



WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER



Member of the NWCA:NCTE Assembly
Information Exchange Agreement

Vol. VIII, No. 10 (June, 1984)

As the semester winds down and we catch ourselves counting the days to vacation, the newsletter will also be taking a holiday. But next September you'll find the newsletter back in your mailbox. Included will be a new column, The Tutor's Corner, which begins its appearance in this issue with an essay written by a peer tutor in the University of Vermont Writing Center. Sue Dinitz, the Director, encouraged her peer tutors to write articles which share their concerns with other peer tutors. We hope these articles will be of particular interest to other peer tutors and will encourage them to add their voices to the discussion.

And along with our tutors there are still many of us who have not yet described the programs, philosophy, or services of our labs, and the rest of us are waiting to hear about them. So do include writing an article for the newsletter on your summer agenda, particularly if you work in a high school lab. With the increasing number of high school lab directors being added to our group each month, there is a steady stream of strong, almost urgent requests for more information on high school writing labs.

Yet another item to add to your agenda is the request to fill out the form for the directory of writing labs being compiled. The form included in the February newsletter pleaded for a deadline of June 15, and while many people have already responded, not everyone has done so. To be truly useful, the directory should be as comprehensive as possible. So, in the hope of coaxing the rest of you to fill out yet one more form in the midst of your end-of-the-year record keeping, I've included another blank copy in this issue with an extended deadline of July 1.

Please send your directory forms along with your articles, announcements, reviews,

questions, names of new members, and \$5/year donations (in checks made payable to Purdue University, but sent to me) to:



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

Have a pleasant, relaxing, and productive summer!

COMPETENCY EXAM PERFORMANCE AND THE WRITING LAB

In order to offer evidence about the effects of one-to-one, contextual instruction in a writing lab on the competency exam performance of college freshmen, a study of approximately 500 freshmen at the University of Central Arkansas was done. Contextual instruction may be defined as discussing errors in sentence structure within the context of the student's own sentences, as well as within the context of a larger unit of discourse (i.e. paragraph or essay).

The students who participated in the study had, under UCA English Department regulations, three opportunities during the semester to pass a multiple-choice, error-recognition type competency exam. The exam had 50 items: 35 correct items was a passing score. The exam tested for the following errors: sentence fragments, comma splices, run-on sentences, incorrect pronoun case, absence of inflectional endings, incorrect verb form, lack of subject-verb agreement, confusion of homophones, and fifty commonly misspelled words. The test was given during the third, eighth, and thirteenth weeks of an eighteen-week semester. Faculty were asked to review the nine errors during the first two weeks of the semester; however,

COMPETENCY EXAM PERFORMANCE

AND

THE WRITING LAB

	Number of Students	Number of Visits	Lab Time in Hours	Test One Points Scored	Test Two Points Scored	Improvement ($T_2 - T_1$)
Total Number of Non-Attendees	157	110	28.5	4286	4366	80
Average Number of Non-Attendees	3.4	.7	.2	27.3	27.8	.5

TABLE ONE: Group One (Lab Non-Attendees) Performance on Competency Tests One and Two

	Number of Students	Number of Visits	Lab Time in Hours	Test One Points Scored	Test Two Points Scored	Improvement ($T_2 - T_1$)
Total Number of Attendees	305	663	617	8404	10,495	2091
Average Number of Attendees	6.6	2.2	2.02	27.5	34.5	7.0

TABLE TWO: Group Two (Lab Attendees) Performance on Competency Tests One and Two

	Number of Students	Number of Visits	Lab Time in Hours	Test Two Points Scored	Test Three Points Scored	Improvement ($T_3 - T_2$)
Total Number of Non-Attendees	54	38	10.75	1567	1639	72
Average Number of Non-Attendees	1.2	.7	.2	29	30.3	1.3

TABLE THREE: Group One (Lab Non-Attendees) Performance on Competency Tests Two and Three

	Number of Students	Number of Visits	Lab Time in Hours	Test Two Points Scored	Test Three Points Scored	Improvement ($T_3 - T_2$)
Total Number of Attendees	218	608	564.25	6187	7764	1577
Average Number of Attendees	4.7	2.8	2.6	28.4	35.7	7.3

TABLE FOUR: Group Two (Lab Attendees) Performance on Competency Tests Two and Three

*PLEASE NOTE: Numbers of students may vary from table within groups because (1) some students passed Test Two and did not take Test Three, (2) some students dropped the course, (3) some students continued taking the exam at their instructor's suggestion (even though they had passed it) to try and improve their scores.

some faculty continued traditional grammar instruction after this review period and a few instructors taught grammar using traditional methods throughout the semester. During the period of time following the first test up until the third test was given, students had the opportunity to work with a tutor in the writing lab as often as they desired. The study sample included only those students who failed the competency exam the first time it was given. Those students who passed the exam the second time around ended their participation in the study at that point. Those remaining continued in the study until they passed or failed the exam the third time.

The results of this correlation study depended on three variables:

1. Students' writing lab attendance computed as time spent.
2. Students' writing lab attendance computed as number of visits.
3. Students' performance on competency tests one, two, and three.

Although much evidence (formal and informal) has been offered by educators and researchers about the absence of a relationship between traditional grammar instruction and improved composition performance,¹ and about the uneasy relationship between multiple-choice competency exam performance and performance in writing,² objective competency examinations are being given in increasing numbers in American colleges and universities. As of 1983 in Arkansas, for example, almost all state-supported schools of higher education require that their students pass an objectively-scored competency examination.³ The multiple-choice competency exam given at UCA is probably the closest objective approximation to an actual essay examination because the error-free and error-ridden sentences that students are asked to examine and judge are drawn from real student texts. Given the widespread adoption of competency testing and the still strongly supported "back to basics" movement in English instruction, it is important that we examine what role a writing lab plays in current pedagogy. Since this study investigates the effect of errors studied in context under peer-tutorial instruction on competency exam performance, it offers data that addresses adherence to a "writing" lab (rather than grammar or usage lab) philosophy.

I have prepared tables that illustrate the performance of students who were members of one of two groups:

Group One - those students who had not attended lab at all, together with those who had attended less than an hour.

Group Two - students who had attended the lab an hour or more.

We divided our student subjects based on an hour of attendance because one hour reflects at least two and possibly three visits to the lab, a number of visits which proved minimally effective. Table One shows the number of visits, the time spent in the lab and the performance of students in Group One (no writing lab attendance or less than one hour writing lab attendance) on test one and test two. The Group One students (who will be called lab non-attendees) improved their scores a total of 80 test points or .5 points per student.

Table Two shows the number of visits, the time spent in the lab and the performance of students in Group Two (one hour or more writing lab attendance) on test one and test two. The Group Two students (who will now be called lab attendees) improved their scores a total of 2091 test points or 7 points per students.

Although both lab non-attendees and lab attendees improved their test scores between competency test one and competency test two, the lab attendees improved their scores significantly more (.5 points for non-attendees as compared to 7 points for attendees) on a 50-point exam. This improvement was sufficient to enable approximately 55% of the lab attendees who had not passed test one to pass test two as compared with 2% of the non-attendees.

Table Three shows the number of visits, the time spent in the lab and the performance of lab non-attendees on test two and test three. These students improved their test scores a total of 72 points or 1.3 points per student.

Table Four shows the number of visits, the time spent in the lab, and the performance of lab attendees on tests two and three. These students improved their test scores a total of 1577 test points or 7.3 points per student.

Again, both lab non-attendees and lab attendees improved their test scores between competency tests two and three. The lab attendees improved their scores significantly more, however (7.3 points on a 100 point exam as compared to 1.3 points for the non-attendees). This improvement was sufficient for 67% of the students who attended the lab between test two and test three to pass the third exam. 6% of the non-attendees improved their scores enough to pass.

These tables indicate the importance of one-to-one contextual instruction on students' improvement of their scores on an error-recognition type competency exam. Further research investigating the type and duration of classroom work these student subjects experienced beyond the two week review (including traditional grammar instruction, sentence combining, and no grammar instruction) is underway. I hope to draw further correlations between classroom instruction and exam performance and to then determine which methods (in the classroom and in the lab) were most successful.

The results of this preliminary study were extremely useful in promoting the writing lab with the University of Central Arkansas English Department and the university's administration. That was a happy circumstance, particularly when it seems as though writing labs and lab directors must continually justify their existence. But more importantly, the research validates the writing lab that is just that--a writing lab, rather than a grammar or usage clinic relying exclusively on exercise sheets or workbooks.

Linda Bannister Willis
Loyola Marymount
University

¹See, for example, the following:
Donald Bateman and Frank Zidonis, The Effect of a Study of Transformational Grammar on the Writing of Ninth and Tenth Graders (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, Research Report No. 6, 1966.)

Andrew Kerek, Donald Daiker, and Max Morenberg, "The Effects of Intensive Sentence Combining on the Writing Ability of College Freshman," Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition, ed. Donald McQuade, (Akron: L & S Books, 1979), pp. 81-90.

Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973.)

Mina Shaughnessy, "Basic Writing," Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays, ed. Gary Tate, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 137-167.

W. Ross Winterowd, "Linguistics and Composition," Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays, ed. Gary Tate, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 197-221.

²Although many researchers have studied correlations between objective tests and essay tests, they do not claim that an objective test can measure writing proficiency. See, for example, Godshalk, Swineford, and Coffman, The Measurement of Writing Ability (New York: CEEB, 1966), Brelant, A Study of College English Placement and the Test of Standard Written English (Princeton: ETS, 1977), and Bamberg, "Multiple-Choice and Holistic Essay Scores: What Are They Measuring?" CCCC (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1982).

³This statistic resulted from a statewide poll conducted by the UCA Remedial Course Committee in 1982.

NEW MCTE BOOKS

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English has recently published two valuable books for teachers. Television and Teaching English, edited by Rhoda Maxwell, contains nine brief articles on how teachers can use TV to teach critical thinking, to motivate, and to teach literature. (40 pages. Cost: \$3.00)

Writing Teachers: What We Say About What We Do, edited by Scott McNabb, collected by Stephen Tchudi, contains fifteen articles for teachers of writing at the secondary and college levels. These articles cover a wide range of topics concerning teaching writing, including the writing curriculum, audience, voice, in-class journals, teaching writing to minority students, ESL students, writing across the curriculum, and several articles on various methods of evaluating writing. The book concludes with a ten-page appendix of over 50 classroom-tested writing assignments. (176 pages. Cost: \$5.50)

Send orders to MCTE, P.O. Box 892,
Rochester, Mi. 48063



USING INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

Tutoring is not an easy task for either the tutor or the tutee. For tutees, it means being open-minded about their writing, and possibly even having to justify their reasoning or motives to the tutor. It isn't any easier for the tutor: he/she has to devise a scheme of helping the tutee with the assignment without completely re-writing the whole piece. It is often difficult to do one of these without doing the other. One of the best ways I have found to solve this problem occurred to me when I became involved with a recruiting program and discovered that interviewing techniques can be effective in solving the "rewriting" problem.

Interviewing techniques can be effective because they use a strategy helpful to tutors. In interviewing, the interviewer asks a series of general, open-ended questions in order to get a "first impression" of the candidate. After this, the interviewer focuses on a certain aspect which the interviewee mentioned in the general questions. The questions will continue to become more specific until the interviewer is convinced as to the specific viewpoint of the interviewee/candidate. This tactic is very effective when tutoring: start out by asking general questions concerning the tutee's paper (how long did it take to write it, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the piece), and once he/she says something that you would like to have clarified, use that as your starting point. Continually narrow down the topic until you are satisfied that the tutee fully understands what he/she has done, or had intended to do. This device is extremely effective for showing a tutee where more detail is needed or where he/she has not fully explained the situation. If the tutee can't answer your questions by reading the paper, then it shows the tutee where the piece needs to be further clarified or re-inforced.

It is important, however, to be very careful when formulating questions for the tutee. The questions should be as clear and concise as possible. They should also be open-ended, meaning that there are no

hidden answers in the questions. For example, an experienced interviewer would never ask, "Now, in this case, would you report this person to the manager?" This kind of questioning is useless since you are not allowing the tutee/candidate to make up his/her own mind. By suggesting an action, you have influenced the candidate's answer. This same idea is very important when peer-tutoring. Don't hide the answers you want to hear in questions. By asking a tutee, "Don't you think that you should describe your mother's reaction a bit more?" you are taking away much of the tutee's free thought. Just because you as a tutor feel that a section should be expanded doesn't justify "telling" the tutee to do so. There are many more effective ways of arriving at the same conclusions, but in these other ways, the tutee draws the conclusion, instead of you. Asking questions like, "What did your mother actually say when you broke the window? Was she angry?" will allow the tutee to decide for himself if what "he meant" is what he said. If after using this technique the tutee hasn't fully "corrected" his/her weak points, go on to something else. Don't dwell on the same line for twenty minutes, or the tutee will change it for your benefit, not his. Remember, a tutor is someone who helps others in writing their OWN papers: the tutee is not an extension of the tutor.

Finally, try to remember that in tutoring, as in interviewing, there are no right or wrong answers (most of the time!). Be flexible in your own ideas for your tutees' papers, and allow them to make up their own minds. Help the tutee through asking questions, but don't interfere with his/her true intentions for the paper. Remember, your job is one of helping the tutee to write a paper, not vice versa. After all, the paper is going to have the tutee's name on it, not yours.

In many ways, tutoring is more demanding than being tutored. One has to be helpful, yet critical, as well as honest. By establishing a technique of "interviewing" the tutee, you as a tutor will become a more valuable resource. Instead of being a proofreader or editor, you have taken on the role of a writing "consultant," a role

invaluable to writers of all levels. Instead of feeling obligated to correct all the mistakes the tutee makes, you can feel confident that your job is one of directing self-diagnosis, not of rewriting papers. This after all is really what peer tutoring is all about.

Toby W. Malbec
Peer Tutor
University of Vermont

CALL FOR PAPERS

The first PACIFIC COAST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION meeting will be held on Saturday, February 9, 1985, at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. Relevant topics include Writing Across the Curriculum, Research and the Writing Center, theoretical concerns of Writing Centers, the use of computers, tutor training, the history of Labs/Centers and others. Interested participants should send 150 word abstracts to the Program Chairs listed below:

Irene Lurkis Clark
Director of the Writing Center
Freshman Writing Program
University of Southern California
University Park MC-1291
Los Angeles, California
90089-1291

Thom Hawkins, Coordinator
Tutor Services in Writing
Student Learning Center
Building T8
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

A READER ASKS...

I need information on the number of clients which your lab had during your first year of operation. Also needed is information on the total number of students on your campus and whether your lab participates in a writing-across-the-curriculum program or in any program in which students are required to visit the lab. Could you please send this and any other pertinent information to

Richard Marshall
Director, Indiana Central University
Writing Lab
1400 E. Hanna Ave.
Indianapolis, IN. 46227

LEARNING REVISING SKILLS IN THE WRITING LAB--A BOOK REVIEW

Alan Meyers' Writing with Confidence, 2nd edition (Scott, Foresman, 1983) was written to help students learn and apply revising skills. A book for basic writers who need to improve their sentence and paragraph writing skills, it covers such standard topics as sentence structure, using verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, articles, prepositions, punctuation, avoiding shifts, commonly confused words, spelling, and paragraph writing. Each chapter contains clear and concise explanations of the material to be learned and a variety of exercises--"Warm-Up," "Transforming," "Combining," "Writing," or "Editing." The format and the use of a second color make the text easy to read, and the content of the exercises will interest even reluctant readers.

Although the book has been well-planned and well-executed and gets high marks for design, clarity, and thoroughness, it is similar to dozens of other recently published works. This does not mean that Writing with Confidence is not useful, but it does raise the question of why select this book rather than another. However, perhaps more important issues are whether it can really teach revising strategies and whether students who go through this book could make better use of their time by writing more and doing fewer exercises.

Despite these problems, Writing with Confidence can be used in a writing lab. I would certainly recommend it for students who want to review grammar and usage, and selected chapters can be assigned to students with special problems. But students who really want to improve their revision skills would have to be committed to completing all the suggested writing assignments and possibly more.

Susan Glassman
Southeastern Massachusetts
University



NOMINATIONS INVITED

The National Writing Centers Association is soliciting nominations from its members for the following two awards:

Outstanding Scholarship Award

This award will go to the person who has, in the opinion of the awards committee, written the best article on writing centers or on research in writing centers within the past two years (January, 1982-December, 1983). The two-year period is designed simply to limit nominations and still honor those who have published articles on writing centers in the recent past.

Outstanding Contributor Award

This award will be presented to the person who has, in the opinion of the committee, contributed most to the development of writing centers and to the professional spirit that has become increasingly characteristic of this organization.

Send nominations by July 30, 1984 to:
Diana George
Director of Freshman English
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI 49931

MICROWRITER //e

Microwriter's price is low--about half the price of the next cheapest word processor. Schools can afford to buy numerous copies, and colleges can assign Microwriter as a text that students buy. If schools will pay cash in advance and demand no paperwork, I will sell Microwriter on wholesale terms of \$15 per copy, with a minimum order size of 5 copies. If schools want paperwork and credit, the prices are \$10 per order for invoices and \$17.50 per copy for copies sold on credit.

These low prices do not indicate low quality: Microwriter compares very well with word processors that sell for \$125 or more. A reviewer told members of the Wisconsin Apple Users: "The value/price ratio for this program has to be the highest for any program I have ever bought."

Microwriter was written by a teacher who earns his living largely as an author and editor. I created Microwriter for my own use, and it reflects two years of development. No word processor fits everyone, but

Microwriter serves teachers and older students well. Loyola University in New Orleans has been testing almost every word processor you have heard of: The head of this project has said Microwriter is easier for students to learn to use than any other program they have tested.

Microwriter suits people who write often and who think about what they are typing while they are typing it. I call it a semi-professional word processor because it is more complex than the simplest word processors, and simpler than the most complex ones.

Because people who write regularly soon memorize control codes, Microwriter devotes the entire screen to text so that users see their words in context. Microwriter eases memory problems by reminding users what to do, and by allowing users to see help displays at any time.

Elaborate word processors suit business firms, but they are less useful for writers who reflect while typing. Users may attend to how their writing looks instead of what it says, and numerous options require numerous control codes that put the computer into different modes. Both multiple modes and multitude control codes have detrimental effects: They raise error rates, make it more difficult to learn to use a word processor, slow down writing, and make it harder to remember how to do things. Microwriter has very few modes: Users can take any control action at nearly any time. Microwriter also has only 26 control actions.

Microwriter knows most of the rules and codes necessary to use various printers effectively, so it helps users take advantage of their printers' capabilities. Users can change printers' actions very flexibly without having to remember numerical codes.

If a computer contains an Apple 80-column text card, Microwriter will automatically shift to an 80-column display when previewing how text would look on paper. Users can also choose whether they want to see 40 columns or 80 columns while they are editing.

Microwriter //e works only on an Apple //e or //c, not an Apple II Plus.

If you send me cash in advance, I will sell your school or college one sample copy for \$10. With an invoice, a sample copy

costs \$15. Orders from Wisconsin must come on school letterhead.



Bill Starbuck
2100 E. Edgewood Avenue
Shorewood, Wisconsin 53211
(414) 963-9750

CALL FOR PAPERS

The NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English invites educators at all levels--elementary, secondary, and college--to submit manuscripts for the 1985 Classroom Practices publication, which will focus on the theme "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Improving Our Professional Status." Articles should describe in detail successful strategies for improving one's sense of self; improving student accountability in the classroom; improving relationships with administrators; improving rapport with parents; improving teachers' image in the community; improving teachers' image with legislators.

The intent of the book is to suggest strategies to improve teachers' professional status in relation to one's self-image, one's students, administrators, parents, community, and legislators at both the state and national levels.

Manuscripts can range in length from two to ten pages. Two copies should be submitted, with the author's name and address appearing only on a title page attached to the front of each copy. Manuscripts should be mailed before September 1, 1984, to the Committee Chair:



Jeff Golub
907 S. Plymouth
Olympia, WA 98502

For your writing lab's resource library, there's a free booklet available which provides an overview of the essentials of preparing a successful presentation. The booklet, entitled Presentation Techniques, includes a list of information resources for researching topics, discusses graphic arts techniques, and lists some suppliers of materials and services that apply to preparing a presentation. For a copy write to Effective Communicators, P.O. Box 2232, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

Training Tutors for Writing Conferences.

Thomas J. Reigstad and Donald A. McAndrew. NCTE, 1984, 43 pp., \$4.00.

Despite the growing collection of published materials on how to train tutors, most of us would gladly welcome a new book which offers a comprehensive overview or treatment of the subject. The advertising announcement which describes this latest title in the NCTE's Theory and Research into Practice Series promises a book which describes "how above-average student writers can be trained to become effective tutors, and how they themselves grow as writers through the tutoring experience...."

"Authors Thomas J. Reigstad, State University College at Buffalo, and Donald A. McAndrew, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, begin by sketching the theories and research findings on which their tutoring program is based. Their 15-week sequence makes use of prospective tutors' own writing to teach them to analyze each step in the writing process. It helps tutors to deal first with higher-order concerns when reviewing a student's draft. Questions of thesis or focus, voice or tone, organization, and development of ideas are dealt with before weaknesses in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Training includes techniques for helping the reluctant student generate ideas and narrow a proposed topic."

Given this description, most readers will expect more than is delivered in this little booklet. Those familiar with current published work on writing labs will be surprised that the "theory" section cites work from the early and middle 1970's and seems unaware of the wealth of recent work. For example, there are no references to any articles in the Writing Center Journal, begun in 1980, and the journal is never cited as a source for further reading. Nor is Tutoring Writing: A Sourcebook for Writing Labs (ed. Muriel Harris, Glenview, IL.: Scott, Foresman, 1982) mentioned. Joyce Steward and Mary Croft's The Writing Laboratory (Glenview, IL.: Scott, Foresman, 1982) and the Writing Lab Newsletter are given only a passing glance in a sentence which acknowledges them as sources of "lab management techniques and problems."

The practice section also creaks a bit with age, especially noticeable in a field

developing as rapidly as composition. The discussion of the composing process, for example, draws on four works: Gordon Rohman (1965), Janet Emig (1971), Sondra Perl (1979), and Linda Flower and John Hayes (1981). If readers were hoping that this recently published booklet would indeed be a guide to current theory and practice, they'll be more than a bit disappointed. Instead, the booklet is precisely what the advertising blurb says it is, a description of one particular tutor training program. As such, it is likely to be useful, though one might wish that the authors would update their course.

DIALECT INTERFERENCE: A "STANDARD" BARRIER

As soon as I open my mouth in a northern city, I know that there are dialectal differences and that yankee dialect interferes with understanding! So I can easily adjust to the situation, but it is not so easy for our students to overcome dialectal barriers. Many regional and sub-regional dialects with distinguishing features exist in America, although the textbooks simplify the cultural conditions. All of us use regional forms in our language. If we ignore these differences, we have in the United States a set of language habits in which our national life is carried on. To these habits is attached social prestige. Thus, the "Standard" emerges as the language used in the conduct of the important affairs of our people. It is this "Edited American English" that is generally required in the "back-to-basics" classroom and for upward mobility in society.

As a teacher of freshman composition, my first obligation is to the student. He is probably required in other classes in the two-year college to read and write Edited American English. If he transfers to a senior college, he undoubtedly will continue to be held responsible for knowledge of this standard. My colleagues may not be very liberal in regard to his dialectal differences. Regardless of what opponents to this traditional view say, we must accept realities. The question is not whether the student has a right to his own language. Of course, he has this right, but educators also have an ethical responsibility. There can be no reduction in the teaching of Edited American English if we are to meet our responsibility as teachers of composition.

Motivation to learn the "Standard" may be a problem; the student must accept the writing conventions I'm teaching or I'm wasting my time. In my particular situation motivation is not a significant obstacle to success. My students cannot graduate unless they pass the Regents' Testing Program, a test of minimum competency in writing and reading. In fact, they cannot receive a degree from any school in the University System until this examination is passed. To be able to read and to write "Edited American English" are skills necessary for this achievement. For some students their dialect interferes with the learning process. Learning "Edited American English" may be difficult even if the student is motivated.

Starting from this fundamental assumption that it is valid to teach Standard English to speakers of other dialects of English, I face the vital question of how to accomplish this goal. Of the many theories which have been developed by both theoretical and applied linguists, perhaps the most relevant to the teaching of one dialect of a language to speakers of another dialect of the same language is the theory of contrastive analysis. This theory assumes that although each dialect has its own unique structure and system, it is possible to systematically contrast on a point-by-point basis in a meaningful way. It can even predict some of the difficulties speakers using one system of communication will encounter when attempting to master another.

Since I primarily teach southern white and black students, the dialectal deviations are rooted in the community's language which is rural South. I must carefully connect the language at home with the language at school. My attitude is the key that opens or closes the door to learning. A depreatory attitude affects students and can even cause them to fail because they are sensitive about their language. Mutual regard is established by a positive attitude. If we teachers approach them with an understanding of the way they think and speak, we can reach them. In addition to learning and applying information about the dialectal differences, we teachers must give courage to the persevering, incentive to the lazy, and good will to all.

When grading papers, we must be careful

with our comments. We must look for patterns, not isolated features due to ignorance or carelessness. That is not to say we must not mark the papers. What I mean is that if we really want to understand the dialect interference, we must look for the features diagnosed as dialectal differences. On a one-to-one basis, in a laboratory, or in class these consistencies in the dialect can be studied and contrasted to the rules of the standard. Pattern practices also can be used to reinforce the contrastive analysis. Also we must use layman's terms our students can understand as we explain the problem dialect interference creates.

Although there are various dialects of Black English just as there are variations in English in general, we who work in the South recognize the difficulty for some students--black and white--to change certain persistent constructions which appear in their writing. Thus, I have worked to understand the features of Black English which appear in student papers.

In my situation the English Lab serves as the place where the students come for this assistance. There on a one-to-one basis the dialectal feature which keeps appearing in the student's work is analyzed by the student and teacher. The following twenty-four features of Black Dialect, gathered from many sources, are the ones generally encountered in my institution. We on our faculty have studied this code to better understand the difficulties that our students face in writing Edited American English. We attempt to use our knowledge to help the student understand why he constructs the sentence as he does. For example, the present tense is regularized in Black English. We often see the absence of the s in the third person singular verb. Sometimes the reason is dialect interference; at other times, carelessness or ignorance may be the reason for the omission. Only the instructor can determine the cause and explain to the student the dialectal pattern probably interfering with his learning Edited American English. This same kind of study can be made on any dialect and used to promote language awareness by student and teacher in any community.

Comparison of Black Dialect and Standard Edited English Forms

1. She don't say. (for) She doesn't say.

The present tense suffix s is not a part of the grammar of the Black dialect. In spite of the influence of education, the s is invariably absent, particularly with the verb do. Black dialect regularizes all verbs in the present tense. Since the other persons and numbers have no change or addition in the present, no addition is made in the third person singular.

2. He talk much in class last Friday.
(for) He talked much in class last Friday.

All speakers of English drop the ed sound when the following word begins with a consonant. In addition, speakers of Black dialect drop ed when the following work begins with a vowel. Often the past tense is indicated by a cue elsewhere in the sentence like "last Friday."

3. You was. (for) You were.

Verbs with irregular past tense forms have variations when written. The past form often survives with gave, told, and got, but the tendency is to regularize the verb and add ed to its present form, probably due to the influence of education, or to use was for were regardless of the subject.

4. They is. (for) They are.

The use of is is found in the present tense regardless of person and number. Is like was above is regularizing the irregular be.

5. I be here when you wake up.
(for) I will be here when you wake up.

Be can be used as the main verb regardless of the subject. This use of the variant be has three main explanations: if will or would is deleted, simple future is meant; it is also used to suggest a "stretched out" present; and it may suggest an intermittent present.

6. The man in a big hurry.
(for) The man's in a big hurry.

Wherever Standard English can contract, Black dialect can delete. For example, "He's my friend" deletes to "He my friend." This deletion is more frequent in third person; it is rare in first person.

7. He gonna go. (for) He is going to leave.

Is is deletable in Black English if the next word is gonna. The form are is present less often in deletion. Gonna is used for intentional future.

8. He been inside (for) He's been inside.

Auxiliary deletion for the perfect tenses seems based on contraction plus deletion also. Have with the participle seems not to be a part of Black dialect except with irregular verbs which have not been kept distinct. These irregular verbs often have a form of have with a past form--the past or past participle. This lack of distinction between the past and past participle is a characteristic found with auxiliary deletion, but when the past form is used, it fits the Standard.

9. I hates this place. (for) I hate this place.

Hypercorrect past tense or present tense is due most likely to the influence of education. None of these constructions is typical of Black dialect.

10. He like to died. (for) He almost died.

Forms of have, be, can, may or would are usually deleted or formed with like to, been, or done to give time orientation to the predication. Been is used to indicate the progressive aspect. Done is frequently used in negation; it also has a completive aspect.

11. We going now. (for) We're going now.

Progressive without the form of be is typical of Black dialect. CopuTa contraction leads to deletion. "We are" leads to "we're" and deletes to "we."

12. Give me that girl shoe. (for) Give me that girl's shoe.

The possessive marker is omitted because the name of the possessor is placed before the name of the possessed. The meaning is clear since the order of the words indicates possession.

13. The men took off their coat. (for) The men took off their coats.

If a word ends in two voiceless or two voiced sounds, the rule in Black English is that the second sound is dropped. In Standard English irregular nouns do not form the plural by adding an s, but sometimes an s is added in Black English to these irregular nouns. In Vernacular Black English, words ending in s plus p, t, or k add the es plural. Plurality also can be shown by the modifier.

14. I like them here. (for) I like these.

The demonstrative pronouns add here and there. Also them is often used as a demonstrative pronoun.

15. They lost they books. (for) They lost their books.

Convention makes the pronoun case rules in Standard English. Consistency or attempt to regularize is a feature of Black English.

16. He hurt hisself. (for) He hurt himself.

In Black English the reflexive pronoun is often formed with the possessive pronoun form plus forms of self.

17. He ain't coming back. (for) He isn't coming back.

The use of ain't before tense markers to negate is common in the South in speech, but this form rarely appears in

writing.

18. We don't have no gear. (for) We don't have any gear.

Whereas the double subject is rarely observed in themes, the negative concord--double or multiple negative--is used for emphasis with one negative attached to the auxiliary verb.

19. Why you don't like him? (for) Why don't you like him?

In simple questions the subject often precedes the auxiliary verb.

20. I don't know can I go. (for) I don't know whether I can go.

Black dialect omits whether or if and retains the inverted form of the question in its indirect questions.

21. Is it a main street in this town? (for) Is there a main street in this town?

Black dialect uses it for there in the expletive function.

22. She teaches Agnes Scott. (for) She teaches at Agnes Scott.

Black dialect appears to have a reduced inventory of prepositions, either omitting all or part of the preposition construction.

23. Everyone experiences grief in their lives. (for) Everyone experiences grief in his life.

Lack of agreement between this pronoun and its antecedent is found universally. Formal writing requires agreement of antecedent and pronoun.

24. He compared it to rest of class. (for) He compared it to the rest of his class.

The article is sometimes absent in Black English or it appears in a nonstandard form. Some hyper-correct use of the is also found.

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