

# THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R  
Volume 23, Number 4 Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing December, 1998

## ...FROM THE EDITOR...

This month's issue might be described as an exercise in seeing our work from different perspectives. Kristin Walker's investigation of genres of engineering writing also provides a tool for studying other genres of writing students bring to tutorials. And as last month's reviewers of the *Writing Center Resource Manual* indicated how the *Manual* is useful in their contexts, additional reviewers this month let us see how their contexts shape their responses.

In addition, the author of this month's Tutors' Column looks at tutoring from her perspective as the student coming in with a paper. And Michael Pemberton challenges us to think about several perspectives on working with special needs students. Finally, a recent WCenter conversation suggests how a book written for classroom teachers can illuminate our work as well.

And, from my perspective, as I look forward, I wish us all a holiday season filled with good cheer and joyous celebrations—and maybe even a few quiet moments to look back and reflect on our accomplishments this year. May we also look forward to a year of peace and good health for all.

• Muriel Harris, editor

## ...INSIDE...

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## Disciplinary writing, disciplinary environments: Ethnographic exploration within writing centers

### Introduction

Establishing a new writing center is not an easy task: budgets necessitate approval, tutors have to be hired, space has to be acquired, staff training strategies need to be implemented, departmental/university politics need to be understood, etc. Establishing a *disciplinary* writing center involves all of the issues listed above, plus the added dimension of learning about that discipline, specific writing needs students in the discipline have, genres of the discipline, and even the culture of the discipline and its impact on all of these concerns listed. Even though university-wide writing centers and those that serve a variety of students address the cultures, politics, and needs of many disciplines, the discipline-specific writing center presents the opportunity for a *heightened focus* on these areas.

As disciplinary writing centers continue to spring up in colleges and uni-

versities, more attention needs to be paid to their success and survival, since these centers face different circumstances than centers that serve a greater variety of students. For example, our writing center in the Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) Department at the University of South Carolina (USC) was established for many reasons. One of them was the increased focus in engineering education on both integration of engineering courses with other disciplines and expanded Accreditation Board of Engineering Technologies (ABET) 2000 Criteria which

emphasize the importance of communication skills. Our writing center's survival has depended on how well we help accomplish these specific goals.

Among the many tasks our writing center and other disciplinary writing centers must attend to, one of them is studying disciplinary writing. Learning more about this writing is a necessary and complicated task, and there is no one "correct" way to do it. Here, I propose that it can be done through various forms of ethnographic exploration. In addition, ethnography can help writing center staff become more familiar with disciplines' goals and standards (such as mission statements that reflect disciplines' educational philosophies and ways those philosophies impact education within the discipline). By *ethnography*, I mean ethnographic research which emphasizes immersion within the community being studied. (See Shirley Brice Heath, Janice Neuleib and Maurice Scharton, and Carmen Werder and Roberta Buck for examples and discussion of ethnographic research and its relationship to writing and writing centers.) The community can be analyzed using a variety of participant-observer techniques such as note-taking, transcript analysis, interviewing, observing and documenting activities within a community, etc. While this is not an exhaustive list of research techniques, it gives an idea of some methods for exploring a community. This ethnographic exploration can take place not only at the initial establishment of a writing center but also throughout the center's operation, since academic and disciplinary cultures change over time, and disciplinary cultural knowledge has a cumulative effect the longer staff work within a discipline and become accustomed to its characteristics.

### **Ethnographic exploration: Collecting and interviewing, talking and listening**

#### *Collecting and interviewing*

When our staff of three (a director and two graduate students) began a

writing center in the ECE Department, we were completely unfamiliar with ECE writing. In order to learn more about the discourse strategies of this discipline, we collected past lab reports from several courses taught in the department. At first, our analysis was somewhat unsystematic: we weren't sure what were effective writing strategies, what were expected/required characteristics, and what were ineffective ones that students should be discouraged from using. What made matters more difficult was that at that time, there were no models or guidelines for learning about disciplinary writing (specifically engineering writing) and connecting that information to writing center practice.

Eventually, we learned about the value of genre theory in both providing a theoretical framework for disciplinary writing study and establishing a means for practical application. Specifically, Carol Berkenkotter and Thomas Huckin's work *Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication*, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis's *The Powers of Literacy*, and Dorothy Winsor's *Writing Like an Engineer: A Rhetorical Education* provided guidance on both the theory and practice behind genre analysis. From these works and others, we learned that genres are social and dynamic, that they are composed of both form and content, and that they are part of and constructed by a community and therefore have a situated quality about them. The politics of disciplinary communication became evident as well: using certain discourse features gives novice student writers entrance into their discipline's discourse community; not using these features causes these students to be excluded. Implementing generic features, therefore, enables students to attain power within their academic situation. Strategies such as using models during tutoring sessions and analyzing professor comments on students' lab reports are tools consultants can use to help students adjust to writing unfamiliar discourse.

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**Manuscripts:** Recommended length for articles is ten to fifteen double-spaced typed pages, three to five pages for reviews, and four pages for the Tutors' Column, though longer and shorter manuscripts are invited. If possible, please send a 3 and 1/4 in. disk with the file, along with the hard copy. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope with return postage not pasted to the envelope. The deadline for announcements is 45 days prior to the month of issue (e.g. August 15 for October issue).

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In addition to the ethnographic processes of collecting lab reports and analyzing professor comments, we found it helpful to use them in communicating with course professors through both formal and informal interviews. Using model studies such as Winsor's *Writing Like an Engineer* and ethnographic guides such as Michael Patton's *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* and Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson's *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*, we asked professors questions about specific lab report characteristics. These interviews are ongoing: before the writing center first opened, professors were interviewed to help determine what their expectations were for helping students with their writing and what kinds of assistance professors thought their students needed. Later, as we became more familiar with studies conducted in engineering (such as Winsor's), we conducted further interviews, based on strategies we had read about, such as asking specific questions about the concept of *audience* and ways students might address it through various forms of engineering writing. In my dissertation "Assessing Students' Genre Knowledge in an Engineering Writing Center," I focused on several interviews with professors to demonstrate the way the lab report genre can vary from course to course.

For example, when students are just becoming familiar with basic ECE exercises and processes in introductory lab courses, they are required only to *mention* any aberrations or unexpected results in their lab reports; they are not required to explain them in depth. However, by junior- and senior-level lab courses, the students should have become familiar enough with ECE concepts that they should be able to explain in detail any unexpected results, thereby demonstrating their in-depth knowledge of the course material and principles (Metts). Knowing these kinds of professor expectations is useful for tutors as they help students from various classes. Using this information

during consulting sessions, tutors and students can discuss discipline-specific knowledge—knowledge constructed as a result of social needs that reflect disciplinary expectations.

Both collecting written examples of this discipline's discourse and interviewing course professors helped us to learn about ECE discourse strategies and the expectations behind the ways professors teach writing in ECE. Knowing professors' expectations has allowed the ECE Writing Center to assimilate itself into the ECE Department more easily than if we had arrived with the mindset that we were coming in to "convert the natives." We knew from the beginning that we had valuable ideas and strategies to contribute, based on our experience working in writing centers and studying composition theory and practice, but we realized also that we needed help from the members of the ECE community. After all, we were not there to help students communicate within the discourse community of Composition and Rhetoric; we were there to help students adjust to writing within ECE. Our presence within the department allowed us to realize how very different the two discipline's cultures and discourse strategies are, and these differences prompted us to research more about ECE writing's genres and ways to communicate genre knowledge in writing center consultations.

### *Talking and listening*

Our realization that we couldn't simply transplant ourselves, our philosophies, and our practices from the English Department to ECE prompted us to recognize the value of talking in order to learn more about the ECE environment. By *talking*, I mean mainly informal conversation that occurs just walking down the hall or briefly conversing with professors in the writing center or in their offices. This accepted way of giving and receiving information when conducting ethnographic research is one way to gain knowledge about a community.<sup>1</sup> Such communica-

tion is similar to Stephen North's term *lore*, the concept that talk and informal discussion build up a body of information that becomes part of a discipline's knowledge base. During these conversations, we usually don't have our notepads and pens poised to begin taking notes. Instead, we talk spontaneously about general concerns, departmental events, or writing center activities. Such talking has yielded even more information about the ECE environment, information that has become crucial to our survival as a writing center.

For example, through conversation with engineering professors, we learned that engineering education in general has been moving toward two goals that directly relate to the writing center: integration with other disciplines and emphasizing communication skills more through ABET 2000 Criteria. Engineering educators would like for students to have a more well-rounded education that involves other disciplines besides engineering. They believe students will be more equipped to work in a diverse workforce doing a variety of tasks if they have a more comprehensive educational background.<sup>2</sup> As a reflection of these changing engineering education needs, ABET has issued new guidelines which emphasize skills engineering undergraduates should have when they graduate. (See "A Framework for the Assessment of Engineering Education," published by the Joint Task Force on Engineering Education Assessment.) Included in these guidelines are "communication skills" and "teamwork." The writing center can assist with students' acquiring both skills, since the center fosters communication skills as well as teamwork through individual and team consultations.

When our writing center first began, we had a vague idea of the importance of cross-disciplinary instruction and ABET 2000 Criteria within ECE, but we were unaware of the large role they played in the desire to establish a writ-

ing program. Through informal conversations in the hall, talking in staff meetings, and discussing engineering education with the department chair, we began to learn how far-reaching these communication goals were for the department.

In addition, through talking, we began to learn the part communication plays in student retention and making the department attractive to potential students. Freshmen have a particularly difficult time adjusting to the engineering community and the rigorous academic program at USC. Many students drop out of the program and choose other majors. The department believes that the writing center, with its personal interaction and close communication with course professors, can help retain students who are having trouble adjusting to the engineering environment. Through its interactions with students, the center can provide general information to professors that can assist them in meeting students' needs better. For example, several professors have shown interest in fostering team interaction through projects in freshman courses. These professors have invited our staff to make presentations on working and writing as teams which have facilitated the professors' course goals and have helped increase student contacts among their peers as well as with the writing center.

In addition to helping the department improve its retention rate, the writing center also has helped attract potential students by emphasizing preparation for the workplace. ECE, a career-oriented field, is supported financially by industry. In fact, one of the reasons the center was established was that the department wanted to prepare students better for workplace writing demands. Students who recognize the importance of communication skills in workplace success might be drawn to the ECE Department as a result of its commitment to improving its students' communication skills.

Two other issues we have discovered through conversation within the ECE environment are the continued application of business and education philosophies and the concept and practice of visual literacy. Both have implications for ECE Writing Center practice. Because the field of engineering is tied so closely with business, many times business and other non-academic philosophies can be applied to engineering education to create a unique business-education philosophical hybrid. Robert Pettus, the current chair of the ECE Department, studies business philosophies regularly and applies them when possible to the operation of the department. Recently, he has applied Carnegie Mellon's Software Engineering Institute's Capability Maturity Model to the operation of the ECE lab courses. The model involves a five-point scale (Initial, Repeatable, Defined, Managed, and Optimizing) which aids in assessing the maturity of software development within an organization. The last level, Optimizing, indicates the highest level of success regarding capability and maturity.<sup>3</sup> Pettus, in a recent article for the center's newsletter *The Write Connection*, states:

If we are to reach level 4 or 5 in our key processes, then we need to do a better job of collecting and using assessment data to determine how to improve. The Writing Center . . . can assist us in our efforts. In the future we will likely use both writing and the Center to assess certain academic processes. (1)

Prior to writing this article, Pettus had talked several times with us about ways the writing center could become involved in materializing this philosophy within the department. Once we became familiar with the philosophy and Pettus's goals, we were able to begin thinking about ways the center could be involved more in the departmental advisement process, through reading and responding to the *content* of students' writing. This close con-

nection between the writing center and meeting the department's needs has helped solidify the writing center in part of the department's mission.

Finally, through observation and just *listening*—two other commonly accepted practices within ethnographic research—much information can be gained by disciplinary writing center staff. If you were visiting our writing center and took a break for a few minutes to wander the halls of faculty offices, chances are that you would witness communication taking place between faculty and students. Most of the faculty has white boards in their offices. Many times, instead of attempting to explain an engineering problem using oral communication alone, the professor will go to the white board and begin sketching a circuit. Not much is said during this time: the professor draws; the student watches. After the professor is done drawing, he or she points to the board and explains some principles or processes. The whole communicative situation is very visual.

Such a process is not unusual in engineering, which relies on diagrams, computer images, and pictures to communicate. But this emphasis was new to those of us in English, who, as students, did not gather around white boards in their professors' offices to visually learn a literary or pedagogical principle. We quickly realized the power of visual literacy within the ECE culture and began using it in the writing center whenever possible. We, too, have white boards within the center, and we use them to illustrate the relationships among parts of a lab report, to attempt to understand an engineering concept, or to jot down ideas as they occur within a consulting session. In addition, we have tried to emphasize the importance of *talking* in the visual learning process and have encouraged teaching assistants, for example, to use this pedagogical strategy in their classes. Since visual literacy is

an integral part of education within ECE, we have tried to incorporate visual learning strategies into writing instruction. In addition, by emphasizing visual literacy in the writing center, the consultants demonstrate that visual communication can be important during the writing process.

### Conclusion

Studying disciplinary writing environments through ethnography can ensure the survival of discipline-specific writing centers by helping center staff become more tuned in to philosophies and practices that are the heart of a department's or discipline's goals and mission. This study and continued awareness should not be ignored during the frenzy that often accompanies the establishment of a writing center; likewise, this ethnographic focus should be emphasized throughout the operation of the center, not just at its inception. The information gathered through ethnography, whether carefully documented as "data" or casually gathered through observation and stored as memory, can begin to construct a cultural history of a discipline and can suggest ways the writing center can involve a discipline's philosophies in writing center practice. The analysis and application of knowledge that can result from such research can only strengthen the writing center's relationship with a discipline and contribute to the discipline's and larger institution's goal of fostering growth through research and practice.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> I don't want to imply here that ethnography involves only one way of "talking." Various types of interviews and discourse analysis can be used to analyze the speech that a community or person uses. Here, I want to emphasize the *process* of talking, whether it takes place formally or informally, and its role in gathering data ethnographically.

<sup>2</sup> See Edward Ernst's essay

"Workplace Changes and Engineering Education Reform"; *Engineering Education for a Changing World*, a publication by the American Society for Engineering Education; and Joseph Bordogna, Eli Fromm, and Ernst's essay "Engineering Education: Innovation through Integration" for further discussion of the need for engineering students to have a more broad educational base than in past years.

<sup>3</sup>For more information on the Capability Maturity Model, see Mark C. Paul, Charles V. Weber, Bill Curtis, and Mary Beth Chrissis's book *The Capability Maturity Model: Guidelines for Improving the Software Process*.

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## Book Reviews

*The Writing Center Resource Manual*, ed. by Bobbie Bayliss Silk. Emmitsburg, MD: NWCA Press, 1998. (To order, send checks to Carl Glover, Managing Editor; NWCA Press; P.O. Box 7007; 16300 Old Emmitsburg Road, Emmitsburg, MD 21727. \$15 + \$2 per book for shipping and handling. For information, e-mail: glover@msmary.edu; phone: 301-447-5356.)

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Reviewed by: Patricia Gillikin, Bethany Fox, and Kathy Zirckel, College of West Virginia (Beckley, WV)

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### Eavesdropping: Writing consultants as users of the *Manual*

**Patricia:**

At The College of West Virginia, we do not have a writing center director. We do have writing consultants, a Director of Advisement who doubles as Tutoring Center Coordinator in her non-existent spare time, and a faculty member who volunteers time for writing consultant training—that last one’s me. So, when I brought back from CCCC in Chicago a hot new copy of Bobbie Silk’s *The Writing Center Resource Manual*, I handed it excitedly to the writing consultants. I was thinking, “Hey, we have THE manual, now we’re real!”—the *Manual*’s very presence provided an aura of legitimacy to our struggling enterprise.

**Kathy’s Approach: Apprehension:**

I worried about becoming a student writing consultant. What would be expected of me? Would I, a student myself, have the knowledge to guide other students? My fears were compounded by the fact that ours is a small, non-traditional, rural, and open admissions college, with a broad range of skill levels, ages, and social, economic and cultural groups. I hoped *The Writing Center Resource Manual* would offer me ways to cope with the diverse situations I would surely encounter.

On my first glance through the book, it seemed to be intended for writing center directors. The book gives advice on establishing a writing center: setting policies, seeking funds, generating forms. Over time, though, I learned that at our center many directorial duties filter down to the staff. I have been decorator, secretary, publi-

cist, counselor, and student, and at our regular Tutoring Center staff meetings tutors give considerable input on policies and procedures. Though the *Manual* seems geared toward a hierarchical situation where roles are clearly defined, I think it can be useful in centers like ours where duties overlap. For example, the section on record-keeping is especially informative, since we writing consultants help to generate and implement forms for this purpose. Likewise, we are involved in campus publicity for the Center. The ideas presented in the *Manual*—bookmarks, tours, and student feedback—could work for us.

**Bethany’s Approach: Necessity:**

When Patricia Gillikin brought this manual to one of our training sessions, I honestly had no intention of taking it home and reading it. After all, with months of experience as a writing consultant, what could this book tell me that I had not already tackled in tutoring sessions? I intended to consult the manual only when a question or problem arose. When I was placed in charge of establishing forms to document use of our center, I turned to the manual. The sample forms helped me greatly to draft our center’s assessment documents. As a result, for our year end report all we had to do was a little paper shuffling and a few calculations.

**Recommendations**

**Bethany:**

After my initial use of the *Manual* to create documentation forms, I realized it was applicable to me, and I decided

to read it. However, I found technical terms such as “current-traditional rhetoric” and “expressivist school” distracting. I suggest including actual voices of writing center consultants and presenting background on the contributors to the manual. These changes would insure the inclusion of writing consultants as audience members and *Manual* users.

**Kathy:**

The *WCRM* would be even more helpful if written in a more collaborative style, recognizing that “tutor” can mean many things. Tutors work one-to-one with students and should not be overlooked when defining the needs of a writing center.

**Patricia:**

Kathy’s and Bethany’s perspectives on the *Manual* taught me that my naive enthusiasm needed examination. Where I see a wonderful, familiar, welcoming community embodied in the *Manual*, the consultants here see unfamiliar names and a strange new language (we offer no English major, much less a course in the pedagogy and theory of rhetoric and composition). They read a text directed at writing center directors. I therefore echo Bethany’s and Kathy’s call for future editions to recognize and reach out to voices and readers outside the well-established writing center community.

**All of us:**

We value the diversity of voices and abundance of useful information in the *Manual*. It provides, for writing consultants and for others involved in making writing centers work, the experience of listening in on writing center directors across the country in dialogue with each other.

## Reviewed by Donna N. Sewell, Valdosta College (Valdosta, GA)

Writing center directors and staff are beginning to pay more attention to computer technology in writing centers, as can be seen in the extended discussions in the 1995 special issue of *Computers and Composition* and the 1996 inaugural issue of *Kairos*. Eric Hobson has recently published *Wiring the Center*, and James Inman and I are finishing another collection, *Taking Flight with OWLs*, that examines technology use in writing centers.

While most of *The Writing Center Resource Manual* deals with physical writing centers rather than online ones, references occur throughout the collection to computer technology use in writing centers. In separate chapters, Mark Shadle, Muriel Harris, Anne Mullin, Joe Law, Sally Crisp, and Neal Lerner mention OWLs, online resources, WCenter and OWL-Shop (two e-mail listservs), or computer databases and spreadsheets. In an appendix, Gail Cummins notes that one of seven institutions in the Kentucky Writing Center Association provides Internet assistance and workshops and another one conducts cybertutorials. Even the bibliography on tutor preparation cites articles by Stuart Blythe, David Coogan, and K. Grubbs involving computer technology.

In addition to such references throughout the *Manual*, Stuart Blythe's chapter, "Technology in the Writing Center: Strategies for Implementation and Maintenance," provides the most

focused discussion of computer technology use in writing centers. Blythe indicates that he wants the chapter to "serve as a starting point, as a primer on technology in writing centers" (II.7.2). The chapter does exactly that, addressing the planning, assessing, and updating of computer technology. Blythe begins this chapter by encouraging us to focus on the missions of our individual centers. Too often, writing centers add computer technology without completely understanding the ramifications of such a move for the center's mission and identity, its clients, and its tutors. Deciding not to incorporate computer technology is becoming less of an option as more universities move toward distance learning and as student populations become increasingly computer savvy. Centers that have not embraced computer technology need to think now about how to ensure that technology will support—both theoretically and pedagogically—a center's work.

This chapter goes far beyond simply offering advice about computer technology use in writing centers; instead, it discusses the planning, implementing, and evaluating of such technology, the human issues involved in technology adoption. All writing center directors and staff interested in using technology to forward the aims of the writing center should carefully consider the ideas and lessons presented in this document.

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## Reviewed by Michael Dickel and Julie Eckerle, University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN)

Since the common theme of almost every chapter in *The Writing Center Resource Manual* is the contextual nature of all writing centers, it is only appropriate that we first describe our own context before reviewing this new resource. We work at the University of Minnesota English Department's Student Writing Center, which serves all undergraduate students in the College of Liberal Arts and is staffed by sev-

eral graduate student tutors (many of whom teach Composition courses), some adjunct specialists in ESL (who also teach composition courses), and a few peer tutors. We are one of three independent writing centers at this large land-grant research university. Another is in the open-enrollment two-year program for traditionally under-prepared students, and the third is an online writing center housed in the Depart-

ment of Rhetoric, which itself resides in the College of Agriculture.

Michael Dickel, who coordinated the Center as a graduate student, has recently returned as an academic-staff director. Julie Eckerle, a graduate student who has tutored here and at the University of Kentucky's writing center, is assistant director and manager of the Virtual Writing Center project—our

plan to expand our services to interactive web-based materials. Other specifics of our context include an upcoming shift from quarters to semesters with a concurrent implementation of mandated writing across the curriculum requirements.

### General Comments

As an introduction to writing center administration, *The Writing Center Resource Manual* is comprehensive, useful, and generally well organized. As noted above, its very appropriate theme is the contextual nature of writing centers and the work that happens in them. The chapters are written by experienced writing center directors in a variety of settings at a variety of academic levels, and—as a result—there are few gaps in the material or perspective. However, because *The Manual* offers so much breadth to writing center directors, especially new directors, depth is often sacrificed. And it would be important to have some of the few gaps filled, from our perspective.

As directors of a well-established writing center, we often found ourselves wishing for “the next part of the story,” the adventures and challenges of those directors who make it beyond setting up. Furthermore, what about writing center directors who enter the story *in media res*? In other words, what happens to those administrators who are already in the midst of running a writing center and, unfortunately, haven’t yet explored and come to terms with the context of their centers (as numerous contributors, such as Simpson and Cummins, suggest for starting off “right”)? What are the struggles, concerns, and challenges facing these directors? How do they explore their context while simultaneously running a center in it? How can they revise their services, and how do they do so using the same space, staff, and budget (if necessary)?

Furthermore, while the contextual approach is realistic and appropriate, the result is too often a series of questions without answers. In the end, this

approach dilutes the material because the contributing writers do not take firm positions. (It should be noted, however, that the appendices do counter this problem somewhat by providing numerous concrete and practical documents for writing center use).

By contrast, “Serving ESL Students” (IV.2) is *not* directed to an administrative audience, is not as contextual as the rest of the chapters, and takes a directive (rather than suggestive) tone. All of these differences make this chapter much less useful or appropriate for this type of manual. Thus, there is a fine line between the open-ended advice provided by the majority of *The Manual* and the directive commands provided by the ESL chapter. While we much prefer the former, a few more concrete examples would enhance the current material.

Surprisingly, *The Manual* also contains a number of proofreading errors and occasional discrepancies between chapter references to Appendix items and the Appendices themselves. While we understand the negative implications of a grammar-heavy writing pedagogy, we are concerned that these errors will not represent our field to outside readers (such as university administrators) in the best light. In a couple of cases, these minor errors lead to some confusion or an inability to locate a source. Finally, a few suggestions for additions to *The Manual*: 1.) Appendix items listed in the Table of Contents and more clearly labeled (the word “safety” should be in the title for the safety self-assessment, for instance), 2.) A sample budget in the Appendix, and 3.) An index that cross-references the entire work.

### What’s here for the graduate student

As noted above, *The Manual’s* success is due in large part to its consistent and careful attention to the innumerable contexts in which writing centers operate. However, one perspective missing from this *Manual’s* current manifestation is the graduate stu-

dent administrator, as well as any serious attention to graduate TA-tutors or training. While perhaps not common, graduate students do take on administrative duties, ranging from clerical assistance to directorships. Furthermore, these are often opportunities for interested graduate students to do advanced research or to pursue academic interests related to the work of a writing center. As such, they need as much support and as many resources as possible. However, while *The Manual* addresses a variety of administrative concerns and devotes an entire chapter to research, it does not address or even acknowledge the unique position of a graduate student who is in the writing center—not to tutor or to get help with a paper—but to direct, lead, and/or conduct research. *The Manual* addresses graduate students as writing center clients (see, for example, chapter IV.3, “Working With Graduate Students,” which could more accurately be titled “Tutoring Graduate Students”) and mentions graduate students as tutors. Certainly, there is useful information for the latter group, not the least of which is “Philosophy, Methods, and Ethics” (II.1), a nice overview of basic pedagogies and typical conflicts faced by tutors and/or administrators. However, in most cases, the graduate student reader must work hard to find applicable information, usually by extrapolating useful material from a chapter designed with a different audience and purpose in mind.

“Assessing Needs, Identifying an Institutional Home, and Developing a Proposal” (II.2) may be useful to a graduate student tutor interested in the complex network of institutional entities and personalities that determine the fate of a writing center. Other chapters, such as “Establishing and Maintaining Writing Centers in Middle, Elementary, and Preschool Settings” (II.3) and “The High School Writing Center: An Identity of Its Own” (II.4) will appeal to graduate student tutors interested in secondary and/or elementary education careers. Finally, Paula Gillespie and Jon



Olson's repeated claim in "Tutor Training" (III.3) that tutors are writers, too—and thus constantly learning themselves—is profitable to both experienced and inexperienced graduate tutors. But in all of these cases, the chapters are written for those with decision-making power. As such, it is unlikely that many graduate student tutors will take the time to read through *The Resource Manual* when the rewards are relatively few and difficult to reap.

Similarly, while *The Resource Manual* contains a great deal of useful information about running a writing center, none of the contributors recognize the occasional graduate student administrator and the very unique position this person holds. Decision-making is generally very tentative, as graduate students hold little to no power among other administrators and tenured faculty. The time of a graduate student administrator is especially crunched, as academic pressures which should be their priority are often subsumed by teaching and, in this case, administrative duties. Another consideration is turn-over and how to maintain continuity with changing administration. Finally, approaching university and department administrators with proposals takes on entirely new ramifications for the average vulnerable and underfunded graduate student. In conclusion, I would like to see separate chapters for this *Manual* that address the graduate student administrator and the training of graduate student tutors.

### What's here for the experienced academic-staff director

Reading through *The Manual*, I was struck by how much I wish I had had this material eight years ago when I first entered a writing center as a coordinator, as opposed to a tutor. There is a wealth of helpful information for starting writing centers. Even at present, as an experienced coordinator and now a director, I found that reading this manual provoked a stream of new ideas for my own administration

and for my own center. That being said, though, I would like to have seen more material specifically for already existing writing centers—ranging from specific applications within chapters to perhaps separate chapters (for instance, on revising an already existing writing center)—the *in media res* position we referred to earlier.

My own response to chapters and the manual is contextual, of course. Besides the general statements about our context in the introduction, there are some important changes in the writing center I administer that influence my reading. Changes in the composition program here, among them a merger back into the English Department, have wrought changes in how we are staffed. In the past, the graduate TA staff were thoroughly trained in composition pedagogy and had at least a year's experience teaching composition in their own classrooms before they came to the Writing Center. A series of changes has led to this year's TAs being largely inexperienced in the classroom, and with far less composition-specific training.

Therefore, I found the chapter on training quite helpful. Still, the emphasis in the chapter seemed to focus primarily on peer tutor-training. Graduate TAs might well be unusual in writing centers, and much of what applies to peer tutors might apply to graduate tutors as well, but graduate TAs are in many ways more like colleagues than students, so much of what can (and should) be done with peer tutors does not translate. I can and will work through some of these differences myself, but it would have been nice to have some of this addressed within the chapters more directly.

Another part of our context has to do with changes that are about to take place next year. These include the aforementioned shift from quarters to semesters and implementation of a writing-intensive requirement that will mandate writing across the curriculum

in many departments which have not in the past emphasized writing very much. Therefore, we anticipate major changes in use of our Writing Center starting next year. I will need to propose changes in the Writing Center to accommodate these.

For this reason, Jeanne Simpson's chapter on developing a proposal proved useful to my need to propose changes. Again, I would like to have seen more details and specifics about revising a center, as opposed to starting from scratch or completely starting over. But I found some of those details in Penny Bird's chapter on assessment and reporting. While I have established a good database system for collecting information as students sign in and out of the Writing Center, I found her use of tutoring portfolios and her discussion of how to use collected data helpful. Katherine Fisher's Monopoly game trope entertained, while her article on budgeting helped provide some insight into how to make requests for changes in a writing center budget that I will probably use in my proposals.

### Final thoughts

The most useful parts of this manual ultimately may be the references to further information in most of the articles, along with Appendix A, which is an extensive bibliography. We especially appreciate Joe Law's chapter that included an annotated bibliography, and would recommend this for all chapters in any extensions or revisions of the manual. We also look forward to that aspect of the manual—its extensibility, both from NWCA Press and by our adding materials specific to our Center and our context. We will add what we need, as we expect NWCA Press will do what it can to fill gaps and keep the information current. We expect that the three-ring binder *The Manual* resides in will grow quite fat in the next few years as we use the manual and its format to meet our own challenges.

# TUTORS' COLUMN

## Learning to listen

The student climbs white stone steps up to the red-brick building and pushes open the massive door, walking quickly with squeaking sneakers across the marble floor. She thinks she might be late. She glances briefly at the wooden clock suspended from the rotunda-like ceiling, an ugly clock very much out of place in all that domed and columned splendor, but which matches most of the other clocks in the building.

The girl passes through a set of mahogany doors and enters a room filled with hard, spindle-backed chairs and long, heavy tables, a room devoted to 24-hour studying and filled with the restless hush of students poring over texts, notebooks, calculators, worksheets, bills, letters from home. She walks more slowly through the silent murmuring, through the stares of the other students. They all know where *she's* going. Faced with the final set of doors, the girl sighs and pushes their polished brass handles. Walking through, she says to the assistant, "Hi, I have a ten o'clock appointment?" But she's thinking, "I really don't want to be here. I can handle this on my own. I've dealt with this by myself for years. I don't need their help. I'm only here because someone is making me come. Maybe it will be over soon. I hope."

No, you imaginative reader, she's not about to be the test subject of some human mind control experiment, and she's not going to be led through the dark and scary realms of her subconscious by some loony psychiatrist. She's going to the writing center, and she is dreading that soon her worst nightmares will come true. She fears that the tutor will either "rip her paper

to shreds" with criticism, while he displays his superior gifts of writing, or worse, the tutor simply will not care about helping her learn to write a little better. Maybe he is just there for the paycheck. This student thinks she's doomed. I know how this student feels; I've been there myself, and now that I'm a tutor, I've learned how important it is to be sympathetic to the student, and to *listen*.

I think most of the students who come to the writing center are concerned about the same things as the student I described above. Most of the students are truly conscientious, they really want help, and they are worried that the tutors will ruthlessly criticize their work. Many times they are shy and reluctant to talk. They simply slide their papers to the tutor across the table and look up with thinly-veiled anxiety in their eyes. That's when the tutor has to "listen between the lines." Often the student is not going to come out and tell the tutor what kind of help she needs, but really wants to be helped all the same. This type of student needs a sympathetic ear, an encouraging word, and non-threatening suggestions.

Looking back at the beginning of my first year as a tutor, I realize that I often dominated the tutorial, instead of allowing the student to talk more or listening to what the student was trying to tell me. The tutorial would go something like this: I would read the draft and then immediately make suggestions, without even asking any questions about what the student wanted the paper to do or convey. I would say, "I think that here you might want to think about developing your ideas. You know what I mean? [no pause]

You might want to discuss X here and Y down here. Do you see what I'm saying? [no pause] The reason I think so is because you've listed X, Y, and Z in your introduction. It makes more sense this way. I think that this might do well here and don't you agree?"

The poor student could not get a word in edgewise. Now I can imagine the thoughts that probably ran through her mind: "But that's not what I'm interested in. My professor doesn't want to hear about that. I don't have enough information on X and Y. I wanted to talk about something totally different! This isn't helping at all. My paper must really be awful if I haven't even written the right things. NO, I don't see what you mean!"

Then I started thinking about what I would have liked tutors to say to me when I came to the writing center for help. I did not want to be talked *at*; I wanted to discuss my problems, but I sometimes felt intimidated by what I saw as the tutor's superior knowledge. Sometimes I would leave with the tutor's remarks rattling around in my head, thinking that I had not really been helped because I had not been able to articulate what problems I was having with my paper. The tutor had never asked me; he had told me. The last thing I wanted was to have someone's opinion forced on me. I realized that this was the last thing that I needed to do to a student.

Gradually I came to see that I needed to ask more open-ended questions, not questions asking whether or not the student agreed with my interpretation of her work. Now I not only ask to see the assignment sheet, or at least for specific details about the requirements,

but I also ask questions about previous suggestions the professor may have made. This gets the student talking about writing style and “chronic” writing problems, which are things the student may feel insecure about. I ask, “What do you want your reader to learn from your paper?” Often I’ve found that I only need to listen and detect the student’s insecurity, then give an encouraging word.

A good example of this type of student was Daisy. She was probably the most advanced English 101 student I’ve ever had the pleasure to tutor, yet she was also the least secure. Often, she had simply scribbled, “Help!” with an arrow pointing to a sentence or a paragraph. After reading her paper, I really only had one suggestion about organization. Yet she asked countless

questions, mostly about minor details. I tried to listen carefully to figure out what she was really worried about. Daisy wanted the paper to be just right, with no mistakes whatsoever. Everything had to be perfect. I realized that she really did have the paper under control, but *she* did not realize that. All she really needed was someone else to tell her, to reassure her that she was writing well. So that’s what I did. I stopped the tutorial and told her that she had picked a challenging and important topic to work with, that she had done an impressive amount of research, and that she had written a mature and informative paper. I told her she just needed to believe in herself, because she was a good writer. A look of relief bloomed on Daisy’s face. She told me she had learned a lot during the session and thanked me repeatedly.

This tutorial is memorable because Daisy also reminded me of myself as a freshman, when a word of encouragement meant so much to me. After that, I found myself focusing on listening and encouraging. I asked myself, “What is the student’s real concern, beyond just the paper?”

Next semester, I hope to be able to quell some of the students’ fears, to give more encouragement and less of my own opinion or influence. I’ve learned to work with what the student wants to do. The lessons I’ve learned will help me become not only a better tutor, but a better student, reporter and colleague.

Beth McConnell  
Mary Washington College  
Fredericksburg, VA

## Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

Feb. 3-6: Southeastern Writing Center Association, in Charleston, SC  
Contact: Tom Waldrep, Director, The Writing Center, The Medical University of South Carolina, AA 113 Harper Student Center, 45 Courtenay Street, Charleston, SC 29401.  
Fax: 843-792-9179; e-mail: motenb@musc.edu.

Feb. 26: Northern California Writing Centers Association, in Redding, CA  
Contact: Maria Madruga, Writing Center Director, Shasta College, P.O. Box 496006, Redding, CA 96049-6009.  
Phone: 530-225-4689; e-mail: mmadruga@shastacollege.edu.

March 5-6: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Little Rock, AR

Contact: Sally Crisp, University Writing Center, Dept. of Rhetoric and Writing, U. of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 S. University, Little Rock, AR 72204; fax: 501-569-8279; e-mail: sccrisp@ualr.edu

March 20: Middle Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Dover, DE

Contact: Renee Young, English Dept., Delaware State University, N. DuPont Hwy. Dover, DE 19904. For further information: <http://www.english.udel.edu/wc/mawca> (or) [ryoung@dsc.edu](mailto:ryoung@dsc.edu).

April 10: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in Lewiston, ME  
Contact: Theresa Ammirati, Dean of Freshmen, Connecticut College, 270 Mohegan Avenue, New London, CT 06320. E-mail: [tpamm@conncoll.edu](mailto:tpamm@conncoll.edu).

April 15-18: National Writing Centers Association, in Bloomington, IN  
Contact: Ray Smith, Campus Writing Program, Franklin 008, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405; phone: 812-855-4928; e-mail: [nwca99@indiana.edu](mailto:nwca99@indiana.edu); <http://www.indiana.edu/~nwca99>.

November 5-6: Pacific Coast Writing Centers Association, in San Bernardino, CA  
Contact: Carol Peterson Haviland, English Dept., California State University, San Bernardino, 5500 Univ. Pkwy., San Bernardino, CA 92407; phone: 909- 880 5833; fax: 909-880-7086; [cph@csusb.edu](mailto:cph@csusb.edu)

# WRITING CENTER ETHICS

## “Special needs” students and writing centers

Different student groups may have special needs or special requests for tutorial assistance in the writing center, and it is incumbent on every writing center to consider how—or if—those needs should be accommodated.

Where should writing centers draw the line between a “reasonable” and an “unreasonable” request for specific tutors or specific tutorial strategies? In an earlier column, I referred to the request ESL students often make for particular attention to their grammar, often to the exclusion of other important issues in their papers. To what extent is this a legitimate request? (Powers) Are there institutional directives or priorities that might affect the stance a tutor takes in response to this request? Does the instructor of the course stress grammatical correctness and consider it an important criterion when figuring grades? Responding ethically to the requests made by students within different demographic groups will require tutors to weigh student needs against writing center policy against institutional missions against academic contexts. In short, there are no simple answers and no easy solutions.

What constitutes a “legitimate” group with “special needs” requiring “special considerations,” and what doesn’t? If a Japanese student comes into the writing center and asks to work with a tutor who understands Japanese as well as English, should that request be accommodated (assuming there is such a tutor on staff)? If a black student asks to work only with black tutors, is that a reasonable request? What if a female student asks to work only with female tutors? Or a male with only males? On what basis

does a writing center determine which groups should have their requests honored and which groups should have their requests deflected, deferred, or rebuked?

And beyond these concerns for the relative significance of cultural, gendered, or racial features that should be shared by tutors and students, writing centers must also grapple with the issue of how important specialized training and/or specialized knowledge is to successful writing conferences. If a student with disabilities—be they physical, such as blindness/deafness, or cognitive, such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder—comes into the writing center for help, for example, what should the writing center do? Should this student conference only with a tutor who has been specifically trained to understand and work with disabled students? Should all tutors be trained to work with such students? Should the student be allowed to work with tutors who have not received specialized training? Should the student be referred to other campus units or services which are better prepared to work with the disabled? Cheryl Hofstetter Towns addresses some of these questions in her article, “Serving the Disabled in the Writing Center,” arguing that writing centers should serve disabled students “because *serve* is what we’re here to do, for all students. It’s our underlying principle” (15). Even if tutors have not been specifically trained to work with physically disabled students, says Towns, there is much that the writing center can do. She recommends such steps as locating other campus support services, starting a reader/taping service, provid-

ing access to writing center computers, and fostering self-advocacy among the disabled. In response to the question, “But are all these ‘special favors’ fair to the other students?” Towns says, “The best answer is ‘Yes.’ Fairness is an individual matter” (15).

Brian Huot thinks that extending such special treatment to students with learning disabilities is ethical as well, since the special needs of LD students often require a unique, individualized approach that is fully in keeping with the overall mission of the center. Describing his experience with Charlotte, a “special learner” with severe epilepsy, he argues that LD students can profit a great deal from the kind of intensive help and extensive attention that would not normally be given to other students in the writing center.

One marked difference in working with a special learner such as Charlotte and working with a nonspecial learner is the need for the tutor to provide a structural framework within which the special learner can function. Charlotte lacked experience and know-how about what needed to be done and how to do it. She also required someone to tell her when things should be done, and she needed someone to supervise her while she worked. This is quite a different approach than working with students who have no special needs as learners and writers, since often our immediate job is to make the student take charge of her own writing and achieve a certain degree of independence. With the special learner we must walk a fine line where we supply the necessary structure without usurping the student’s ownership of the task or text (10-11).

Julie Neff is even more explicit about the types of help she feels LD students can ethically be given in writing conferences:

The writing advisors still need to be collaborators, but they also may need to help the students retrieve information and shape an image of the product. They may be called upon to demonstrate organization or to model a thesis sentence when the students cannot imagine what one might look like. The advisors may have to help the students call up detail in ways that would be inappropriate for the average learner. They may need to help with the physical production of texts. And they may need to help with correcting mechanics when the papers are in their final stages. (87)

But, David Brainard, a tutor at SUNY Plattsburgh and a learning-disabled student himself, disputes Huot and Neff, saying that LD students should *not* receive special treatment from tutors:

I'm going to be frank about helping these students with their work in subject areas affected by their learning disability: nobody knows how. . . . I've heard a lot of quasi-intellectual, self-aggrandizing, and pitifully shallow conjectures about what learning disabilities are and how to fix them. Having a learning disability myself (and I think most learning disabled students would agree), I find these conjectures personally insulting. . .

[M]y advice to tutors of learning disabled students is the following: treat them just as you treat other students. If tutors attempt to model their tutoring of learning disabled students around the fact that these

students are learning disabled, then the students will feel discriminated against, they will dislike the tutor, and they will lose self-esteem. (15-16)

More recently, Cornelius Cosgrove has reviewed current literature on learning disabilities and come to the same conclusion as Brainard: "[W]hen working with learning-disabled students, writing instructors who make use of conferencing should not change their pedagogical approach in any significant way" ("Conferencing" 100).

Where does the "right" ethical decision lie, then? Disabled students—of whatever stripe or character—are different from the non-disabled, but does that mean that they should be *treated* differently in the writing center? Do they deserve special considerations and specialized tutoring? It seems there is little agreement about the answers to these questions, and that makes it a bit more difficult to offer advice. Ultimately, I think writing centers tutors have to listen to the experts, listen to their students, and do the best they can with the resources they have available. But it is especially important that tutors be fully aware of what those resources *are*. If that means contacting the disabled student services center on your campus and finding out how to coordinate your services with them, *do it*. If that means contacting the ESL department or an ESL specialist and arranging for training workshops, *do it*. The best way to tutor students, particularly those with special needs, is to be the best informed tutor you can be, and that will often mean knowing something about teaching units and academic services outside the center itself.

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# VOICES FROM THE NET

## Talk about talk on WCenter

(The following are excerpts from a discussion on WCenter, the electronic listserv for writing center specialists.)

**Thursday, 22 October 1998**

**From: Eric Hobson**

Several weeks ago someone posted a request for information about issues of gender and power, etc. in wc conferences. There really wasn't much of a response, partially, I know, because in doing a thorough search of the community's literature (thanks to the fabulous annotated bib. that Chris Murphy, Joe Law and Steve Sherwood published) we really have not done much with the topic beyond the most general and generic discussion that the issue is real.

Get to the point, Eric. . . .

Anyway, I've been reading a new book, *Between Talk and Teaching: Reconsidering the Writing Conference*, by Laurel Johnson Black (Utah State UP, 1998). While it does NOT work with WC conferences/tutorial, I am convinced that much of what she presents applies. What separates this book from others about conferences is this: Black uses the analysis tools of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics to look carefully at the interactions taking place in teacher/student conferences at the level of the talk taking place.

Her intro. chapter is thought-provoking. The gist of her intro/rationale for the book is this: conference talk and conversation are NOT the same thing, although the discipline almost always wishes to present conferences as conversations. Noting this difference is critical, because "if one participant thinks a conference is a conversation and the other thinks it is teaching,

then there is going to be confusion: who speaks when? What topics are appropriate? What role should each play?"

The Table of Contents is as follows:

- Ch 1 Conversation, Teaching, and Points in Between
- Ch 2 Power and Talk
- Ch 3 Gender and Conferencing
- Ch 4 Cross-cultural Conferencing
- Ch 5 The Affective Dimension
- Ch 6 Possibilities

Folks, this one is worth a close read. It would be a very useful book to use in a tutor-training course, a discourse analysis course, a grad composition course, a reading group.

**Date: Thursday, 22 October 1998**

**From: Rebecca Jackson**

Hi all,

I'll second Eric's recommendation of Laurel Black's *Between Talk and Teaching*. I picked up the book at 4C's in Chicago. After reading it, I immediately put it on the required reading list for the graduate level writing center theory course (Writing Centers: Theory, Practice, Administration) I'm teaching this semester. We haven't gotten to the book yet, but my sense is that students will appreciate the distinctions Black makes between conference and conversation, her discussions of gender and cross-cultural interaction, and her sociolinguistic approach. If people are interested, I'd be happy to relate how the students respond to the book, especially in relation to the other texts we've read.

**Date: Thursday, 22 October 1998**

**From: Rich Haswell**

Eric, thanks for the review of Laurel Johnson Black's book. Very helpful.

You ought to post it on Amazon.com!

Meanwhile, let me post my ignorance. What's this "fabulous annotated bibliography" by Murphy, Law, and Sherwood. Would you provide a cite?

**Thursday, 22 October 1998**

**From: Eric Hobson**

Rich, et. al.:

My comment about an annotated bib refers to *Writing Centers: An Annotated Bibliography*, Christina Murphy, Joe Law, Steve Sherwood. Greenwood, 1996. ISBN 0-313-29831-9

For a review, see *Writing Center Journal* 18.1, pp. 61-65.

*Information for ordering this book:*

Michael Spooner, Utah State Press editor, informs us that the Website for Utah State Press, which lists this book, is: <http://www.usu.edu/~usupress>

Ed. note: WCenter was started in 1991 by Lady Falls Brown, who continues to serve as listowner. To subscribe:

*send to:* listproc@listserv.ttu.edu  
(no subject line)

*message:* subscribe wcenter <your name>

### Listserv for graduate students in writing centers

Kendra Banks Perry announces the birth of a new discussion list for graduate assistants in writing center administrative or supervisory positions.

Anyone who would like to join this list may visit our web page: <http://www.andrews.edu/~banks/wc.htm> or e-mail me directly at [banks@andrews.edu](mailto:banks@andrews.edu)

## NWCA News from Eric Hobson, President

Given the lead time the *Writing Lab Newsletter* needs to bring each issue to our mailboxes on a regular schedule, I play an interesting rhetorical game in this month's NWCA News column. I speak as NWCA's "official" voice a full month before Al DeCiccio hands me the President's gavel following the NWCA Executive Board meeting at the NCTE conference in Nashville, November 21 (I will summarize and comment on that meeting in January's column). At the same time, however, as you read these words, that administrative transition has occurred. As Alice says, "It's getting curiouiser and curiouiser." Writing then as pseudo-President, an interloper or bounder of sorts, I offer the following:

The past month or two has been busy period in the writing center community. In addition to winding down the Fall term, our colleagues in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Associations assembled at their annual conferences—both of which I hear were quite successful. Likewise, the National Peer Tutoring

Conference, held in Plattsburg, NY allowed many of our colleagues and our students to meet and share their knowledge and experience. The NCTE convention in Nashville continues to provide a great forum for showcasing writing centers to a diverse group of educators. NWCA's booth, while not as glitzy as many in the exhibit hall, is a hot spot.

The past few weeks have also seen many of us working hard to finish and mail abstracts for the 4th National Writing Centers Conference to be held at Indiana University, 15-18 April. Ray Smith, Conference Chair, and his colleagues from the East Central WCA report that everything is in place and the meeting will continue the tradition of excellence and fun maintained by the previous NWCA national conferences. It's time to start making plans to attend. IU's location in the college-dense Midwest should ensure that this meeting includes large numbers of students, thus adding to the richness of the dialogue I look forward to engaging in. Spring in Indiana is beautiful.

Finally, I wish to thank Al DeCiccio for his stewardship during the past year. His ability to juggle many tasks without ever seeming to get flustered made his presidency particularly productive. With his guidance and prodding, several long-term NWCA projects—particularly NWCA writing center accreditation—are reaching closure. He also had the honor of making NWCA international by moving that we admit the European Writing Centers Association as a regional affiliate of NWCA. Al's only disappointment was that his beloved Boston Red Sox didn't make it to the World Series. Please let Al know how much his efforts have meant to NWCA as a whole and to those who have benefited directly from his tireless work this past year.

Following in his and the previous Presidents' footsteps will be a challenge. And, so I begin. . . .

Eric H. Hobson  
Albany College of Pharmacy  
hobsone@panther.acp.edu

### Writing Center Director Willamette University

Applications are invited through Jan. 15, 1999. The tenure-track position begins in August of 1999. Salary is competitive.

Approx. 1/2 to 2/3 of the time will be devoted to directing the Writing Center that serves the campus-wide writing program; the Center includes comfortable consulting space and a computer classroom. The remaining portion of the position will be devoted to teaching courses in the English Dept.

This position offers an opportunity to join an English Dept. that teaches literature and writing on a campus where faculty in other disciplines participate in a University-wide writing culture. Willamette offers a liberal arts setting

that emphasizes writing as a creative and recursive process pursued through individual conferences with faculty and student consultants.

Please send curriculum vitae, a letter of application addressing the relationship between teaching and writing and your vision for a writing center in the liberal arts setting (not more than 10 pages), and the names of three references to Professor Michael Strelow, English Department, Attention: Writing Center Director Position, Willamette University, 900 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97301; (mstrelow@Willamette.edu). We are an equal Opportunity Employer and embrace excellence through diversity.

### Kellogg Summer Institute

Kellogg Institute for the Training and Certification of Developmental Educators, at Appalachian State University, in Boone, NC, is holding its twentieth summer institute from June 25-July 23, 1999. The four-week series of seminars covers current topics for operation of developmental and learning assistance programs, and graduate credit is optional.

For information and applications, write or call:

Director, Kellogg Institute  
PO Box 32098  
Appalachian State University  
Boone, NC 28608-2098  
(828-262-3057)

**South Central  
Writing Centers  
Association**

Call for Proposals  
March 5-6, 1999  
Little Rock, AR  
“*Collaboration: Human Touch/Electronic Touch*”  
Keynote speaker: Eric Crump

Contact Sally Crisp, University Writing Center, Dept. of Rhetoric and Writing, U. of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 S. University, Little Rock, AR 72204; fax: 501-569-8279; e-mail: sccrisp@ualr.edu. Deadline for proposals (of not more than 300 words): December 10, 1998.

**Pacific Coast  
Writing Centers  
Association**

Nov 5-6, 1999  
California State University  
San Bernardino, CA  
keynote speaker: Jacqueline Jones Royster

For information, contact Carol Peterson Haviland, English Dept., California State University, San Bernardino, 5500 Univ. Pkwy., San Bernardino, CA 92407; phone: 909- 880 5833; fax: 909-880-7086; cph@csusb.edu

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