



WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

Vol. II, No. 3 (Nov., 1977)

"Diversity" is the word I would choose to describe this issue of THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER. The letters which have arrived this month, asking to join our group, come from California, Minnesota, Florida, New York, and a good selection of points in between. The elegant letterheads identify the institutions as large state schools, private universities, community colleges, and regional branches. We are indeed a diverse group geographically, and the articles included in this issue reveal the flexibility of our labs to respond to the varying needs of our own institutions.

For those of you who have not yet shared with the rest of us a quick over-view of your lab, do send us a few paragraphs description. In addition, we all need to trade other information. I have received several requests (from people engaged in structuring new labs) for suggestions on sources of funding for labs. How is your lab funded? Do you know of outside sources of funding? Another question concerns the use of computer-assisted instruction. Descriptions of programs, the necessary hardware, and evaluations of computer-assisted instruction would be of great interest to many of us.

Please send your contributions to future newsletters, names of new members, and donations of two dollars to help defray mailing and copying costs (with checks made payable to me) to me at the address listed below. I regret that, because of the informal nature of our newsletter, I cannot respond to requests from purchasing offices for invoices in triplicate, shipping memos, and/or whatever other paraphernalia business offices devise to talk to each other.

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

TEACHING COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS IN SOUTHERN COLORADO'S LAB

The University of Southern Colorado's Basic Communications Department maintains a learning laboratory for reading and for composition. Our open-admissions, multi-cultures institution has remedial programs, but the learning laboratory has "caught on." Student use averages 1,100 hours per month.

The laboratory is staffed by one para-professional and seven trained work-study students. Students may be assigned to the laboratory by faculty, but many students find the laboratory to be a place where they can work independently on particular skills or deficiencies.

The laboratory includes programed materials, self-study texts, general texts and materials, and handouts. Equipping the laboratory has been a gradual process for the past three years but the current holdings are adequate. Over the years, materials have been cross-referenced so that a student who has difficulty with one type of material can switch to a different approach if necessary. Also, such cross-referencing allows the laboratory to serve several students in one area with a limited equipment or text supply.

As a service to the students, materials about resumes, study skills, letter forms, speech, listening skills, and various technical papers are available.

Ralph G. Dille
University of
Southern Colorado

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR A DISSERTATION ON LABS

At the beginning of the 1977-78 academic year I found myself faced with two large unanswered

questions. The first grew out of my status as a candidate for the Doctor of Arts in English (I specialized in the teaching of writing) at the dissertation stage: "What do I do for a dissertation?" The second came about as a result of my landing one of two Teaching Assistant spots in our new Writing Lab--one that we are pretty much putting together as we go along. That question goes like this: "What do we need to do in this Writing Lab and how do we find out how to do it?"

The natural thing to do was to combine the questions so I'd only have one answer to worry about--so that's what I did. I have begun a dissertation that will answer many of the questions we had about writing labs by going to the logical source, other writing labs. Specifically, I plan to make personal, on-site visits to some 50 writing labs over the next 6-8 months, to see them in action and to interview staff and students. I'll also be collecting all the materials I can on these visits, and I'll take whatever other material I can get--by mail, courier, or thrown through my window wrapped around a brick. When I've finished my legwork, I'll write a book about what I will have learned--and, hopefully, answer some questions about writing labs in a form that will be most useful to the very people I get my information from--those who work in writing labs.

I would very much appreciate information of the following three kinds (or any other kind that you think I ought to have): (1) The names and addresses of labs that such a study ought to include, especially places that have been very successful in some particular way--staffing, funding, physical design, etc. (Invitations to unroll my sleeping bag in a lounge or garage would also be welcome--see #2). (2) Any information on possible funding for even part of the travel in such a project. (3) Published or unpublished materials, or, probably better, information about where I can send for them. I'll keep the WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER informed of my progress.

Stephen M. North
Department of English
SUNY at Albany
1400 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12222

THE CLAC NEWSLETTER

CLAC: The Conference on Language Attitudes and Composition is a new pressure group which hopes "to be more on the side of action than suffering." CLAC is the immediate product of

discussions held at the Tennessee Invitational Conference on Language Attitudes and Composition, a two-day session held in November 1976 at the Chicago NCTE meeting. If you're (1) worried about the shoddy linguistics used to construct competency-based entry/exit tests for colleges (Georgia's Regents' Exam); or (2) puzzled over the confused hostile reaction to the CCCC "Students' Right to Their Own Language" position paper, a reaction that perceives the NCTE as monolithic or anarchistic; or (3) wrestling with problems associated with language and the teaching of composition; or (4) aware of any public policy and language planning which seems suspect, WRITE FOR THE CLAC NEWSLETTER, c/o Jim Nattinger, Shelly Reece, or Tony Wolk at Portland State University, P.O. Box 751, Portland, OR 97207.

CLAC 1 included a proposal (which was institutionally funded) for a workshop that brought NCTE resources and workshop leaders to the college campus. In part the intent was to alert the English department and others as well to a scholarly tradition which was generally ignored or considered suspect. More importantly, the project had another goal getting college teachers to work with problems and methods of teaching composition, inside or outside the English Department, in ways that go beyond repetition, drill, and practice in correcting errors. CLAC 1, 2, and 3 have described problems in competency testing in various states, as well as reports on the teaching of language done well.

Tony Wolk
Portland State U.

COURSE OFFERINGS AT VOLUNTEER STATE'S WRITING LAB

Volunteer State Community College at Gallatin, Tennessee, has had a writing lab program for six years. The program at present include three courses: two preparatory for freshman composition and the third a support course.

Instructors in the preparatory courses diagnose writing problems from compositions and assign individual auto-instructional work on the problems. Students then correct their errors on the original compositions, write a new composition, and proofread for the error on which they've been working. Tapes and one-to-one techniques are used as needed. These courses each give three hours of elective credit. The support course works

primarily with writing problems diagnosed in the regular composition courses but also gives some auto-instructional and tutorial help on rhetorical problems. This course gives one hour of elective credit.

Most of the auto-instructional material has been written by Volunteer State faculty. The textbook used for beginning students, Hard-Core English, by Louise Clara and Betty Nelson, is to be published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston by November, 1978. If you are interested in an examination copy of the latest

edition, write Betty Nelson at Volunteer State. (Dr. Clara is now Chairperson of the Department of Special Studies at South Georgia College, Douglas, Georgia.)

The lab does attrition studies on students, a tracking study on those who succeed in the basic program, a study (for comparison) of students recommended for the program who do not take it, and a study of correlations of success with CGP Sentences Test scores.

Betty Palmer Nelson
Volunteer State
Community College

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER Mailing List - Supplement #5

Broder, Dr. UT 1835
Cleveland State University
1983 E. 24th Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Heneghan, Donald
Writing Laboratory
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403

Danielson, Susan
Department of English, P.O. Box 751
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon 97207

Kroll, Barbara
Department of Linguistics
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California 90007

Dille, R.
Basic Communications
University of Southern Colorado
Pueblo, Colorado 81001

Language and Literature - Carpenter
AH Building, Room 310
Northest Missouri State University
Kirksville, Missouri 63501

England, David
Communications/Humanities Division
North Lake College
2000 Walnut Hill Lane
Irving, Texas 75062

Learning Skills Center
Davis and Elkins College
Elkins, West Virginia 26241

Freeze, Pat
Writing Skills Center
Department of English
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

Le Beau, Bernard A.
3640 Fessenden Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Garrett, Charlotte
Department of English
Louisiana State University
Eaton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

Linn, Michael
Department of English
420 Humanities Building
University of Minnesota - Duluth
Duluth, Minn. 55812

Gomez, Debra
Educational Opportunities Program
University Library, UL B94
SUNY - Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

Lovejoy, Kim
Department of English
William Woods College
Fulton, Missouri 65251

Macklin, Mary Ann
Department of English
Wright State University
Dayton, Ohio 45431

Maimon, Elaine
 Beaver College
 Glenside, Penn. 19038

Sparks
 Missouri Western State College
 4525 Downs Drive
 St. Joseph, Missouri 64507

McBride, William G.
 Department of English
 Colorado State University
 Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

Skills Center
 University of North Florida
 P.O. Box 17074, Pottsborg Station
 Jacksonville, Florida 32216

Merrill, Stephen
 1120 East North Avenue
 Olney, Illinois 62450

Ulster County Community College
 Room 911 B
 Stone Ridge, New York 12484

Midland College ;
 Barnhill, Sandra
 Green, Tim
 Huckaby, Holly
 Miller, Robert
 Schneider, Jack
 Tillapaugh, Rebecca
 Department of English
 3600 North Garfield
 Midland, Texas 79701

Woodson, Linda (new address)
 Department of English
 Southern Methodist University
 Dallas, Texas 75275

Murphy, Gratia
 Department of English
 Youngstown State University
 Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Nelson, Betty Palmer
 Department of English
 Volunteer State Community College
 Gallatin, Tennessee 37066

Osterholm, Kathy
 Department of English
 Clarion State College
 Clarion, Pennsylvania 16214

Pigott, Margaret B.
 Department of Learning Skills
 Oakland University
 Rochester, Michigan 48063

Reed, Janet
 Writing Center-Special Programs
 Thompson Student Services Center
 University of Nevada - Reno
 Reno, Nevada 89557

Reiss, John
 English Department
 Western Kentucky University
 Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Skerl, Jennie
 Department of Lang., Lit., and Comm.
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
 Troy, New York 12181

