

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

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Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing December, 1999

...FROM THE EDITOR...

The essays in this month's newsletter are yet another reminder (in case anyone needed one) of the interplay of theory and practice in our work. Connie Sirois offers us a theoretical clarification or perhaps, more accurately, a theoretical lens through which to see that tutorial collaboration is not plagiarism. A multi-voiced book review by four experienced directors reminds us that while writing center administration is—for each of us—rooted in our own contexts, collections of essays too mired in local detail are of minimal value. Roy Andrews describes a way to invite instructors to become more invested in the writing center, even to advertise it, by hanging writing lab posters on their office doors and bulletin boards. And Kristina Santos, a peer tutor, vividly illustrates for us how, for a nervous student fearful of seeking tutoring, a moment of kindness and interest can provide much needed self-assurance.

And included in this issue are announcements of jobs, conferences, and my wishes to everyone for a joyous holiday season filled with peace, happiness, relaxation, and nary a Y2K bug to swat. Happy new millennium, all.

• Muriel Harris, editor

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Emerging from plagiarism's shadow

Steve Sherwood opens his *Writing Lab Newsletter* article, "Ethics and Improvisation," with these words:

While I was a graduate student working in a new writing center, one of my professors stopped me in the hall to ask, "You're not writing the students' papers for them, are you?" He interrogated me about his other suspicions, implying that he found the work we did in the writing center equivalent to plagiarism. (1)

I take the time to repeat Sherwood's words because, unfortunately, many in academia harbor suspicions similar to those of Sherwood's professor. Consequently, writing centers fight a daily battle for acceptance, understanding, and respect. For various reasons, it seems that many individuals are unable, or unwilling, to believe that the teaching that takes place within writing centers is ethical—is teaching at all. As Sherwood's encounter so aptly shows, "plagiarism" is the term often used by outsiders instead of "teaching." If the whole truth were told, however, those of us who work within the writing center walls would have to admit to periodic bouts of mild skepticism concerning our work.

There are times—more often than most of us care to admit—when we question whether or not we have stepped over the proverbial *line* into the realm of plagiarism. Since the line image seems to cause our questioning, we may ask, “Where exactly is the line?” The answer to this question lies in our distinction between ethical and unethical behavior. But as Sherwood notes, even after years of writing center work, ethical and unethical practices are sometimes hard to distinguish (1). Several issues can complicate the determination of where and how to

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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).

Please send articles, reviews, announcements, comments, queries, and yearly subscription payments to the editor.

draw the line. One issue noted by Sherwood is a sense of obligation to “ourselves, our colleagues, the students’ teachers, the administrators who oversee our centers . . . and the society at large” (1-2). According to Sherwood, these obligations can be a source of contention because of the varying individual definitions of what constitutes help (2). More important than this, however, is Sherwood’s observation that we must determine “how to limit the amount and kind of help we give students” based on “a larger question of whether [we believe that] knowledge resides in the individual mind or is socially constructed” (2). Sherwood has hit upon the very thing that allows us to justify our work to ourselves as well as to others—our controlling epistemological view. If we expect others to understand and accept our work, then we must have a firm understanding of and be able to explain the epistemologies, theories, or philosophies that allow us to support and take part in writing center work. Social expressivism and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism comprise the underpinnings for an explanation of writing center work—at least the work that I do in my writing center. I will examine how together these two concepts can offer a base for writing center professionals’ explanations of why writing center work should not be considered plagiarism.¹

Plagiarism

Before discussing either social expressivism or Bakhtin, however, I want to briefly look at the idea of plagiarism. What constitutes plagiarism? Sounds like an easy question, right? Wrong. The notion of plagiarism is a shifting one and, as the Western world knows it, relatively new. In an essay for the “Coming to Terms” section of *English Journal*, Darsie Bowden explores what she calls “the foremost and richest of post-modern dilemmas”—plagiarism (82). Bowden cites Augustus M. Kolich for pointing “out that the word *plagiarism* comes from *plagiarius*, the Latin for a person who

owns slaves . . .” (82).² Kolich says that the notion of plagiarism was first used in reference to textual matter

by the Roman poet Martial who claimed that another poet, Fidentinus, had passed off Martial’s poems as his own and, hence, had stolen the “servants of his imagination.” But Martial [was] not particularly concerned, confident that, because Fidentinus [was] only a second-rate poet, he [would] soon prove himself a fool “for trying to enslave those [words] who serve the mind of a master.” (qtd. in Bowden 82)

Martial did not view the theft of his words in the grave way that plagiarism is viewed today. The modern notion of plagiarism surfaced much later.

The idea of individual authorship, which stems from the modern concept of individualism, allows for the modern concept of plagiarism. Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede remind readers that the notion of individualism as it is known today originates in Descartes’ teachings (79). They quote Jean A. Perkins:

“[I]t was he who placed the individual human being at the very center of the universe and at the same time radically divorced this same figure from the rest of the world.” This separation between subject and object, knower and known, is intricately bound up in an epistemology that situates knowledge within the self, one that provides a necessary condition for the development of the concept of “originary authorship.” (79)

Susan McLeod asserts that the “notion of plagiarism was born at about the same time as . . . the romantic notion of the single, original author . . . and the capitalist notion of private property” (qtd. in Bowden 83). Therefore, without Descartes’s concept of individualism, modern plagiarism could not exist. So, as we can see, plagiarism in today’s terms is a relatively

new, culturally created concept. The issues of ownership and originality expressed by McLeod are evident in the varied definitions of plagiarism which exist in handbooks and dictionaries today.

Knowing a definition or the origin of plagiarism does not fully explain what writing centers face, however. We must also consider the different levels of responsibility that are placed upon various writers when it comes to the issue of plagiarism. Student writers are held, because of academic considerations, to much more stringent criteria than professional writers. For example, a student who has another person look over his paper and then incorporates that person's suggestions at various points in the paper without giving credit may be said to have plagiarized. But a published author can do the same, briefly mention the person in his acknowledgements, and publish the work without fear of being accused of plagiarism. It is important to remember that many professors see differences between what constitutes academic versus professional plagiarism. And this is one reason why writing center practice holds such a precarious place in their minds, even though they participate in similar activities with their colleagues.

Bakhtin & dialogism

An overview of Mikhail Bakhtin and his central idea of dialogism may prove helpful to those unfamiliar with his work. Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a Russian philosopher who, despite having written the majority of his works before 1950, became prominent among American scholars in the 1980s. According to Bakhtinian scholar Charles I. Schuster, "Bakhtin wants to know in part who we are, and since his answer is that we can only be known through our language—since we create our language, which, in turn, creates us—Bakhtin necessarily becomes a philosopher of language . . ." (176). Angus Paul, in an article about the growing influence of Mikhail Bakhtin,

states, "Bakhtinian concepts are cropping up with increasing frequency in the fields of anthropology, linguistics, and literature, to name just a few" (4). Currently one could add rhetoric, composition, and, not surprisingly, writing centers to that list.

Because Bakhtin does not supply definitions or concrete explanations of his terminology, his neologisms may miff readers. Bakhtin does not offer definitions because in his way of thinking definitions are static, and stasis does not allow for dialogic interaction—a necessary condition for the making of meaning. Therefore, the full meaning of a word cannot be determined from a dictionary entry alone. Bakhtin says, "Neutral dictionary meanings of the words of a language ensure their common features and guarantee that all speakers of a given language will understand one another, but the use of words in live speech communication is always individual and contextual in nature" (*Speech* 88). Schuster notes, "Bakhtin delights in flux . . . and it is not possible for meanings to unfold once they have been set into the rigid form of a definition . . ." (166). This inability to define his words and his insistence that words cannot be definitely defined put him at odds with the Aristotelian method of categorization that controls Western epistemology. The only way to discuss Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is *dialogically*.

So what does dialogism mean? Bakhtin's theory of dialogism takes "the essentialist epistemology of Saussure . . . to task . . ." (Schuster 176). Bakhtin sees all utterances³ as social and interactive: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (*Speech* 69). And the "social elements—the setting, the identities of the speakers, their relation, their gestures, the ideological content and value of the hero, tone, movements—all enter into the semantic content . . ." (Schuster 178). Because of the contextual significance of

any utterance, no utterance can ever be truly repeated. Even though the contextual elements remain the same, the mere realization that the word or utterance is being repeated changes the context and ultimately the meaning. Bakhtin says, "When such an influence is deep and productive, there is no external imitation, no simple act of reproduction, but rather a further creative development of another's (more precisely, half-other) discourse in a new context and under new conditions" (*Dialogic* 347). Also important to Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is the idea that the utterance cannot exist outside of the social interaction. This does not imply that a second person must always be present for an utterance to occur. But it does mean that the utterance "takes into account what has been, is, and will (possibly) be said" (Schuster 184).

Schuster says that the "view of the word as 'alive' . . . is formative to the very notion of the dialogic, that embrative principle that occupied so much of Bakhtin's thinking" (186). To Bakhtin, "[t]he word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (*Dialogic* 293). If the word is "half someone else's," then only through dialogic interaction can a person's ideas and language be created. Bakhtin writes,

In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and [that it] does not remain in an isolated and static condition. It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that is, freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions. . . ." (*Dialogic* 345)

Schuster sums it up nicely by saying, “Dialogism is the means by which culture lives and renews itself through language” (188).

Epistemology, Bakhtin, and the writing center

Over the past few decades, three dominant epistemologies have shaped composition theory and, by consequence, writing center theory. (Since several classification systems exist, it is important to note that I will, for the most part, use the terminology established by James Berlin.) Each of these epistemological views, to some extent, still influences writing center pedagogical practices. In addition, I intend to discuss a fourth that seems to be more appropriate for writing center justification.

The most dated epistemology under consideration here is positivistic epistemology which holds that truth is exterior and that reality exists in the material world. Knowledge is thought to be exterior and definable, and a person can be given knowledge from another person. According to James Berlin, the most influential rhetoric to come out of this epistemology is current traditional rhetoric (7). Current traditional rhetoric’s prescriptive nature and the positivistic epistemology supporting it ascribe to writing centers a narrow purpose. Writing centers must be “fix-it shops” where students with identified deficiencies go to work on skills. We (writing center consultants) explain to students what they do not know and make sure that they understand the information. Plagiarism is avoided under a positivistic epistemology because all work is done outside the context of the students’ papers. Bakhtinian dialogism cannot fully support this approach because no dialogic interaction is possible. As Alice M. Gillam argues, Bakhtinian theory opposes a strict positivistic approach because this approach privileges centripetal forces (forces such as rules, conventions, and textbook prescriptions that are taught by a tutor to bring about unity and to

stabilize language) while ignoring the centrifugal forces that constantly work to destabilize language (context, dialects, and multiple meanings) (127-28). Bakhtin does not argue that centripetal forces are destructive but that they cannot overpower the natural presence of centrifugal forces: “Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward” (*Dialogic* 272). By ignoring the centrifugal forces, this approach produces an unnatural situation.

As the late 1960s arrived, so did the second epistemology I wish to discuss, expressionism. James Berlin has noted that in this view truth resides within the writer and reality is individually constructed (145). In consultations, truth is to be pulled forth by the questions we pose to the student. We must be sure not to impose upon the student writer any personal views or ideas which may stifle the student’s intention or insight. In order to avoid plagiarism (giving ideas to the student), a sophistic approach must be used. Open-ended questions and questions used to answer the student’s questions are the main pedagogical practices of a writing center based on an expressionistic epistemology. Bakhtinian theory is at odds with this approach as well. Gillam states that this approach privileges only the student and in so doing creates a monologic rather than a dialogic interaction. The notion that the writer possesses innate knowledge and can have “unique, innate ideas or experiences outside of language” is impossible in Bakhtinian theory (128). Conversation, the cornerstone of writing center work, is precluded, making the consultation a less productive venture.

In the next epistemology under discussion, plagiarism seems to be less of a concern. In transactional epistemologies, knowledge results from the interaction of words and is therefore so-

cially constructed. Currently, the most prominent theory based upon a transactional epistemology is social constructionism. Here we begin to move closer to Bakhtinian theory. We, as consultants, are free to discuss content with the student because the conversation will help the student form knowledge about the content. Although plagiarism is possible, the consultation is much more open to two-way conversation. This openness makes opponents uneasy. The problem with social constructionism seems to be with the theory whose name has become nearly interchangeable with it, “collaborative learning theory.” Michael A.

Pemberton asserts that educators who see collaborative techniques as unethical do so mostly because they view knowledge as transferable (11). In a similar observation, Bowden comments that the move toward a socially constructed view of language has caused an increase in collaboration and writing center usage, and this social view goes against “a very Western notion of individualism and proprietary interest in textual . . . production” (82). Collaboration seems to be the dominant pedagogy for transactional epistemologies today. This is problematic because there are many arguments for collaboration as plagiarism, as Duane H. Roen and Geraldine McNenny so aptly showed in the title of their 1992 CCCC presentation, “Collaboration as Plagiarism—Cheating is in the Eye of the Beholder.” And with such opposition to collaboration, one can see how a writing center, working under the collaborative veil of social constructionism, may foster resistance from opponents to collaborative theories. Even though Bakhtinian theory fits well under transactional epistemology, it cannot fully support the dominant transactional rhetoric of social constructionism. Why? Because social constructionism—“with its valorization of collaborative vs. individual learning strategies, its limited understanding of the role the emotions play in the writing process, and its emphasis upon only those aspects of knowledge that

can be socially constructed” (Murphy 29)—ignores the individual, an important aspect of dialogism. Bakhtin’s dialogism finds room for the individual intention, accent, and appropriation of language; social constructionism does not.

Lunsford and Ede note that writing pedagogy has seen vast changes in the past twenty years, moving toward process, context, and student-centered work. “But,” they say, “in spite of these pedagogical efforts, most day-to-day writing instruction in American colleges and universities still reflects traditional assumptions about the nature of the self (autonomous), the concept of authorship (as ownership of singly held property rights), and the classroom environment (hierarchical, teacher-centered)” (112). Lunsford and Ede contend that “collaborative learning theory has from its inception failed to challenge traditional concepts of individualism and ownership of ideas . . .” (118). These concepts “inevitably affect how much help can be given to students, especially in writing centers whose primary work involves writers helping other writers, predominantly through some form of collaboration” (Bowden 83). I contend that the inability to move away from the notion of individualism in writing stems from the fact that the individual, more often than not, writes alone. There is a way, however, to reconcile collaboration and individualism (i.e., social constructionism and expressionism).

Social expressivism,⁴ a fairly recent construct as far as I can tell, is convincingly applied to writing center work in an essay by Don Bushman entitled “Theorizing a ‘Social-Expressivist’ Writing Center.” Bushman uses Sherri Gradin’s *Romancing Rhetoric* and her concept of “the ignored version of expressivism” that she calls social expressivism to offer a more complete writing center theory. I offer you this theory because I feel that it is truly indicative of my writing center work. Despite the fact that expres-

sionism and social constructionism are the two strongest forces in writing centers today, each leaves something to be desired, as shown by subjecting them to Bakhtin’s theory. Expressionism denies, by placing all knowledge within the writer, the obvious influence that the consultant’s questions and suggestions will have on the student writer’s work. Social constructionism, while allowing for consultant involvement, denies that in academics the student writer must go away and write the paper alone. In contrast to pure expressionism or social constructionism, social expressivism allows for the social exchange of ideas and admits that the writer will bring his own individual voice to bear on the words he gains from his social interactions. Knowledge may be socially constructed and voices merged, but when one speaks, it is an *individual* voice giving voice to many other voices. Does this sound Bakhtinian? Well it should. We can see social expressivism at work in the writing center each time a student interacts with us and then goes away to revise or to write his paper. The hope is that we, as consultants, will recognize what is happening so that we can facilitate the making of knowledge. Bushman argues that consultants who understand that inner speech is constructed by societal interactions and then re-externalized in writing will be better able to help students make sense of their own inner speech (8-9). He states,

In order to get from inner speech to well-elaborated written discourse, a student who brings a rough draft to the center must be willing to explore his or her thoughts and to make a real effort to relate to another how those thoughts are connected to the words on the page. And the tutor must be willing to ask the sort of questions and provide the sort of supportive atmosphere that will help transform written down inner speech into something understandable. (9)

The interaction at the social level is therefore trying to affect the work at

the individual level—social expressivism at work.

Overall, Bakhtin feels that it is important to imitate the accomplished. “One’s own discourse,” he says, “and one’s own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other’s discourse” (*Dialogic* 348). This is exactly what we hope to witness in our work with student writers. We want to have an effect on the way students write and think, but we often allow our fear of taking ownership of the paper to interfere with this process. We allow the thought of possible plagiarism to stifle our potentially knowledge-making conversations with students. So how can Bakhtin and social expressivism help resolve this conflict? Bakhtin’s theory complements social expressivism because Bakhtin saw language, ideas, and knowledge as socially constructed, and at the same time, he acknowledged that the language, ideas, and knowledge gained in social interactions must be reiterated fully imbued with each individual’s accent, voice, and intention. We must acknowledge that we cannot interact with students without affecting their work. By being aware of the effect we can have, we can insure that we do not facilitate an act of plagiarism. Bakhtin and social expressivism can be the source for understanding how to acknowledge and to take responsibility for our effect.

Conclusion

It should be noted that I am not insinuating that Bakhtin and social expressivism can eliminate any opportunity for plagiarism to occur. We must always be aware of the extent to which students will go in order to avoid doing their own work. But we can, based on these concepts, better explain and justify why our work is not plagiarism. I would like to close with a quotation in the Bakhtinian spirit from Roen and McNenny:

In many ways, plagiarism haunts

our work. Some influences we acknowledge; others we don't. And yet, the influence of all that we have ever read or written echoes in our words, carrying on what Kenneth Burke so fondly characterizes as a conversation into which we plunge, given an adequate sense of the context. (17)

As writing consultants, we must "plunge" without reservation into the ongoing conversation, the dialogic interactions, of our students.

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Thibodaux, LA

¹I do not wish to insinuate that inadvertent forms of plagiarism do not occur in writing center consultations but that what the majority of writing center professionals do in practice is not plagiarism.

²This may be open for argument since the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (4th ed.; 1995; Gibaldi, Joseph, ed.) says that it means "kidnapper" (26).

³For Bakhtin an utterance can be anything from a single word to a novel, as long as it has a complete meaning. In Bakhtin's view, a grammatically complete sentence could fail to be an utterance.

⁴Expressivism should be considered synonymous with Berlin's expressionism.

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Call for Papers

The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist

We invite abstracts for a proposed collection focusing on ways Writing Program Administrators create and use theories. Possible areas of focus include, but are not limited to: 1) theory development (How do WPAs develop theories about their programs? How do WPAs test and refine theories about rhetoric and writing in the context of program activities and practices? How can WPAs contribute to cross-disciplinary theory?); 2) theory deployment (How do WPAs use theory to inform program planning and design? How do WPAs use theory to understand program practices? How can writing programs function as sites for application of theory?); 3) the role of theory and theorizing in the intellectual work of WPAs (What does it mean

to theorize about writing programs? How can WPA work be understood as theorizing/theoretical?).

Please send 500-word abstracts and brief descriptions of the author's work in writing program administration by March 15, 2000 to Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser, Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1356. Drafts of selected papers will be due October 1, 2000. We encourage your inquiries or questions. Please contact either Shirley K. Rose (phone: 765-494-3741; e-mail: roses@purdue.edu) or Irwin Weiser (phone: 765-496-2205; e-mail: iweiser@purdue.edu).

National Writing Centers Association Conference

Call for Proposals
November 2-4, 2000
Baltimore, MD

The call for proposals is now available at <<http://www.english.udel.edu/wc/mawca/nwcacon.html>>. The NWCA 2000 website is under development; watch for the registration form and further conference information. The conference is sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association with NWCA.

East Central Writing Centers Association

Call for Proposals
March 30-April 1, 2000
Lansing, Michigan
*"Writing Centers, Writing Cultures: Student Success
and Institutional Roles"*
Keynote Speaker: Christina Murphy
Luncheon Speaker: Joe Law

Call for proposals is available at <<http://www.lansing.cc.mi.us/~penningj/ecwca2000.htm>>. Hard copies will be mailed to those in the East Central region. Proposals are due January 14, 2000. Jill Pennington, Conference Coordinator, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan. Jill_Pennington@lansing.cc.mi.us

Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference

Call for Proposals
March 3-4, 2000
*"Tutors of 2000: Revising for the New
Millennium"*
Keynote speaker: Clint Gardner

Those interested in presenting at the conference should send a 300-500 word abstract. Individual or group presentations or workshops may be 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or 60 minutes in length. Submissions should include presentation title, name of presenter, address, e-mail address, and telephone number. Proposals should be mailed or faxed to Utah Valley State College Writing Center; 800 W. University Parkway, MS 176; Orem, UT 84058-5999. Fax: (801) 797-2797. The deadline for proposals is December 17, 1999. Questions may be directed to Lisa Dague, Writing Center Manager, Utah Valley State College, Phone: (801) 222-8099; e-mail: dagueli@uvsc.edu

Kellogg Institute Summer Program for Developmental Educators

The 21st Kellogg Institute for the training and certification of developmental educators will be held from June 24-July 21, 2000 at the Kellogg Institute, Appalachian State University. The program will focus on the assessment and placement of developmental students, use of learning styles, process of designing and implementing developmental evaluation activities, classroom

assessment, and advising and tutoring developmental students. For information on institute fees, graduate credit, and applications, contact Elaini Bingham, Director of the Kellogg Institute, or Maggie Mock, Administrative Assistant, National Center for Developmental Education, P.O. Box 32098, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608-2098; 828-262-3057; <www.ced.appstate.edu/ncde>.

Book Review

Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers: Scenarios in Effective Program Management. Ed. Linda Myers-Breslin. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1999. (\$29.95, non-NCTE members; \$22.95, NCTE members. Order from NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd. Urbana, IL 61801-1096; 877-369-6283; orders@ncte.org)

Reviewed by Leigh Ryan, University of Maryland at College Park (College Park, MD), Sonja Bagby, State University of West Georgia (Carrollton, GA), Kathleen Shine Cain, Merrimack College, (North Andover, MA), and Al DeCiccio, Wheelock College (Boston, MA).

Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers: Scenarios in Effective Program Management, edited by Linda Myers-Breslin, fills a hitherto ignored aspect of graduate school curricula—preparing students to take on administrative tasks. We much appreciate and acknowledge the value of such a text, for with no administrative experience or training, each of us was thrust at some point into a position directing a writing program or a writing center.

Myers-Breslin's case study approach is an excellent one, and we like the concept and general execution of the book. Divided into three sections, "Selection and Training," "Program Development," and "Professional Issues of Departmental Authority and Professional Development," each contains scenarios that focus on different stages and areas of establishing and maintaining a program/center. Useable by many practitioners, the text provides a theoretical and practical framework to make effective use of the cases.

We were surprisingly in accord with our perceptions and opinions about the essays. In general, those essays that combined theory, practice, and management/administration appealed most to us. In addition, we gravitated toward those that demonstrated more flexibility; while situations described were specific, the discussion was adaptable to our own various and different situations. By the same token we had difficulty with scenarios that

were too situationally specific; they tended to be difficult to identify with and were sometimes tedious to read.

We considered Louise Wetherbee Phelps' essay to be among the book's best and a wonderful addition to the literature. The thoroughness with which she explores the theoretical, pedagogical, and administrative conflicts inherent in reforming and directing a writing program is impressive. Within imaginary Cicero University, she poses all the questions faced by writing center directors and writing program administrators in substantial detail. Her flexible framework adapts easily to various situations and bridges the gap between composition specialist and administrator.

Likewise, Carol Peterson Haviland and Edward M. White incorporate theory, pedagogy, and management issues effectively as they show us the importance of geographical location for composition courses, writing centers and writing-across-the curriculum programs. We are so accustomed to bemoaning the spaces accorded writing centers, and here Haviland and White eloquently and elegantly demonstrate the power and significance of location. More importantly, they use broad-based composition theory as a basis for decision making about such issues as space and structure, areas which we don't tend to link together.

In her essay, Lisa Gerrard superbly frames not only the problem of writing

programs staffed largely by adjuncts, but also the problem of untrained faculty teaching composition. Linking theory and practice, she poses the question, "Why should writing teachers be scholars?" Gerrard relates the UCLA Writing Program's struggle to establish the University Center for the Study of Teaching of Writing to support scholar-teachers through coordinating funding applications, organizing projects, and disseminating research findings. Sadly, the program has not been approved, funded, or even given more than passing attention, and the work done on this proposal has simply fed the frustrations of the writing program faculty. While this essay doesn't really say anything new, Gerrard articulates the interrelatedness of scholarship and teaching quite well. We especially liked the use of Ernest Boyer's expanded taxonomy of scholarship, and also particularly noted her acknowledgment of the practical and ethical considerations involved in conducting research with no support and no incentive.

Two other essays we especially liked were those by Howard Tinberg and Dave Healy, because both call into question some of the basic problems we deal with in writing centers. Tinberg tends to raise questions rather than offer solutions as he explores the issues of ESL versus standard basic writing and of the writing center's role as mediator versus evaluator. Though we might have preferred a more elaborate case commentary, it's sometimes

useful to raise the questions even if you don't have answers, especially with important issues like how we work with writers and what we say about assessment and effective discourse. Like Tinberg, Dave Healy focuses on the role of the writing center within the academy as he describes the advantages and disadvantages of teaching assistants also serving as tutors. His case within a case—Scott's dilemma of tutoring his own student—highlights the possible conflicts inherent in a center that's too closely allied with the curriculum. We also noted and appreciated Healy's use of references throughout his discussion; they tended to reinforce the possible universal applications of the problems and commentary. The essays with no references, we found, sometimes had trouble moving out of the anecdotal mode.

Like Healy, Robert S. Dornsife looks thoughtfully at writing center staffing issues. Through his scenario, he poses useful questions for us to consider as we develop, implement, and evaluate our writing centers. With an ultimate goal of "bridging the gap between undergraduate preparation and professional expectations," he leads us through his steps as he develops a tutoring program with a mix of faculty and peer tutors in a writing center previously staffed exclusively by part-time faculty. He reminds us that as writing program administrators or writing center directors, we must give careful attention to English majors who have no experience in the three possible areas of their future professional lives: teaching, research, and service.

Muriel Harris's practical piece also focuses on writing center staffing, articulating all of the major questions and concerns that one needs to address in writing center administration and practice. Not surprisingly, she provides some concrete and wise answers to those questions.

The essays by Joan A. Mullin and Linda S. Houston tell stories we've all heard before about the challenges of dealing with change. Even so, it is worthwhile revisiting these familiar areas again and again so that we may continue to learn from them. Other essays we found helpful included those by Deborah H. Holdstein and Sara E. Kimball because they suggest ways in which writing center workers may integrate technology into their operations. We also liked Rita Malencyk's piece because her vision is hopeful and worth pursuing.

We found some scenarios less engaging than others, mostly because they were too specific to a particular domain for us to access adequately. These included the essays by Allene Cooper and others, Paul Bodmer, Ben W. McClelland, Linda Myers-Breslin, Barry M. Maid, Lynn Langer Meeks and Christine A. Hult. McClelland, Myers-Breslin, and Maid's pieces are interesting texts from longtime workers in the field who raise important issues about administering writing programs, but they seem somewhat inaccessible for those writing center workers who are concerned with making sure their programs for writing instruction work well on a day-to-day basis. The case commentary in the scenario by Cooper and others also seems too facile; "time heals all" appears to be the answer to a number of significant writing program administrator's concerns. Meeks and Hult examine an important area—the problem graduate instructor—and one that we can all relate to, even if our problem person is a tutor. The difficulty here was too much background information; much of it seemed unnecessary to understand the situation and made the reading ultimately tedious.

One concern that we share is the limited list of resources and readings. Though arguably the least important

aspects of the text, they are dated and incomplete. Where is mention of Eric Hobson's *Wiring the Writing Center*, Bobbie Bayliss Silk's *The Writing Center Resource Manual*, and *Weaving Knowledge Together: Writing Centers and Collaboration*, edited by Carol Haviland, Maria Notarangelo, Lene Whitley-Putz, and Thia Wolf? Where are the newer texts on tutor training, such as those recently reviewed in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, and some of the more recent and germane articles? And why is Dave Healy listed as editor of the *Writing Center Journal*, when Joan Mullin and Albert C. DeCiccio have co-edited this publication for more than two years? While there may be publication overlaps as a book is readied for publication, one with a 1999 date should be more comprehensive.

Overall, we liked Myers-Breslin's book. So many of us end up in administrative positions, but we come to them without formal preparation or experience. Her blending of those who direct writing programs and writing centers acknowledges that people often move from one administrative position to another during their careers. It also acknowledges that many of us oversee combinations. But most importantly, addressing writing center directors and writing program administrators as one helps to legitimize the often-marginalized writing center director. A writing program administrator is almost always a faculty member, more often than not in a tenure-track position; many writing center directors do not enjoy that rank. Treating the writing center director's position as commensurate with the writing program administrator's position assumes that the former's place in the institution is equally significant. And the more that assumption holds, the happier we'll be.

Using quote posters to connect faculty and the writing center: An NWCA conference presentation

Muriel Harris said, “I have to think about it,” when I, standing in front of a wall covered with 25 colorful posters, asked her for a quote about writing. I was conducting a poster presentation at the NWCA conference in Indiana about using quote posters to connect faculty and the writing center, and my creative instincts insisted that a quote from Muriel Harris would somehow make the interactive portion of my presentation a grand success.

“How about a quote off the top of your head,” I coaxed, offering her a pen, as she edged toward the door.

“The top of my head’s all worn out,” she quipped.

I laughed. I’d watched her Thursday night conduct the keynote address on where writing centers should head in the new century. During her insightful speech, the warm-up to small group discussions involving hundreds of participants, she had changed hats, as writing center workers are wont to do figuratively, dozens of times. Only she’d changed hats literally, for dramatic and comic effect, from floppy white gardening hat to backwards baseball cap, as she alternated role-playing a tutor and a student. Now she was tired, I could see that, and rushing off to watch a presentation by one of her grad students. If I was going to get her quote (and I knew she had one in her and ready), I’d have to act fast.

“I need your quote,” I said, “so I can write an article about these quote posters for the *Writing Lab Newsletter*.”

That did it. In the doorway leading out of the poster presentation room, Muriel Harris stopped and turned back to my poster presentation project. She

searched my face for a moment, then her face lit up. She smiled as she walked back to my presentation table, and she picked up the pen.

This writing center poster campaign I was sharing at the NWCA conference in Indiana was schemed up five years ago by Jim Carmody, a student writing consultant at Plymouth State College’s writing center. Jim had graduated absolutely last in his high school class (a point of pride) and started a dry wall business the next day. That was in the 80s, when the New Hampshire economy, fueled by Michael Dukakis’s so-called Massachusetts Miracle, was booming, and Jim’s business took off. But I have no doubt that Jim’s business would have succeeded no matter what the state of the economy had been. Jim has the gift of people sense, a knack for building connections with and inspiring other people. Five years ago Jim was a fine writer, an aspiring elementary school teacher, a developing poet, a terrible speller (at last, his junior year of college, he was diagnosed as dyslexic), and an enthusiastic and inspiring writing consultant. He understood the non-directive approach to tutoring writing; he understood WAC; he understood the potential for personal and intellectual growth that writing offers; and he understood the joys and value of creating a writing community. And not only did he understand all these things at the ripe old age of 25, but he had business experience and business sense to boot. He knew what to promote, and he had a way of figuring out how to do it.

One morning Jim rushed into my office to tell me about a poster campaign scheme he’d dreamed up the night before. He’d been searching for a way to connect more professors with the writ-

ing center, get them to give a little and therefore become more invested, and now he had an idea. It was a simple scheme, he told me, and it went like this: What we do is ask professors across the curriculum for their personal, individualized quotes about writing. Just a sentence or two, but it has to come from them, in their voice. We tell each professor that we’re going to put their quote on a writing center poster and send them two copies to post wherever they think is best in order to further their students’ interest in writing and encourage their students to use the writing center. What we do when we get a quote is put it in a box in the middle of a poster with the professor’s name, title, and department, and then we put “College Writing Center” in big letters right above the box. In that way the professor and the writing center become connected in the mind of whoever sees the poster.

The scheme sounded great to me, especially the part about the professors putting up their own posters. “Go for it!” I said, and Jim hacked out a model poster and a form letter inviting faculty to send us their quotes. Early response to this brand new scheme was not overwhelming. A few quotes dribbled in by mail or word of mouth: “Writing is an act of discovery” – Dr. Jeanne Dubino, Professor of English; “Writing captures ‘the unheard melody of thought’” – Dr. Bartelo, Associate Professor of Education; and several versions of “Writing is thinking,” an echo of what Toby Fulwiler taught us when he came to campus in the mid 80s and helped us launch our now flourishing WAC program.

Jim was delighted that we had received any early response at all, and he set out to augment it by personally vis-

iting professors and soliciting quotes. He scored a big success while delivering posters to the mailboxes in the education department. Professors who happened into the office to check their mailboxes while Jim was there were greeted and shown the exciting new posters that their colleagues were receiving with personalized quotes on them. He would casually let drop that they too could get one of these posters if they acted fast and supplied him with their own personal quote about writing.

A natural science professor who had flunked Jim in Earth Science one semester because Jim chose not to do the assigned journal writing, and then agreed the next semester to let Jim, who was re-enrolled, help teach the course instead of doing the journal, was the first professor to offer a quote (solicited by Jim) that clearly reflected a discipline: "Written communication is essential for the distribution and growth of knowledge." —M. Turski, Natural Science Department. His quote opened up a whole new approach and quickly other discipline-related quotes were submitted: "Writing gives us a public voice which is essential to citizenship in a democratic system." —Michelle Anne Fistek, Professor of Political Science; "Writing gives voice to the spirit within each of us. When we attend to that voice, it can teach us our mysteries." —Dr. Meg Petersen, English Department; "Teaching is a dialogue encompassing both oral and written communication." —Trish Lindberg, Associate Professor of Education.

About the same time that discipline-related quotes emerged, so did quotes that connected writing to passions of the authors. From someone who excels at basketball: "When I'm writing and in the zone, it just flows." —Gary Goodnough, Education Department. From a homebrewer extraordinaire: "*In Vino Veritas, In Cervisia Felicitas, In Scribendo Libertas.*" —David Zehr, Professor of Psychology. And from someone who loves to explore the

mystical side of life using art, Tarot cards, and writing: "Writing takes you to the edges where things may be the same and where changes become visible." —Merryl Reichbach, Director of the Gender Resource Center.

Although Jim Carmody graduated from Plymouth State College three years ago (he was hired as a junior high school science teacher and founded an across-the-curriculum writing center), our poster campaign lives on. For almost five years we used the same plain but functional design, drawn on PageMaker and printed on pastel paper. Recently, a graphic design major joined our staff and offered to jazz up the posters. "Go for it!" I said. Now our posters, which number twenty-five, have a more artsy look and are printed on bright colored paper; the underlying idea, however, of projecting a professor's support for the writing center remains the same.

Do the posters increase our number of visits? I don't know. Most professors post their posters on the outside door of their office, on a wall in their office, or on a bulletin board in a classroom they teach in, and when I occasionally ask students I am conferencing with if they have seen the posters around, they all say yes. But when we ask students how they first heard of the writing center, as we routinely do, they usually answer from a professor or from a friend or from a staff member visiting their class. Rarely does anyone say from a poster.

The major value of the posters, I believe, is what Jim Carmody originally envisioned—they connect professors to the writing center. Every year just before sending out updated posters (updated because the list of writing consultants changes, and occasionally our hours do, too) we invite the professors to change their quotes, but no one ever has. They change their titles to reflect promotions, but their quotes, apparently, have become a part of their identity that they are comfortable with.

Collectively, that investment in the writing center enhances the across-the-curriculum writing community on campus, as is visually reflected in our colorful collection of all twenty-five posters on walls and space dividers in the writing center. Students when they visit the center notice the posters, notice the names of professors they have or are taking courses from, and that is affirming. Professors when they visit the center notice the posters, notice the quotes from colleagues and especially from professors in their department, and that too is affirming.

"Perhaps you'd like to offer up a quote," I say when I catch an unrepresented professor looking at the posters. "What is writing to you?" I ask. "Or what is writing in your discipline about?"

Often new quotes are offered up as part of an implicit exchange. I give writing consultation to a math professor who is in charge of the math department's program review (and agree to handle any attacks from an overly logical colleague who will question her singular versus plural use of the word "faculty"), and she is delighted to give me a quote when I ask for one: "Writing used to be rare in mathematics, but it's not anymore." —Bernadette Russek, Professor of Mathematics. I give writing consultation to an Art professor who is working on her application to a summer conference in Newport, Rhode Island, and when she is accepted into the program, I ask her for a quote and she is pleased to supply me with "Writing, like painting, is an attempt to express the connection between an inner and an outer reality." —Annie Robinson, Art Department. I co-author with a computer science professor (via e-mail) an article for the Plymouth State College WAC Journal, and after publication ask him for a quote, which he happily supplies: "Writing is programming for life." —Peter Drexel, Professor of Computer Science. In each of these cases there is an eagerness to support the writing

center and publicly assert a connection with it. The exchanges—I help them, they help me; they give me a quote, I give them a poster; they recommend the writing center to their students, we support their teaching efforts—are mutually satisfying. And I suppose it is exchanges of this sort that are the basis of community.

The NWCA conference in Indiana is my third. New Orleans, St. Louis, (Park City was out of range), and now Bloomington, Indiana. It is Saturday morning, the final day of the conference, as I set up my poster presentation, and I find myself reflecting that my experience this time has been not only similar, but also markedly different from my experience at the other two conferences. As always, people are friendly at NWCA conferences. Everyone understands and talks enthusiastically about writing centers. And it is for this that I have returned, for the personal contact, the ideas, the affirmation, intellectual and emotional, that comes from sharing with those who value the work you do because they do it too. The exchanges I have at NWCA conferences charge me up, and I take that energy and the new ideas (from this year: 3-on-1 tutoring, insights about OWLs, immediate conference summaries to faculty via e-mail, an entertaining promotional video) back to my writing center.

The sessions I have attended so far in Indiana, though highly informative and filled with new ideas, have not been as daringly interactive as sessions I attended at previous NWCA conferences. I remember sessions built on creative spontaneity and collaboration that, though lacking in orderliness and crisp rationality (like the best writing conferences), were social experiences that not only burrowed ideas about communicating into my memory in strange, deep ways, but also fostered a sense of empowerment when participants' personalities were revealed and a sense of community formed.

It was these musings that prompted me at the last minute to add a creative, interactive element to my otherwise entirely safe display of quote posters. I would solicit quotes about writing from the people who visited my presentation. I would encourage expression, encourage voices, enhance a sense of community. Something valuable would come of taking this risk, I was sure, and being optimistic by nature I imagined that what would happen would be fun.

The poster presentations began at nine a.m., and right off the bat my optimism took a beating. An elderly gentleman glanced at the posters and, after just a little coaxing, wrote on the paper I had placed on the table in front of me: "Writing is hard work." A nice, solid, safe quote, but when I asked him to sign his name he refused. "It might spoil the market for my upcoming book on writing," he said. And here, I must confess, I made an error. Instead of projecting acceptance, as any worthy writing consultant would have, I expressed bewilderment. How was signing his name to this quote going to spoil the market for his book? Oh well. He left disgruntled and returned shortly thereafter with a malicious gleam in his eye. He picked up the pen again and wrote: "Writing is not PR or fast quotes." I laughed and laughed and praised his irony, but I must now admit that his dry, ferocious glare did raise some bothersome doubts in my mind about the applicability of the quote campaign's essence, connecting with others and forming community, at the NWCA conference. In short, I was rattled. I took a quick water break, and when I returned I let the interactive portion of my poster presentation go. People looked at the quotes. I sat there and watched them looking. And then a man picked up the pen, without any prompting from me, and wrote: "Writing is blood." —Wayne Stein, English, University of Central Oklahoma. Ah. He pumped life back into my NWCA interactive project. Not only that, but

his quote seemed to invite me, gazing at his face, to inquire if he had Korean blood.

"Yes, half Korean," he replied, which encouraged me to pull out wallet pictures of my eight-year-old son and thirteen-year-old daughter, who are both, bloodwise, half Korean. From there we transitioned into a conversation about Asian-American literature, which he teaches and the woman I'm married to writes, and during that talk, which circled the world, the personal connection potential of gathering quotes about writing was re-vitalized for me. After that the quotes just flowed:

"Writing is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." —Robert Hill, The Union Institute.

"Writing is 99% procrastination and 1% inspiration." —Deb Bieler, writing specialist, Eastern College.

"Writing is a tool for social workers—a power tool." —student, Wayne College, Univ. of Akron.

"Once you accept mediocrity, then you can start writing and work toward brilliance." —D. Odney, Southern Illinois University.

"Writing very often reminds you that you don't know who you are or what you think." —Doris Clark, student, University of Central Arkansas.

"Writing is like the perfect donut—solid but airy." —anonymous.

"Writing is a love/hate relationship. I love to have written; it's the struggle to write that isn't always so enjoyable." —Kathleen Welsch, English Dept., Clarion Univ. of PA

A tall, dark, handsome young man with "Michael Pemberton" written on his name tag happened along. "What's the relationship between writing and ethics?" I asked him.

“There is no relationship between writing and ethics,” he proclaimed, and laughed heartily.

“Write it down,” I coaxed. For a moment he hesitated as he mumbled something about not wanting that to end up in a journal somewhere. Then he picked up the pen and wrote the first two words, “There is.” He stopped writing, pen poised, and as I watched, as others watched, his gaze seemed to turn back into his head. It occurred to me that we were all witnessing what is, perhaps, the most glorious moment of writing consultation—the act of revision. After twenty seconds his pen began to move again: “There is a close relationship between writing and ethics, politics and literary criticism notwithstanding.” —Michael Pemberton, Univ. of Ill.

Most of us were still buzzing about what we had seen, when another quote mysteriously appeared on the list: “Writing is a pain in the ass, and revision is the Preparation H.” — (collaboratively written and anonymous). The president of the NWCA approached the table to see what the sudden riotous laughter was about. “Who wrote that?” he asked.

“No idea,” I said.

The president picked up the pen: “I hate to write; I love to revise.” —Eric Hobson, Albany College of Pharmacy.

Allison Holland, an inspirational presenter at the conference and a guru of writing center marketing, approached the table, attracted, no doubt, by the crowd. “What’s the deal here?” she inquired, glancing at the posters behind me.

“We get quotes from professors about writing and put them on writing center posters,” I replied.

She took a closer look at the posters and grinned, energy radiating from her. “The professors love it, don’t they,” she said, “because it makes them feel good!”

I confirmed her insight, and she took a look at the growing list of quotes from writing center people. Then she picked up the pen: “The only way to fail is to not try. What are you waiting for? Write on!” —Allison Holland, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

She moved on to the next table, then suddenly hurried back and wrote: “Even Ernest Hemingway would still revise, but he’s dead. What’s your excuse?”

She praised the poster idea again, and again moved on.

Now it was 11 a.m., closing time, but here came Muriel Harris, heading for the door. Ah, Muriel Harris. Just the person I needed a quote from to make my whole quote gathering project into something, though I still didn’t know what. I asked her for a quote, she gently brushed me off, and as she reached the exit door I made my final bid: “I need your quote,” I said, “so I can write an article about these quote posters for the *Writing Lab Newsletter*.”

That did it. Muriel Harris knows a good deal when she’s struck one. She picked up the pen, and in five seconds scribbled out: “Don’t toss out that great insight about tutoring; write it up for the *Writing Lab Newsletter*!” — Muriel Harris, Purdue University.

It took a moment for me, staring at her freshly forged quote, to realize what had just happened—and then I understood: this twelve-page article of mine was, well, all but written.

Roy Andrews
Plymouth State College
Plymouth, NH

Visiting Instructor/Coordinator in University Writing Center University of Central Florida

This administrative, 12-month, non-tenure-earning faculty position is renewable for three years. Responsibilities will include:

- Helping to develop, coordinate, and/or teach UWC workshops, including thesis and dissertation writers workshops and other special-topic or special-audience workshops
 - Coordinating UWC outreach to graduate and undergraduate students
 - Helping to coordinate one-on-one support services for UCF writers, including scheduling and assessment of UWC writing consultants, particularly during summer
 - Working with graduate thesis and dissertation writers
- Requirements: Masters degree from an accredited institution by the contract date in an appropriate area of specialization. Basic computer competence is required.

Preference will be shown for experience with undergraduate and graduate students (especially teaching or writing center experience), strong interpersonal skills, ability to work in a team environment, and a willingness to work flexible hours. The position is scheduled to start December 23, 1999, with an annual salary of \$26,000 or higher. Starting date and salary are negotiable, depending on experience. Screening will begin shortly after November 8, 1999 and continue until the position is filled. Please send letter of application, cv, and three letters of reference to:

Dr. Beth Rapp Young
Director, University Writing Center
University of Central Florida, 4000 Central Florida Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32816-1347
(If you have questions, contact Dr. Young: byoung@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu)

TUTORS' COLUMN

The tutoring appointment

Stephen plodded through the writing center, following the secretary. She'd said, "Follow me." Not in a bossy or mean way, but with just the right touch of no-nonsense authority. Reminded him right away of Mother.

The secretary's dark eyes were kind. Too bad she couldn't be his tutor. Now, here he was, traipsing after her, through the whole writing center, every table filled with students (probably all looking at him). He tried to stand up straight and pick up his feet, but his sandals slapped against the carpet and his t-shirt, which was a size too small, kept coming un-tucked. And now, for the first time, he realized that these yellow socks were a little too bright with the olive green bermuda shorts.

All these students needed tutoring, too? They all looked relaxed, smiling and talking. At most of the tables he couldn't tell who was the tutor and who was being tutored. They all probably didn't really need tutoring. He hadn't known he needed it either. Not until he turned in his first Philosophy 2000 paper and the professor returned it with a lot of red markings, and said, "See me during my office hours."

Well, writing had never been his strongest subject, but he was shocked when the professor said, "I want you to go to the writing center at least twice a week for tutoring." She'd been nice about it. Said he had good ideas, just needed a little help in organizing them and expressing them. But what would Mother and Dad say? Here he was, their only child. They were so proud to send him off to college, so pleased with his plans to become a college math professor. What if they knew he

was going to have to be tutored, and here it was, only the second week of school?

The secretary stopped at one of the tables and gave his tutoring slip to a blonde girl who was dressed in a plain white t-shirt and jeans—that understated, uni-sex look that was, Stephen knew, exactly right. She was about his own age, pretty, and she looked smart, too. Intelligence flashed in her blue eyes, when she glanced up at them.

"Here's your 3:30 appointment, Sheri," the secretary said.

The girl began gathering up books and papers and putting them into her backpack. "Oh, don't you remember? I told you I can't be here today at 3:30." She zipped up her backpack and stood up.

Did she sound annoyed? Stephen knew she probably just didn't want to tutor him. He was too fat. The bulge around his waist showed in this old t-shirt. But he was down to the bottom of his clean clothes and hadn't had a chance to do laundry, yet. Actually, he hadn't figured out *how* to do laundry yet. The washers and dryers were on the first floor of the dorm, that meant he had to carry his laundry down two flights of stairs, wait for it to be done, and then carry it all back up again. He'd probably be able to figure it out this week-end, since his week-ends were turning out to be pretty quiet.

He couldn't help noticing how everyone in here was glowing with summer suntans. He felt positively pale in comparison. But he sunburned so easily. Mother had made him promise to wear

sunscreen and a hat at all times, even if it did crush his curly hair. He was used to living with coastal fog, so naturally, Mother had worried about California's Central Valley sun. She'd said, "It's unrelenting, Stephen, so protect yourself at all times."

So, here he was, pale and pudgy, and now without a tutor. How was he going to get started on this "major revision" the professor said was due by Friday? Now they were all walking back to the secretary's desk, the secretary and the tutor, and he following along behind them.

It didn't help that he was standing here holding this plastic bag full of toiletry items he'd just bought at the student store. It would have to be *clear* plastic. Everybody could see the deodorant (spicy musk scent), the mouth wash, the box of tissues (he seemed to have developed a constant runny nose, must be some kind of allergy), the deodorant soap, and the extra sunscreen, SPF 30. (It would please Mother to know he was thinking ahead on the sunscreen.) It had been awkward that he'd left his toiletry bag under the seat in the car on the day he arrived. Mother and Dad had put it in the mail, but so far he hadn't received the package. Rather than wait any longer, he'd decided to purchase a few essentials. He was afraid these first few days at college he may have had a little body odor. Maybe that was why his roommate Zach was never around—seemed to permanently inhabit a room down the hall filled with laughing and loud boys *and* girls. So far, Zach only slept in his bed, and now and then, studied in the room. But he was polite, said "Good morning," and "Good-night,"

and had given him equal closet and dresser space.

Maybe he should ask for a different tutor. She was too pretty. He'd never be able to concentrate on his writing. Now the secretary and the tutor were looking at the schedule book. Stephen tried to hold his stomach in, but it made it hard for him to breathe. Maybe it was the pimples on his face. They'd just popped out in the past few days. His acne medicine had been left behind in the car, too. Mother said he could go to the health center, see a doctor, and

get a new prescription. But he hadn't found the health center yet.

The tutor turned toward him. "I am sorry about this afternoon," she said. "You were supposed to get a message letting you know I couldn't make it. Guess there was a mix-up. Hope it's not too much of an inconvenience. Can you come in tomorrow morning? I have 9, 10, or 11 open." Her voice was concerned, her smile was warm, and she looked right into his eyes, like she didn't even see the huge pimple on his chin.

Stephen strolled out of the writing center into the blazing afternoon sun. He pulled his San Francisco Giants cap out of his back pocket and fitted it snugly down over his forehead.

Maybe he would tell Mother and Dad that he was having tutoring. They'd be happy to know that he was working on improving his writing.

Kristina M. Santos
California State University
Stanislaus, CA

Writing Center Director St. Cloud State University

Tenure-track position beginning August 2000: 2/3 administrative to direct the English Department's Writing Center, and up to 1/3 teaching in 1st-year and advanced composition. \$45,000 maximum salary. Requirements: doctorate in English, rhetoric, or related field; specialization in writing center theory and administration, writing center experience, demonstrated excellence in teaching writing courses; relevant publications and professional activities; demonstrated ability to teach and work with persons from culturally diverse backgrounds. Preferred experience: ESL, assessment, WAC/WID, technology applications. Send letter of application, vita, and transcripts (copies acceptable for initial screening) and 3-5 recent letters of recommendation by 1 February to: Philip M. Keith, Search Committee Chair, English Department, 106 Riverview, St. Cloud State University, 720 Fourth Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498.

We invite individuals who contribute to cultural diversity to apply, including minorities, women, the disabled, and veterans.

Writing Center positions University of Michigan

Developmental Writing Specialist: Professional/administrative 12-month position in writing center (position pending authorization). Responsible for development and administration of programs directed at basic writers, liaison with related programs, implementation and extension of programs involving computer-mediated instruction, and review of placement policies and practices. Applicants should have a PhD and significant experience in a writing center or in programs for developmental writers.

Lecturer III in technology and writing, Sweetland Writing Center (position pending authorization): PhD or ADB to teach basic and first-year writing courses, serve on technology development committees, act as liaison to office of instructional technology, represent technology needs for writing faculty to the administration, consult with faculty on writing-related course software and with faculty and staff technology users. Starting date 9/1/00.

Send letter of application and c.v. to Ejner Jensen, Director, Sweetland Writing Center, U. of Michigan, 1139 Angell Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003. Applications are encouraged by December 15, 1999. The U. of Michigan is a nondiscriminatory affirmative action employer.

Graduate English Society

Call for Papers
Writing Centers-Theory and Practice
Feb. 25-26, 2000
Lubbock, TX

Participants are invited to send individual presentation, panel presentation, and workshop proposals on any facet of writing center theory and practice to: Sabrina Peters-Whitehead, Department of English, Texas Tech University, MS 43091, Lubbock, TX 79409-3091, fax: (806) 742-0989, sabrinalee@ttu.edu 250-word abstracts are due by December 10, 1999. E-mail submissions are encouraged. Please put Writing Centers/GES Conference in the subject line for all electronic submissions. For more information about the conference or to submit online, visit our web site at: <http://english.ttu.edu/>

Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

February 3-5: Southeastern Writing Center Association, in Savannah, GA

Contact: Christina Van Dyke, Dept. of Languages, Literature, and Philosophy, Armstrong Atlantic State University, 11935 Abercorn St., Savannah, GA 31419-1997; phone: 912-921-2330; fax: 912-927-5399; vandykch@mail.armstrong.edu

February 26: Northern California Writing Centers Association, in Berkeley, CA

Contact: Liz Keithley or Luisa Giulianetti at ncwca@uclink4.berkeley.edu. Phone (510) 643-7442; <http://slc.berkeley.edu>

March 24-25: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Fort Worth, TX

Contact: Jeanette Harris (j.harris@tcu.edu), Texas Christian University or Lady Falls Brown (L.Brown@ttacs.ttu.edu) Texas Tech University.

March 25: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in Keene, NH

Contact: Anne Szeligowski, Gateway Community-Technical College, 60 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT 06511. E-mail ASZELIGOWS@aol.com; fax: 203-789-6976. Conference web site: <http://www.mcp.edu/as/wc/wc.html>

March 30-April 1: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Lansing, MI

Contact: J. Pennington, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan. E-mail: Jill_Pennington@lansing.cc.mi.us. Conference website: <http://www.lansing.cc.mi.us/~penningj/ecwca2000.htm>

November 2-4, 2000. National Writing Centers Association in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Baltimore, MD

THE WRITING LAB
N E W S L E T T E R

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