

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 28, Number 1

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

September, 2003

...FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome back to a new academic year, and welcome to Volume 28 of the *Writing Lab Newsletter*. William Broussard starts us off by offering his rationale for establishing a satellite center in an athletic department. Several calls for proposals invite us to contribute to collections of writing center issues, and for those of us who meet daily on WCenter, we can enjoy the tribute to Lady Falls Brown, WCenter's originator and listowner, on her retirement. E. Stone Shiflet shares methods of playing with metaphors, and Evelyn Biler Menz and Jui-Chuan Chang remind us how much tutors educate us all about tutoring concerns.

In addition to writing articles, you too can contribute to the newsletter in other ways. If your Web site has new content, material that will be useful for others to link to, or other aspects you'd like to share, please send me (harrism@cc.purdue.edu) the URL and a few sentences describing what you are drawing attention to (see page 15). Finally, if your region has this year's conference date set and would like a notice in the newsletter, send that along too.

We have much to share and much to do in this coming year, and I hope the newsletter will contribute to these efforts.

• Muriel Harris, editor

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Collaborative work, competitive students, counter- narrative: A tale from out of (the academy's) bounds

CATS CLAW is a writing center satellite in which student-athletes can improve their composition skills and also expand their sense(s) of what it might mean to be writers in and members of an academic community that often defines them in limiting ways. Working within the confines of an old-fashioned "study hall," I have, for the past three years, attempted to coordinate and accommodate the interests and requirements of a high-powered athletics department and a politically potent composition board, and erstwhile manage to serve the varied interests of students, administrators, academics, and myself.

That's a mouthful. One thing is for sure – actually pulling this off has been equally interesting. Entering my third year of teaching college writing, I still have spent more time on the "other side of the ball," so to speak, having competed as a varsity

football player at Northwestern St. University (La.). To me, the wounds are still fresh – I can still remember encountering teachers who felt as if athletics had no place in the academy.

The scouting report: A preface

Media outlets routinely depict professional athletes in America as larger than life characters who are purveyors of materialism, lawlessness, and greed. In turn, its athletes (particularly males in the “Big

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Manuscripts: Recommended length for articles is approximately 2500-3000 words, 1500 words for reviews and Tutors' Column essays. 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).

Three” Sports, baseball, basketball, and football) are constructed as the beneficiaries of undeserved, exorbitant wealth and affluence. These traits are often unwittingly transposed into college athletes, leading many members of campus faculty, staff, and even fellow students to believe that college athletes (again, mostly male) are of the same ilk, benefiting by taking away scholarships from more deserving students and receiving leniency in terms of class attendance and evaluation. This construction, coupled with unfortunate events involving academic fraud/plagiarism at Division I athletics programs, pervasive lore regarding experiences with college student-athletes, and a lack of publications in the field of Rhet/Comp on the subject has led to a general uneasiness about working with college student-athletes on the part of writing programs, particularly in writing center settings.

Few are the opportunities in which college student-athletes actually have the opportunities to represent themselves—opportunities to critique and confront the stereotypes that threaten their academic careers, psychological well-being, and for a select few, their future livelihood. Because these myths/stereotypes represent ‘the natural order of things’ to so many, few student-athletes or faculty are willing to examine their troubled and troublesome relationship to one another on many college campuses, nor are many willing to reconsider their unwillingness to work with one another. This is evinced by a recent experience I had with a varsity football player with whom I worked on a revision assignment from his first-year composition course. After receiving a D+ on his first draft, the student began the session by berating the instructor, accusing him of grading him unfairly. After allowing the student to vent, and assuring that the student’s misgiving was probably unfounded (the student’s paper was average, and to boot, was missing a “Works Cited” page, a key component of all research assign-

ments), we addressed the teacher’s comments and he later completed the revision. Weeks later, he received the evaluated essay with a score of a B+ — the highest score in the class. Though he was quite pleased with the score, jubilant even, he became reticent when I reminded him that the same teacher who “hated student-athletes” had just given him one of the highest scores in the class.

This is the sort of dilemma I face when I work with student-athletes who do not feel welcome in the culture of the academy. In fact, it cuts both ways. In my experiences as an instructor of first year composition, I have often dealt with instructors who make the same sorts of generalized, unfounded comments about student-athletes. For example, recently, at a regional writing center conference presentation, I opened up with the question “Who are Student-Athletes?” The unified, and somewhat troubling response from the audience of college/community college English instructors was that they were a) Poor students, b) Poor writers, and c) Not concerned with/interested in academics.

After directed questioning, it was revealed that these generalizations were based on limited experiences with student-athletes, and based more on teacher lore and negative public sentiment about student-athletes and their relationship (or perceived lack of one) to the academy. This lore is informed by many things such as isolated experiences, media depictions of college and professional athletes as money-hungry fame seekers, or maybe the resentment toward professional athletes who sign million-dollar contracts (whom precious few of these student-athletes will ever become) while educators struggle to make ends meet. The result of the misperceived privilege of student-athletes and their nihilistic/apathetic reaction to this resentment is a discordant state in which there are no open lines of communication between the involved groups. In many cases, this has

created a wall between athletic departments and academics who are both schizophrenic with the fear that one is out to get the other, and meanwhile, student-athletes suffer because while they may be successful at athletics, in the academy, they are often not even allowed on the field of play.

When students are socially constructed as “uninterested” and “unmotivated” on one end and alienated from their labor on the other before they ever enter their classrooms, then what hope do they have of succeeding within its walls unless the stereotypes are destroyed? The answer, I propose, is to find ways to help student-athletes develop critical consciousness, give them the recourse to develop pride in themselves through their academic work and their relationship to the academy, and advocate their attempts to achieve these ends. The process begins with opening up the channels of communication between groups who have, for a number of reasons political, social, and economical, created an impasse.

The “game” face: Material culture of a student-athlete writing center satellite

Tonight is as any other. An inordinate number of students have walked through the double doors down here, Room 109F, in the McKale Athletic Center, home of the University of Arizona Athletic Department. Metaphoric in its imagery, the tutorial program, STARTFAST, takes place in this corridor of classrooms and carrels in the basement, and the students walking through those doors are student-athletes: football players, gymnasts, golfers, tracksters. Instead of carrying balls and shoes, they are toting textbooks and classnotes. Instead of inquiring about snap counts and court presses, they raise questions about Plato, the “Big Boom,” and social construction. Other than the occasional jog to the computer lab, or the adroit catch of a pencil as it falls from the table, this space does not require these

students to be particularly athletic. But I can be quite sure that this is a part of their identity that is never far from their minds, tackling Descartes, DeCerteau, and Derrida though we may.

I run a writing center satellite for student-athletes, under the aegis of the English Department and the Writing Program, and under the sponsorship of the Athletic Department. Four days a week, from 5:00 to 9:30 pm, we (two writing tutors and myself, the coordinator of the program) work with the student-athletes on their writing assignments—from invention to revision. Though that’s not particularly interesting or out of the ordinary, perhaps the space in which we do this work *is* interesting, and rather extraordinary.

Our writing center satellite is in the basement of the McKale Sports Arena. To get there, I walk by the football team’s locker room, then the training room, and all the while, my walk encircles the basketball arena that is often packed with nearly 15,000 for our nationally ranked team’s home games. My room is directly across from the football team’s “ready room,” and I’ve occasionally been displaced by the media for post-game interviews. In fact, at least a half a dozen times a semester, we cancel hours completely because of home basketball games. It wouldn’t matter if we didn’t cancel hours . . . finding a parking space would be impossible on those nights, anyway.

Our room is a meeting room, eight tables and twenty-four chairs evenly spaced throughout. Just over my student’s head, I see the outlines of football players . . . a mural on the wall in red, white, and blue. The mural is nearly seven feet high and depicts a football player making a block while the running back judiciously cuts back against the grain to make an extra yard. His number is 26.

As I diagram sentences on the dry-erase board, I can clearly observe

“ghosts” . . . outlines of the “x’s and o’s” one proverbially associates with football plays. I erase them and begin to explain the receiver of the action in a sentence with passive voice. In the front of the room, there is a VCR and a box full of tapes. The labels on the tapes say things like “New Mexico State vs. UNLV: 9/14/98.” And protruding from the ceiling is a film projector. A cursory analysis of the smells, murals, and blocking schemes quickly reveals that it is the offensive line’s meeting room, a place where football players and coaches watch the film of their opponents to learn about their opposing team’s personnel before gameday. Meanwhile, my student and I talk about the consequences of using passive voice—though, I would assume I speak with less grit, less urgency, than the coach who warns about the consequences of eyeing the defensive end’s drop too closely during a zone blitz, and failing to recognize the oncoming strong safety.

As the WC Satellite coordinator for the University of Arizona Athletics Department, I am given the opportunity to empathize with and understand the perspectives of the student-athletes as much as anyone in the English Department can ever hope to. As a former collegiate athlete, I know that the aches from their morning workouts and pains from afternoon sessions do not magically disappear once the practices end. I know that wounds do not heal that quickly. And I know that the last thing a young man or woman wants to think about after expending himself/herself on the field is verb conjugation, parallel agreement, or the invention phase. Knowing these things helps me understand how to motivate the students I work with.

In the CATS CLAW writing center, student-athletes are not expected to compete—collaboration is encouraged and often expected. They are not judged on either athletic or intellectual ability – we take on all comers and welcome many forms of conversation.

Most importantly, the students are not required to attend sessions. I have avoided “institutionalizing” the work that the tutors and I do with student-athletes, in hopes of avoiding the models of pedagogy that have alienated them for so long. By doing so, we hope to give student-athletes an opportunity to build an academic addendum to their already tight-knit communities, along with tutors who give them chances to talk about their writing, themselves as writers, or the obstacles that keep them from writing. We offer an empathetic and perspective-taking audience. This, in turn, gives them the ability to begin, in the words of Pratt, “healing and feeling mutual recognition . . . sharing understanding and knowledge” in ways that they could not have in any other arena.

My ultimate goal, with the help of the student-athletes themselves, is to convert this space into a space for intellectual and social growth, rather than specifically for athletic development. To give them a space where competition is not the only aesthetic – a space where critical consciousness is encouraged and praxis engaged. A space for the student-athletes, as well as myself, to come to terms with the ways they are constructed by others, and the ways in which they represent themselves.

I was, and still am, a bit perplexed by the fact that writing instructors, people who have, or, are working towards advanced degrees in the study of languages, are so unaware of how they have allowed these stereotypes to develop without critically assessing the language used to construct them, or, consider the pedagogical implications of constructing a student-body in this manner. I am also distraught because intercollegiate athletics departments often place the kinds of restraints on student-athletes that force them to commit actions which perpetuate these dangerous constructions. Given the

WPA’s history for advocating and fighting for the needs of students, I think WPA’s should be far ahead of the curve when it comes to working with student-athletes to ensure that they have productive academic, as well as athletic careers. I hope to provide illustrations from my own experiences as a graduate teaching assistant working in a composition program, in an intercollegiate athletics department, and as an aspiring WPA, which will articulate with one another to provide the impetus for conversations that we have rarely participated in, and conversations that, for all those involved, we sorely need to re-visit. All three groups involved (faculty, especially WPA’s, Athletics Department Administrators, and student-athletes) should be given opportunities to voice their concerns to one another in hopes that compromise can be achieved and new hope encouraged in the process.

Taking one for the team: Irony, hegemony, and “checkin’ myself”

I began working with a young man on the football team several weeks ago on an essay for an African-American Studies class he was enrolled in. Minutes later, two of his teammates strolled in and after dispensing with greetings, all had a seat at the round table. We discussed the essay topic they had been handed, and after a few minutes of an extremely engaging discussion, they all began writing, taking notes, and circling important passages in their textbooks. I told them to come back and see me if they needed help. They assured me they would.

Two weeks later, all three of the young men stopped by to see me at work, quite pleased with themselves. Two of them had received A’s on their papers and the other a B. They then pulled their papers out and asked me if I would read them. I assured them that I would love to, but sensing the oppor-

tunity for a read-around, I asked them to exchange papers with one another. They handed them over, in a clockwise motion, and dove in. Within minutes, a conversation had arisen:

“What do you mean here?”

“Is that what you think West means by “nihilism”?”

“I can’t see how we’re exploited, and I don’t think we deserve equity. . . but that would be pretty cool if we did.”

Meanwhile, I stepped out of the room to find other students who may need help, primarily because I felt guilty about asking the young men to quiet down because they were disturbing others in the room— as guilty as any classroom teacher would feel about quelling a generative debate that had arisen so from a class discussion. They later thanked me for getting that conversation started (although I hadn’t done much other than give them the suggestion, and the time and space to do it).

Later that evening as I filled out student feedback sheets and made my nightly notes about that evening’s sessions, I felt a strange sense of accomplishment, and I was quite amused by the irony of the preceding moments. There I sat, in the company of three linebackers, one of them a two-time all-conference performer, having an intellectual conversation and not once mentioning women-chasing, beer-swilling, or the upcoming party that was supposed to be “off the chain.” It had been straight out of a movie, one of the line of Hollywood’s awful, parodic movies that have been so popular as of late. Or, maybe the beginning of an academic’s really bad joke—“Four football players walk into a Burkean parlor and discuss West (___insert your own punchline here___).” Either way, it had all been too much for words at the moment. Unfortunately, the very surrealism of that moment proved that the hegemony I so often criticize others for replicating had been

reproducing itself, insidiously, within my own body.

I immediately began to feel a sense of shame. How could I, in the very beginnings of my work as an ethnographer of student-athletes, and former student-athlete myself, hope to tell their stories and represent them ethically if I replicated the same hegemony as the groups which I believe alienate them? Could my years as a student-athlete, the labels, the stereotypes, the unfair and derisive generalizations have spawned a callous contradictory consciousness within myself—one that I would subconsciously pass on to the colleagues and students I work with? Rather than allow myself to be defeated by my sense of uncertainty, I used it as an opportunity to reconsider my desire to work with student-athletes in order to understand not only how I could help them, but how I could help heal myself through the process of working with them and sharing their stories. I am hoping that fellow instructors and WPA's, possibly hearing such stories for the first time, realize how often they are guilty of stereotyping their students, and thus, limiting their ability to succeed in their minds. I was able to discover there was a space for transformative pedagogy here—maybe even more so for the instructor than the students involved. And how fortunate that I, too, was able to begin developing the awareness I hoped that student-athletes, administrators, and academicians alike would develop through this process of analysis and advocacy.

Finding daylight: The evolving responsibility of the WC coordinator

When I first began my work with student-athletes, collegial response was predictably discouraging. Colleagues in the English department thought my ideas were compelling, but that they may be better suited for post-graduate, or even post-tenure work. But what

happens to the student-athletes who begin matriculating during this time and fall victim to the capitalist system that forces a wedge between themselves and the academy, and prevents them from developing self-actualization and critical consciousness? Athletic department administrators were equally suspicious and skeptical, quick to bring up NCAA by-laws, and to question why I wanted to do more than parse sentences with remedial writers in the writing center. However, the group whose opinion mattered the most to me, the student-athletes, were refreshingly hip to the notion of developing an academic community of their own to complement their athletic community, and so my subversion (which got me called in for several “conferences” with English Department professors and Athletic Department Administration) was paid off by the thanks, praise, and encouragement of the student-athletes with whom I worked.

In our tutorial sessions, we do more than tackle sentence level problems, difficult essay prompts, and detailed revisions, we give the students the chance to take part in the construction of an academic community—one in which they are not valued solely for their athleticism. They are also given the opportunity to work with non-athlete tutors and a coordinator who is a graduate associate in the English Department, who are all beginning to ensure them that there are members of the academy who are sensitive to their needs. Finally, the project is funded by the athletic department, and even though the administration is not involved in a hands-on role, this gesture does at least say that they are willing to provide for the student-athletes' personal and intellectual growth, even if they wouldn't even know where to begin themselves (nor did I, at first).

Next season . . .

As much work as all of the involved groups have undertaken, we can't have

expected members of the academy, administration, and student-athletes to question their cultural values more than cursorily in such a short time. Meaningful revision will come along slowly, as slow as the machinery of administration dictates, but as long as the groups are willing to push towards it, we can take the necessary steps to begin reconsidering the academic culture of college student-athletes in America. This begins, then, with realizing how we construct students unfairly, and often, without reference or experience to draw from. Once we can recognize our part as WPA's, writing instructors, and agents of instructional change in deconstructing these notions, we can critique them and look into ways to help student-athletes succeed off the court, off the field, *within* the academy's bounds.

*William Broussard
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ*

Pacific Northwest Writing Center Association forming

Given that the current Pacific Coast association encompasses so vast a geography as to make regional assembly improbable, several of us salmon-saving tree-huggers are organizing a smaller region to include Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia. If you would like invitations to upcoming regional soirees—or if you'd like to volunteer for our new board, please contact Roberta Buck, 360-650-7338, Roberta.buck@wwu.edu.

Call for Papers

International Writing Centers: Issues and Answers.

Edited by Joan Mullin and Leigh Ryan.

While writing centers have a strong recorded history in the United States, the accomplishments of colleagues around the world have not been as extensively documented. The recent publication *Teaching Academic Writing in European Higher Education* focuses on the many ways in which writing is taught in Europe, and includes writing centers. However, we seek submissions not only from Europe, but from around the world in order to compile a publication that views specifically how writing centers operate, using theory, pedagogy and administrative knowledge as it emerges within particular contexts. In a community of scholars seeking to reflect on and recreate new knowledge, we would like to challenge and/or support our idea of a writing center by expanding our understanding of the term "writing center." Additionally, we want to establish an exchange of global writing center perspectives

that will be useful for practitioners as well as for the writers with whom we work and send into the world.

So that a variety of facets that make up writing center work can be examined in depth, we would like each contributor to focus on the most significant issue/problem/question confronted in theorizing, establishing, maintaining, or making changes in a writing center. By September 30, 2003, submit a (maximum) two-page summary of your proposed chapter in which you explain what issue/problem/question you will address; how/why that issue/problem/question manifests itself; how you handle it; what was and/or wasn't successful; or what you have learned from confronting the issue/problem/question that is of use to the international writing center community.

Final drafts will address the context

in which the issue/problem/question arose, but timely topics to propose include the material conditions and placement of a writing center (e.g., getting administrative support, physical location and structure, fitting into the academic/community structure, funding and workloads); theoretical impact of writing centers (e.g., changing the curriculum; getting faculty support; finding and training staff and tutors; changing faculty pedagogy); challenges to current models (reflective practice that led to new pedagogies; and theories emerging out of practice.

Authors of proposals will be notified of acceptance by October 31, and completed manuscripts (MLA format) will be due May 1, 2004. Please send electronic proposal by September 30, 2003 and all questions to either: Leigh Ryan (LR22@umail.umd.edu) or Joan Mullin (JMullin@UTNet.Utoledo.Edu).

**International Writing
Centers Association (IWCA)
/ National Conference on
Peer Tutoring in Writing
(NCPTW)**

October 23-25, 2003

Hershey, PA

"Writing Back"

Keynote address: Rebecca Moore
Howard

Featured presentations: Aesha Adams
and Howard Rambsy

Pre-registration for this joint conference ended July 15, 2003. Please visit our Web site to register and to discover more information about our conference and venue: <www.wc.iup.edu/2003conference/index.htm>.

Superheroes

The writing center community has historically been receptive to metaphors. In fact, it was the metaphor of writing center as “fix-it shop” that inspired North’s now landmark call to arms for writing center practitioners to band together to become more than just proofreading services. His call was answered in ways that continue to multiply with every conversation in a writing center session. I was recently reminded of just how willing writing center practitioners are to delve into the creative potential of the metaphor at a recent Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference. The theme of the conference, “Making a Difference: Writing Centers and Change,” resonated strongly throughout the three-day gathering. The keynote speaker, Patricia Lambert Stock, set the tone for collaboration, asking that her listeners help her “name” a new positioning for writing centers in and outside of the Academy. Stock’s workshop method dovetailed with my own presentation for the conference, and this perhaps not-so-coincidental symmetry of ideas inspired me to write this.

The circumstances that led to my participation in the conference actually started last summer. I was working with my dissertation director on the implications of metaphors in the English language, and while I was researching the topic, I noticed an on-going discussion on the WCenter listserv addressing the prevalence of metaphors in writing center consultations. Practitioners from across the country eagerly shared metaphor systems that helped student writers perceive the process of composition in more familiar terms. I became interested in these metaphor systems in my own university’s Writing Center, a center in which I was moving from consultant to coordinator in the coming fall semester. My role as coordinator involves collaborating with five graduate stu-

dents who are paid employees, less than dozen graduate students who are working in the center unpaid as part of a practicum, and a handful of volunteers who are not in the practicum, but are committed to spending time in one-to-one consultations with writers. Because we are limited in funds, we were not able to begin this academic year by implementing all of the changes that we could imagine. So during staff meetings, I invited the staff to think of ways to bring about innovation without spending any money.

During one of our first meetings, I shared with my co-workers my interest in metaphors that had developed over the previous summer. I suggested that the center could be referred to metaphorically as the “Academic Hall of Innovation,” a center staffed with graduate students who possess “super” expertise in disciplines ranging from Comparative Literature and Rhetorical Theory to Whiteness Studies and Postcolonial Theory. So often, I had listened to these dedicated center consultants play upon the strengths of their particular areas of specialty and marveled at how well these areas of expertise had informed the consultants’ metaphor of explanation to a student writer visiting the center. In response to my realization, I started seeing my colleagues not as Ph. D. candidates or master’s students, but as versions (or inversions!) of the superheroes I had grown up with on network television during the 1970’s. I invited my colleagues to do the same.

When I shared this “revelation” with my colleagues in a staff meeting, the reviews were mixed at best. It seems that graduate students are always asked to speak in strictly scholarly terms when discussing their work within the academy, so the notion of applying to a conference with a proposal based on cartoon characters didn’t exactly fit

into the category of “scholarly,” at least on the surface. Additionally, none of my colleagues was eager to seem boastful, as none of them are, and most were reluctant to describe any of their special training as “super” or “heroic.” But then something very interesting happened. I noticed that none of us had the same definition of or understanding of what a superhero was, exactly. In fact, our two second-language consultants—Deepa, who grew up with Russian cartoons in India, and Elisabeth, who grew up with Japanese cartoons in Italy—did not even have a point of reference for an American superhero because they did not grow up in American culture. Therefore, we decided not to even try to offer one clear definition of what a superhero within the American writing center community should be. The results were as creative and diverse as the center staff members.

Additionally, while no one wanted to list his or her own personal expertise or experience as super, no one had any difficulty in identifying something that was “super” and “heroic” about the consultation practices of colleagues. At this point, we decided to explore the notion of forming a metaphorical Academic Hall of Innovation with the understanding that the mission was to highlight and learn from the special training and interests of each staff member and not to elevate any egos. We each developed our own personal interpretation of the superhero in the standard journalistic format: each consultant completed the “who, what, when, where, and why” of the character in an effort to highlight the transformative power of incorporating areas of academic expertise into the writing center arena. Our lineup included the following:

- Stone: Scarlett O’Hara
- Deepa and Elisabeth: The Wonder Twins (Zan and Jayna)
- Kathleen: Sydney Bristow from

ABC's *Alias*

- Toni: The Shapeshifter
- Allison: The Transformer
- Susan: The Lady of the Lake
- Julia: The Cyborg

During the following months, we all developed handouts explaining each superhero's strengths, then translating those strengths into terms applicable to writing center consultations.

Armed with the idea of using our personal superhero metaphors into a springboard for a collaborative conference session, we headed to the conference. Six center staffers and our Director made the journey in minivan designed for, I would say, no more than 5—total. Finally, after months of revision and collaborative work during Center staff meetings and eleven trying hours through the back roads of three Southern states, we arrived and began the public relations campaign to encourage conference attendees to attend our presentation. We placed a flyer for our session around the hotel inviting everyone to witness the powers of the our Academic Hall of Innovation working against the “injustices” of under-funding and limited staffing. And our campaign paid off, as more than thirty people sat in attendance when we gathered at the podium and began our explication of the superheroes we had selected and our explanation of how such an exercise can be useful in a writing center. After delivering our “introduction by example” and heading into the audience to begin the workshop, I sensed that I was not the only member of the Academic Hall of Inno-

vation who was a little concerned about audience response.

Of course, that apprehension formed only because I had forgotten one little detail about my context—I was among writing center practitioners, scholars who know that every day brings different circumstances and different possibilities. Within my own workshop group, senior cadets at the Citadel, began collaborating with me immediately, becoming Bart Simpson and Bruce Wayne, respectively, in the context of my group's Academic Hall of Innovation, and they were given less than twenty minutes to invent these characters, which included answering the same set of journalistic questions that my league had answered over several months. Bart and Bruce were accompanied by Anastasia and Leah, respectively Toni Morrison's *Sula* and ABC's *MacGyver*. Along with these spontaneous metaphorical developments came a myriad of multicultural explanations of why each practitioner had selected a particular superhero figure. In other words, Rhetoric and Composition was unified with Literary studies in a questioning strategy that is as old as the academy. I suppose what I am suggesting is that the practice of experimenting with a loosely-defined metaphor of the American superhero in a writing center environment is an excellent opportunity to summon many areas of English studies for infusing multiculturalism into the Academy.

In fact, this supposition was finally “named” for me after listening to the conference's keynote speaker who

asked her listeners to participate in “naming” the terms for a current project. Stock spoke about finding terminology to enhance the role of the writing center inside and outside of the academy. Immediately, her listeners became speakers, offering ideas ranging from terminology to pedagogical theories from across the discipline of English studies. She generated a method of collaborative critical thinking that married all areas of literary studies into one united force. She, in essence, was much like a superhero calling her colleagues to arms. So in the spirit of her invitation, I extend my own, offering an outline of our superhero project that aided in our collaborative development of our Academic Hall of Innovation. The steps are the following:

- Simply begin by naming the “who, what, when, where, and why” of your chosen superhero.
- Then answer the same questions about yourself in the context of your superhero.
- Invite your writing center colleagues to do the same.

What you should be left with is a series of diverse superhero representations that represent many cultures and many disciplines. While the results of the exercise are multi-layered, each layer offers new ideas for highlighting strengths and spotlighting diverse interpretations of what a writing center can and should be.

E. Stone Shiflet
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL

Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

October 4, 2003: Michigan Writing Centers Association in Flint, MI Conference Web site: <www.flint.umich.edu/Departments/writingcenter>.

October 23-25, 2003: International Writing Centers Conference and National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, in Hershey, PA
Contact: Ben Rafoth, brafoth@iup.edu. Conference Web site: <www.wc.iup.edu/2003conference>.

Honoring Lady Falls Brown

Lady Falls Brown—An endowment

Lady Falls Brown, who has contributed in major ways to the profession of writing centers through her scholarship and her work as the listserv owner who started and maintains WCenter, is retiring in September, 2003. To honor her equally impressive work as Director of the Texas Tech University's Writing Center which has spanned nearly two decades, several members of the English Department, led by Director Kathleen Gillis, are working to establish an endowment in her honor. A minimum endowment at Texas Tech is \$10,000. This endowment would be the first of its kind in the nation to honor a writing center director and would illustrate the university's enduring commitment to and support of the vital work that occurs daily in the writing center.

On July 22, 2003, a reception in her honor was held in the University Writing Center where the endowment effort was announced. If you would like to assist, please make checks payable to the Texas Tech Foundation, Inc. for the Lady Brown Endowment. They should be mailed to the following person:

Todd W. Rasberry, Senior Development Officer
College of Arts and Sciences
Texas Tech University
Box 41034
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1034

If you have any questions about the Endowment, please e-mail Susan M. Lang (Susan.Lang@ttu.edu) or Kathleen Gillis (Kathleen.Gillis@ttu.edu).

Lady Falls Brown—A writing center legend

Lady's writing center career began in 1982. As Jeannette Harris, the founding director of the Writing Center at Texas Tech and recently-retired director of the Writing Center at Texas Christian University, said, "I had been at Texas Tech only a few days when Lady showed up at my office and announced that she was one of the graduate students assigned to tutor in the Writing Center I had been hired to establish. From that moment on, her enthusiasm for writing centers was obvious. Later she became director of the Writing Center at Texas Tech and, with her great energy and vision, developed it into a university-wide program known for its innovative use of technology and its service to public school students in remote rural areas of West Texas. And, of course, in her spare time she established and managed WCenter, which has played a major role in connecting the world-wide writing center community."

From 1982-1986 Lady was a writing center tutor at Texas Tech. In 1988 she became the interim director, and in 1989 was appointed as director. In 1991, with the help of Fred Kemp, she established the WCenter listserv, which continues to serve as a primary communication medium of the writing center community. WCenter, an electronic bulletin board for people interested in writing center theory and practice, has 1100 members in the United States, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and New Zealand. Lady remains list owner and sponsor. In 1994, Lady received the National Writing Centers Association Award for Outstanding Service for WCenter.

In 2000, again partnering with Fred Kemp, Lady set the University Writing Center on an ambitious project to provide writing help for 4th-grade and 8th-grade students in Texas rural public schools. The project, known as the "Texas Tech/K-12

Instructional Partnership with Schools" (TIPS), lasted two years and served hundreds of students in dozens of Texas schools. For this service, Lady Brown and the University Writing Center at Texas Tech were awarded the 2001 Texas Higher Education STAR Award, one of only five such awards given that year. Lady has also served as South Central Writing Centers Association representative to the National Writing Centers Association and has served as a member at large to the NWCA.

Sam Dragga, chair of the Texas Tech English department, in summarizing her work describes her as "a teacher, a scholar, a genuine pioneer." Brown says, "My writing center philosophy [is]: Some people are born writers; then, there are the rest of us. My purpose has been to help people become aware of the conventions of their specific discourse community so they can succeed in their field." When told of the various ways she is being honored now, she stated, "How nice! I swear; nothing has become my career like the leaving thereof!" Now, as she awaits the birth of her first grandchild in September, Lady plans to take university courses, travel, work on the ranch that she and Bo own, and enjoy her granddaughter—among many other things, no doubt. Lady Falls Brown's entire career, but especially her work at Texas Tech, can be described as a life well lived, a service well rendered, and a job well done. God bless you, Lady, for all you have done for so many. We will miss you.

Tim Hadley
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX

Editor's note: Because of space limitations, only a portion of Tim Hadley's essay appears here. The full text is available on their Writing Center's Web site: <<http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>>.

TUTORS' COLUMN

Sins of a writing goddess

When I was offered an opportunity to work at Southeast Missouri State University's Writing Center as a tutor two years ago, I jumped at the chance. Like most tutors, I enjoy writing, and I enjoy helping other people. So, I counted my blessings twice when I was offered a graduate assistantship that allowed me an opportunity to do both. It seemed a dream come true.

Of course, in the beginning, I was concerned that I did not possess the know-how necessary to effectively support the writing efforts of "SEMO" students, but that worry was short-lived—thanks to the encouragement of my supervisor and the other tutors in the Center. So, after a brief orientation, I began my tutoring career two years ago. My support-skills bag was equipped with little more than a friendly smile, an interest in writers and their writing, a little experience in one-to-one conferencing, and a huge desire to be helpful. Almost two years have passed since my first one-to-one conference. It is with pride that I say to you today that I am now a very different tutor than I was two years ago.

Oh yes, as I look back over the past two years, I can recount with certainty that in the beginning I did not make the kind of difference for student writers that I, as a tutor, was expected to make. I can remember thinking so many times, as I locked the door to the Center after having worked all Sunday afternoon, that I probably hadn't made *any* difference in the writing efforts of those students I had worked with. You know, the kind of difference in student writing that tutors should be making—that long-term difference, the one that represents an improvement in their

overall ability to compose. Instead, I fixed their papers.

There, I said it. And, yes, I did it, sometimes boldly marking through error-filled passages and creating new ones, sometimes making little notes in the margins or between the double-spaced lines, indelicate instructions that left still disabled writers with little more than instructions on final clean-up efforts. Indeed, as I read the texts handed to me by those novice writers, I worked diligently to make immediate differences in the compositions before me. I took the "directive" approach to a whole new level.

The students seeking help were oh-so-unsuspecting of the treachery about to befall them. They entered the Writing Center with concerns about their essays, and I alleviated their concerns. No, these students were not wise to my deceit. Because these writers were interested in improving the "grade" they would receive for their efforts, and because I was concerned with improving the overall quality of their papers, we had an agenda we both could live with! So I reacted to essay after essay by expending large quantities of writing leadership and lead. When I had completed this step of my tutoring, I would hurry back through their texts, explaining confidently my revisions, my squiggles, my underlines, and my question marks. I ruled!

But wait. I left out the best part. I did want the sessions to have *some* kind of redeeming, "tutorial" quality. Well, I remembered learning in orientation how important it is to *engage* the student during a tutorial. So I decided that engagement could act as my agent of

deliverance. Oh yes, my tutees would be engaged. So, before I began reading their essays, I would turn toward the students (body language, you know) in hopes that they would turn their focus toward me. (If they didn't, I would wait patiently until they finally did.) Then I'd lay their paper between us on the table and begin reading, usually aloud, looking up now and then to make sure they were attentive to *my* support of *their* writing needs. I did not want them gazing across the room, or, heaven forbid, fumbling with other materials they had brought with them. *No, no, no.* I wanted them to be audience to my efficient efforts. I wanted them *engaged* in my revision process. And, I am compelled to report that most of them absolutely delivered. I'm not sure why. Perhaps it was from sheer astonishment, or maybe they were thinking, "Thank you, God. She's fixing my mistakes." (I did witness a couple of students clasp their hands as if in prayer when I handed my work back to them). Regardless, they were truly engaged in watching me work. *Whew!*

I always ended those tutoring sessions that first semester by filling out the appropriate Writing Center form (another requirement of the tutor) and handing my casualties the proof they needed to present to professors: confirmation that they had indeed received attention in the Writing Center. For a little instant gratification for myself, I would also make sure they filled out a thank-you—I mean comment—card. With that, I'd send them on their way. I'd push my chair back from my altar—I mean table. I'd stand up, shake off my cloud of pencil-dust proficiency, then walk proudly over and

smile as I shook hands with the next victim of the Writing Goddess. Writing Goddess? Of course. I earned this title that first semester I “tutored.” In fact, one of the many students I encountered deemed me so. On a comment card, after evaluating my performance, this student wrote simply, “She is a Writing Goddess.” And, I have to admit, I truly was, at least in the realm of paper fixers.

Fortunately, for the hundreds of students seeking support from the Writing Center, my goddess-ship was fairly short-lived. My supervisor encouraged me—forced is too strong a word, although I am positive it would have come to that if I had not been cooperative—to attend his tutoring seminar. In those sessions, I began to learn how to conduct myself differently when I tutored. I learned that I could not take ownership of others’ work. My responsibilities instead lay in helping those real proprietors develop new writing skills and/or enhance the ones they already possessed so that *they* could make a difference in their writing.

Armed with the excellent training I received, and a renewed sense of pride, I began to provide assistance that was truly worthy of our Center’s intentions

as a support service. I am happy to report that on Sunday afternoons after my formal training and day-to-day experience began to take root, I stood more ready for the challenges presented me by the writing students at Southeast Missouri State. I am also happy to report that the students I then encountered left the Writing Center, more and more, with new skills that would help them in their future writing endeavors—empowered with new competencies they could rely on when confronted with the need to compose.

With enthusiasm, I must also report that it has been quite some time since I have been referred to as the Writing Goddess. My student-feedback cards are no longer testimonies to my keen abilities as a “paper-fixer.” They no longer sing praises of my holding hostage the work of others, incorporating my own methods of revision redemption, allocating my own composition skills, ultimately ignoring the real needs of those unsuspecting student writers. Of late, students’ comments are genuine critiques of genuine tutoring sessions. They often begin with “I” instead of “she.” And, of late, the forms I must fill out are true evidence of the work that has been done.

Last Sunday, as a young woman stuffed into her book bag a draft filled with comments *she* had written in the margins, I handed her the copy of the form on which I had summarized *our* work, evidence of her accomplishments during the session. On it, I had written proudly, “*We* discussed various techniques this writer might consider when revising this text. This writer discovered that her draft needed attention paid to focus. Armed with new possibilities, she has come up with several options she can consider when revising this composition.” On the feedback card, she had written, “*I* feel like *I* am finally able to do something that will make a difference in how and what *I* write.” Just below this statement, she added, “Thank you.”

So, as I sadly announce that I will be leaving our Writing Center soon, my master’s degree in hand, I gladly announce that I will take with me incredible learning experiences. For it is the ones I have had in the Center that have had the most impact on me as a student, as a teacher, as a goddess, and as a human being.

Evelyn Biler Menz
Southeast Missouri State University
Cape Girardeau, MO

Talking about my omelet: Why and how?

An international student from Africa came to the Writing Center a few weeks ago with a draft having a sentence that says, “Mom made me an omelet that morning, but I did not want to eat it because I felt sick.” I asked him curiously if there was any omelet in his country. He hesitated and then said no. He said it was something that looked like an omelet, but it did not even taste like one. They did not even put eggs in it. Somehow an odd feeling came to me all at once, and I did not know how to respond to his explanation. But soon I suggested that he try to

describe that food a little in one or two sentences, and told him that he did not have to sacrifice his own culture in order to be understood by another culture. He looked perplexed, and perhaps so did I. After ten minutes, he wrote a paragraph about the origin and tradition of that African food. I found that the paragraph connected everything that I originally thought was irrelevant and confusing. Before he left, he told me that this was the first time he felt he was really saying something he wanted to say in another language.

I am an ESL (English as a Second Language) student from Taiwan who had been in this country for only two months at the time of writing this analysis. Like any ESL student, I see that American culture is so dominant that sometimes it makes people with different cultural backgrounds neglect, or even abandon, their own cultures. In a sense, the English language has helped enforce the postcolonial side of this culture, purposefully or not. Nevertheless, most native English speakers are only scapegoats, or victims, of

their imperial histories and seemingly unconscious egocentricity. Take Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* as an example. Crusoe gives an aboriginal a funny English name "Friday," asks him to learn English, and tells him that his name is "Master" without explaining what "Master" means. He even deems Friday's tribal religion as savage and asks him to convert to Christianity (192-205). Like Crusoe, sometimes ESL instructors' failure to explain the implications of certain English phrases and their lack of understanding of other non-English cultures may be interpreted as ignorance of existing ethnic identities.

On the other hand, many ESL students think of coming to the writing center as not only a way to learn how to write but a way to learn more about the language and culture. In effect, a hardworking ESL student would take every opportunity to verify and enhance what he or she has learned before coming to this all-English environment. That might include pronunciation, grammar, listening, and writing, as well as food, culture, and history. As a result, it is unrealistic and even irresponsible for tutors to assume that we should only teach them writing. Moreover, tutors in the writing center may assume greater responsibility than teachers because tutors can work with tutees one-to-one for thirty or fifty minutes and give full attention to them while teachers can hardly do the same in class.

I am also convinced that tutors should be more careful and sensitive about what we convey to tutees, for we must confirm that we will help them improve their writing and English without taking away what belongs to them. Elliot L. Judd suggests that such consideration is substantially "a moral question": "If we [ESL teachers] did not expect our students to learn English and change their English language use, why would we be teaching at all? In some cases, we may be asking our students to abandon their na-

tive language(s) entirely" (267). With this question, he synthesizes those debates related to the issue into two ways of thinking. One view argues, sociolinguistically, "[t]he forces which affect these movements are part of language evolution," which is inevitable. The other is that second language teachers, as social scientists, should be aware of all the possible consequences that result from their pedagogies and "aid diverse groups in implementing their own educational destiny" (269). Judd comments, "[W]e as teachers involved in the political process are responsible for the political and social effects that our instruction causes" (268).

Many ESL instructors have advocated diverse approaches to deal with the political infrastructure in their pedagogies. Carol Severino explores three stances—assimilationist, accommodationist, and separatist—which instructors may consider when responding to ESL students' writing. Instructors and tutors do not have to stick to one specific stance; they may take more than one for different students, different classes, or just one student, according to the degree of acculturation needed in various instructions (188). Assimilationists usually ask ESL students to write in standard English and tolerate no linguistic diversity in writing (190). Accommodationists encourage ESL students to acquire new oral and written discourse patterns without giving up their natural ones; they appreciate cultural and linguistic differences and expect to see detailed explanations for these differences (191-92). Separatists accept "different culturally influenced logics and rhetorical patterns" and assert that readers are supposed to understand ESL texts without their writers changing written patterns or giving additional information (190-91). For instance, I took the accommodationist stance by encouraging that student from Africa to embrace and further explain his cultural differences after realizing what the "omelet" in his article actually was.

In the section that follows, I will examine my tutoring session with an ESL student from China, who continued his high school education in the States and now is a freshman. I find the session exemplary for my analysis because, although he has relatively rich English rhetorical skills, the essay he wrote shows that he is still having trouble accurately conveying to English speakers those ideas he had before he came to America. It is said that an attempt to use a language to depict any events outside its discourse could be substantially problematic. But I assume that the Chinese student's writing problems mainly result from the different ways he identifies himself with the audiences from the two contrasting cultures and the way he gets along with the two cultures in his life.

On a sunny afternoon, Senhan Lin comes to the Writing Center straight from his class. He explains to me that he is working on an English 102 assignment, and the paper in his hand is supposed to be the final draft. He wants me to check on his grammar and fluency only, since he has been through everything, including drafting, rewriting, and so on. Looking at his paper's title, "Things that Changed Me," I think of the examples that Severino gives in her research (1998), a Vietnamese student's essay that mentions his mother's death and a Korean student's assignment that compares her two homes, one in Korea and the other in America. In addition, topics like these always embrace a vast amount of cultural background. Therefore, I decide to start a deeper, even personal, conversation with Senhan before we get down to anything in his essay.

He tells me that he was born in Beijing, China, and came to the States alone when he was fifteen. Before attending college, he spent his first year in Nebraska and the next two years in Mississippi for senior high school, in both of which I guess he was quite ethnically alone. He has no family here, and his mother in Beijing works very hard to support his education. Then I

ask him to give me a few minutes to read through this autobiographical essay.

After reading his essay, I find myself immediately making a choice among Severino's three political stances and being haunted by Judd's moral question rather than focusing on Senhan's grammar and fluency. After all, before coming to the States, he received three years of English courses, followed by three years in American high schools that enriched his linguistic repertoire and helped him get rid of common ESL writing weaknesses, such as tense, articles, and indirectness. Overall, his ideas are clear and remain fairly focused throughout the essay, although at times I need to pause a while and think across two cultures for a possible link between two sentences. Therefore, I decide to work with him on clarifying his ideas by adding transitions, splitting run-on sentences and, most important of all, supplementing his text with sufficient cultural information for his readers.

"Who do you think is the reader of this article? Who's gonna be reading it?" I ask him. Since I started tutoring in the Writing Center and read enormous amounts of student writing, I have found that, although some students try to have a teacher or wider range of audience in mind, they in fact address themselves mostly when writing essays. Consequently, they expect the audience to see the ground on which they stand automatically without giving enough background information. "I'm not sure. I think it's my professor," he scratches his head and says. "Good," I say, "then now I want you to imagine that you *are* the professor. Please read the essay for me, pause anytime when you think you have trouble understanding the phrase or sentence, and then mark it with the pencil."

After going through the entire essay, he circles most of the sentences that have got me "political" in my first read-through, along with a few run-on

sentences, which I am happy to see because I can thus start from text-clarifying strategies for readers rather than a political lecture on how to preserve one's home culture. "When I was writing this article, I didn't think too much about the role of an audience," he says. "Now I think my professor probably wouldn't understand a few things in the essay that mean much to me." I ask him to explain what he sees in his text as a reader. "Here, my father gave me a nickname, 'Little Dragon.' It's also the given name of that martial art master, Bruce Lee, you know. In Chinese mythology, a dragon is a strong, powerful animal that brings blessings to people. But in the book I just read last week about medieval knights fighting dragons that blow fires, they seem evil and savage. I think I need to say more about this."

"And that friend of my father's who came to see me at the summer camp called my father 'Comrade Han.' For the past few years, I've met some mean guys who would call me 'Commie' just because I'm from China. I want people who read this paper to know that not everyone from China is that political. We call each other 'Comrade' just like Americans call each other 'Mister' or 'Miss,' and that's it. Maybe I should just replace 'Comrade' with 'Mister'?" he says. "I'm not sure," I say, "but if you put 'Mister' here, for me, it's like in some movies back in the eighties where everyone speaks English whether they're from Russia, France, Japan, or Cambodia. But you're free to make your own option. You can always think about it later."

He uses an English expression, "call a spade a spade," when describing his grandmother's reaction to his decision to study in the States. I feel awkward about it because almost any saying or expression has its cultural allusion, and I am nearly sure that his grandmother was not brought up in the company of poker and Western cultures. Although I am convinced that the principal meaning of "call a spade a spade" ex-

ists in the Chinese language, I am afraid that it could carry more than what is intended thanks to its underlying cultural aspects. "Why do you use the saying here? Did your grandmother say anything like that in Chinese?" I asked him. "Not really," he giggles. "I just think that I can use an English saying in my essay. That looks better, I guess." "Yes, indeed," I try to explain what I think without criticizing his effort, "but it also makes me feel that it's not what a native Chinese elder would say. Perhaps you can just put her plain words here and that might sound all right."

I am also curious about the Christmas setting he refers to when he reminisces that his mother was sad because he ran away from home around Christmas; for, traditionally, Chinese people do not celebrate Western holidays. The answer I get from him resembles the answer I got from that African student: "Well, actually that wasn't Christmas. That was Moon Festival. It's just like their Christmas, you know." Moon Festival, also known as Mid-Autumn Festival, usually comes in September because it is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth month on lunar calendars. Accordingly, the moon can be seen roundest only on that night of the year. Most Asian countries have it as an official holiday on which people go home for family reunions. "I know what I did here is very weird," he says, "but I don't know how to explain the holiday concisely without distracting the reader from my main point in this paragraph." He has a point, though. Therefore, I suggest him to either omit the name of the holiday in the text and simply refer to it as an important holiday for Chinese people, or keep its name there and add a brief description that relates his mother's sadness to the holiday.

When helping Senhan write across cultures, I prefer the accommodationist view mainly because I think the role of a tutor and that of an ESL teacher vary to a certain extent. For example, a tutor

(continued on page 16)

Call for Papers

Up Close and Personal: The Possibilities of Narrative Inquiry in Writing Centers.

Edited by Rebecca Jackson and Valerie Balester

Researchers from across the disciplines have begun to (re)discover the value of narrative approaches to qualitative research. Interests are varied, ranging from analysis of individual, group, organizational, and cultural narratives—narratives as the focus of analysis—to the use of narrative as a methodological tool, a way of both inviting and writing “stories” that celebrate subjectivity, contingency, intimacy, and possibility. To date, discussions of narrative in writing center studies have focused almost exclusively on this last objective, on the use of researchers’ and participants’ narratives as both a legitimate—epistemologically appropriate—form of scholarly discourse and way of knowing.

The emphasis on researchers’ stories is an important one, particularly because it lays the groundwork for an extended discussion of narrative research in our field, on narrative as a *mode* and *site* of inquiry. As writing center researchers, teachers, administrators, and tutors, we have much to gain by making a full and formal “turn toward nar-

rative.” Narrative analysis of previously published work in writing centers, for example, would enable us to map changes in our disciplinary identity over time; narrative analysis would offer insight, as well, into tutor socialization, the nature of consultant-writer talk and interaction, or the institutional, disciplinary, and cultural narratives that shape our approaches to such things as tutor training or work with faculty from across the disciplines. As a mode of inquiry, narrative interviews might be used to illuminate tutors’, students’, administrators’, and faculties’ writing center-related experiences, attitudes, identities, and/or constructions of others, or to encourage active tutor, student, and/or administrator reflection. As we hope these potential topics illustrate, narrative inquiry in writing centers is rich, yet largely unexplored, territory.

We invite proposals for an edited collection entitled *Up Close and Personal: The Possibilities of Narrative Inquiry in Writing Centers*. We envi-

sion the collection organized around three key sections: (1) research using narrative as a mode of inquiry; (2) research on narrative(s) as a site of inquiry; and (3) theoretical and practical discussions of the promises and limitations of narrative inquiry in writing centers. We are particularly interested in essays that explore the intersections of narrative, culture, and identity and the ways in which narratives are both inescapable and malleable—shaping, yet capable of being resisted, transformed, and/or altered.

Please send 2 copies of a 300-500 word proposal, including your name, institutional affiliation, and tentative paper title, by November 15, 2003 to Rebecca Jackson, Department of English, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, 78666. E-mail submissions are also welcome and should be sent to Rebecca Jackson (rj10@swt.edu). For information or inquiries, please e-mail Rebecca Jackson or Valerie Balester (v-balester@tam.u.edu).

Call for Proposals

Centers for Learning: Writing Centers and Libraries in Collaboration.

Edited by Jim Emborg and Sheril Hook

Over the past ten years, a number of academic resources have been in the process of merging into multi-use academic “centers.” Two active participants in these mergers have been libraries and writing centers. Although these partnerships may be seen as part of a larger emerging model of the learning center on the academic campus and the challenges and rewards of the attendant relationships, the focus of

this book will be specifically on the collaboration between writing centers and libraries. Editors are especially interested in the role libraries are playing in locating and shaping these centers and in the relationship between the writing center and the library.

This book will include two parts: 1) a critical introduction providing an overview of the writing center/library

collaboration and 2) case studies that will examine the relationships between the writing center and the library. The editors seek submissions from writing partners for the second half of the book. Writing partners will be composed of a writing center administrator and a librarian. These partners should be able to speak equally and with experience about their collaboration. They will be responsible for writing a criti-

cal case study of their multi-function center. The editors hope that essays in this collection will demonstrate the potential for shared vision that can be used to further develop and understand the educational value inherent in this collaborative model. Our goal is to create a book with broad appeal to both librarians and writing center personnel.

Submissions for this collection should examine both the practical and theoretical aspects of the shared center. These include (but are not limited to) administrative philosophies and their role in shaping the center; educational philosophies and their role in shaping

the center; shaping of best practices through collaboration; assessment models that have emerged in the collaboration; peer tutors and fellows programs, their management and training; establishing boundaries and sharing responsibilities; the theoretical and historical underpinnings for the collaboration; campus politics and strategic positioning; finding the mission for a shared center; expanding definitions of literacy and pedagogies to address them

Please respond to either of the editors below by October 15. Include the names of your writing partners and

their titles, the name of your institution with a description of the institution (e.g., size, public, population, comprehensive) and a brief (one hundred words or less) history of your collaboration. Preliminary deadline for completed case study chapters is February 15, 2004. Jim Elmborg, The University of Iowa School of Library and Information Science, 3070 Main Library, Iowa City, IA 52242-1490, 319-335-5717 (james-elmborg@uiowa.edu); and Sheril Hook, University of Arizona, Main Library, A204, Tucson, Arizona 85721, (520)621-9919 (hooks@u.library.arizona.edu).

What's new and/or interesting on your Web site?

WLN invites writing center folks who want to share some special feature or new material on their OWL to let us know. Send your URL, a title, and a sentence or two about what to look for to the editor (harrism@cc.purdue.edu).

• Starting small and local at California State U. at Chico

The Writing Center at California State University, Chico, now has a Web site with resources for students and faculty, including synchronous on-line tutoring via WebCT: <<http://www.csuchico.edu/uwc/>>. The site, designed for local audiences, is our first step in joining the Web-based writing center community.

*Mark Hall
California State University, Chico
MHall@csuchico.edu*

(Editor's note: A full—and interesting—account of how this OWL started and proceeded to develop to meet local needs will be printed in a forthcoming issue of WLN, co-authored by Mark Hall and Thia Wolf.)

• A Webliography at Texas A&M

Debbie Pipes recently constructed a Webliography for their University Writing Center Web site: <<http://uwc.tamu.edu/faculty/webliography/>>. A webliography is a collection of annotated World Wide Web links useful to writers. The site is organized in two ways:

1) *Sections*. Here writers can check out the appropriate section they need, such as “writing process,” “research process,” or “types of documents.” Each section has annotated live links to sites with information about that topic.

2) *Alphabetical list*. Here writers can look up a topic from an alphabetically organized list of topics. For example, if the writer needs assistance with quotation marks, she looks it up in this list and will find annotated links to other sites.

The contact person is Debbie Pipes (dpipes@neo.tamu.edu).

“Talking”

(continued from p. 13)

at the writing center deals with one student at a time while a teacher might have twenty-five students in a class. Teachers might tend to extend an assimilationist view to every student's writing due to a great number of papers. Therefore, tutors have more time (and responsibility) to hear ESL students explain their essays and to provide them with as many solutions to their problems as possible, especially when cultural and linguistic differences are noticed in their essays. Furthermore, I would suggest that we as tutors not select any of the solutions for these ESL students; instead, they pick one for themselves. They can freely choose the one they think can best express what they want to express in English, and we help them do so. Thus, we avoid imposing our values, or Western values, upon these ESL students who come to the writing center. At the same time they feel respected in the process of making their own decisions about their writing, and most im-

portantly, first languages. We must do more than Crusoe to help them understand themselves instead of turning them into Fridays.

Before we wrap up the session, Senhan tells me that he used to think it is useless to talk about his story because no one would care about a Chinese student like him. After working with me, he starts wondering whether people's ignorance of him has resulted from his own ignorance of himself as well as from his confusion of self-identity in the two cultures. Smiling and nodding to him reservedly, I am afraid that his revelation is only halfway reached, since it is always easy for an outsider to succumb and hard to stand firm in such a dominant culture. But I do not really say anything, for I believe that he will modify his assumption by learning more about the world sooner or later, and so would I. We are both trying to locate our new identity in this dominant American culture. I have never met Senhan since, and so I do

not know if he rewrote his Moon Festival experience. But I know that I might have to find a way to talk about *my* own omelet too, or I might be missing it in my memories someday.

Jui-Chuan Chang
DePaul University
Chicago, IL

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