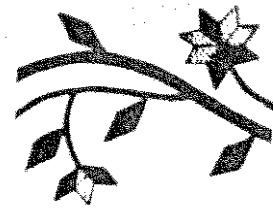


WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER



Vol. VII, No. 10 (June 1983)

With this issue the newsletter takes a summer vacation--until we all slip back into the harness in September. Although summer should include some much-deserved leisure, you may want to include on your agenda a reminder to write something for the newsletter. While there are stacks of manuscripts waiting to appear next year, there are also hundreds of people in our newsletter group (which now numbers about 1,300) whom we haven't heard from:

- What's happening in your writing lab?
- What new services have you added recently?
- How do you train your tutors?
- Have you found a way to evaluate your work?
- What research are you doing in your lab?
- Do you have any cautionary advice for the rest of us?
- Have you found some useful materials to share?
- What special problems does your lab have to contend with?

Newsletter readers constantly comment on the usefulness of newsletter articles, but we can only continue to help each other by sharing, in writing, accounts of our work. I look forward to reading your papers!

Another newsletter service includes conference announcements, calls for papers, and so on. Please keep in mind our usual deadline--the first of the previous month (i.e., August 1 for the September issue, September 1 for the October issue, etc.)

Our newsletter now serves another function because of its new status as the publication of the National Writing Centers Association, the recently recognized assembly of the National Council of Teachers of

English (NCTE). As such, the newsletter will be participating in the NCTE Information Exchange, and we hope to serve the regional groups as their forum also. Starting in September, we will be including names of all regional groups who request such a listing. If you are the president of a regional group and want to be included in this monthly listing, please send me the name of your group, plus the address and phone number of an appropriate contact person, either you or your membership chairman.

However, membership in the national or any regional group is not necessary in order to be part of the newsletter group. And, since Purdue's English Department publishes the newsletter (thereby footing all the bills for duplicating and mailing), your yearly donation of \$5 is greatly appreciated. If you have not yet contributed for this year or are in an expansive mood and feel like making another donation, your check will be greatly appreciated. I don't attempt to send out invoices or reminders to your business office; instead, I rely on your conscience to send in your donation.

Please continue sending articles, reviews, announcements, queries, and those \$5/year checks (made payable to Purdue University) to me:



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

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Have a relaxing, pleasant, leisurely, and (if possible) productive summer!

EVALUATING OUR OWN PEER TUTORING PROGRAMS: A FEW LEADING QUESTIONS

There are few subjects which elicit the twin emotions of anxiety and boredom more certainly than evaluation. To evaluate or to be evaluated are both uncomfortable positions that tend to switch places when one least expects it. Yet, in spite of all the associated anxiety and the lassitude that goes with it, evaluation has to be thought about and "performed." This is becoming increasingly true for our peer tutoring programs. Even if peer tutoring is a relatively new educational innovation and even if it may be still premature to begin a systematic evaluation of its effectiveness, my Dean, at least, wants to know (and sooner, not later), "Does your peer tutoring program work?" It seems to me that we are going to have to start coming up with some answers to that question, or at least learn to ask more appropriate questions.

Certainly, I can provide my Dean with some impressive statistics about the numbers of students who make use of our Writing Lab and of the peer tutors, (and I probably will) along with some earnest generalizations about the good we are doing at a comparatively low cost, and this might satisfy him. Or it might not. More important, it won't really satisfy me or, I suspect, satisfy you. We want to know what actually is going on in our own tutoring programs, whether we value that or not, and, if we do, why and to what degree? The question is, then, how do we begin to evaluate our own programs?

First of all, I think it is important to recognize that we are, for the time being, going to have to play the twin roles of evaluator and evaluatee. Most departments, colleges or universities are not willing to bring in an outside evaluator to look at one relatively "insignificant" program, peer tutoring. Even if they were, I will be so bold as to suggest that there are at this time very few if any "outside" evaluators with a clear enough sense of what peer tutoring is about to pass judgment on someone else's program. Perhaps in the near future we will have developed a workable model of peer tutoring and collaborative learning so as to have the expertise to set up teams of evaluators for each other's programs, but in the meantime we need, those of us who administer and train peer tutors, to begin a process of self-evaluation. We need, for ourselves first and then, perhaps, for our administra-

tors, to determine where we stand in relation to our programs and where these programs fit into the educational mission of our institutions. In order to get this kind of perspective on ourselves and our programs, I have prepared a list of questions. You can ask them in the privacy of your own mind. The collective answers, however, are what will eventually help set the standards by which institutional decisions will be made, so I hope that if these questions, some of which I have also provided commentary on, are of any use to you in terms of thinking about the value of your peer tutoring program or in writing a report to an administrator, you will reply personally to me or, even better, in the pages of the Writing Lab Newsletter.

The first series of questions has to do with goals and rationales:

1. What were the reasons--historical, educational, political, personal--for establishing your peer tutoring program? This is a hard question to answer without engaging in polemics. The point is not to try to justify your program here; rather, try and figure out in the context of your own institutional situation why it is there.
2. What were the goals, stated or implied, of the peer tutoring program at its birth? These need to be written down in as specific a language as possible if you have not already done so.
3. Have the goals of the program changed as it has matured? If so, in what ways? Sometimes the process of evaluation tends to create the false impression that programs and people are static, or, worse, that if they have changed, something must have been wrong with them. If your thinking about peer tutoring has not changed and you've been at it for more than a year, that in itself ought to tell you something about your program.

The next series of questions, all with sub-questions circling like mosquitoes, has to do with the working part of the program.

4. How are tutors selected and trained? This is perhaps the most frequently asked (and answered) question about peer tutoring programs, probably because it is a good question. In order to evalu-

ate the usefulness of the answers, however, the question needs to be broken into smaller parts that might include among them questions such as the following:

- A. Have selection procedures and qualifications changed since the program began? If so, what was the rationale for the changes? If no changes occurred, why not?
- B. Do students receive academic credit for the training program? Are students paid during training? Why or why not?
- C. Are there compulsory in-service training programs for tutors who have completed their initial training? Are tutors paid to attend?
- D. Finally, and most important, what pleases you about the selection and training of your tutors? What makes you unhappy about it?

5. How effective are peer tutors on the job?

Obviously, this is the question we would all like to avoid because we really don't know quite how to talk about what peer tutors do in a successful peer tutoring program. We are always being shadowed by the suspicion that we ought really to come up with "scientific proof" that peer tutoring improves the writing of tutees. Maybe something in a pre-test/post-test outfit would be nice, as if posing that kind of question didn't already dictate the terms of its answers. There is, when one comes down to it, a great deal of mystery here still. Thankfully, there are a few "factual" questions to begin with.

- A. How many tutors are there? How frequently do they tutor? How many students do they tutor? What percentage is this of your lab's entire program?
- B. Is the tutoring facility adequate? Is it appropriately sized? Is it accessible? Attractive? Do tutors hang around when they are not tutoring?

The following questions might elicit useful information for you and, perhaps, even a way

to begin talking about what a 'successful' program in peer tutoring is.

- C. Have you ever had to "fire" a tutor? Why? Do you have a problem with absenteeism among tutors? Tutees?
- D. Is there always a "regular" faculty member present when tutors are working? Why?
- E. What do you think the tutors are really good at? What do you think they are not so good at?
- F. What do tutors tell you?
- G. What do your colleagues tell you about the program? What do tutees tell you? (A survey would be helpful, obviously, but what about casual conversations?)

The next couple of questions have to do with the relationship of the peer tutoring program to the director of the peer tutoring program--you.

6. How much of your total time is spent working, worrying and administering the peer tutoring program, including training, budget preparation, scheduling, in-service training, publicity, day-to-day administration, and reading articles like this one?

Would you rather be doing something else with your professional time?

I pose these questions because the answers, I think, will tell us all about the future of peer tutoring in the teaching of composition. In short, are these programs efficient?

Here are a few other questions that one might pose vis-a-vis administration:

- A. What support services do you have for the program, including secretarial, clerical, technical?
- B. How has your administration of the program affected your relationship with the college administration? Departmental colleagues? The academic community in general?
- C. Have there been any unexpected bene-

fits from the program? Drawbacks?

Finally, I would like to conclude this rather grueling self-interrogation with a couple of off-the-wall questions.

7. Have you ever been embarrassed by your peer tutors? What were the circumstances? Have your tutors ever made you swell up with pride? When? What did they do?
8. Are you exploiting your peer tutors? In what way? Are they exploiting you? How?
9. Do you prefer to work with your peer tutors instead of your colleagues? If so, what does this say about your program? About your colleagues?
10. What affect has the peer tutoring program had on your career? What would happen to your career if the program were to fold?

We have time to think about all of these and other perhaps more germane questions in the next few years, but we must, I believe, begin to ask and genuinely answer them if we are to respond in a fruitful way to the question that our colleagues and institutions ought to be asking us: IN WHAT SPECIFIC WAYS IS YOUR PEER TUTORING PROGRAM MEETING AND NOT MEETING ITS GOALS? The reports that we will write or are currently writing to college Deans, Departmental Chairpersons, educational policy committees and each other will become the academic lore of peer tutoring and the teaching of composition. We need to make it as accurate and interesting a story as possible.

Harvey Kail
University of Maine



CALL FOR PAPERS

THE DELAWARE VALLEY WRITING COUNCIL
AND
THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

invite interested instructors and other individuals at the elementary, secondary

and college levels to submit proposals for presentations at a

FALL CONFERENCE - OCTOBER 29, 1983

at the new campus of the Community College of Philadelphia. Theme of the Fall Conference is

"ACHIEVING LITERACY THROUGH WRITING"

The following types of proposal are solicited:

Individual Presentations: Please submit a 200 word abstract of a paper for a sixty - minute presentation on such topics as:

- Writing as a means of discovering knowledge.
- Writing as a means of communicating knowledge.
- Translating from other "literacies" into writing.
- Literacy and style.
- Literacy and literature.
- Teaching and evaluating any of the above.

Workshops: Please submit a plan for conducting a workshop in which participants may respond to the above or related topics.

Details will follow regarding the format of these sessions.

Please send abstracts and workshop proposals by July 1, 1983 to:

John Nace, Learning Laboratory
Community College of Philadelphia
1700 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

The Conference Committee will make every effort to include as many presenters as possible. If you have any questions, please call:

John Nace (215-751-8485)

or

Steve Glogger
(215-751-8660)



A REPORT ON THE 1983 CCCC SPECIAL SESSION FOR WRITING LAB DIRECTORS

There is one main problem that occurs when a large group of enthusiastic directors and staff of writing labs from across the country get together: time. The CCCC Special Session for Writing Labs, which met in Detroit in March, was no exception. Given only 75 minutes, we managed to conduct a business meeting, attend two workshops, and exchange materials.

During the business portion of the session, we heard the results of the writing lab survey done by Linda Bannister (University of Central Arkansas) and Patricia Murray (University of Michigan--Flint). Briefly, they found that the typical director is a full-time English faculty member at the instructor/lecturer level who is on a nine-month contract making between \$15,000-\$20,000. Details on how directors see their duties, work load, and environment can be had by writing Murray.

Following their report, Phyllis Sherwood detailed the current writing lab status at Raymond Walters College, much publicized earlier this year in the WLN; unfortunately, that situation has not improved much, a warning to all directors. On a more positive note, Nancy McCracken (Youngstown College) announced the new NCTE assembly status of the Writing Center Association, which means that we will have the right to elect representatives to the NCTE Board of Directors and to have a regular meeting time at the NCTE Convention (this means a one-day workshop in Denver this November).

A summary of the workshops follows. John and Tilly Warnock (University of Wyoming) focused on the liberatory qualities of writing labs, which "has as its object the empowering of self to act effectively in society by, among other things, developing critical consciousness." That means "students' awareness of themselves as writers and of their composing processes, of their options as writers, of their limitations, without implying that these limitations are evidence of their mental or moral deficiency, without, that is, blaming the victim." Furthermore, the Warnocks defined the liberatory lab and its relationship to the department, the university, and the community.

Barbara Weaver (Ball State University) and Alice Gillam-Scott (University of Illinois at Chicago Circle) explored the tutor as writer. "Although new tutors bring to the writing lab an interest in writing as well as some success at it, they do not necessarily bring an understanding of the writing process or of themselves as writers." To that end, then, this workshop offered insights in facilitating such an understanding and fostering a tutor's identity as a writer by suggested activities such as focused free writing, questionnaires, journals, and composing profiles.

Lee Quiring (Westlake School, Los Angeles) provided suggestions for designing and operating the high school writing lab, including facilities, lab philosophy, staff screening and selection, tutor training, resources, publication, and director's duties. This is certainly an area in which college lab directors could assist their high school counterparts and also build a better rapport between the two institutions.

At times, however, we need to convince our own colleagues of the usefulness of the lab, and Jeanne Simpson and Carol Stevens (Eastern Illinois University) did that in a workshop on "Reaching a Tough Constituency." First, they suggested frequent communication with faculty, class visits, requests for sample themes and lessons, reports on new textbooks, and T.A. training. On the other hand, faculty can contribute to idea files, observe tutor sessions, and follow-up on referred students.

Although the primary responsibility of a director is to run a lab, once that lab is run efficiently, then there are opportunities to extend the influence of the lab and to get visibility and support by consulting with the college community. Marcia Silver (Brooklyn College) offered strategies for locating "individuals and programs in your institutions in need of consultation and helping them plan." Some of those possibilities include writing across the curriculum, staff development, faculty workshops, and assistance to graduate students.

The last three workshops focused on instruction. Richard Veit (University of North Carolina--Wilmington) presented "A

Systematic Program of Writing Center Instruction," coordinating free writings and longer assignments to introduce basic writers to actual writing tasks early and often. Janice Neuleib (Illinois State University) emphasized a discourse-centered tutoring approach in which "all instruction is based on what the student can do with his or her own writing," and one which also caters to different learning styles with a variety of strategies to approach writing problems. Finally, Irene Lurkis Clark (University of Southern California) tried to answer the question of whether the computer is "Help or Hassle?" in the lab. Certainly, there are advantages to the computer: immediate feedback, motivation for students, and content teaching. However, writing instruction must focus on the process: heuristics, revision, and style--to name but a few. At USC, they are using computers primarily for teaching revision strategies and plan on programs for pre-writing and organizational strategies in the near future.

The keen interest in computers was evident at the entire conference, and at other recent conferences. Before jumping on the Applewagon, we should seriously consider our goals and objectives of writing instruction and then see how the computer can be used to attain some of those goals; in other words, our curriculum should not change simply because of the new toy. Some of us are distressed at the "old wine in new bottles" syndrome rampant in which exercises are simply transferred from book to machine. That is not efficient use of the computer. We should, then, study the software before raking out the bucks--remember all those cassette tapes growing dusty on your shelves? (See the April issue of Personal Computing, which includes a buyer's guide to 74 software programs, and Computers in Composition Instruction, edited by Joseph Lawlor for SWRL in Los Alamitos, CA, plus the fall issue of WPA.) In short, the computer can be helpful for writing instruction, but it will not replace the teacher or group editing, for example. Ideally, it will take care of some of the mundane teaching tasks so that we can spend more time in the classroom on more sophisticated writing strategies. We hope that next year we will have demonstration computer programs at our New York CCCC meeting.

One of the added attractions to the Special Session is the Materials Exchange

Table. Before, after, and during the break between workshop sessions, those attending may benefit from the wide variety of materials contributed from writing labs all over the country, materials that those participating in the exchange have found especially beneficial in their own labs and which they in turn bring or send to share with others.

In the past these materials have ranged from a wide variety of publicity aids advertising the various services writing labs provide to specific materials developed to teach composing concepts within the writing labs themselves. Recent sessions have presented such helpful resources as handbooks for writing tutors, questions for teaching the composing process in the writing lab, in-class editing techniques for various kinds of compositions, and effective pre-writing strategies for college writing labs alongside a variety of brochures pinpointing the services of writing labs, bibliographies of resources available to writing lab personnel, and notices of regional meetings of writing labs around the country. Areas that are presently receiving increased attention and requests for materials are assessment of facilities and computer-programmed instruction.

The rapidity with which these materials disappear is evidence in itself of how much participants appreciate the opportunity to share their materials, giving and gleaning new ideas and techniques which help keep each writing lab current with new trends in the field of composition. This atmosphere of unselfish give and take is just one indication of the nature of the writing lab special session; not only do writing lab personnel throughout the country strive constantly to keep abreast of newly developing theories and techniques, they also freely share these ideas with their colleagues. In an era where we are still searching for an identity, such support is at once reassuring and beneficial.

If anyone is interested in more details on the session or its workshops, the workshop leaders can be contacted, and we hope that published versions of these workshops will appear in the near future. This special session has enjoyed a lively past; active involvement can make it an even livelier future.

Joyce Kinkead
Utah State University

Jan Ugan
Allan Hancock College



TUTORING YOUR TUTORS: HOW TO STRUCTURE A TUTOR-TRAINING WORKSHOP

As a teaching assistant pursuing an M.A. in English, I worked six hours a week, teaching one section of freshman composition and tutoring three hours a week in the department's Writing Lab. I had virtually no training for either task.

Despite my lack of preparation, teaching composition did not pose insurmountable problems. After all, someone, or a series of someones, had taught me to write. I discovered that by reflecting on their methods, researching composition theory, and using some imagination, and common sense, I could survive the semester without too much embarrassment to myself and without completely wasting the students' tuition.

But tutoring? That was another matter. I had never been tutored myself; I had never observed anyone tutoring; and I certainly never received instruction in tutoring techniques. Needless to say, my tutoring sessions were less than satisfactory.

When I was appointed Director of the Writing Center at Lenoir-Rhyne and began to select peer tutors, I tried to devise a system of training them which would circumvent many of the problems I had encountered as a novice.

Conducted during the second week of the semester, the peer tutor training program consists of a six-hour workshop divided into four, one and one-half hour sessions. Three to five selected students, all undergraduates, attend the workshop.

On the first day, the students receive an information sheet which explains the purpose of the Center and their responsibilities as tutors and offers general suggestions for approaches to tutoring. We discuss the guidelines in detail. The tutors also receive a bibliography listing print and non-print materials in the Center. I reserve time this first afternoon to answer general housekeeping questions and devise each tutor's work schedule.

The second meeting is devoted to familiarizing the student tutors with the support materials at their disposal. I pull from the shelves programmed texts, handbooks, and mimeographed worksheets covering spelling, grammar, reading comprehension, report-writ-

ing, test-taking, essay development, etc., to demonstrate the variety of available resources. I then show them non-print materials including a computerized grammar program and a videotape series on sentence structure. I make sure each student can log-in to the computer terminal and operate the videotape machines and tape decks. Students spend the remaining time skimming through the print materials and audio-visual programs to acquaint themselves with the content and structure of each. As the tutors examine the resources, I stress the importance of gearing assistance to the needs and personality of the individual seeking help. I explain that some students do not respond well to workbook exercises while others prefer such independent, structured tasks. Throughout this second session, I emphasize that the resources should never substitute for one-on-one tutoring. Though the Writing Center posters and brochures invite students to come to the Center to use materials on a self-help basis if they wish, students rarely do come to work by themselves. They arrive expecting help from a person--not a workbook or a machine. So, student tutors learn that support materials should be just that--support for a tutoring session. For example, a student's responses to a workbook exercise may help the tutor to identify his grammatical weaknesses, thereby giving direction to the session, or the tutor may use a short videotape program as a review of, or reinforcement for, concepts covered during one-on-one tutoring. Used in this way, support materials can be quite helpful.

The third afternoon meeting is divided into two parts. During the first forty-five minutes, I offer practical suggestions about tutoring techniques and try to prepare the tutors for some of the situations they are likely to encounter.

Peer tutors are advised to develop their listening skills since the best tutors talk very little. Instead, the tutor should ask thoughtful questions which urge the student to talk through his difficulties and discover solutions for himself.

Tutors are told that when a student comes to the Writing Center, he will complete a form which asks his name; the name of the professor who referred him to the Center (if applicable); and what he needs help with. Tutors are instructed to have the student write a paragraph if he cannot (or will not) identify precisely what kind of assistance he needs. The tutor should then base the ses-

sion on the weaknesses that surface in that piece of writing. If the student has trouble getting started, the tutor should guide him through the invention stage of the composing process and then help him organize his ideas.

Peer tutors are cautioned not to interpret an assignment. If the student is required to write an essay or a report or a critique, and he does not know how long the paper should be, whether he is to conduct research, or whether he is allowed to write in first person, the tutor should send him back to his professor for clarification. Once the student understands the assignment, the tutor can help him prewrite, organize his information, or compile a bibliography.

I advise tutors to come to the Writing Center prepared to exercise all their patience. They are warned not to be intimidated by silence; they must not answer their own questions. If a student cannot answer a question you ask him, I tell them, try to rephrase it. For instance, if the student has trouble responding to the question "What is the subject of this sentence," try asking him, "Whom is this sentence about" or "Who is performing the action described in this sentence." If you perceive that a student is only guessing correct answers, I add, have him justify his answer. Or, in another cautionary example, I explain to the tutors, when you are working with a student who shows you a paper full of sentence fragments, it is acceptable to begin by asking if he knows what a sentence fragment is. But do not accept "yes" as an answer. Insist that he explain what a fragment is or locate one in his own writing.

Of course, peer tutors often worry about being asked questions that they can't answer, especially questions about grammar. This is a legitimate concern, especially for undergraduate peer tutors who write well themselves, but may know few technical terms or textbook rules. I urge each one to become familiar with one of the standard grammar handbooks and to have it with him for reference whenever he tutors. But, most importantly, the tutor must be convinced that there is nothing disgraceful about admitting uncertainty, or even ignorance. When I confess that I consult a handbook as I grade papers or tutor students, peer tutors seem to feel more comfortable.

Next, I focus on the student writer's self-image. I point out to the tutors that many of the students who come to the Center

feel insecure about their communication skills and discuss with them ways to help students develop more positive attitudes. Tutors are reminded that they should always comment on the strengths in a piece of writing and commend any signs of improvement.

Finally, I review professional ethics, emphasizing the following:

1. Do not write any portion of a paper-- not even one phrase. This is hard for beginning tutors. Like most of us, they find it easier to tell the student what to write than to find a way to help the student think of a more effective or acceptable expression.

2. Do not edit the paper for mechanical errors. This includes finding or labeling the spelling, punctuation, or grammar mistakes in a paper or dictating corrections. Once again, tutors are reminded to provide guidance and instruction, not "answers."

3. Never criticize directly or implicitly an assignment, a course, or a professor. Student tutors find this a difficult policy also. Their peers are more likely to complain to them or to try to elicit sympathy from them than from me or another professional.

During the last forty-five minutes of the third meeting, tutors work as a group evaluating sample papers and discussing possible tutoring approaches. This exercise has proven particularly valuable. Often tutors focus initially on a student's most trivial weaknesses. They must learn to pinpoint any profound problems and deal with those first. For instance, one of the sample essays I have used is reprinted as a footnote at the end of this article.* Without fail, tutors triumphantly locate the careless use of "the" (instead of "they") in the first sentence and the misspelling of "familiar" in the second sentence. They notice errors in punctuation but typically mention those only as an afterthought and almost never comment on the insufficient development of ideas. The evaluation exercise helps them to set priorities.

On the fourth and final day, I give each tutor an opportunity to practice what he has learned by completing a written exercise and by participating in role-playing activities. Each receives an exercise sheet listing various problems a student might have. The tutor must explain in detail what he would do to help the student with each problem. In other words, the tutor must indicate what support materials he would use or what explanation he would offer. While the others work on this

project, I call aside one tutor for role-playing activities. Talking with each tutor in turn, I pose as a student who comes to the Center with a problem such as one of these:

I don't know what Dr. Jones wants. I don't think he knows what he wants either. He's such a jerk!

I don't know why I have to write a paper about castle architecture. I'm a business major. What do I care about castles?

I can't spell!

I got this paper due for Sociology 250. I never was much good at writin'. I don't know where to start.

I was told I had to be here every Wednesday at 3:00 so here I am.

I want to improve my vocabulary.

I failed an art appreciation exam, and do you know why? Because she counted off for grammar mistakes. Can you believe that? An art teacher has no right to criticize my grammar!

I can't ever remember when to capitalize "mother" and "father" and when not to.

I just got this English paper back. The professor said I had a lot of comma splices. What does he mean by comma splices?

I have to write a one-page opinion paper on mainstreaming in the public schools. Help!

Through role playing the beginning tutor can practice devising diplomatic responses almost instantaneously, before he confronts his first eager or perplexed or resentful student. It is a good idea if possible to videotape the role playing. Videotaping eliminates the need for extensive critiquing, for when the tape is reviewed, tutors see for themselves their strengths and weaknesses.

Tutor training does not end with this session. We schedule meetings several times during the semester to share successes and discuss problems. I also talk with each tutor personally at least every two weeks. Furthermore, to stay in touch with the realities of the job--to make sure I can do what I expect the peer tutors to do--I tutor several hours each week.

In closing, I'd like to stress that I do not believe it is possible or even desirable to anticipate and solve all dilemmas for peer tutors during the workshop. Certainly we all learn by making mistakes, by discovering our own methods. But too many problems lead tutors to frustration and convince students who come to the Writing Center that peer

tutors are unreliable. Some difficulties are avoidable, and by avoiding them we can increase the likelihood of meaningful learning experiences.

The peer tutoring system works well at Lenoir-Rhyne, I like to think, largely because of the training program I have just described to you. I am convinced that today any one of my peer tutors would manage much better than I did as a tutor eight years ago.

Suzanne Edwards
Writing Center Director
Lenoir-Rhyne College

*Prologue is Beneficial to Freshmen

Prologue helps freshmen become aware of campus facilities and how they operate.

As a freshman I feel that it has helped me very much, without the prologue I don't think I could have become as familiar with my surroundings as I am at this point. It also helps you to get to know some different people of different classes.

The prologue leaders are very nice they help in any way they can, they also seem as if they are concerned about you and your ideas.

I feel the prologue system is great because it gives you a lot of courage to enter your new life style with a sound and open mind.

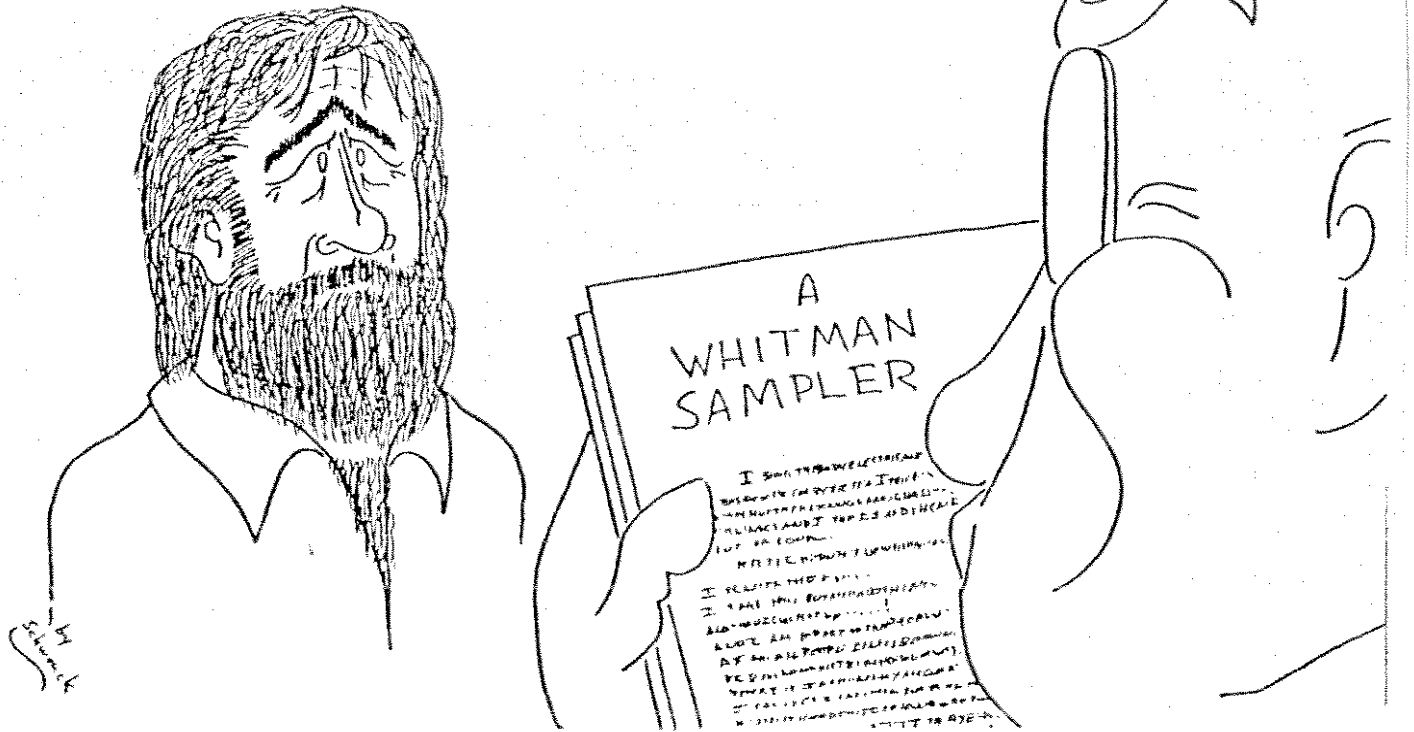
CONFERENCE SESSION ON COMPUTERS

This October, I will be chairing a session entitled "Computer Applications in English and Foreign Languages" at the South Central Modern Language Association's annual meeting in Fort Worth, in October. After reading Lorne Kotler's article in the March issue of the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER, I've contacted Professor Kotler concerning the session.

This session, an integral part of the SCMLA, is scheduled for 3:00 to 5:30 p.m., on Thursday, October 27, and will meet in Crystal Ballroom C at the Fort Worth Hyatt Regency. Emphasis will be on practical demonstrations, hands-on experience, and discussion. Professor Charles Sphar and several of his colleagues from Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, for example, will bring 8 to 12 microcomputers and demonstrate the writing lab program that they have been developing for four years.

Robert Quinn
Delta State University

MR. WHITMAN ~ YOU REALLY MUST STOP
OVERUSING THE FIRST PERSON
SINGULAR PRONOUN!



WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
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West Lafayette, IN. 47907

