

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 26, Number 5

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

January, 2002

...FROM THE EDITOR...

If your writing lab or center works with students writing papers in many disciplines, are you looking for analyses and resources on writing in other fields? Kathleen Welsch and her tutors offer us some assistance.

Looking for a collection that reprints important articles in writing center theory and practice? Robert Barnett and Jacob Blumner's new book is reviewed by Sonja Bagby, Jo Koster, and Leigh Ryan. Wonder how tutors cope with stress and student "freakout"? Peer tutors Nicki Ashcroft and Jack Barger share their insights and strategies.

Thinking of starting a publication of student writing? Pamela Wilfong offers us her experience with their project.

Job hunting? See page 11. Want to know when and where some upcoming conferences will be next semester? See pages 5, 11, and 16. Writing an essay for possible publication? See page 7 for a new WAC journal and the information on page 2 for the newsletter.

None of the above? Then let me know what topics you'd like addressed in the newsletter.

• Muriel Harris, editor

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Discipline-specific lessons: What tutoring reports taught us

Tutoring reports provide a writing center with information that serves a variety of purposes. Statistical record keeping certainly has its place and value in writing center administration, but it's the descriptive portion of the report that informs the pedagogical practice of a center. Our own writing center practice of descriptive record keeping continually reminds us of the value of knowing a student writer's tutorial history since it enables us to provide more effective assistance. However, we have found that by studying the descriptive portion of our reports we can learn more about our track record as tutors who attend to the shifting demands of writing from discipline to discipline. While we know that our sessions with writers are generally productive encounters which clarify for and assist writers through the writing process, we wanted to know more about our ability to effectively address discipline-specific assignments, rhetorical conventions, and expectations.

As we reviewed our tutorial reports, patterns began to emerge that we were able to classify into two major areas of concern:

- *Understanding how students imag-*

ine they are addressing an assignment: The key to starting a conversation with student writers is to identify how they understand the assignment. While many students come to the writing center to discuss a discipline specific assignment and find a starting point, those who come with a draft in hand reveal a great deal about their confusion, misreading, and half understandings of the task before them. We know that students

don't sit down to write failing assignments, so our task is to approach their writing from a generous perspective. Based on what we see, how do *they* imagine they are doing the assignment: What elements of the assignment are they addressing? How are they attempting to tailor their response to discipline specific demands? How is their knowledge of the subject shaping their response to the assignment?

- *Understanding students' expectations regarding a tutor's knowledge across disciplines:* Whether writers are first-year students writing their first college essays, juniors facing a fast approaching deadline, or students simply overwhelmed by the daunting task of a discipline specific writing assignment, their expectations of a tutorial are directly tied to their specific writing need. And the more the need is associated with negotiating the content and conventions of a particular discipline, the more the writer pressures the tutor to intervene in the writing by explaining the assignment, interpreting a text, or offering a specific how-to plan to achieve the desired product. After all, it *is* a writing center and doesn't that mean that a tutor should automatically know the "right" way to address every type of writing assignment?

As we examined tutoring reports, we were able to see how these two concerns manifested themselves from discipline to discipline and how tutors devised strategies to navigate them. We limited our review to our "high traffic" disciplines—philosophy, history, and literature. So what follows is what we have learned from studying our records of working one-on-one with writers in philosophy, history, and literature.

Literature

Literature tutorials offered us a type of control group for our investigation

since, generally speaking, both students and tutors have had more experience writing essays about literary texts. The primary concern of students writing about literature was organization and revision; few requested assistance in getting started. Most, in fact, arrived with a draft in hand which tells us that these writers possess at least a general understanding of what is expected of them and that they aren't intimidated by the subject matter. A good percentage of these writers had already had their assignments evaluated and were now seeking assistance for specific difficulties ranging from structural errors, to working more closely with text, to approaching the task in a more discipline-specific manner.

What our reports revealed is that the most common writing difficulties in literature stem from the writer's incomprehension of the text (especially when it's poetry—are we surprised?) and a dependence on plot summary rather than analysis or interpretation. Tutors' reports cataloged the ease with which writers revert to plot summary, imagining it as analysis or interpretation simply because it is the writer's retelling of the story. Tutors repeatedly noted observations such as the following: "Christine was working on a character analysis. . . . In the body of the essay she summarized the story and in the conclusion, she presented her analysis"; "Laura and I found that in most of her paper she was regurgitating the plots of the two works she was analyzing"; and, "Jamie was summarizing too much. She needed to explain the motivation of the characters."

Since most student writers aren't particularly adept at articulating their concerns beyond gut level feelings about their inadequacies as writers, they say things like: "Does my paper flow?" or as one student claimed: "My paper just doesn't 'feel' right to me and I don't know if it is portraying what I want it to or what my professor expects." So tutors often begin with a conversation about the assignment, the

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Manuscripts: Recommended length for articles is 10-15 double-spaced typed pages, 3-5 pages for reviews, and 4 pages for the Tutors' Column, though longer and shorter manuscripts are invited. If possible, please send as attached files or as cut-and-paste in an e-mail to mjturley@purdue.edu. Otherwise, send a 3 and 1/2 in. disk with the file, along with the paper 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).

text, literary elements, or interpretation as a way of clarifying the writer's concern. The tutor's greatest challenge, however, is moving a writer from plot summary to analysis or interpretation: 1) the tutor has to establish the distinction between the critical work of analysis/ interpretation and simple summary, and 2) has to devise a strategy that demonstrates how a writer brings ideas and text together in a critical manner.

For writers who are attempting to analyze but find themselves slipping into summary, one tutor suggests having the writer "label every sentence in her paper: 'P' for plot; 'A' for analysis." The tutor explains: "If she finds there are more 'P's' than 'A's,' then she knows that she has too much plot." Writers who rely heavily on plot summary usually do so because they haven't established a clear position of their own. Therefore, establishing a thesis or focusing one that is vague and universal is a crucial step in distinguishing summary from literary analysis.

In assignments where the task is to synthesize a number of texts and literary elements, writers need to devise a way of seeing those elements in relation to each other before writing. One tutor suggested the following strategy for a student working with theme and symbols in three texts. He writes: "I made three columns on a sheet of paper with one title in each column. She told me the first things that came to her mind about the setting, characters, themes, etc. . . . We then went back and hi-lighted related ideas and symbols in different colors. These colors will become the paragraphs." Both of these strategies position writers to see literary texts and their writing about those texts from a new critical perspective. The ability to distinguish between original thought and text content is an important step for a writer who is expected to participate in the disciplinary activity of analyzing and interpreting literary texts.

History

Since history, like literature, is generally perceived as stories about people, places, and events, we weren't surprised to find writing difficulties similar to those in literature. Here again, students tend to revert primarily to summaries rather than addressing the more difficult task of demonstrating an understanding of the big picture—their interpretation of the relationship between events. Although students may imagine history as a set of cut-and-dry facts and dates (a view frequently reinforced by multiple choice tests), what they don't realize as they write about it is that the work of the historian is the interpretation of facts. It is the challenge of balancing historical facts with an explanation of how one understands those facts and their significance to each other that moves a student to describe her need for assistance this way: "History is very hard for me to comprehend how to write." Notice, it's not the subject matter of history she finds difficult, but the writing about it.

While students may claim not to understand the subject of a particular history assignment when they first sit down in a tutorial, what tutors report is that in one-to-one discussions students actually know the material quite well. What they haven't comprehended is the task of the assignment. As one tutor wrote: "[I]t was obvious she wasn't doing the assignment She needed to draw a conclusion based on what she learned. Her introduction, though, implied that she was going to summarize." The tutor's first step in this situation was to have the student identify a specific issue and compose a thesis statement. But even at this point the student still required guidance developing the essay as a discussion of the thesis rather than offering a collection of summary claims.

Other students write essays that begin as summaries and arrive at a concluding claim or observation in the final paragraphs. They begin with what

is most familiar to them—the narrative structure of summary that allows them to demonstrate their knowledge of the material. Then, having "covered" the facts, they conclude with an idea of their own which leads them to believe that they, indeed, have offered an analysis or interpretation. In situations such as this, the tutor's strategy is to have the writer identify sections of the text where an original idea, observation, or conclusion is presented. These moments then become the starting point for re-visioning not just the content of the draft, but the work of the writer. This is how one tutor described this process: "Brian's essay summarized . . . rather than discussed the issues. . . . We identified two main points buried at the end of the essay and discussed how [he] might restructure it around these points and use details from the original draft as support." What we see repeatedly in history writing is students who write very clear, well organized summaries. Our task is to assist them in writing like historians with an eye toward seeing relationships, making observations, offering interpretations, and drawing conclusion about historical events.

Philosophy

Unlike literature and history—courses with which students have experience prior to entering college—philosophy, as one tutor claims, seems to be a student nemesis. Consider, if you will, the situation of average first-year philosophy students: they most likely take the Introduction to Philosophy course in their first semester of college; the material is both abstract and dense; the philosophy essay is most likely one of the first they'll write in their college careers; and philosophy—like most disciplines—imagines students as "apprentices." Professors anticipate that students will learn to think and write as "philosophers" by being immersed in readings and discussions where philosophical conventions are modeled. Rarely do professors make the rhetorical conventions and expectations of their discipline evident to students.

We've seen a few who do provide some assignment guidelines, but students are so overwhelmed with the foreign nature and difficulty of the subject that they don't make much use of them. We've also seen that, while tutors generally feel confident enough as writers to tackle philosophy tutorials, it is one area where tutors do express a certain frustration with their perceived lack of expertise with the subject and texts.

Philosophy is the subject that generates the most requests for assistance in understanding the assignment and getting started. Tutor reports frequently make note of students' general sense of helplessness and lack of direction. Commonly recorded details of these sessions include no thesis, no unity, no organization, no idea how to start a philosophy essay, and little if any comprehension of the material. Students are evidently at a distinct disadvantage as writers in this discipline. Not only don't they possess a rhetorical awareness of the task at hand, they also don't possess a solid understanding of the content they are so desperately attempting to control in a three- to four-page essay. If the writer can't understand and tame the content of an essay, how is a reader expected to? And what does a writing center tutor do in the face of this set of difficulties?

Although tutors commonly see themselves in the roles of coach and counselor, modeling the writing process, this is particularly true when addressing the discipline-specific demands of philosophy. Tutors spend a great deal of time discussing the assignment, discussing the material, and generally putting the writer at ease by making the task accessible to the writer. One tutor wrote: "The student is having a hard time grasping how detailed the assignment is. He has put together a very general outline, but obviously does not understand the material very well." This tutor's strategy was to approach

the task in "layers." First, she had the writer reread the material with the assignment questions in front of him. Then they made a set of notes based on his responses to the questions. Their final step was to identify a focus point out of his notes and devise an outline based on his responses, not the assignment's list of questions.

When in doubt about how to approach a philosophy essay, many students simply respond to an assignment's list of questions (usually provided as starting points for thinking about essay possibilities) in a checklist manner which seems to provide them with a sort of organizational foothold on the task. This approach gives students the false security that they've addressed the assignment because they've answered the questions; however, this strategy doesn't provide the integration of materials and reasoning expected of a philosophy essay. The following description represents one of the most common tutor observations about philosophy essays: "Melissa's paper, like the last Philosophy student I worked with, was lacking a thesis or any type of unity. . . . Her problem was that she had to answer five questions in one essay and that is exactly what she did. Melissa answered each question directly and didn't tie them together." Another tutor working with this same problem encouraged the writer to move beyond questions by focusing on how understanding the course material allowed the writer to address the assignment as a discussion rather than a checklist. Still another tutor had the writer simply talk through her responses to the questions while the tutor made notes of what the writer was saying. Together, writer and tutor then worked with the notes to develop a controlling idea and outline.

It's also not uncommon to read tutor frustration in philosophy reports. Since the tutors themselves are unfamiliar with the material, the professor's stan-

dards, or discipline specific conventions, they write about how they feel out of their element at times. In such cases, tutors typically revert to a basic writing process approach as this tutor did in the face of complex and unfamiliar material. He writes: I had a hard time grasping Sara's main ideas since they were the ideas of Thracymacus, Socrates, Hobbes and Glaucon. Best I could do was ask her to explain the relationships among the philosophers and to organize her explanations into an introduction." While defaulting to a writing process strategy may not address the discipline-specific conventions of philosophy, it offers the writer a framework for moving through the task at hand in a constructive manner.

Monitoring our work with writers in various disciplines by reading our tutoring reports carefully, we sharpen our ability to hear the concerns and difficulties of student writers, develop our rhetorical awareness of discipline-specific conventions and expectations, and devise effective strategies for passing that awareness on to student writers. Because students generally take a first-year composition course, professors in other disciplines like philosophy, history, or literature assume that knowledge of good writing will transfer to whatever writing task is assigned. What we see on a regular basis with discipline-specific writing, however, is that writers benefit from instruction that clearly defines the rhetorical conventions (characteristics of literary analysis vs. plot summary, historical interpretation vs. summary, elements of philosophical argument vs. answers to questions) and standards expected of them. Our challenge as tutors is to assist them in defining and meeting those expectations. The fact that students come to the writing center for guidance rather than seeking out their professors places a certain burden on tutors in terms of expertise. At such times tutors have to draw on their own experience and knowledge as tutors and writers,

turn to the resources they have for writing in various disciplines (see bibliography below), or direct students back to professors for discipline-specific clarification.

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Discipline-Specific Resources for Writing

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Colorado Writing Tutors Conference

Call for Proposals
February 9, 2002
Lakewood, CO
"Theory and Practice (Or Theory Versus
Practice?) in the Writing Center"

Peer tutors, faculty members, and directors are invited to submit proposals for panels, talks, roundtables, posters, or workshops. Formats that invite discussion are particularly encouraged. Sessions may include role playing activities, tutoring workshops, panel discussions, round-robin discussions or other formats that suit the purpose of the proposal.

Proposals should describe the proposed session, including any activities that will be conducted, list technology needs, and indicate the estimated length of the session. The conference website is: <http://www.ppcc.ccoes.edu/owl/CWTChp2002.htm>. Please submit proposals (maximum 250 words) by e-mail or snail mail by January 15, 2002 to: Tina Getz, Pikes Peak Community College, 5675 S. Academy Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80906. E-mail: Christine.Getz@ppcc.ccoes.edu

Book Review

Robert W. Barnett and Jacob S. Blumner, Eds. *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001. Paperback: 576 pp., \$53.00

Reviewed by Sonja Bagby (State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA);
Jo Koster (Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC), and
Leigh Ryan (University of Maryland, College Park, MD)

A Conversation—But for Whom?

As three writing center directors (current and former) who have faced the challenges of training tutors, dealing with administrators, helping our clients, and theorizing our practices, we welcomed the appearance of Bob Barnett and Jacob Blumner's *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice* with enthusiasm. At last, we thought, those days of standing over the copying machine while glancing nervously over our shoulders for the copyright lawyers were over. This is the collection we have all been waiting for. For completing the tremendous task of gathering, selecting, culling, and choosing, Barnett and Blumner deserve enormous credit. Indeed, they have dared to do what no one else has, and a publisher appreciated their efforts enough to enter the comparatively narrow market of writing center work. This is a book that will go on all our bookshelves and be well used.

Barnett and Blumner state that the book "bring[s] together some of the most important, controversial, and influential ideas that have helped shape and reshape how we define ourselves and how we fit into the larger educational picture," contributing to "a rich, productive discussion" (x), and largely, it does. The book is comprised of 45 essays arranged in six sections: a history of writing centers, theoretical claims to writing centers' place, administrative and institutional issues, the process of tutoring, diversity in the center, the relationship of centers to Writing Across the Curriculum programs, and technology issues. Among

the notable names in center scholarship included in the collection are Stephen North, Muriel Harris, Peter Carino, Kenneth Bruffee, Christina Murphy, Eric Hobson, and Elizabeth Boquet. The editors say that they "have carefully chosen articles that will benefit instructors at the undergraduate as well as graduate level; anyone engaged in research will find this collection to be useful as well as time-saving; and, perhaps best of all, this collection can be used as a companion to the *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, by Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner, for use in both undergraduate and graduate courses" (x).

And in many ways the editors achieve their goal. The anthology is arranged in a way that will fit well with many courses in tutoring and with textbooks other than Gillespie and Lerner's. Those of us who have found ourselves photocopying Steven North's "The Idea of a Writing Center" and similar classic essays for the n-teenth time will be equally pleased, as Barnett and Blumner have chosen many of the tried-and-true mainstream choices that constitute the informal canon of writing center theory and practice. Those researchers whose libraries don't contain the entire back run of the *Writing Center Journal* or the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, or some of the anthologies of writing center scholarship, will find everything from Robert Moore's 1950 essay "The Writing Clinic and the Writing Laboratory" to chapters from recent books on centers and technology and centers and WAC practice. In several of the sections, most notably those

on theory and on the relationships of centers to WAC, the essays present multiple and often contentious viewpoints for students and experienced centerfolk alike to consider.

But the economics of publishing keep the book from reaching all of its goals. Perhaps because the three of us, like so many other people who work in centers, wear so many hats, we find that the depth of coverage in each of the six sections is sometimes problematic. In an e-mail message, Bob Barnett noted that Allyn & Bacon had made the editors "cut 15 articles. We originally had a much longer section on the practice of tutoring. We also had more articles on learning-disabled and other special needs students. Aside from that, we had to cut at least one article from each section" (e-mail communication to Jo Koster, 21 May 2001). (One such "classic" article glaring in its omission is Mickey Harris' "Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors," a staple in many tutor training courses.) Of course, no anthology can contain all the articles every reader would want, and publishers have practical concerns about length, but the missing depth makes the book less effective for some of the announced audiences than was intended. For instance, the assumption seems to be that only composition/rhetoric specialists will be hired to tutor or to direct centers, for nothing in the book suggests where relative newcomers to the field might learn about writing as process, dealing with grammar concerns, beginning WAC issues like writing to learn, cognitive writing, expressivist writing, and so forth. Where does writing stop and writing center be-

gin? The coverage may in fact be too narrow for those tutors or directors beginning a writing center career without taking advanced composition or composition theory classes, or those who aren't simultaneously taking a class in tutoring writing that uses a tutor-training textbook.

In the section on special needs tutoring, an increasingly important area of center practice, the cuts seem to show most. Not only is the anthology short on tutoring for ESL and learning-disabled clients, but it also gives scant coverage to issues like the roles tutors play, body language, and the like. And the beginning center administrator may find the section on dealing with the center's place in its institutional context inadequate for his or her concerns; there is nothing, for instance, on space constraints, on the politics of negotiation, on hiring and evaluating tutors, on lobbying for (and setting up) the credit-earning peer tutoring class—many of the subjects that provide new directors with their greatest challenges. (Jane Nelson's and Kathy Evertz's *The Politics of Writing Centers*, which has appeared since the Barnett and Blumner collection was published, goes a long way toward supplementing this particular chapter.)

This thinness means that no one particular audience—the student tutor just beginning, the director seeking theo-

retical and practical advice, the researcher looking for a particular perspective or viewpoint—will find all of what she or he wants here. In many ways, the collection is a bricolage—and the seams are evident.

What Barnett and Blumner's anthology will establish is a kind of "canon" of voices and perspectives that represent writing center scholarship—and in a field as notoriously opposed to regulation, canonicity, and standardized practice as writing center scholarship is, that's another problem. The three of us, being pragmatists, have focused almost immediately on the issues of praxis that face directors, teachers of tutors, and administrators. Those centerfolk whose interests are more theoretical, and those centerfolk who prize the center's position as oppositional, as outside institutional structures, as a vehicle for social change, as part of service or community-based learning, will certainly point to the scarcity of such viewpoints in the collection. Again, we see this as unavoidable where the needs of a varied community and a commercial publisher collide—but we wish that those voices were present here, to show the greater diversity and debate that truly informs the center community.

And while this is where, in the end, we feel that *The Allyn & Bacon Guide* falls shortest, there's a relatively

simple solution. Though any anthology faces space constraints, a future edition should acknowledge that this further conversation exists with suggestions (preferably annotated) for further reading and pointers to places where such discussions can be found (such as the WCenter list, *WCJ*, or *WLN*, the IWCA web site, or even a support page on Allyn & Bacon's composition website). Such an addition would take up no more than a few pages and make the book infinitely more useful to its intended audiences. (As a small aside, we also hope that in the next edition, the publishers will also correct the few typos that slipped through the scanners and copy editors—e.g., p. 11, "co;" p. 89, "marches;" p. 397, "tom.")

Overall, our impression of the book is quite favorable. It's a useful text, though not sufficiently complete to stand as the definitive collection of essays for centerfolk. But that, after all, is the problem with any anthology: something is always missing. And if the editors have fallen a bit short of their announced intentions to cover all the bases, they have nonetheless performed a singular and needed service in bringing together enough material to form a common starting place for discussion and dialogue, one which we can supplement and enlarge upon to speak more clearly to all the audiences involved in center theory and practice.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The WAC Journal

Now in its 13th volume, *The WAC Journal* began as a regional publication for the Plymouth State College community. With the 11th issue, the journal began accepting articles from other regions, and with the 12th it published articles from around the country.

The editorial board of *The WAC Journal* is now accepting articles from around the country for volume 13. We publish WAC-

related articles in the following categories:

- WAC and Writing Centers
- WAC Experiences and Reflections
- WAC Techniques and Applications
- WAC Literature Reviews
- Interviews with WAC personalities

Send 5-15 page manuscripts for the annual spring issue to Roy Andrews via email (roya@mail.plymouth.edu). Deadline: February 28, 2002. Inquiries welcomed.

TUTORS' COLUMN

Moody tutor: A survival guide

Turning the corner, towards the writing center, I whine to my friends, "I'm so tired; I have so much work to do, and now I have to go tutor. I pity the person who gets stuck with me." My friends are mildly sympathetic as they move on to their next high school classes, and I enter the writing center. When I originally signed up for this writing class, I knew I would be tutoring before I knew what tutoring was. From the beginning, I enjoyed working with other students, but on certain days, the thought of being helpful and appreciative is almost too much to handle. Fortunately, I've come up with several ways to prevent this reluctance from getting in the way of the session.

Before I share my strategies of pure genius, let me prove to you that they are necessary. From the opening small talk on, a student can immediately sense when your heart is not in it and they *will* respond accordingly. You might say the same words in the same order in the same tone of voice but only genuine interest and cheerfulness will come through. Take a look at two different scenarios:

Tutoring job 1:

Tutor- hey, I'll be with you in a minute, hang on.

Student- [doesn't respond, fidgets]

Tutor- all right, let's get this going. Let me see your paper.

Student- [still says nothing as the tutor reads]

Tutor- I think you need to work on this and this. Look. [points out mistakes, etc.]

Student- [watches, with an occasional nod or comment]

Tutor- ok, go fix that and good luck. [turns his or her back]

Notice the rushed style and lack of involvement. Notice the student's silence. I (or whoever it was) must make the student feel as if they are getting the attention they deserve and force the student to speak or show some sign of ownership of the paper. Maybe I was having a bad day; maybe I had other assignments to think about and other worries to deal with. But that poor student should not have to pay for the tutor's outside life (assuming of course that the tutor has an outside life, which is a different question all together). Now, compare that situation with this one, we'll call it:

Tutoring job 2:

Student: [enters reluctantly, shyly, says little]

Tutor: [after a few minutes of mostly one-sided small talk] So what do you think about this paper? What would you like me to look at?

Student: Well, I don't really know but I was a little worried about this, this, and that.

Tutor: Okay, let's go through it and see what we can find. [reads] I think you were right about that and that. Maybe, we can work on them. What would you do to fix them?

As the session continues, it is obvious: the tutor's continuing good-humor has turned the session into a cooperative effort. The student leaves with both an appreciation of what he/she has written and new ideas on how to make it better.

But wait, you say; didn't this paper begin by talking about the effects of grumpiness on a tutoring session? Those two situations looked to be a comparison of the skills of the tutors.

Hmmm . . . you say. Then, what if I told you that both of those tutors were the same person (me) in a dramatic rendition of my moodiness? The skill level is the same; only the attitude of the tutor changes from one scenario to the other.

Have I convinced you, once and for all, that the tutor's mood impacts the session? Good. Now I can share my enlightening advice about what to do if you walk into that writing center and just don't want talk to anyone. When I find myself in that position, first of all, I remind myself of the other person in this interaction. In our high school, many teachers use the writing center as a required part of an assignment, a situation that can make for uninterested students and non-productive conversations. Unless, of course, the tutor actively encourages discussion and interaction. In other words, if I don't do anything, no one will. Responsibility can often get me back on track.

Next, I sort through my list of cliches. Start with "if you smile, it will put you and everyone else in a good mood," so make funny faces at yourself in a mirror; eat chocolate; crack a joke. Usually, a few minutes of forced cheerfulness will turn into real good humor, and you're all set.

Relaxation can also work miracles. Breath (both in and out) and think of the writing center as a place to escape your problems and not just a place to worry and stew about them in peace and quiet. You came in to do a job, so do it well. Think about what you're going to say and how your words will sound before they come out of your mouth, not after. Just think laid-back.

Of course, some factors are out of the tutor's control. I can't help it if a student comes in with a chip on their shoulder, or a studied indifference or a real indifference. Sometimes, a session is unsalvageable, and you just have to shrug it off and laugh. But look at it this way: if it was a horrible experience *despite* the fact that you were charming

and wonderful, think about how much worse it would have been if you were as grumpy and obnoxious as the student.

Tutors (me and everyone else who thinks they deserve that name) must leave their stress at the door even if the writing center is just one more class in

the middle of their hectic days, even if the students are not there voluntarily, especially if the students are not there voluntarily. So smile and enjoy.

*Nicki Ashcroft
Medfield High School
Medfield MA*

Start where you are

When I started this tutoring gig, I knew that I would meet a lot of interesting people. I also figured that I would meet some people that would give me problems and make my job just that much more difficult. I kept telling myself that I would just need to relax and take it in stride. I *did* meet a lot of people, but I really didn't have many problems with the various students' personalities or study habits. What I did discover, though, was that so many people—students, professors, advisors, and even maintenance folks—seem to frequently be stressing out so much that it looks like it could turn fatal. I consider myself to be a fairly laid-back person, so I think that I can observe, comment, and offer suggestions on these different forms of what I like to call the “freak out” specifically for the purpose of helping everyone smell the roses for at least a minute. Serenity now . . .

I will say (at the risk of sounding obvious) that the students are, for the most part, the ones who are the guiltiest of acquiring a bad case of the “freak out.” With tests, papers, presentations, and the rest of life breathing down their necks at every turn, it is certainly easy to understand why the student would be the most harried. I

can recall, in one of my first sessions ever, a girl who came up to me in the Writing Lab and couldn't do anything but stand there and stare at me. Wait a minute, she was sweating and panting, so I suppose she was doing other things besides staring. She made me very nervous, so I said hello to her to see if it would get a reaction. I *needed* a reaction, you see, because I thought that the girl had been temporarily hypnotized by the light from the copy machine downstairs, and I wanted to make sure that she knew who and where she was before I went any further. I asked her if she was all right, and she looked at me like she had just been awakened from a brisk sleepwalk. She shook her head back and forth very quickly as if coming to, and replied that she was indeed all right, but that she was just very busy. Apparently, she was so “busy” that she forgot where she was, and had to snap to. I had her sit down and just relax for a minute or two. We delved into some small talk—I asked her what her big hurry was, why she came to the Writing Lab, and all of that good stuff. After about three minutes, it seemed that she had caught her breath and realized that she was in a writing lab on the planet Earth, and we were ready to get down to business. Now, every time she

comes to see me, we sit for just a few minutes at the beginning of the session and simply relax. It works wonders for the mindset, and helps everyone involved feel much more comfortable.

In another instance, a student came up to the desk looking at me like he was two years old, and I was Santa Claus. In a word, the kid looked scared. I did the regular “Hi, how are you” thing, and unlike the aforementioned girl, this guy knew where he was—and he was scared to death to think of it. Now obviously, this student wasn't too confident in his (or his teacher's) decision to visit the Writing Lab. I was instantly sympathetic, because I'm not too keen on new things myself. I had him sit down, being careful to keep an acceptable distance from him so he didn't feel smothered, and proceeded to ask him a few questions. I didn't ask him questions about his paper, his major, or anything that had to do with school at all. He happened to have a Cleveland Browns shirt on, and I just so happen to be a Browns fan, (no comments from the peanut gallery, please) which provided me with a beautiful avenue to go down. All it took was a couple of minutes to loosen this guy up a little, make him feel comfortable, and move on to his paper. By

the time we were done with his session we had gotten a lot done and we were both laughing like we'd been friends for our whole lives.

In yet another form and instance of the dreaded "freak out," I'll have to admit that I, a.k.a. "The Rock," a.k.a. "The Captain of Calm," a.k.a. "The Guy Who Likes To Make Up a.k.a.'s For Himself," had a little bout with this affliction in a situation that I'll never forget. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, guilty, and whoever else needs protection. I was sitting at the writing center desk, calm, collected, and ready for my scheduled appointment, when a girl came up to me.

"Can you help me?"

"Well," I replied, "that depends on what it is you need help with." I need to mention, also, that there is a math tutor sitting about two desks down from my desk. The girl had already made it known that she knew the math tutor, and that she wasn't hesitant to talk to him when she probably needed to be listening to me.

"I need help with my paper. I have an appointment."

I was glad to hear that she was the one with the appointment scheduled. I found out that her name was Calliope, (not really, but we're protecting the innocent, remember?), and she seemed like a nice girl, and not only was she not "freaking out" at all, she seemed almost *too* calm; nonchalant would be a good word to describe her. We sat down to look at her paper, and, almost immediately, she started to talk to the math tutor (two desks down, remember) about what a good dancer he was, and how cute he was. I had gathered that the two of them had been at a local dancing establishment the night before, and that she had a little crush on the math tutor, whose name was Rasputin (protecting again). Anyway, Calliope started to pay attention to her paper,

but not for very long. In my mid-sentence, she stood up, turned in the direction of Rasputin, and proceeded to dance like she had presumably danced the night before. Rasputin and I looked at each other in astonishment and laughed a little bit. It *was* very funny, but I was so shocked that my laugh was more nervous than anything. I had to look down at her paper, but nothing was registering because I couldn't exactly think straight while all of this was going on.

She finished her "dance of love," and sat down with me once again. She apologized to me, and I thought that we could start to work on her paper again. I thought wrong. The whole time, she was either telling the math tutor how cute he was, or telling me that what little I actually got across to her was "too much work." I was really starting to lose my cool when I thought to myself, "What more can I do?" From that point on, I just kicked back and let her do what she wanted. When she looked like she wanted to work, we worked; when she wanted to talk with the other tutor, after many attempts to get her to pay attention to her paper, I let her talk to him. As soon as Rasputin got a student to tutor, Calliope was ready to go on her way. I haven't seen her since, and I've realized that she probably wanted me to write her paper for her, and, as we all know, that can't happen. I did as much as I could with her and, beyond that, I just relaxed and watched the show. There was no sense in me getting all worked up. How could I feel bad for her when she didn't feel bad for herself?

Finally, I just want to reiterate the general meaning of this column, and that is that relaxation and a nice, calm attitude will normally help immensely in stressful situations. "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff," as the saying goes, and, in my opinion, it's all small. This applies to us as tutors, because no matter what situation we

may find ourselves in, if we can work with a clear head, it's a lot easier to figure out the problems that we encounter with students and their papers everyday. It's important for *everyone* to remember not to get discouraged, and that goes for tutors, teachers, advisors, maintenance people, and everyone involved with life's daily grind. As the old saying goes, "Don't be discouraged; everyone who got where he is, started where he was."

Jack Barger
The University of Findlay
Findlay, Ohio

IWCA at CCCC

The International Writing Centers Association invites you to join them at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, in Chicago. On Thursday evening, March 21, there will be a Special Interest Group (SIG) for those interested in writing centers. The session will be held in Parlor E, on the 7th floor of the Palmer House Hotel, at 6:45 p.m.

The session is entitled "Separation, Initiation, Return: Bringing Institutional Perspectives Back to the Writing Center." Three writing center pioneers will share experiences of having left writing centers for other university positions and having returned with refreshed perspectives:

- Jeanne Simpson: "Writing Center Redux: What I Don't Know Now is Different from What I Didn't Know Then"
- Jeanette Harris: "You Can Go Home Again and Why You Should"
- Harvey Kail: "Right Back Where I Started? Making a Career in Writing Centers"

Immediately following the SIG there will be an IWCA board meeting in the same room, and you are invited to attend.

Writing Center Director California State University, Los Angeles

Twelve-month academic appointment reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies with retreat rights or tenure (depending on qualifications) to an appropriate academic department.

Qualifications: Ph.D. in Rhetoric/Composition, English or related field and experience in administering a writing center. A successful record of teaching, using a variety of methodologies, and scholarship. A record of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse populations, non-native English speakers and developmental writers and demonstrated ability/ interest in working in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment. Demonstrated excellent organizational, communication and interpersonal skills.

Responsibilities include providing leadership in developing and implementing programs to enhance the writing skills of students throughout the University; recruiting, training, and supervising peer tutors; supervising the development of curriculum and instructional materials for tutorials, writing workshops and training sessions; providing consultation and workshops to faculty regard-

ing writing across the curriculum; coordinating Writing Center activities with other student academic support services including the English composition program, and the CSU graduation writing assessment requirement; coordinating the course that serves as one means of meeting the graduation writing requirement, including recruiting and hiring faculty and overseeing the course content and requirements; and managing the Center's resources and budget. Opportunity to teach one or two courses a year in an appropriate department.

Starting date: July 1, 2002.

Salary: Commensurate with experience and qualifications.

To apply, submit a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and three letters of reference to Dr. Alfredo Gonzalez, Dean, Undergraduate Studies, CSU, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032-8254. Position is open until filled, but to ensure full consideration, apply by January 18, 2002.

Lecturer/Prof. to manage the Writing Center Alakhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco

Alakhawayn University is a recently created Moroccan University, which uses English as a language of instruction. Its degree programs are set up according to the North American administrative and pedagogical model. It has close connections, exchange programs and academic agreements with a number of U.S. Universities. Please check our website for further details: (<http://www.alakhawayn.ma>)

Qualifications: We are looking for a highly qualified specialist in the teaching of ACADEMIC WRITING to assume responsibility for the development of the University's Writing Center, and to advise the University faculty as a whole on strategies to improve student performance in written English. A teaching commitment will also be anticipated in order to evaluate student needs. Applicants should have considerable previous

experience in writing center tuition and management, as well as a background in the teaching of academic writing to non-native speakers of English.

Salary : Competitive; commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Procedure : Please request further information (full position description) by email from: Mr. Peter Hardcastle (Director), Center for Academic Development and Study Skills, Al Akhawayn University. (P.Hardcastle@alakhawayn.ma; Fax: 212 (0) 55 862431; Tel: 212 (0) 55 862422; 212 (0) 55 567456). Applications must eventually be submitted to: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Al Akhawayn University, B.P. 104, Ifrane, Morocco.

Celebrating student writing: The value of creating a campus journal in the writing center

How well I remember my first semester of college. With great anticipation, yet apprehension at the age of forty-something, I had the nerve to take only one class—English Composition. Imagine after decades of being out of the classroom my excitement and pride when I finished my first semester with an A. I wrote four papers in English Composition, receiving an “A” on each one, along with glowing accolades from my professor. I was so proud of myself. Although I didn’t, I wanted to place each of my essays in various conspicuous places throughout my home for everyone to see. It seemed obvious to me that anyone coming to visit would pick up a paper and begin to read it with the same enthusiasm I had. I couldn’t have been more wrong! I soon discovered few were interested in my success, dismissing the fact with an “Oh that’s nice” or “Good for you,” then immediately changing the subject. Needless to say, those papers remained in my little black folder and were eventually tossed into the bottom of a dresser drawer.

Much has happened since that first semester. My success in writing continued, and with that success came a position as a tutor in the campus Writing Center. More importantly, I have learned that I am not the only student who can write a paper worthy of an excellent grade. Unfortunately other students, like myself that first semester, put their papers away never to be seen again—papers that deserve more than a place at the bottom of a drawer. However, our director and staff of the Writing Center at the Stark Campus of Kent State University realizes student writing should be recognized and cel-

ebrated. We believe recognition for successful academic writing builds student awareness about the value of writing not only in the academic world, but also in the world outside of the university. For this reason, four years ago we began publishing the best of student writing from across the curriculum in a journal now known as the *Writing Center Review*.

The *Writing Center Review* has been well received by the administration, faculty, and students, and has grown not only in volume and sophistication, but also as an excellent representation of writing across the curriculum. Although the primary purpose of this journal is to celebrate and reward student writing, the *Review* has become a very useful publication in that it not only recognizes excellence in student writing, it also serves as a tutoring tool, familiarizes tutors with the publishing process, and, perhaps more importantly, showcases the Writing Center itself. However, before I go into details, it is helpful to know why and how the *Review* began and how it currently operates.

Kent Stark, although the largest regional campus of Kent State University, is a small campus with an average enrollment of twenty-eight hundred students per semester. Oftentimes, a regional campus cannot offer students the opportunities or amenities that larger universities can provide; however, this is not the case at Kent Stark. Our campus is fortunate to have dedicated faculty and administrators who work hard to try to ensure that the various academic needs of students are met. Because of this dedicated commitment to serving the students’ needs,

former Writing Center director Dr. Robert Miltner lobbied school administrators for support in creating a journal publication that would recognize and celebrate students’ achievements in writing. According to Dr. Miltner, he wanted to create a journal because “all too often, excellent papers get written, graded, and returned, but not as often shared with peers.” As a result, he believed “the creation of a journal publication would give students the opportunity to share their best work with their peers.” Furthermore, Dr. Miltner maintains, “a publication of this kind enhances student awareness of the importance of good academic writing, and students benefit from reading papers that have been written for various disciplines.” When Dr. Miltner asked administrators for support, they agreed with his theory; thus, the first journal publication was created.

Currently, the *Review*, now under the direction of Dr. Jeannette Riley, celebrated its fourth and most successful publication. To achieve this status, significant changes were made in the assembly of the journal. First, Dr. Riley decided the publication should be the responsibility of the tutoring staff, and that she would serve only as the faculty advisor. She believes “tutors should benefit from the opportunity to learn how to oversee committees, how to edit and desktop publish a journal, and how to work together to achieve a major goal” (4). Second, the journal is now published before the end of the school year; previously the students had to wait until the next school year to see their work in print. And third, believing that a drawing or painting is to the art major what writing is to the

English major, Dr. Riley and the staff decided to include art that was produced in response to student poetry. Each of these changes helped achieve the most successful publication to date. This year, out of a total of forty-eight submissions, thirteen essays and four pieces of art were published. In addition, this year's journal included a wider variety of disciplines: art, biology, communications, education, English, French, mathematics, philosophy, U.S. history, and political science. Moreover, as the *Review* continues to grow, so do the academic advantages.

The first advantage the *Review* produces is that it gives a student the opportunity to become a first-time published writer. Granted, not all students care about becoming published writers, but the Writing Center tries to encourage submissions for publications by informing students that a publication looks great on their college resume, especially if they are planning to continue on to graduate school. Becoming a published writer provides students with affirmation for a job well done, encourages them to continue to strive for excellence, and builds confidence for future writing. Instructors also encourage students to submit papers that represent their area of academia. In this instance, if a paper is selected, it becomes a model for other students to follow. In turn, the paper serves an additional use as a tutoring resource in the Writing Center.

As a tutor in our Writing Center, I use various tools of the trade when collaborating with a student. Knowing which tutoring tool works best depends upon the particular need of each student. Although I agree with Muriel Harris when she states "as collaborators, tutors rely on talk as our primary pedagogical tool. We listen, we ask questions, we talk, we ask more questions, we listen some more" ("Award"), I have found with some students—talk is cheap! Some students require more than talking—they require visual aid. In such cases, the *Re-*

view becomes my tool of choice. Students who come to the Writing Center unsure about the conventions of academic writing, or uncertain of the structure of a college paper, sometimes need to see specific examples of what they should be doing. Viewing examples of peer writing helps them understand more clearly the goals of academic writing. Physically pointing out the introduction, thesis, topic sentences, integrated sources, and conclusion is extremely helpful to the visually oriented student. In doing so, the compositions in the *Review* provide a body of knowledge about the inter-workings of a well-constructed paper and provide learning assistance to students who do not understand the concepts and methods used in creating a quality paper. Like the tutor who learns his/her craft by reading examples of tutoring sessions, so does the student through examples of peer writing.

To further assess the merits of the *Review* as a tool for tutoring, I conducted a written survey in which I asked the question: Do you feel the *Writing Center Review* would be helpful to your own writing? The survey was passed out to students throughout various disciplines, along with a copy of the *Review*. Overwhelmingly, the response was yes. I received only one negative response. This person responded she had been writing so long she didn't need examples or help (lucky her!). Many of the students wrote that by reading other students' compositions they gained insight into what a particular professor is looking for and what others consider to be a quality paper. Other comments explained how the *Review* helps with overall paper construction. Students felt they learned more about thesis statements, style, organization, works cited pages, themes, and grammar. This survey confirms that students can and do benefit from examples of peer writing. Moreover, because students are motivated and strongly influenced by their peers, seeing their peers' compositions in print becomes a motivating factor in their own writing.

Another advantage of the *Review* is that it gives tutors a broader sense of purpose. For Writing Center staff members, who sometimes feel like the Maytag repairman waiting for something to do, working on the *Review* occupies time when students aren't in the Writing Center. When our Writing Center isn't busy, tutors work on all the details of putting the *Review* together. They busy themselves with advertising, writing submission standards, putting together selection committees, writing biographies and introductions, editing, and the layout of the journal. All of these jobs can be beneficial to tutors in their future careers outside the university walls. According to Robert Berens, co-editor of this year's publication, "Working on the *Review* gives a tutor the opportunity to explore other areas as a possible work field, such as editing or advertising." For me personally, because the *Review* is entirely student directed, working as a team toward an ultimate goal was helpful in developing interpersonal relationships with co-workers. No matter what problems arose, we supported each other as a team and channeled our energies to overcome them so we could obtain our goal—much like we do when collaborating with a student. In an essay dealing with interpersonal dynamics, Christina Murphy states: "a good tutor . . . function[s] to awaken individuals to their potentials and to channel their creative energies toward self-enhancing ends" (46). Similarly, as we worked toward the self-enhancing goal of producing the *Review*, we functioned as a team to awaken each other's creative energy. As a result, our interpersonal relationships developed into a better understanding of each other's needs. In like manner, these same skills we learned to use with each other will affect our interpersonal relationship with students and others outside the university walls.

Another pleasurable advantage in putting together the *Review* was being able to read some really exceptional compositions. When I discussed the

advantages for the tutors with Berens, he remarked, “Working on the *Review* gave us the opportunity to read more advanced, well written papers from across the curriculum, papers that are more challenging to read, and more refreshing than what we see daily.” We both agreed reading these papers makes us more knowledgeable, which in turn helps us become better tutors.

Perhaps the most important advantage of the *Review* is that it showcases, gives credibility, and helps justify our Writing Center’s existence. Michael Pemberton tells us in his January 1995 *Writing Lab Newsletter* column, “Writing Center Ethics: Questioning Our Own Existence,” that we have to “take a hard look at what we do, why we do it, and how we can justify it to people who might be looking to us as expendable budget items in tough—and getting tougher—economic times” (8). I believe when we take a look at what we do and why we do it, we must ask ourselves: is there more we can do? My answer is yes. Directors and tutors can showcase their writing centers to administrators, faculty, and students by creating a journal publication like the *Review*. The *Review* highlights and gives credibility to our Writing Center insofar as it shows our administrators, faculty, and students that the Writing Center is more than a “fix-it shop.” The Writing Center is an important entity of our campus that cares about quality writing and is dedicated to serving the needs of the campus community. Our journal publication confirms this fact by creating awareness about how very important writing is.

In an interview, David Baker, assistant dean at Kent Stark, focused on the fact that writing is synonymous with thinking. According to Baker, “writing refocuses our attention back to one of the most fundamental skills which is language. Almost everyone thinks in words, and the ability to articulate those words in writing is the focus of education. We then take these skills out into the world to communicate with others.” Moreover, since “the *Re-*

view illustrates the various disciplines,” Baker feels the publication “shows there is no discrimination in writing; it is applied to all areas and makes us conscious of how important writing is outside the university walls.” Baker also comments, “The *Review* broadens audience awareness of what good writing is, which is bound to improve personal writing skills.” For this reason, the *Review* is going to be used as a text for University Orientation classes in the next Fall Semester. The Orientation class is a required course for all new freshman and transfer students entering the university. This course assists students in developing academic success strategies; therefore, professors teaching this class hope that by requiring students to read the various compositions in the *Review*, the examples of writing will be beneficial to the success of their students’ writing. The use of the *Review* in the Orientation classes highlights the Writing Center as a necessary and important foundation of our campus. University administrators fund performance; therefore, creating a journal publication is a way to define the importance of our existence so administrators will allocate more money for our continuance. Our journal publication highlights the Writing Center services, which consequently leads the university to invest money in our efforts. As a matter of fact, our administrators were so impressed with this year’s edition they gave us an additional three hundred dollars toward next year’s edition. In addition, because they are so pleased with the work we do in general, they are moving our center to a larger space to better serve our students.

Up to this point, I have explained why we do this, now let me explain how. Creating a journal publication takes time and effort, and although problems do arise, a project like ours is not difficult to complete. At each of our bi-weekly staff meetings, we set aside time for *Review* business. Because our journal is student directed, we each formally apply in writing for

positions on the *Review* committee. Our applications consist of a cover letter and resume sent to our director. The positions we apply for are as follows:

Editor or Co-Editors: Responsible for overseeing the entire project.

Standards and Submissions:

Composes the criteria that all papers submitted must follow. Also responsible for drafting the submission’s form. These two items are attached to a manila envelope in which students will place their hard copy and disk.

Selections: Recruits faculty members and tutors to read the submissions; organizes the times that they will meet in their specific committee to discuss their choices.

Layout: Makes decisions on the format of the journal and style of print.

Advertising/Art: Oversees the advertising of the *Review* and the call for papers. Also responsible for collecting the art submissions and ultimately deciding which art will be published.

Biographies and Introductions: Writes the introductions that appear as a heading for each paper, as well as a brief biography on each student which appears in the back of the journal.

After our director appoints these positions, we begin scheduling time to meet with other committee members and decide upon dates and deadlines.

We begin the call for submissions in late November, which ends mid-February. The submitted papers must have been written during the last semester of the previous school year, or from any time during the current one (Example: Spring Semester 2000—Spring 2001). A student may submit a paper on his/her own; however, he/she must have a

nominating professor's signature on the submission form. This signature indicates that the professor supports the student's work and recommends it for possible publication. To ensure anonymity, submissions are sent to our director Jeannette Riley, whereupon she records the author's names and title of papers in her files. She is the only person who knows the identity of the author. Furthermore, if a tutor has collaborated with a particular student who is submitting a paper, then that tutor will not be on the committee that evaluates that student's work.

Next, each member of a selection committee, which consists of four faculty members and one tutor, receives an average of 10 to 12 compositions to read and review over the course of a weekend. (The number of selection committees depends upon the number of submissions). Each member chooses a total of 4 submissions, ranking them from 1 to 4, with 1 being the strongest. The committee then meets to discuss the merits of their individual choices, mutually arriving at a final decision. Selected compositions are examples of one or more of the following criteria: readability; clear thesis; effective and appropriate support; organization; precise documentation; audience awareness; authorial control and distinct voice. In some cases, not every composition is worthy of publication; therefore, committee member may only decide upon two or three submissions.

Each student who submitted a paper is then formally notified as to whether or not his/her paper has been selected. At the same time, selected students are informed that they must meet with a specific tutor for editing. The tutor reviews the paper, then meets with the student to discuss any surface errors the tutor may have found. While we edit for sentence level errors, students' sentence construction and language choices remain intact. We make this decision in order to accurately represent students' diverse voices. Tutors then prepare the layout of the journal, deciding on the format and the style of

print. Next, the journal goes into page making and desktop publishing, which is done by a Kent Stark staff member. Afterwards, tutors and the director do a final proofreading of the journal. When this process is completed, it is sent off to the printer.

The final task tutors are involved in is the planning of a reception for the published students, their family and friends. Tutors are responsible for sending out invitations to students and faculty and planning the reception menu. At the reception, each student is introduced, whereupon the faculty member for whom his/her paper was written speaks about the student and the composition. Afterward, each student is presented with a formal certificate of achievement. This reception gives further affirmation to the student's success in writing and showcases the dedication and hard work of the Writing Center staff.

Writing centers that have never undertaken such a project might be wondering how much money is needed to compile a journal publication. If money is a negating factor, do not let it dissuade you from the project, for I assure you our journal is published on a shoestring budget. This year's publication *and* reception came to a total of thirteen hundred dollars. Twelve hundred dollars was spent on printing, for which we received five hundred copies of an eighty-page journal that included the reproduction of art in black and white on the inside and cover art; the remaining was spent on the reception.

As you can see this is not a difficult endeavor; however, problems can and often do occur along the way. For example, last year we had to extend our deadline for submissions. As of the February 15th deadline we had not received the number of submissions we had hoped for, so we extended the deadline to the end of the first week in March. Because we had to have the journal to the printer by the 15th of April, we were left with only three weeks to make the selections, schedule

student editing, do the desktop publishing, and final editing of the journal. To combat this problem in the future, we have decided as soon as the school year begins in September we will feverishly advertise for submissions and immediately begin accepting them; this way we can possibly end the call for papers in February as previously scheduled. Another problem is the scheduling of meeting times for committee members. It is very difficult for professors and tutors to adjust their schedules to meet at the same time. There seems to be no really good solution to this problem other than to be aware of it and plan in advance. Since we have learned from each year's process, the staff is confident that our goals and standards for future *Review* editions will now be greatly enhanced by the understanding of past problems. Regardless of these problems, the staff of the Writing Center, our director, faculty, administration, and students of KSU Stark value the *Review* as a first-rate academic representation of writing across the curriculum.

I believe wholeheartedly that the benefits produced from our *Writing Center Review* are well worth our effort, time, and money. For all of the reasons previously mentioned, I encourage writing centers that do not already do so to create their own journal publication. I think you will find it to be an exciting and rewarding experience that will enhance not only you as an individual but as a writing center team. Creating a journal publication shows the administrators, faculty, and students that we are there for students at *all* levels throughout the various disciplines. I imagine there will always be students who will toss their papers into a drawer, but for those who want to show their peers, family, and other members in the university community their hard-earned efforts, let's give them the opportunity.

Pamela Wilfong
Kent State University / Stark Campus
Canton, OH

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*Calendar for Writing Centers
Associations*

- Feb. 22-23, 2002: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Clear Lake, TX
Contact: Chloe Diepenbrock, Box 77, University of Houston-Clear Lake,
2700 Bay Area Blvd. Houston, TX 77058. Phone: 281-283-3356 (office);
281-283-3360 (fax); e-mail: Diepenbrock@cl.uh.edu.
- March 1, 2002: Northern California Writing Centers Association, in Hayward, CA
Contact: Cindy Hicks: phone: 510-723-7151; e-mail:
chicks@clpccd.cc.ca.us. Conference Web site: < [http://
chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/ydominguez/NCWCA/index.html](http://chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/ydominguez/NCWCA/index.html)>
- April 4-6, 2002: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Canton, Ohio
Contact: Jay D. Sloan, Kent State University-Stark Campus, 6000 Frank
Ave. N.W., Canton, OH 44720-7599. E-mail: jsloan@stark.kent.edu;
phone: 330-244-3458; fax: 330-494-1621.
- April 11-13, 2002: International Writing Centers Association, in Savannah, GA
Contact: Donna Sewell, Dept. of English, Valdosta State University,
Valdosta, GA 31698. Phone: 229-333-5946; fax: 229-259-5529; e-mail:
dsewell@valdosta.edu.
- April 19-20, 2002: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in Smithfield, RI
Contact: J.P. Nadeau (jnadeau@bryant.edu) or Sue Dinitz
<sdinitz@zoo.uvm.edu>. Conference Web site: <[http://web.bryant.edu/~ace/
WrtCtr/NEWCA.htm](http://web.bryant.edu/~ace/WrtCtr/NEWCA.htm)>.
- April 27, 2002: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Wye Mills, MD
Contact: Cathy Sewell, The Writing Center, PO Box 8, Wye Mills, MD
21673. Phone: 410-822-5400,ext. 1-368; fax: 410-827-5235; e-mail:
csewell@Chesapeake.edu

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