those of you who have more affluent budgets are invited to continue sending in larger donations.)

With this issue, the newsletter will also take a breather for the summer. Best wishes for a pleasant, relaxing few months, and do continue to send your articles, announcements, reviews, notices, names of new members, and donations of \$5 (in checks made payable to Purdue University) to:



Muriel Harris, editor
WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
Dept. of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Ind. 47907

1983 SPECIAL INTEREST SESSION FOR WRITING LAB DIRECTORS

Originally, the deadline for proposals for the special session was May 21; however, that date will be extended to early June because of several errors in the original announcement. At the CCCC meeting in San Francisco, we noticed that the date of the 1983 meeting had been changed to March 17-19. The proposal form has to be in by June 21st, but I will accept any proposals for consideration up to the previous week, so we don't miss out on any good workshops. Please send a detailed abstract (about 1 page) of the content of the workshop, materials to be used, and purpose to the following address, or call for information:

Dr. Joyce Kinkead, Writing
Center Director
Department of English
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762
Phone: 316-231-7000
ext. 376 or 306

THE MIAMI UNIVERSITY SPELLING SKILLS CENTER

In April of 1981, the directors of our Writing Skills Center began a sub-operation: a Spelling Skills Center. The new Center represented a concentrated attack upon the problems inherent in teaching spelling. Most students with severe spelling problems also have severe problems in mechanics, grammar, and organization. Our tutors had no time, prior to the opening of the Spelling Center, to concentrate on much more than those writing skills problems. Even when they did have such time, few materials were available

because of the lack of attention given to spelling.

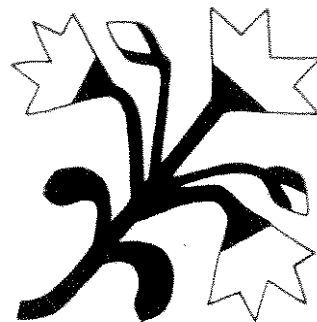
In developing the Spelling Center, we wanted to emulate our analysis process in the Writing Center by attempting to identify those areas in which the student had his or her greatest problems. We developed a spelling test which grouped students' spelling difficulties into ten specific areas: word beginnings; -ceed, -cede, and -sede endings; consonant combinations; double consonants; general word endings; ie/ei words; "schwa" words; silent letters; vowel combinations; and words often confused. I then wrote our Spelling Skills Index, which sorts the resources of our library by subject area, and we began to admit our first students.

Writing tutors interested in teaching spelling were given a brief orientation to the test and Index, and were then encouraged to experiment and to write the materials still needed. Students tutored in both Centers were not given the same tutor for both; this prevented the student from using a spelling session to discuss writing problems. Tutors were required to write student progress reports, and these were monitored closely.

In August of 1981, we hired a graduate assistant with a background in speech and hearing; thus, she possessed a good knowledge of phonics. Under her guidance, the spelling tutors have developed a number of teaching approaches and materials.

Our Spelling Center is still new, and in need of further development. We have received a small alumni fund, and we are interested in finding effective materials that we could purchase with these funds. If you know of such materials, or if you have any questions concerning our Spelling Center, please write us. We are looking forward to communicating with others who have worked in this field.

James Melko
Coordinator of Basic Skills
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056



OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO THE WRITING CENTER

The individualized Learning Center at Florida Institute of Technology opened in the fall of 1978 as just one aspect of a university-wide effort to increase retention of freshmen. F.I.T. is primarily a scientific and technological university with approximately 3,000 students on its main campus in Melbourne. As we considered the kind of learning center that would be appropriate to F.I.T., we sought to avoid a number of problems frequently associated with writing centers. For one thing, we wanted to insure faculty confidence in and cooperation with the center. A second concern was that we would need to staff the center with reliable, responsible students who could be trusted with expensive audio-visual equipment and who could be in charge of the center during the evening when no faculty members would be present. Third, because of our major concern with freshman retention, we hoped to find a way to meet the needs of as many F.I.T. students as possible. Above all, we wanted to avoid the stigma so frequently attached to the writing center whose sole function is remedial. With these concerns in mind, we decided to make assistance with writing problems just one feature of a multi-purpose center that would attract students on all levels of the university and from every discipline.

As it now exists, the Individualized Learning Center at F.I.T. assists students in three major ways: it offers a variety of programmed self-help materials for most basic and some advanced courses; it provided qualified tutors to help students master all basic subjects, including mathematics, physics, and chemistry; it serves as a center where instructors may place cassette tapes, slides, and filmstrips on reserve for their students to use as supplementary learning materials. The ILC also serves as a reference center for proper form and organization of papers, resumes, abstracts, and letters.

In order to avoid faculty skepticism toward the kind and quality of remedial instruction offered by a center which is not attached to an academic department, the Individualized Learning Center was placed under the Humanities Department. The center's director and one associate are members of the Humanities faculty. A member of the Mathematics Department serves part time on the center's staff. Having the ILC attached to an academic department and staffed by faculty paid by and teaching in academic departments makes for a spirit of confidence and cooperation throughout the university.

We were able to solve our staffing problem by incorporating the school's tutorial program with the learning center. The program was formerly under the dean of students, and faculty members had no role in the selection process. Now, in addition to having at least a three point GPA, each tutor must be recommended by at least two faculty members. This method of qualifying assures faculty members in all departments of the university that only the most competent students are eligible to work in the ILC. In order to better supervise the program, we decided to have the tutors work with their students in the learning center. Formerly, they could meet whenever and wherever they chose. An additional advantage to this system is that the needs of far more students are being met. Formerly, a student was assigned to a tutor for an entire quarter. Now, a student comes to the center only when he needs help; he receives as little or as much as he needs; he can also work with more than one tutor on more than one subject. Having the tutors work in the center has also solved our staffing problem. We have lost none of our valuable equipment, and the loss of books has been minimal.

The Individualized Learning Center has a staff of around twenty tutors who work at regularly scheduled times; the same schedule is maintained throughout a quarter. We keep a file of all the subjects for which we have tutors. When a student asks for an appointment, the person at the front desk consults the file, ascertains which tutors can help in that subject, consults the tutor's schedule, and arranges a meeting time. Tutoring in the ILC is free to any F.I.T. student. The learning center is open from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, except Fridays when it closes at 5:00 p.m. At any given hour during the day, there are at least three or four tutors in the center. We try to maintain a balance in

terms of subject matter--for example, one tutor for physics, one for chemistry, and one or two for mathematics. Most of the tutors are qualified to assist in two or more major subject areas--for example, mathematics and chemistry or mathematics and physics. Nearly all can provide some degree of help with freshman level mathematics.

The tutors on the ILC staff are, for the most part, juniors and seniors; occasionally we hire an outstanding sophomore; and usually we have one or two graduate students. Some of the tutors qualify for work/study money; the rest are paid from college funds. Because of its small size, the university is allowed by the federal government to pay students sub-minimum wages. Nevertheless, we always have a waiting list of students who want to be tutors. They enjoy the interaction with other members of the staff, and they are free to work on their own assignments if no one needs their help during their scheduled hours. Some tutors work as few as three hours a week while others work as many as twenty. In addition to the tutors, we now employ a few other work/study students to sit at the front desk, make appointments, check equipment out and in, and perform various clerical tasks.

Because we have no English majors at F.I.T., very little help with writing is provided by tutors. The two instructors of English from the Humanities Department work directly with students who need such help. We look over the marked papers their instructors have returned, assess their needs, and work with them in whatever manner seems appropriate. For example, if a student's problems are simply grammatical, we may direct him to the mini-courses and other programmed writing materials. If he needs help in the planning and organization of papers, we arrange to work with him throughout the quarter. We have found sentence combining exercises to be especially helpful with both native speakers and international students.

At F.I.T. students most seriously in need of improvement in verbal skills are placed, on the bases of testing, in special classes--Learning Strategies of Composition--for which they receive college credit. In Learning Strategies, students work to improve their reading rate and comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills. In Fundamentals of Composition, students perfect their skills in writing sentences and proceed to the paragraph. Students enrolled in these two courses do many of their assignments in the

learning center, using the reading and vocabulary materials housed there and supplementary programs in grammar, spelling, paragraph and essay writing and other materials.

An advantage to these weaker students is that by working regularly in the learning center, they become acquainted with the other self-help materials available and quickly take advantage of the tutoring program. Highly competent students also come to the ILC, some to seek help with fairly minor problems and others to spend time on relatively sophisticated mini-courses such as thermodynamics and heat transfer. Thus, the weaker student does not feel the stigma so frequently associated with centers which offer only remediation. Frequently, traditional writing centers fail to achieve their objectives because students are reluctant to be seen there and will come only when instructors require them to do so.

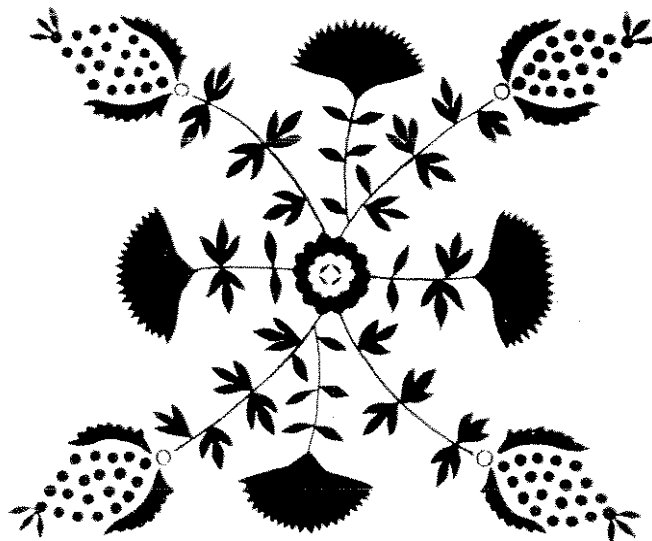
Sometimes a student comes to the Individualized Learning Center at F.I.T. because his advisor or one of his instructors has urged him. However, most students come of their own accord as soon as they sense a need. In the past year, attendance at the center has increased nearly twenty percent. All any student has to do is come to the center and state his need; he will then be given an appointment with a tutor and/or directed to the self-help materials. If a student is in any way confused about the kind of help he needs, he is referred to the director or one of her associates. The ILC, however, has no responsibility for psychological counseling; the Student Counseling Center meets such needs.

Regardless of the reason a student might be drawn initially to the ILC, he quickly becomes aware of the multiplicity of materials available and the variety of ways in which he can broaden his learning. The center has rapidly acquired a reputation as a friendly place where a student can expect to have his needs taken seriously and, in some way, met. In two years, the attrition rate for freshmen, university wide, has dropped from 39% to 33.2%, a drop of almost 6%. The figures are even more impressive within the School of Science and Engineering; two years ago the attrition rate was 40%, but it is now only 31.2%, a drop of almost 9%. The improvement in freshmen

retention is, of course, a result of several factors, including improved advising procedures, the use of placement tests, and revised admission standards. In any case, student surveys to date give the learning center the highest approval rating of any service to students on the campus.

Although Florida Institute of Technology is primarily a scientific and technological university, this same kind of learning center format could be adapted in most small colleges common to writing centers and to extend their services.

Jane P. LeMoine
Florida Institute of
Technology



GRAMMAR HOTLINES

I am compiling a list of language hot line services so that we will be able to communicate with each other from time to time and refer callers to the nearest service. Please send me basic information about your service by the end of June.

Donna Friedman
Writing Center/Grammar
Hotline
Tidewater Community College
1700 College Crescent
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

PLACEMENT TESTING SURVEY

Twenty-one colleges and universities responded to a survey on the placement testing published in the December 1980 Writing Lab Newsletter. These schools represent a wide geographical distribution, from the Virgin Islands to Oregon and from Texas to Minnesota. Eighteen of the 21 respondents are church-affiliated, five are universities, four are community colleges, and the rest 4-year colleges.

Ten of the respondent schools have open admissions policies, and almost all of them (19) have an English writing placement test. The placement test is, in almost half the schools, an in-house test. Sixteen of these tests are either writing sample exams or exams that include a writing sample component. Only two schools of those surveyed use an objective test. Eight schools that require placement tests also require their students to enroll in the recommended courses.

Eight out of the eighteen respondents who answered this question reported that English Department faculty administered the placement test. Placement tests are also administered by counselors and by Testing Centers, Study Skills Centers, Academic Skill Centers' personnel.

The small sample size limits the usefulness of the survey, so no inferences can be reasonably drawn. If, however, you wish to respond to the survey or comment on placement testing, especially on the use of writing samples as opposed to objective tests, please write to the Department of English and Philosophy, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850.

We began the survey last year when we attempted to gather data that would support a policy of required testing. The College accepted the policy on educational grounds but is still embroiled in the process of developing procedures that are acceptable to all campuses.

Myrna Goldenberg
Montgomery College



Directors of writing labs, I need your help. During the fall semester of the 1982-83 academic year, I hope to be on sabbatical leave and want to visit writing centers throughout the Midwest, Northeast, and Atlantic coast states. All writing centers interest me, but I am primarily interested in those that are changing, whether by design or from outside pressures, from serving freshmen who need remedial instruction for English composition classes to serving all levels of students, freshmen through graduate levels, native and non-native, majors in liberal arts or in the professional schools.

If your writing center is serving students across your campus and if you are willing to have me visit your lab, please let me know. As I will be traveling at my own expense, the number of centers which I can visit will, of course, be limited, but I will try to visit yours if you answer this plea.

Ada L. Kukurisas, Director
ISU Writing Lab, Dreiser
Hall 2
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, IN. 47809
812-232-6311



A MATERIALS ORGANIZATION SYSTEM FOR THE INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS OF WRITING SKILLS CENTERS

The most difficult problem in orienting writing skills tutors is in familiarizing the tutors with all the books available to them from the writing skills center library. In our Center, we have simplified the problem by combining all the indexes from all the books into one central Index. Our Index is divided into subdivisions such as the following: Articles, Capitalization, Comma Splice, Diction, Fragments, Idioms, Logic, Modifiers, Organization and Coherence, Sentence Structures, and many others. Each of these categories will then include a list of references dealing with the categorical subject. A typical page might look like this:

CAPITALIZATION

1. WAI/97
2. RHG/426
3. CWH/180
4. MCC/429, 434 (special)
5. WE/rules for using/231
6. HCH/capitals/92
7. W-SH/capitals/62
8. ECW/capitals and italics/97
9. CCFE/italics and capitalization/99
10. EW/other punctuation and capitalization/
317
11. WW/keep mechanics conventional/318
12. WE/in quotations/71
13. CEH/in words, types of/181
14. WE/of new sentences/136, 232
15. CWH/in sentences and poetry/181
16. MCC/for personifications/37

The abbreviations stand for books; for example, "MCC" is McCrimmon's Writing with a Purpose. All abbreviations are listed at the beginning of the Index next to the appropriate title and bibliographical information. Such a list is ideal for inventory and materials replacement.

The initial entries on the page refer to chapters dealing specifically with the title of the Index page. In other words, were we to include a descriptor, it would be exactly the same as the title of the page. From these initial entries, groups of related entries follow more or less in logical sequence.

If more than one page reference is listed for a book as in entry #4, the second reference is distinguished from the first by a descriptor. In entry #4, the second page reference deals with special capitalization.

Using the Index, tutors can refer to books as if they had completely read all of them. Then as tutors experiment with different references, they begin to choose which books they prefer for a particular problem. Recommendations are not included in the Index so that each tutor is free to use books compatible with his or her individual style.

Another use of the Index is in our analysis of writing samples. After the sample is marked, each error is checked according to its category on our "Student Writing Analysis Form (SWAF)."

The SWAF is divided into five categories: mechanics, grammar, expression, organization and logic and other. Each category has listed all the types of errors that we have encountered in our students' writing. For example, mechanics includes the following: capitalization, plurals, possession, use of commas, standard punctuation (exclamation point, question mark), spelling, comma splice, and special punctuation (semicolon dash, and colon).

Next to each problem area listed on the SWAF are two or three blank lines. Using these blanks, the analyst lists specific Index and handout entries to be used in overcoming each individual problem. The tutor is not required to use these references, but they provide a somewhat personalized "Index" for each student.

An Index is difficult to put together, but usually needs to be revised only every two years. Once the initial Index is completed, typed, and bound, revisions in order to include new books are simple to do. Creating the first Index is easiest if the writer first decides on the categories, then examines and copies the index entries pertaining to each category. Once each book has been examined, the entries can be numbered according to their logical sequence under the Index category.

As noted, the Index is difficult to create, but well worth the effort. In our new Spelling Center, a Spelling Index was the first item created to ensure effectiveness in tutoring. An Index is invaluable as a means of guaranteeing equal, effective analysis and tutoring of high quality for each student.

Jim Melko
Coordinator of Basic
Skills
Miami University

A READER ASKS...

If you have successfully used audio-visual programs in your writing lab or writing program, would you please send me the name of the program and the publisher.

Patricia Anthony
General Education
Spartan School of
Aeronautics
International Airport
8820 E. Pine Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74151

THE WRITING LAB: STEPCHILD OR RIGHTFUL HEIR

A writing laboratory serves one major function--to assist students to improve the quality of their writing, a task that has confronted teachers and scholars since at least the medieval East midland ancestral roots of our language. For a lab to function successfully, however, there are certain obstacles that have to be met and conquered, obstacles that for the most part require a continuing labor of education and re-education. There is the obstacle of convincing the administration that funding for the lab is justified, the obstacle of convincing the faculty that their support for the lab through participation in its function and involvement in its maintenance is vital, and the obstacle of convincing the students of the importance of their utilizing the facilities of the lab.

The first obstacle to conquer, and obviously the most important, is the administration. Without administrative support there are no funds, therefore no lab. Administrators, it seems, have two main duties in the world of higher education: to find funds for the operation of the institution and, once found, to devise reasons as to why the funds cannot be spent. Since nowadays many institutions already have writing labs and the trend in the teaching of English is toward the establishment of such centers, administrators cannot often argue effectively against a lab, but they can attempt to treat the lab as a stepchild of education by shunting the lab into an undesirable location, a strategic error which can harm the lab's effectiveness. Therefore, if the present location of a writing laboratory is undesirable, one should find a site that is central to the campus, that will require little renovation, and that is seldom used for anything else. Administrators are concerned nowadays with utilization of all available space, and a location that will utilize such space and that can be made attractive is ideal. As do most other people, students work better in pleasant surroundings than in unpleasant. Too, the taxpayers or the benefactors must get their money's worth--a not unreasonable expectation in light of increasing administrative costs; and by locating a lab in a space heretofore unused, the administration is happy, the money sources are happy, and, if the space is made attractive, the students are, if not happy, at least soothed.

If money is tight, another method to gain administrative support is that many, possibly most, of the materials used in the lab can be created in-house; thus funds necessary for purchasing materials will be minimal. Frankly, because each department of English has its own bias toward the teaching of composition, it has been my experience that there is relatively little material commercially designed and produced that will answer the needs of a particular student population. Commercial materials are usually too general. And, frequently, the emphasis on terminology is inconsistent with that taught at the institution; for instance comma splice as opposed to commas fault, subjective complement as opposed to predicate noun or adjective--inconsistencies which pose little problem for English instructors, but which create confusion for students. I must add, however, that the one or ones chosen to create the in-house materials must not sell himself or themselves cheaply. Released time or increased monetary compensation should be given to those who create the materials.

A third point addresses staff and equipment. Administrators are always interested to know how much money is to be required for salaries. Staffing of writing labs is really quite simple, because existing faculty can be used--but more about that in a moment. Probably one full-time, or perhaps only part-time person is needed. Call that person a paraprofessional or a technician. Such appellations sound impressive and cheap. The technician is primarily a clerical person who handles the mechanics of handing out the materials and replacing them in order to avoid chaos. However, the technician can be trained also to check the exercises. In fact, at times, and perhaps quite often, more than one evaluator is necessary to handle the traffic, especially during those periods when the use of the lab is greatest. The technician is useful too to fill the gap at the changing of the guard as one instructor leaves before he is replaced with another. And the equipment? Excellent writing labs can be maintained with no equipment except desks or tables and self-instructional soft materials, such as typed study materials which contain answer sheets so that the students can check their work. (However, one will probably want to include also a post test to be checked by the technician or instructor.) Eventually, attempts, usually

successful attempts, can be made to include money in the budget to purchase equipment.

A second obstacle to the effective operation of a writing lab is, ironically, that of the departmental faculty. It goes without saying that a writing lab should not advocate changes in teaching styles, whether the styles be traditional, mechanical, or electronic. To advocate such changes would create instant enmity. A writing lab should serve as adjunct to whatever teaching styles the various members of the faculty prefer. The problem, if there is one, is not that of teaching styles but that of involving faculty in the use of the lab. And here I must point out that without faculty involvement, an institution may have a glorious writing lab, gloriously empty. Students will not ordinarily attend a lab without gentle prodding from the faculty, traditional, mechanical, or electronic. The faculty must be participants. They must work in the lab.

Our plan at Amarillo College is that each faculty member who works in the writing lab exchanges one class section for six hours per week of lab time. Three hours for six at first observation does not seem a bargain, but when one considers that he will have one class less of themes to grade and quizzes to prepare, the advantage is obvious, especially if one's institution, like mine, expects one to have a normal teaching load of fifteen hours. And, in a community college, it is likely that at least twelve hours of the fifteen are freshman composition classes.

I have already mentioned one advantage to using existing faculty in the writing lab--the lab is staffed without the necessity of hiring a new faculty member--but a more important advantage is that the teaching staff become involved with the lab itself, especially if the instructors are rotated each semester so that eventually all teaching staff gain experience in the lab. One's active participation in operating the lab tends to obviate an attitude of "The lab is over there, I'm over here; it can tend its affairs, and I'll tend mine." The more familiar the instructors are with the materials available in the lab, the more likely they are to insist that their students use the lab--a not lightweight consideration when one thinks of influencing students to use the lab.

One final selling point to the faculty, and perhaps the most worthy from their point of view, is that the writing lab alleviates the necessity of one-on-one conferences in which the instructor spends most of his time explaining such basic writing errors as comma splices and run-together sentences. The instructor can send the student to the lab to work on these problems and spend his conference time on instruction concerned with theme content, style, and form.

A third obstacle is the student. The primary method which influences the students to attend the lab is quite frankly that of coercion. Perhaps the best term to describe the process is that of "subtle persuasion." One wants the students to think that they are going to the writing lab voluntarily; that they have a choice of whether they go; that they go because they are scholars, not school-goers. In reality, however, the students must be given a Hobson's Choice, because few students do anything voluntarily. And as for scholars--well! Students may choose not to go if they so desire, but they must understand that to choose not to go will influence adversely their semester grades, a persuasive argument, perhaps not so subtle, to insure the correctness of their choice. Their semester grades must be at least marginally dependent upon their use of the lab. Another persuasive device is to initiate a referral system. The referral system is really ingenious, because it puts limits on the use of the lab in terms of the course requirement by specifying for the individual student just how much usage is required of him in order to meet the requirement; and it gives each instructor a means whereby he can keep a record of the student's use of the lab. Incidentally, or perhaps not so incidentally, the referral provides an excellent means of control for the lab--control of materials used (materials which, importantly, should be catalogued) and control of traffic into the lab. No one comes without a referral. No drop-in's who want to visit their friends and thus clog the carrels; no "Will you check this for me's?" who want the lab personnel to write their themes. The referral also gives tangible support to the instructor's contention that, if given a referral, the student is obligated to go to the lab: no referral, no course requirement; referral, course requirement.

Curiously, in spite of my flippant remark concerning the scholarship of students, most students do desire to learn; and, once they have been exposed to the lab, will, for the most part, recognize, perhaps reluctantly, that the lab does provide help with writing problems. Thus, the next time they are referred to the lab, they will be less resentful about going. Also, when they learn that the material which they are asked to work on requires usually no longer than thirty minutes of their time (an important factor too in the success of a writing lab), or, often even less than thirty minutes, their resentment declines even further. I doubt, frankly, that a sweetheart relationship will ever be formed between the lab and the students; but I do believe that a respectful relationship is often formed.

Ideally, a writing lab should have several approaches to each major writing problem, because students respond, obviously, to different stimuli; therefore, a slide program on comma splices (I have discovered that the comma splice is the most common of major punctuation errors), a taped program on comma splices, a combination of the two, and a paper-only program provide a variety of teaching approaches. And all will be utilized. It helps to have a media center complete with artist, photographer, technicians, recording and processing equipment, etc.; however, if one's institution does not have such a center, there are usually commercial businesses which will do the work.

In summary then, allow me to reiterate and expand to a degree some of the points already made. The writing lab should have a reasonably pleasant atmosphere in which students can work. If a lab is in an obscure corner of the basement of Old Main, dingy and gloomy, one should try to find a more suitable location. The best materials are generally those created by the teaching staff; and each lesson should be no longer than thirty minutes in length, shorter if possible. Also the materials should deal with one specific writing problem only. Many of the students who need the services of the writing lab have limited attention spans. Finally, there needs to be continual review and upgrading of materials.

An effective writing lab requires many

hours of hard work and a little luck. But when the lab proves itself to be successful--a legitimate child of education--well, and here I shall paraphrase our medieval friend Chaucer: What need is there to say more?

Carl Fowler
Amarillo College

The Writing Needs of Linguistically Different Students (edited by Bruce Cronnell) includes six papers presented at a research/practice conference held at SWRL Educational Research and Development on June 25-26, 1981:

"Introduction to Black English" by Robert Berdan (National Center for Bilingual Research)

"Design and Implementation of Writing Instruction for Speakers of Non-Standard English" by John Baugh (University of Texas at Austin)

"Spanish-English Bilingualism in the Southwest" by Maryellen Garcia (National Center for Bilingual Research)

"Writing Development in a Bilingual Program" by Carole Edelsky (Arizona State University)

"The Writing Needs of Hispanic Students" by Jon Amastae (University of Texas at El Paso)

"American Indian Children and Writing" by Lance Potter (University of Southern California)

This 168-page report is available for \$5.00 (check or money order made out the "SWRL"; California residents add 6% sales tax). Send orders to Accounting Department, SWRL Educational Research and Development, 4665 Lampson Avenue, Los Alamitos, CA 90720.

"I think that one is constantly startled by the things that appear before you on the page when you're writing."

-Shirley Hazzard

DO YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE 1983 WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE?

The Writing Centers Association will hold its Fifth Annual Conference on May 6, 1983, at Purdue University. A formal call for proposals will appear in one of the fall issues of the newsletter, but for now, we are seeking your suggestions both for topics and format.

FORMAT

-Other than talks by speakers, are there other formats for some of the sessions that would be useful ways to exchange information and to learn from each other? For example, would you want one or two sessions structured as discussion groups? If so, what topics would you suggest as particularly well suited to this setting? Any other formats?

-If there were several display tables, one for each participating lab, would you have enough portable material to bring

along so that the rest of us might have some sense of having "visited" your lab? Would a few of your tutors be willing to man the display for the whole day?

TOPICS

-In addition to the usual subject matter, are there other topics not usually addressed at lab conferences that need to be covered?

-To gain new perspectives on our work, are there specialists from other disciplines whom we should include? For example, might a reading specialist trained to work with dyslexics offer useful insights?

Please send your suggestions and/or expressions of interest in participating in next year's conference to Muriel Harris, Dept. of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
Muriel Harris, editor
Department of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN 47907

