WRITING LAB
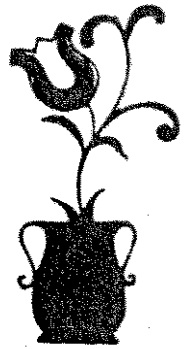# NEWSLETTER

A huge, collective thanks to all the members of our group who have sent in $5 donations for this year. For the others, a reminder. The newsletter now goes out to close to 1200 names on the mailing list, and it is all handled as a "spare time" activity. With no time or funds for a billing system, I rely instead on people's conscience to remember to send in donations.

Another plea. The response to Sharon Sorenson's series of articles on her high school lab has been extraordinarily enthusiastic. We have one other article waiting, on a junior high lab, but obviously there is a great interest in high school labs. We hope more people who have structured or directed a high school lab will share their insights with the rest of us.

Please send your articles, names of new members, announcements, requests for information, and $5 donations (in checks made payable to Purdue University or to me) to:

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

PERSONS, PLACES AND THINGS IN THE WRITING CENTER

Tutors work cheap; cassette tape players work even cheaper. For those of us in charge of a writing lab or any program at a state school, these statements have had significance since the day Proposition 13 hit. Every memo from the deans, every directive from the President, every meet-

ing with your supervisor allude to the same idea: cut back. Attract more and more students (most of whom will be less and less prepared for traditional college work) and teach them better, while spending less money. We know we need, say, six full-time trained faculty members in the lab, twenty half-time tutors and a large cheerful room partitioned into a testing area, quiet work area and conference area. That is ideal. Our dean tells us we can have the large room, all right--the lecture hall--but forget the equipment, soundproof partitions, full-time and part-time staff. The writing lab will meet three times a week--we and 250 students who have 250 different reasons for their inability to write--in a lecture hall. For deans with budgets to meet, that is ideal. An assistant dean may, if you're lucky, surreptitiously slip an extra $79.95 into your budget for a tape recorder because he's into individualized education.

Somewhere between these two extremes most of us operate. We have some staff, but they're overworked and underpaid; we have a few tutors with a little rudimentary training; we have some workbooks and locally-produced programs and exercises, but there's never enough release time or money to develop our materials; we have a fair-sized room, but it's drab white and we share it with the Reading Lab anyway. We have tape players and a TV for videotapes, but our AV program selection is limited and besides, we have some doubts about machines and gadgets for instruction anyway. What kinds of compromises and sacrifices can we make, backs to the wall? How can we best maintain personalized, attentive instruction for Basic Writing students while still meeting our budgets? How can we get the most mileage out of the combination of persons, places and things that is our writing lab?
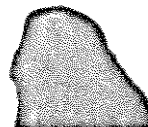
The Writing Center at Northern Essex is temporarily "between" outside-funded tutorial programs. I mean to suggest by "between" the same plight as the unemployed man who refers to his status as "between jobs." In the past, we have had CETA programs which paid for tutors in the Academic Support Center, which our Writing Center is a part of. Now, because of red tape, bad luck, bureaucratic bungling, deliberate sabotage, and genuine ill will between the district CETA office and the college, we have no help. We have some locally-produced exercise skills, some commercial texts and workbooks, and a limited collection of readers and rhetorics. The Center is located in a small room seating fourteen and providing some space for tables, filing cabinets, bookshelves, a cassette player and the Westinghouse Learning Tapes in spelling, syntactical patterns and phonics. Like Dilsey, we endure.

Our brief experience with CETA tutors in the past has shown us the kind of tasks that non-degreed staff can perform effectively, and also the tasks they can't. There were no degree requirements for the tutors we hired; in theory, any warm body off the street qualified. In practice, however, we hired competent people--three of the four hired for the writing center, in fact did have college degrees. Even though I sometimes doubt a B.A. in English qualifies a person to tutor in a writing lab any better than a B.S. in physics does, generally I could count on a degreed tutor's recognizing (after some training) a sentence fragment or a misspelled word more quickly than a non-degreed tutor. For those without an academic background, I have to give them the course that they will be tutoring in, essentially. Sometimes division of labor helps--ask one tutor to become a "spelling person," familiarize himself with the AV spelling equipment, work the exercise books until he's really good, learn to spot misspelled words quickly and know the appropriate exercise or chapter or tape to prescribe to correct the problem. Of course, this "specialist" approach to writing reduces the lab's ability to respond holistically to students and their writing, requiring that the lab still have at least one person available at all times to diagnose writing problems and set priorities for their correction.

One rule of thumb for testing whether or not a tutor can be trained to do a certain task is "is there a rule of thumb for what he'll be teaching?" That is, a tutor can be efficiently trained to provide instruction where there are precise rules to follow--conventions and mechanics, in other words. Form and content, not being subject to prescriptive rules, are more difficult to train tutors to teach. My experience, given tutors who change every year or even every semester, has been to let the tutors teach editing skills and more highly trained faculty or paraprofessionals diagnose, perform most error analyses, and teach the composing process.

Our training of the tutors has not, in the past, been as thorough as it should have been. One reason, I'm sure, is that when I took over the writing center this past September, I inherited the tutors, most of whom had already settled into roles in the Center. Also, as I noted earlier, three of the four had B.A. degrees in English, so basic training was clearly inappropriate. The training was mostly informal and ad hoc--I gave each tutor a great deal of responsibility for his students' progress, and in turn all performed responsibly by asking for help and advice when they needed it. The training, like the instruction of students in the Writing Center, was individualized. "Rick," one of them would say to me, "Joanne's paper this week is pretty good. I can't find any errors. But something's missing--I can't put my finger on it--could you take a look at it?" Such conversations were repeated many times a week and really, as I see it, constituted the bulk of the training.

I spent four years working with Donald M. Murray at the University of New Hampshire. "I think you could probably lock students into a room with a typewriter and a ream of paper," he once told me, "and at the end of a semester they'd be writing as well as if they had taken my course." That firm conviction in the natural ability of students translated itself into a laissez-faire composition program which he oversaw while I was at New Hampshire. His attitude and personal example both demanded and encouraged a toughness and compassion in his composition staff, nearly all of whom were teaching assistants like myself. It was the best possible training for me, and I try to create the same kind of informal, confident, and caring atmosphere in my Center. I figure if the tutors don't care--genuinely care--about their students, then the students may as well talk to a computer console and read-out screen. The benefits for students of human contact dissolve in

the presence of antagonistic or unfeeling tutors.

The formal training of staff thus figured less importantly in the day-to-day conduct of the Writing Center, and this was by design. I distributed a packet of readings which, both intellectually and academically, were of uneven quality but which served to create an atmosphere of caring for students and the belief that (as a discarded title of a draft of Murray's book claimed) Writing Can Be Taught. The readings often offered no nuts-and-bolts information on how, specifically, writing can be taught; yet readings such as Ashby & McCracken's "The Widow's Walk" (College English, Jan., 1975) impress by their beauty and sensitivity. In the face of such awesome concern for students in their writing, the details of fixing an occasional sentence fragment or deciding when "i" comes before "e" seem insignificant. Formal and informal training both must begin there-- with concern for the students.

Tutors should also read Murray's A Writer Teaches Writing and Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations--in my case the objectives of the Writing Center evolved directly from those books, so to understand fully what we're doing in the Center a tutor needs that general background. We subscribe to Basic Writing, Writing Lab Newsletter, CCC, and College English, and I expect tutors to sample those publications with an eye for striking ideas, new techniques, workable suggestions. Tutors should know the workbooks we use in the Center, have worked through them themselves, and be prepared for any questions on them. They should also become familiar with all the resources of the Writing Center, since I do allow my more experienced tutors some freedom to diagnose and prescribe. Early last semester we spent our slow afternoons going through the workbooks, handbooks, programmed texts and rhetorics one-by-one, sharing questions about them, discussing possible uses and speculating on their effectiveness. When the time came that a tutor needed a set of exercises on verb endings, a program for correcting run-on sentences, a good example of narrative writing or clarification of a rule on common usage, he knew where in the Writing Center to find them. We also keep an up-to-date file of 3 X 5 cards indexing all Writing Center resources under headings such as Fragment, Verb tenses, etc.

I also tried to have weekly formal meetings with the tutors, although, often the experiences of meeting students' varied schedules and needs prevented the meetings, always considered secondary to our students. At these meetings, when held, we would share ideas, discuss successes and failures about individual students, examine and occasionally grade students papers. By the way, I'm skeptical (now) of allowing tutors into the actual grading process. I must take full responsibility for grades assigned--my name alone is on the Registrar's records. So while I find the discussion and occasional heated arguments over whether a paper is a "B" or a "C" useful and instructive, constantly forcing the tutors and myself to reexamine our purposes and standards, I also find the shroud of authoritarianism that falls over the tutors when I'm forced to assign a grade radically different from the majority's grade to be stifling and damaging to the open atmosphere I try to encourage. So now I do all final grading.

Tutors, then, must be trained (or at least encouraged) to be sensitive to individual students, and can be trained to do many specific, directed tasks-- editing skills such as spelling, punctuation, etc., as well as slightly more subjective tasks such as identifying topic sentences and paragraph unity. This releases full-time, experienced or trained professionals for the more important task of teaching the composing process--generating ideas and specifics, logical and full development, clarity of expression, style, voice and awareness of audience. Teaching the composing process demands experience, a deep background in good writing, and an unusual willingness to listen patiently to students. Only rarely can a tutor acquire all three of these quickly enough to take on added responsibilities before a semester or his tenure ends. I should add, however, that it can happen--it happened to me once with an unusually good tutor whom I came to trust almost as much as I trusted myself with any student and any writing problem.

Another "method of delivery of services," as this weeks' jargon for "teaching" has it, is materials, either commercially-prepared or locally-produced handouts and exercises. Most of these will be focused and specific, requiring the one "correct" answer from students and no judgment from graders. Thus they can easily be used by tutors. The only real imagination or non-

rule-directed behavior required of the tutor is explaining any mistakes a student might make on the sheets or exercises. This requires some knowledge of the student and a bit of error analysis to supplement the materials. Is the missing "s" from the third person singular present tense verb due to black English dialect interference, a failure to perceive the true singular subject of the sentence, or a basic unawareness of the need for concord in Edited American English? Usually, a tutor, aware of the concept of error-analysis, can make the kind of basic judgment or at least ask a professional staff member for assistance. Sometimes the answers a student gives on an exercise sheet or pattern-practice handout will actually highlight a pattern of error that is obscured in his actual weekly writing assignments.

The best bargain in the Writing Center, though limited to certain kinds of deficiencies and certain kinds of students, is the programmed text. The advantages of this kind of text are obvious. It is self-paced, always an advantage in individualized programs; more conveniently, it is auto-instructional and self-correcting, so it doesn't require much tutorial or correction time. It is structured, and some students either need or want systematic approaches to learning. In an occasional student's case, programs in fact work better than one-to-one tutoring, because of the structure, I'm sure. Most important, it often works; that is, when students finish a program unit, they are slightly better writers. I can personally attest to the effectiveness of programs: I learned chemistry as a college freshman entirely through two programmed texts. I have seen Blumenthal's English 2200 practically eliminate run-on sentences from students' writing; I have seen Feinstein's Programmed Spelling Demons solve the TO - TOO - TWO dilemma (or should I say trilemma?) or the LOSE - LOOSE confusion for students. I have also seen both books fail miserably with other students, causing resentment, frustration, anger and confusion.

It is difficult to resist the lure of direct grammar instruction, expecially when students themselves often see it as the remedy for all their writing problems. "If I just knew what a gerund phrase was," they seem to say, "I could write." Yet direct grammar instruction is nearly worthless, and the fact that it's trendily packaged in a complete grammar program does not make it more valuable. A highly-structured learning program can benefit only some kinds of students, and only in certain kinds of topics-- specific isolable skills such as spelling or verb endings, where there is a clear-cut "right"

and "wrong" answer. Like minimally experienced tutors, programmed texts work, but with editing skills rather than composing skills.

Who decides when a programmed text is appropriate? In situations where lack of any kind of staff is evident (such as mine some semesters), the temptation to hastily assign a student a particular chapter in Blumenthal or other kind of exercise sheet is strong. During the brief history of learning centers in general, their one real weakness has been just that tendency: to substitute individual busy-work for individual teaching and learning. The primary objective in a Writing Lab must be to provide genuine individualized learning--to make sensitive and accurate diagnoses of each student's problem, to make informed prescriptions, and to remain flexible enough and have a sufficient supply of resources on hand in the lab to change diagnoses, prescriptions and programs at any point in the term whenever a student doesn't seem to be progressing well. Only a trained and experienced professional staff member can keep track of the resources of the center, have the combination of analytical and intuitive processes for determing the cognitive styles of each student, and maintain a generally clear distinction between editing skills and composing skills. Thus my inexperienced tutors don't have the option (or responsibility) of diagnosing and prescribing a programmed text.

Closely allied with programmed texts are media aids to learning--videotape cassettes, audio-cassettes, computer terminals, and the like. More glamorous than Blumenthal's zebra-striped pages, glowing with scientific and technological legitimacy, they nevertheless have much the same advantages and same limitations as do extensive written texts. They often are programmed--highly structured and systematized; they require little or no staff time to oversee, teach or correct; after the initial purchase price of the programs and necessary equipment (which often is large, admittedly), they are inexpensive, asking neither salary nor fringe benefits. They have additional minor advantages which may make them more suitable for a few students than programmed texts: there is at least the illusion of human contact-- a voice, sometimes even a TV picture of an instructor. A-V material is likely to be

based on extensive research, with batteries of laboratory studies and tests and the latest theories of cognition behind it. No programmed text that I've seen has the credentials of some of the A-V stuff I have lying around my lab, yet oddly the texts seem to work no better and no worse than the commercially prepared media programs.

One really exciting use of media is being started by the Math Lab director at Northern Essex. She and her assistant (dealing with 300 students a week, she is allowed one half-time assistant) are preparing their own video-tape series of math lectures, tied closely to individual chapters in the text. Students view the tapes at their convenience (this is more flexible than the old Monday-Wednesday-Friday at 9 lectures), do the exercises in the corresponding chapter, go to the math lab for feedback, and take the appropriate test. Of course, math, being much more rule-governed than writing, easily lends itself to this kind of extensive modularization and competency-based systems. With writing, even in a remedial lab setting, minimum competency is simply one of our tasks, often not a very important one, if by "minimum writing competency" one means good editing skills.

The general goal of a Writing Center is to provide individualized diagnosis of writing deficiencies and establish individual ways of remedying those deficiencies. Speaking strictly pedagogically, I can say from my experiences in a lab setting that people do this best. "Individualized instruction" and "personalized instruction" are often used interchangeably, especially by the A-V firms with huge P-R budgets. In truth, an audio cassette on verb endings is no more "person-alized" than the Rosetta Stone, even though it is prescribed on an individual basis. People--that is, professional staff or tutors--can respond, make allowances for individual cognitive styles, interrupt the flow of the instruction process to answer a deep-seated but seemingly bizarre question on apostrophes that no designer of tapes or programmed texts could ever have anticipated. But beyond the fact that people are nearly always better teachers than are machines, I believe that education (despite the current jargon about "basic skills" and "minimum competencies," as if teaching someone to write were on a level with teaching him to repair a leaky faucet; we are still educators, even if our students are "academically deficient" when we first see them)--I believe that education must be a humanizing force in our society

today, teaching us to be more human and humane. And no machine, no video cassette, no set of programmed exercises that I know of can do that as well as a concerned and sensitive fellow-human. Writing Lab direc-tors can sacrifice the human contact, if our budgets demand, and teach competence in basic, rule-governed editing skills with media or programmed texts, but ethically and pedagogically, we must leave that de-lightfully human package of surprises known as the composing process--invention, thinking, exploration, discovery of idea and detail, and communication--to the humans.

H. Eric Branscomb
Coordinator, Writing Center
Northern Essex Community
College

CALL FOR PAPERS

MARYLAND COMPOSITION CONFERENCE/1982

The Maryland Composition Conference/1982 will be held at the University of Maryland, College Park, on Friday, April 16, 1982. We invite papers which focus on these three issues:

1. New developments in Evaluating Student Growth in Writing.

2. Integration of Faculty: Part-time Instructors, English Teachers and Teachers from Across the Disciplines.

3. A Definition of Pre-Professional Writing.

Proposals and papers may take the form of individual presentations (approximately 20 minutes), panel presentations (approximately 90 minutes), workshop sessions (approximate-ly 90 minutes), and debates.

DEADLINE: 10 December 1981

Send proposals, papers, or inquiries to:

Susan Kleimann, Conference Chairman
Department of English
The University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742

THE HIGH SCHOOL WRITING LAB: ITS EVALUATION
(PART III)

The following is part three of a three-part series about high school writing labs. The first part dealt with the establishment of the lab; part two dealt with the management plan; part three deals with program evaluation.

Part of the value of a high school writing lab is definitely extrinsic. While the objective included in our Title IV-C Innovative Education proposal asked us at Central High School to prove some very specific outcomes, the results in the high school composition classroom are probably of greater interest to the general reader than are the cold statistics. We will examine both; but let us first consider the benefits in the classroom, those non-measurable benefits we all see but can't statistically prove.

If the composition teacher schedules half of his class of twenty-six into the writing lab on Thursday and the other half on Friday morning, something meaningful needs to be going on in his classroom on both mornings. He may do something as simple as a flip-flop lesson, taught perhaps no differently than if his whole class were there; he may do individual conferencing, working with students on their most recent compositions. On the other hand, if the composition teacher sends only five of his most advanced students to the lab on Monday morning, he may do a much-needed review with the other twenty-one. Or perhaps instead he sends ten of his least successful students to the lab for remediation while he works with the remainder of the class on a concept the least successful students cannot handle. On Wednesday, he may send students to the lab who have finished a unit early and can profit from additional work on an earlier unit or from enrichment work he knows he will have no time to cover in class.

What happens in the classroom while part of the class is in the lab is as varied as are the teachers and the classes involved in the project. Teacher response to the evaluation of the project tells part of the story: "What happens in my classroom now is far more intense that could have happened prior to the writing lab. I have more time for individualized instruction since part of the class is receiving individualized instruction in the writing lab. In addition, I see that the writing lab reinforces my own evaluation of a student's work, i.e., a student learned from someone else in addition to me

that misplaced modifiers make his writing unclear."

While the extrinsic values are commendable, the intrinsic ones are really impressive. During the first semester, 347 students made 1316 visits to the lab. The objective of our Title IV-C Innovative Education proposal called for the following results: Upon completion of project activities, 80% of the composition students at Central High School in grades 10-12 who have received one-on-one remediation or enrichment instruction in the writing laboratory will show improvement in individually indentified areas of need. The formal evaluation design consisted of three parts:

1. At the conclusion of each nine-week period, outside objective readers read analytically all students' final writings. Readings were made solely on the basis of identified problems dealt with in the writing lab. In other words, there was no effort made to analyze the whole gamut of writing skills, but, rather, only those for which students were sent to the lab.

    The objective readers used a rating scale of 1 to 3 for each identified problem, i.e., each problem marked by the composition classroom teacher on the diagnostic sheet. A mark of 1 indicated the identified problem was not evident in the final composition (identified need met); a mark of 2 indicated the identified problem was erratic in the final composition (identified need improvement but not met); and a mark of 3 indicated the identified problem was evident in the final composition (identified need not met).

2. All composition students both at Central High School and at a control school took The Purdue High School Test, Forms 1 and 2, Form 1 as the pre-test and Form 2 as the post-test. Such testing, while it does not measure all writing skills, permitted writing lab personnel to do both a pre- and post-test comparison as well as experimental-control comparison.

3. A student attitudinal survey, designed by the writing lab personnel, was taken at the end of the semester to

determine student reaction to the process.

The results were better than our highest hopes: Analytical readings of students' final writings showed that during the first nine weeks 88.78% of the students completing the program showed improvement in one or more identified needs. During the second nine weeks 90.83% of the students showed improvement in one or more identified needs. In addition, 38 students made 250 visits to the Writing Lab for enrichment. Although it was not part of the project's objective, an additional analysis was completed not for total students, but for total needs. For the first eighteen weeks, 93.40% of all needs (every item checked on diagnostic sheets by every classroom composition teacher) were either met or improved.

In order to prove that such results came about because of the writing lab and not because of classroom instruction, pre- and post-test results from Central High School and a control group were compared. Students who benefited from the writing lab during the first nine weeks showed a significant increase on the post-test, and the increase was significantly higher than that of the control group. When statistical analysis was completed for students enrolled in composition both nine-week periods, results were highly significant. The difference over eighteen weeks is much greater than the difference over nine weeks. This is evident in the fact that in the eighteen-week analysis $p < .01$ but in the nine-weeks analysis $p < .05$. In addition after nine weeks, there was a difference of 2.24 points in the estimated means, adjusted for differences in the pre-test scores. In the eighteen-week analysis, the difference is 6.58 points.

The student attitudinal survey issued a pleasant surprise. Not only did students show highly significant gains as a result of the writing lab experience, but they also enjoyed the experience. In a progressive scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most positive, the mean response to the survey was 3.5.

It is evident, therefore, that the writing lab is, indeed, a highly viable project in the high school composition program. In some respects, because of the control which the lab director and the classroom teacher have over student participation, the high school lab is economically more logical than labs in post-secondary institutions. In every respect, however, we as English teachers must use every option available to us to remedy the nation-wide deficiency among our students. Certainly the writing lab is one highly important option.

Sharon Sorenson
Director of Writing Lab
Central High School
Evansville, Indiana

CALL FOR PAPERS --a reminder

People interested in submitting a paper for the second annual Southeastern Writing Center Conference, on Feb. 6, 1982, to be held at the University of Alabama, should send their papers or detailed abstracts, before Dec. 1, to:

Gary Olson
Dept. of English
Drawer AL
University of Alabama
University, Alabama 34586

A RESPONSE TO SUSAN GLASSMAN

In the Oct., 1981 issue of the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER, Susan Glassman published a review of our recent book, Improving Writing Skills (New Directions for College Learning Assistance, Jossey-Bass, 1981). The review outlined essential information about the book, and had it been published in any other forum we would have been delighted with the good things Glassman had to say and pleased with the review as it stands. The newsletter, however, reaches a very specialized population and, thus, we feel compelled to amplify two points raised by Glassman so that potential users of the book may have a clearer idea of its content and intent.

Glassman characterizes the book as an "overview" and recommends it specifically

for administrators and those interested in starting centers. We trust that both audiences will find the book worthwhile, but our hope was that we had provided an introspective and fairly detailed look at a limited group of specific problems--accountability, innovation, ESL funding, research, etc.-- that are of continuing interest to old hands in the field. Those concerned with the nuts and bolts of starting a writing center will find that Muriel Harris's forthcoming Tutoring Writing: A Sourcebook for Writing Labs (Scott, Foresman, Spring, 1982) provides the kind of broad overview necessary to deal with the myriad problems facing new directors. Although both our volume and Harris's are called "sourcebooks," they really address different audiences. In compiling our book, we saw the essays in it as of interest chiefly to those already active in the field and to other concerned faculty and administrators. Anyone starting a writing center or lab will find our book a good companion volume to the Harris text, but it certainly was not designed to be as comprehensive as Harris's book promises to be.

Despite our desire for detail in the essays submitted, we were faced with a very strict page limit. We decided to count brevity as a blessing and encouraged our authors to strive for succinctness and clarity. In order to cover a variety of significant issues, we tried to sharply focus each chapter and asked authors to add depth to only those matters they deemed most important. While we can appreciate Glassman's wish for "greater depth," we do feel that the individual authors did an admirable job of developing their subject matters in this short book (104 pages). We hope that overworked teachers and administrators will find our sourcebook refreshingly brief as well as rewarding.

Thom Hawkins & Phyllis
Brooks
"The Writing Center"
Student Learning Center
University of California-
Berkeley

A CALL FOR HELP

Dear Colleagues:

Muriel Harris has very kindly offered to let me use these pages to appeal to you for assistance. Recently, the CCCC

accepted my proposal for a session at San Francisco next March devoted to the training and use of peer tutors in Writing Programs. The session would have three papers: one by John Ackerman on the use of peer tutors in the classroom; one by Debby Trevathan on viewpoint; and one by me, an overview of the training of peer tutors for English Writing Programs, based on a survey I promised to conduct.

Last year in Dallas I (and many of you) attended the session devoted to Writing Programs. Several of my colleagues gave papers based on Lincoln's Writing Program. Peer tutoring was a brief part of several presentations, but elicited a great number of questions from the audience. It occurred to me that we ought to know more about the ways each of us select, train and use peer tutors.

Let me admit in advance that there will be plenty of ambiguity in my questions. No two writing programs are alike; no two even agree on what a writing lab is or might be, much less a writing program. But perhaps what this survey or overview of our peer-tutoring components can do is to indicate some practices and usages already in existence which are successful at various institutions. Such finds might serve as models for our own institutions to adapt or attempt. Whatever I find, the results will be part of our program in San Francisco next spring and will also be reported in a future article in the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER.

Please complete the following survey and return it to me no later than December 15, 1981. That way I can assess, tabulate, and draw some tentative conclusions from the data over my one-month Christmas break. And I thank you in advance for taking some of your very scarce time to complete the accompanying questionnaire.

Mail the complete survey, by
Dec. 15, to:
Dr. Lynne Loschky/Dept. of Humanistic
Studies/425 M. L. King/Lincoln U.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A
READER
ASKS...

At Niagara County Community College, we have developed an integrated reading-

PEER TUTOR/WRITING PROGRAM SURVEY

1. Do you use peer tutors in your writing program? Yes____ No____
2. If "yes," complete the following questions:
   In which of the following settings (one or more) do your peer tutors operate?
   a) Tutoring Center (resource center apart from regular classroom with tutors for several disciplines)
   b) Writing Lab (language center with peer tutors and professional tutorial services)
   c) Classroom
   d) Other
3. How are your peer tutors selected? (Underline one or more)
   a) By their major: (If so, English? Education? Other?____)
   b) By their previous performance in writing classes: How many need they have completed?____ Must they have attained a certain grade in these courses?____ If so, what?____
   c) By recommendation from college writing teachers?
   d) By process of interviewing applicants?
   e) By applicants proving financial need?
   f) Other
4. Is your peer tutor program
   a) A course? (How many hours of credit?)
   b) A job?
   c) A volunteer position?
   d) Other____
5. How are your peer tutors rewarded?
   a) By a grade or partial course credit.
   b) By remuneration.
   c) By college tuition reduction.
   d) By status.
   e) Other
6. How are they trained? (Underline one or more)
   a) By the Writing Program Coordinator before and during the semester they peer tutor.
   b) On the job, by a classroom teacher and/or other professional staff.
   c) Through the Education Department.
   d) No training given.
   e) Other

-2-

7. Are any of the following training practices utilized during a peer tutor's training or career? (Underline one or more)
   a) Workshops/seminars conducted by peer tutor trainers.
   b) Assigned appropriate readings.
   c) Retreats or other off-campus training sessions.
   d) Writing assignments.
   e) Small group work.
   f) Grammar drill.
   g) AV training.
   h) Peer tutor exchange sessions (sharing success/failure stories)
   i) Other
8. Do your peer tutors work for one writing teacher? Yes____ No____
9. If yes, do they help plan classroom activities? Yes____ No____
10. Is there an attempt to match tutor/teacher? Yes____ No____
    (If yes, can either refuse to work with the other? Yes____ No____)
11. Are your teachers trained to work with their peer tutors? Yes____ No____
12. Who is responsible for grading the tutor? (Underline one or more)
    a) Coordinator of the program
    b) Teacher to whom assigned.
    c) Peer tutors themselves: self-evaluation____ peer evaluation____
    d) Other
13. How long may a college student peer tutor?
    a) One semester.
    b) ____ semesters.
    c) Unlimited.
14. Do you consider that your peer tutors are an integral part of your writing program? If so, feel free to elaborate.
15. Could you estimate the following demographic information concerning your peer tutors: %Female____ %Male____ Age 18-25____ Over 25____
16. If the preceeding questions do not get to the heart of your school's selection, education and utilization of peer tutors in your writing program, please explain briefly what your program consists of.

SCHOOL NAME____

writing developmental skills class and are
offering it for the first time this semester.
I am interested in learning how other colleges
have structured and organized these classes
as well as what approaches have been found to
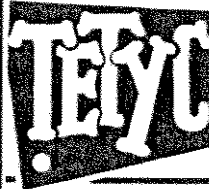be effective.

> Dr. Kathleen T. McWhorter
> Director of Basic Skills
> Niagara County Community College
> 3111 Saunders Settlement Road
> Sanborn, New York 14132

A

READER

ASKS......

I am a junior-level computer science
major at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
I am presently working on a project in
the area of computer aids for basic writing
skills as taught in the WPI writing center.
Do you have any information on computer aids
for programs carried out at any writing center?

> David L. Sanborn
> 1 Dayton St. #14
> Worcester, MA 01609

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
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