



# WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

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Vol. II, No. 2 (October, 1977)

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As our newsletter group continues to expand (see Helen Naugle's report in the next column), so do the questions sent in by our readers. One of the most frequent inquiries is for materials that can be used effectively to supplement tutorial instruction. There is also a continuing interest in ways to individualize instruction, i.e., methods that differ from classroom teaching. Your suggestions for general approaches are welcomed, but if you have some pedagogical techniques for specific kinds of instruction (such as how to correct run-ons, formulate topic sentences, develop paragraphs, proof-read for spelling errors, etc.), this can be equally useful.

Please send your suggestions, comments, questions, etc., plus names of new members and donations of two dollars to help cover mailing costs (with checks made payable to me) to:

Muriel Harris  
Editor, WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER  
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## MORE INFORMATION ON PEER TUTORS

Kenneth Bruffee (Brooklyn College-CUNY), a member of our newsletter group, will be speaking at the NCTE convention in November. His session, (B. 20, Nov. 25, 10:15 - 11:45 a.m., Chambord Rm. 12, Americana Hotel), is entitled "Preparing and Using Peer-Tutors," with reference to Writing Centers in two and four year colleges. Professor Bruffee also calls our attention to Mark Smith's dissertation, "Peer Tutoring in a Writing Workshop" (Xerox Microfilm catalogue #76-9320).

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## LIST OF WRITING LABS GROWS--AND GROWS!

I am happy to report that our list of writing labs and learning centers is growing like a weed. The response has been gratifying. I am convinced there are no finer, more helpful people than English and reading lab workers.

With nearly every letter listing a lab, the writer offers his services or sends brochures, assignments, manuals, etc. to be shared.

We have been able to get people together for help and to supply material and names with addresses.

There may be some few duplications, but a rough count reveals 75 labs on the first list published by the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER, 14 on the Supplement #1 and 11 on Supplement #2 and 26 on Supplement #3. Eighteen more have been added through the NEWSLETTER, and I have listed nine in Georgia, making a total of 153. The eighty labs listed on David Sloane's NCTE list and 76 on the CCCC list added to our original list give us a grand total of 283 lab addresses.

Later I hope to break them down according to type, location, etc., but right now I am delighted simply to report the enthusiastic response and to thank the editor and the readers of THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER for making this service possible.

Helen Naugle  
Georgia Institute of  
Technology

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## THE WRITING CLINIC AT ST. CLOUD

The St. Cloud State University Writing Clinic was organized in 1968 within the English Department, primarily to give supplemental help to students who have special

problems in the two basic composition courses here. We do welcome any others who come.

I have one or more graduate assistants whom I train during orientation sessions preceding fall quarter. We see from five to six hundred students in an academic year. We keep a file on each student during a quarter, recording progress made and work needed; at the end of each quarter the chief information is transferred to a four-by-six card. These cards, which take little storage space, become permanent records that supply data needed for such things as accountability studies of surveys of clients and services.

During our first years, our teaching materials consisted of certain books that were kept available in the University Bookstore and of handouts that I had created while teaching courses in remedial English. Gradually, the file of handouts grew, and now we use handouts as a basis for all our conferences with the exception of one text, Spelling Your Way to Success by Mersand (Barron). We do not use tapes, slides, or computer programs, preferring the personal conference approach.

Our method of evaluation is as follows. We survey the students who have attended from the two general education composition classes that are taught, reaching them through their composition teachers. During the last week of classes in a quarter, these instructors are given brief questionnaires to distribute to their students who have attended the Writing Clinic; lists of the names are supplied. The students fill out the questionnaires anonymously and return them to the instructors, who then give them to the Writing Clinic director.

This method of evaluation works very well. A minimum amount of time is required from either student or instructor, for the questions are brief and the system is simple. We do not attempt to measure whether grade changes are brought about by the Writing Clinic because too many variables are involved in such a change. We do find out how students feel about their Writing Clinic experience and whether they think that change is needed. Their ideas are grouped and tabulated to give an evaluation of the services of the Writing Clinic.

Lorraine Perkins  
Writing Clinic Director  
St. Cloud State University

## ST. JOHN'S ADDS WRITING REQUIREMENTS TO COLLOQUIUM

We are in the process of setting up a writing lab/workshop, and of course we are interested in knowing how other universities have gone about it. Our funds are limited (an all too standard beginning), but we intend to make the best of a bad lot; next year, we hope, our funds will be increased. For this year, we will have one instructor and two assistants, all working half-time or less. Of our 1,700 students, we are not sure how many we will serve.

We shall begin by opening the lab to all who want help; instructors may, however, refer students. Should we be overrun, we will screen clients and take only those with basic writing problems. We expect that most of our clients will be freshmen who are required to take a colloquium course.

The colloquium offers courses in all departments (in the English Department we offer several different introduction to literature courses; freshman composition is not offered). The idea is that all departments will require students to work their way through levels of reading and writing in their special field. All colloquium instructors will use the same English handbook (Heath's brief Handbook of Usage, 9th ed.); how enthusiastically, and well, mathematics instructors will mark papers for grammar remains to be seen.

Should any university have a similar program, we would like to get in touch with them. Please write c/o College of Arts and Sciences, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321.

Charles Thornbury  
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WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER Mailing List-Supplement #4

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