

# THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 28, Number 3

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

November, 2003

## ...FROM THE EDITOR...

This month's issue of the newsletter offers us opportunities to stretch our thinking. Mark Hall and Thia Wolf illustrate the axiom that we learn as much from the journey as we do when we arrive at our destination. The path they describe in developing a Web site offers insights for us as well as suggesting that you too have journeys to share. Georganne Nordstrom's essay helps us to think about yet another marginalized language group, and Lisa Whalen draws parallels for us between composing in music and language, offering another metaphor for tutors to use. In addition, Allison VanLoon poses more ethical questions for tutors to consider *before* they find themselves in similar situations.

When we think about what we can write about, these essays both add to our knowledge about writing center theory and practice and also suggest new perspectives we can take in order to study our own work. Every writing center has its own tales and unique aspects that can be studied for the director's internal use and for adding to the literature of writing center scholarship. And when you are ready to send in those essays, please check submission guidelines at our Web site: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/newsletter/index.htm>>.

• Muriel Harris, editor

## ...INSIDE...

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## One writing center's first steps onto the Web

Developing a Web presence is one way to expand the services and resources provided by your writing center, while at the same time making them more widely available, particularly to users who may find face-to-face visits difficult or impossible to schedule. The development process, however, may be daunting because of limited resources and scant computer savvy. This is the story of two such administrators. As the title suggests, our story is not complete. We offer here an account of our initial steps onto the "Information Superhighway." Our tale may be of some use because we learned to think small while constructing our online site, with a focus on meeting local needs and extending—rather than changing—our writing center's pedagogy, based upon a theory of knowledge as contextual and socially constructed.

To develop our online site, we relied heavily on input from our own writing assistants (WAs) and a wide array of campus resources; rather than change our pedagogical approach to tutoring due to the change in the delivery system, we decided to make our online site congruent with the theory and

training used in our tutor-training seminar, ensuring that our WAs could work effectively in both face-to-face and online settings. Because our journey is just beginning, we cannot yet assess its success or failure. Nevertheless, we hope our experiences may be instructive to others who are considering joining the online community of writing centers.

### Piloting an online center: Find the best option

Three years ago, a student in our tutor-training course developed several

possible online tutoring delivery systems as part of her coursework. Soon we recognized that a campus of 16,000 students with a face-to-face writing center might benefit from including online tutoring. Growing numbers of non-traditional students, as well as those reentering college after a prolonged absence, might be especially interested in tutoring from home after hours. A grant from the Provost's office permitted us to pilot two kinds of online centers before choosing one to implement. Rather than decide from a wide range of possible technologies for delivering online tutoring, or, better yet, design a delivery system based upon our pedagogical goals, limited technical and financial resources forced us to choose between two options already supported on our campus.

One of these pilots involved HorizonLive, an Internet-based system that replaces satellite classrooms. HorizonLive provided a real-time video of a professor meeting with students in a small classroom; distance learners could access the classroom, watch and hear the professor's lecture, and ask questions via a chatroom visible at the bottom of the computer monitor. The real-time video, when used by a WA, could provide student-users of the center with some features of the face-to-face interaction in regular tutoring sessions.

The procedures for using HorizonLive were easily learned by WAs and were uncomplicated for student-users, but the WA who test-drove the technology urged us not to employ it. "I'm concerned about the power differences," he explained while being filmed. "The students see and hear me, but they're faceless people in a chatroom; besides, I'm standing where the professor stands, so this makes me seem like a teacher, not a peer tutor." We took these insights to heart, ended the HorizonLive pilot, and shifted students to the second online center, offered via WebCT, an online course management tool that delivers fully

online courses and enhances traditional face-to-face courses with discussion boards, e-mail, a glossary of key terms, a course calendar, online conferencing, student progress tracking, student self-evaluation, grade collection and distribution, access control, navigation tools, quizzes, and student homepages.

In developing the WebCT online writing center, we sought to create a teaching environment as much like the writing center's collaborative face-to-face dialogues as possible. Believing that literacy development occurs in socially meaningful contexts, we wanted to preserve and foster the sense of relationship that student-users of the center often developed with WAs. The concept is elegant in its simplicity: Users establish a WebCT username and password, log on and "self-register" for a WebCT "course" listed as "Online Writing Center," access the homepage, with instructions on how to make an appointment, e-mail a draft to a tutor, and then enter a chatroom to discuss their writing at the appointed time. Student and tutor alike may call up the attached draft to examine simultaneously during synchronous chat.

These processes are roughly analogous to phoning the center or dropping by to make an appointment; the major difference between face-to-face and online sessions is that in the latter the paper is provided to the WA in advance when possible. We reasoned that, since reading the paper aloud isn't possible online, and since writing thoughts down in the chatroom would take longer than conversing in person, it made sense to have WAs read student work in advance of the online session as a time-saving device. We also added links to various style manuals; grammar, punctuation, and mechanics help; the OED online; and so forth, along with additional resources provided by our campus library.

Because tutors routinely tape and transcribe sessions for training and research purposes in our center, we

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agreed that WebCT's transcripts of chatroom discussions would be an added benefit for us. Students who log onto the online center are informed that all exchanges with WAs are stored and may be reviewed for training purposes.

### Protect pedagogy: Let form follow function

Though we knew little about designing an online writing center, we felt strongly that synchronous talk in a chat room would come as close as possible to the face-to-face conversations for which tutors in our center are well trained. Because we are convinced that *talk* about writing is as important as the paper itself, WAs study work by Nancy Grimm, Laurel Black, and David Russell, theorists who highlight the importance of understanding both students and student writing *in context*. WAs in our center begin tutoring sessions with questions about the assignment, the class and discipline that situate both the assignment and the student writer, and those parts of the writer's literacy history that might shed some light on why she is having difficulty with the particular assignment she has brought to the session. Dialogue, then, becomes the WA's most necessary tool in working collaboratively with student writers.

The Provost's office, however, advocated asynchronous tutoring, a virtual "drop-off" proofreading and editing service, in which students might simply e-mail papers to a tutor, and then receive a single written response. Though asynchronous tutoring has proved successful in some circumstances, we were persuaded by research that suggests asynchronous tutoring may be of limited value. For example, Joanna Castner's "The Asynchronous, Online Writing Session: A Two-Way Stab in the Dark?" doubts the efficacy of tutoring without extended talk:

[A] lack of dialogue between the consultant and the client promotes

the wrong idea about the goal of writing centers and the nature of the writing process itself. . . . Consultants do not want clients to perceive writing centers as fix-it shops for writing, places where writing can be repaired in one session. E-mail consulting without dialogue, however, may promote these ideas by giving the impression that clients can send off their texts to be fixed at the last minute by a voiceless editor. (120)

While we insisted on the synchronous model, the Provost's office specified that the pilot program could only be advertised to existing WebCT courses, rather than campus-wide. We accurately predicted that such narrow promotion of a new service would likely result in failure. Indeed, the Provost's office soon announced that funding for the online writing center would be withdrawn, citing both a lack of student participation and the need for cutbacks, given the state's worsening budget crisis.

Insisting on our particular pedagogical model, then, created the need to appeal to a wider campus audience. Together, we argued that before the online center was axed, it ought to be allowed several semesters to become established. To that end, we would need to foster widespread and multiple efforts to promote this new service. The Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts stepped in to protect needed funding and to allow the writing center itself to determine how best to publicize online tutoring. We beat the pavement, meeting with students, faculty, staff, chairs, deans, and other administrators to demonstrate synchronous tutoring and to encourage its use across campus, posted regular announcements to faculty, staff, and student campus e-mail distribution lists, visited classes to sign students up for online tutoring and to show them how to use it, and trained tutors to make class presentations.

### Learn the local technological landscape

Even so, by midterm of the second semester of the pilot program, with 250 students registered to use the service, only a handful had actually taken advantage of online tutoring. In their weekly training meetings, tutors agreed that publicity was still lacking. All we had on the Web was our WebCT "Information Page." Our online writing center was like an island, with no ready access. Because our writing center had never before had a Web presence, how, we wondered, might Internet-savvy students know to turn there for writing instruction? WAs pointed to several popular campus sites, including "Student Services," "Educational Support Programs," and the "Student Learning Center" that might be invited to host links to a full-service writing center site.

Even before we began developing a site, then, we studied the existing campus Web sites to learn where we had a presence, and to consider how we might link to other local resources. In this effort, another local expert weighed in with her advice. She searched campus sites, using key words such as "writing," "writing center," and "tutoring" to determine what information was available online regarding our center and its services, and then recommended sites to link to once ours was developed. She also scanned the university catalogue and other campus print publications, recommending revisions and additions to information about our writing center.

We agreed that, perhaps if we had a comprehensive Web site, of which online tutoring were a part, and if we linked that site to other popular destinations for students on our campus, then we might begin to develop a community of users. Our campus director of "Academic Technologies" agreed that, in some sense, we had gone about this backwards: Establish an identity

on the Web, and then promote online tutoring based upon that. She recommended a professional designer to help. In the meantime, during a semester break, our university completed a Web-based portal to manage Web content and use, with unexpected consequences for the writing center. The portal provides many campus services from a single point of access. Because the portal restricts use to only those courses for which a student has previously registered and paid, a new semester began without access to our free online service. This illustrates the need for writing center administrators to remain abreast of local changes in campus delivery systems—and to avoid panic when those changes are beyond our control.

After numerous consultations with the campus WebCT administrator, we determined that one temporary solution might be to create a separate WebCT installation outside the portal, so that any student could again gain access. But too many steps were required before a student could actually meet a WA to talk about writing. Other problems included finding ways for students to access the site easily, creating the possibility of a disruptive student logging on and changing our generic WebCT password, or worse, using the anonymity provided by the generic username to engage in inappropriate talk in the chatroom.

We also learned that our unfamiliarity with WebCT was a serious handicap. We needed help with even the most basic changes to the pages, particularly since neither of us knew any HTML code. Cutting and pasting from the existing code, we revised the pages based on feedback from students and faculty, always seeking to enhance capabilities, while at the same time striving for ease of operation. We are still learning. For example, initially, students e-mailed drafts to the writing center, and then we passed them along

to the WAs. A little familiarity with WebCT gave us the idea to use the e-mail function capability within WebCT itself, which we labeled “Paper Drop Box.” Students could then send papers directly to the WAs assigned to them.

At the same time, the enormous resources put toward the new portal, which now includes WebCT capabilities for every class, suggest that campus support for WebCT—or another platform like it—will likely continue as faculty and students become more familiar with its capabilities over time.

### **Collaborate with technology experts**

With the portal problem resolved and scheduling improved, we ramped up our efforts to develop a basic Web site, which would offer our campus community more than online tutoring via WebCT. The Web designer urged us to outline the site first, a move we resisted. Our E.M. Forster-inspired “How do I know what I mean until I see what I say?” approach to composing proved counter-productive to Web design. Rather than determine Web content, *then* organize it, a clear purpose and a detailed outline was a must before starting out. We began listing the writing center’s activities and then grouping them under a few short categories. With this list, we created a visual map of the site, listing the content of the homepage, as well as that for each of the major categories, including “Information,” the “Online Writing Center,” “Resources for Students,” “Resources for Faculty,” “Workshops,” and “Becoming a Tutor.”

This early emphasis on purpose and organization raised questions, also, about the scope of the site. We agreed that with so many high-quality comprehensive national writing center sites we should avoid reinventing the wheel. Instead of recreating content available elsewhere, we would think small, designing a basic site for our local com-

munity, with links to other sites we find useful, and one that can grow and develop with our needs. A quick look at <http://www.csuchico.edu/uwc> shows just how basic our site really is.

Another concern was financial. With no Web-design expertise, we knew we would need to pay an expert for guidance. That meant that we would have to choose what was most important, and what we could afford at the moment. The resulting site, then, lacks some aspects we had to put low on our list of priorities, such as a Web-based survey of users. Time, too, was critical. As the fiscal year came to a close, we knew we’d have to spend our limited funds or lose them, so we rushed to get the work done, leading to more quick—and not always wise—decisions about what we could realistically develop in a short time.

Colleagues suggested we could avoid this hassle and expense by hiring a student to design and develop our Web site. One colleague even offered to build the site for us for free. But a professional helped us to ensure that our new site had a look and feel consistent with the other official university pages while it complied with campus accessibility standards and guidelines. This was critical for developing a professional image on a campus where respect for writing instruction and for the expertise of writing teachers and tutors is not guaranteed.

Likewise, the designer helped usher us through the processes of establishing a Web address (URL) on the main campus Web server that would signify our independence from the English department in which we are housed. Rather than create a site that was merely a sub-site of the English Department pages, he helped us underscore our recent name change, from “Writing Center” to “University Writing Center” via our Web address. Small symbolic steps like these to



shape the identity of the writing center are critical, particularly in lean budget times, to demonstrate the value of the center to the university at large.

In addition to collaborating with a Web designer, we also benefited, if unexpectedly, from the expertise of a creative graphic design student. In addition to rushing to spend the last of our yearly budget on the new Web site, we decided to revise our paper informational brochure as well. The previous brochure had been designed in-house by a tutor some time ago and needed updating.

This time, we aimed for visual consistency with other similar university publications. Rather than limit our creativity, we hoped that establishing a clear graphic identity with the university might send a message of cohesiveness with the university, enhancing both the image of the university and our place within it. Together, writing center administrators, Web designer, and graphic design student collaborated to create both a new local Web site and a brochure that, visually, tie together, helping to develop a consistent identity for our writing center.

### **Consider the relationship between online tutoring and the writing center**

Use of our online writing center, however, has remained underwhelming. This has led to another problem, that of under-using well-trained tutors. Initially, we selected our most skilled tutors to work online, thinking that once they had demonstrated success face-to-face, they would have only the new obstacle of unfamiliar technology to overcome. And though our pedagogical aim of integrating online tutoring with face-to-face writing instruction seemed intact, we undermined this goal by separating online work, even cutting the online tutors out of weekly training meetings to work in isolation. We had originally

set out to develop online dialogues about writing via synchronous chat, yet we undercut our own values because we let the technology lead us, instead of leading it. In spite of our efforts, online tutoring felt different to us, and so we treated it differently. Bored WAs chatted with one another, or did homework while they waited for someone, anyone, to make an online appointment.

Finally, one WA began keeping face-to-face appointments while waiting for her online appointments to fill. If an appointment came up during her online hours, she worked overtime, and then gave herself a break the following week by cutting back on her face-to-face hours. In this way, she worked more some weeks, less others, busy face-to-face, while simultaneously “on-call” so to speak, for online tutoring. This suggested an alternative to wasting good WAs for hours on end when no one logged on to the online center. Again, listening to WAs and giving them the freedom to work in ways that make sense to them taught us to revise our understanding of the online center, its purposes and capabilities. This WA’s decision reminded us of our original goal: to extend, rather than restructure, the writing center.

### **What we’ve learned so far**

Though our journey is far from over, we have learned a great deal so far. Our advice to others who want to develop an online writing center for local use includes the following:

- Think small. Address the local online needs of your writing center.
- Insist on your pedagogical goals, then let form follow function.
- Train tutors to theorize their work, then they will lead you; listen when they do.
- Compromise when necessary, while keeping fundamental principles intact.

- Assemble students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and then consider their feedback.
- Consult local resources, both technical and human.
- Heed the advice of experts.
- Know that limited publicity may limit success.
- Consider the campus identity you wish to construct for your writing center as you develop promotional efforts that speak to and enhance one other.

As we continue to develop a presence for our writing center on the Web, we continue to seek out new strategies to promote our efforts. For instance, one way to increase the use of online tutoring, which we plan to implement this year, may be to introduce this service to incoming first-year students via our first-semester orientation “University Life” course, designed to provide students with strategies to help them succeed in college. Components of the course include, among other things, activities to enhance computer competency. In addition to discussing social and personal issues of particular interest to college students, they develop study skills and become familiar with a host of university services and activities. Our hope is that this early introduction will lead at least some of our students to become users of the online writing center throughout their academic careers here.

While it is too soon to judge the success or failure of our Web-based efforts to extend our writing center, we have succeeded in at least one important way: these initial steps onto the Web have led us to uncover a host of valuable local resources, both human and technological, and to develop rich and rewarding relationships with local students, faculty, staff, and other administrators on our campus. These relationships, we are convinced, are good for the writing center, good for the university. Among other things, these re-

relationships have helped to promote the identity of the writing center on a campus with little prior knowledge of our services.

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## Jean Donovan Sanborn Wins 2003 Maxwell Distinguished Leadership Award

Jean Donovan Sanborn, Professor of English and the recently retired Director of the Farnham Writers' Center at Colby College, has won the 2003 NCPTW Ron Maxwell Award for Distinguished Leadership in Promoting the Collaborative Learning Practices of Peer Tutors in Writing. The award recognizes dedication to and leadership in collaborative learning in writing centers, for aiding students in together taking on more responsibility for their learning, and, thus, for promoting the work of peer tutors. The award also denotes extraordinary service to the evolution of the conference organization. A plaque and cash prize, presented October 24, 2003, at the 20th Annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing held jointly with the International Writing Centers Association conference in Hershey, PA, were funded by an endowment from Ron and Mary Maxwell. A committee that includes former award recipients reviewed nominations and made a recommendation to Ron Maxwell.

Nominators noted the "intelligence, enthusiasm, and savvy" with which Sanborn's leadership has sustained the NCPTW since its inception. One person wrote that "she models the kind of relationship one hopes to find between writing center directors and peer writing tutors: respectful but relaxed, serious and light hearted, scholarly but not at all pedantic." Another nominator wrote, "Jean, as much as any other director I can think of, knows that this is one conference that's for the tutors, not the directors. It's what makes the conference a favorite for many of us, and it's why Jean has worked hard to make sure the conference continues."

Sanborn has helped her peer tutors develop presentations that have been highlights of the conference, as the following writer noted: "Jean and her Colby College writing center tutors have been a model of how to get the most from the NCPTW and how to give the most back to the conference. I have often overheard people at NCPTW going through their conference programs say something like, 'Oh, this one will be good. It's the Colby College tutors.'"

When asked what inspires her in her work, Sanborn mentioned Ron Maxwell, Muriel Harris, and Shirley Brice Heath as individuals who have been especially important to her. She also mentioned authors who have written about collaboration, dichotomies, or contraries: Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, Paolo Freire, Ann Berthoff, and Peter Elbow. In addition, there are those who have supported her "desire to value play as essential to the process of setting language in motion": Hans Ostrom, "Myka" (the collaborative team of Kathleen Yancey and Michael Spooner), and Beth Boquet. "These are among the people," Sanborn says, "who make challenging the status quo a constant enterprise and writing centers spirited places."

To receive a 2004 Maxwell Award call for nominations, contact award administrator Jon Olson at <writingcenter@psu.edu>.

Jon Olson  
Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA

Writing Across the  
Curriculum Conference

May 20-22, 2004  
St. Louis  
"WAC From an International Perspective"

Please see the conference Web site: <<http://muconf.missouri.edu/WAC2004/>> for all conference information. Feel free to contact us at [WAC2004@missouri.edu](mailto:WAC2004@missouri.edu) with any questions.

## Call for Papers

***The Writing Center Director's Resource***, Edited by Christina Murphy and Byron L. Stay

This book will be written primarily for the new writing center director, although it will have broad application for veteran directors as well. It is intended to help the writing center director gain confidence and develop realistic expectations for writing center management. It is also intended as a practical guide to writing centers, one which will explore the potential for writing centers and writing center directors to initiate institutional change and to develop personally and professionally.

Writing center directors' responsibilities pull them in many directions and can make the administration of writing centers a daunting task. They serve as managers and trainers. They often function on a departmental level, negotiating the administrative structure that supports their centers. Each of these structures requires different strategies and presents different problems for the new director. Similarly, writing center directors occupy different professional roles in their institutions, some tenured or on tenure track, but a large number of writing center directors

are hired as staff. Increasingly, writing centers have become the sites of technological innovation. Because writing centers play such integral roles within the administrative and academic structure of their institutions, it should not be surprising that many writing center directors find themselves moving naturally into administration.

In addition to these topics we invite proposals on writing center history, certification, academic disciplines, administrative oversight (writing centers in English departments, learning centers, or independent writing programs), assessment, technology and any other issues of central importance in the administration of writing centers.

This book will also present case studies of a few selected writing centers that illustrate the issues raised here. These case studies should examine issues of staffing, writing center placement, faculty status, training, and ethics. The preliminary design for this book was initiated by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, and they will be reviewing the completed manuscript. Initial chapter proposals will be accepted through January 15, 2004.

## Watson Conference focuses on writing centers

The University of Louisville announces the fifth biennial Thomas R. Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition. "Writing at the Center" will be held October 7-9, 2004 at the University of Louisville. Featured guests will include Neal Lerner, Bob Schwegler, David Russell, Joan Mullin, Art Young, Paula Gillespie, Brad Hughes, Doug Hesse, and many other scholars and administrators who work in and influence writing programs. Other special features of the conference include scholarship awards and student guest speakers.

We encourage composition scholars to consider the relationships among writing programs as well as how literacy sponsors, students, teachers, tutors, and administrators view writing programs. We invite proposals for individual presentations or panels that consider some aspect of the conference theme. Participants might explore any number of avenues, including but not limited to:

### *Writing Programs*

- How might we envision more cooperative relationships

among writing programs?

- In what ways are literacy sponsors involved with writing programs? •
- What are their priorities for writing programs?

### *Students*

- How can we best promote student agency?
- How do peer tutors/students view our programs?

### *History*

- Why have we become concerned with preserving our histories?
- How do we see our history at this moment?

Send proposals to Carol Mattingly, Director, Thomas R. Watson Conference, Department of English, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292. Proposals should be postmarked by February 15, 2004. Please visit the conference website at <<http://www.louisville.edu/a-s/english/watson>> or call 502-852-1252 for additional information.

# Finding their way to the Writing Center: Language perceptions of pidgin speakers and non-native speakers from Asian countries

At our Writing Center at the University of Hawai'i, there are remarkably few Hawai'i Creole or Pidgin speaking visitors, whereas more than half of our clientele are non-native speakers from Asian countries. In a project I have undertaken, I found that while negative perceptions about Pidgin affect native Pidgin speakers' willingness to visit the Writing Center, non-native speakers (NNSs) from Asian countries operate under the perception that seeking help from the Writing Center does not negatively label them.

In this project, I have undertaken the task of writing about two groups of people to which I don't belong. Although I have lived, played and worked with both Hawai'i's native Pidgin speakers and non-native speakers from Asian countries throughout my life, I am Caucasian, or haole, a Hawaiian word meaning "White person, American, [or] English" (Pukui and Elbert 58). The subject of my research is close to me; however, I also realize that it is impossible for me to speak for others completely unencumbered by my own biases. As Gesa Kirsch argues, "Scholars inevitably interpret and appropriate participants' stories in context of their work, filter interviewees' comments through their rhetorical framework, and analyze participants' narratives based on their own knowledge, training, and lived experiences" (49). I come to this work with a specific set of experiences and a hypothesis I wish to analyze that affects the way I interpret my subjects and their comments. Therefore, in an attempt to position myself within the context of my research, I will explain my relationship to both the research topic and the groups I have chosen to work with.

Since the fall of 2001 I have worked as a tutor at the University of Hawai'i's Writing Center. As someone who grew up in Hawai'i, I have always been aware of the perceptions surrounding Pidgin or Hawai'i Creole (HC), a language spoken by many *local* residents of Hawai'i. Pidgin is an essential part of our group identity—of being *local*, a complex and contentious term in Hawai'i. In her article "Asian Settler Colonialism in Hawai'i," Candace Fujikane defines *local* as "a geographical marker designating ethnic groups from Hawai'i" (xxii), which includes Hawaiians, Asians, Haoles, Portuguese and other peoples who have strong connections to the islands. It is important to stress, however, that while all Native Hawaiians who reside in Hawai'i are *local*, not all *locals* are Native Hawaiian. Although there are federal definitions relating to blood quantum,<sup>2</sup> "Native Hawaiian" and "Hawaiian" invariable refer to people of Hawaiian ancestry. In this paper, I use Native Hawaiian to refer to all people of Hawaiian ancestry regardless of blood quantum as Fujikane does in her article, "Reimagining Development and the Local in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre" (58). Although I am a native Standard English speaker, in certain situations, specifically when I am in places where *local* values rather than academic or professional ideals are dominant, I use my best Pidgin to show that I belong as a *local*.

Despite the sense of belonging that speaking Pidgin fosters, it has also received bad press from educators. Scholars such as Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (1994) have written about how Pidgin has been blamed for low stan-

dardized test scores, poor academic performance and poor writing skills. In 1999, Hawai'i's Board of Education Chairman, Mitsugi Nakashima, warned "If people speak pidgin English, they will think pidgin English and will then write in pidgin English" a viewpoint that suggests that many Pidgin speakers are not acculturated into academia. These negative markers associated with Pidgin, which I have grown up with, led me to the assumption that Pidgin speakers would be regular visitors to the writing center—that they would be coming for help to overcome the challenges they faced within the academy. Anne DiPardo argues that writing tutors are "[o]ften placed on the front lines of efforts to provide respectful, insightful attention to . . . the social and linguistic challenges which inform [non-anglo students] struggles with writing" (350). I was on the front line, and I was ready to help—but who I was helping was different than whom I was expecting. I became very aware of who was visiting our Writing Center, and from my vantage point, it was not Pidgin speakers but mostly non-native speakers from Asian countries, specifically from Japan, Korea and China. Having lived in Japan for ten years myself, I know what it is like to be a NNS in a foreign country, and to want to seek out help with writing. However, I was surprised that the number of NNS from Asian countries so outweighed the number of Pidgin speakers visiting the Writing Center. During the fall 2002 semester, approximately 60% of the visitors to the Writing Center were NNS from Asian countries whereas only 7% admitted to speaking Pidgin (Writing Center Database).

The story of Pidgin is imbedded within political, social and cultural contestation.



Hawai'i's colonized history played an essential role, not only in its development, but also in the resulting marginalization of Pidgin as a language and of those who speak it. Pidgin evolved around events that led to the almost complete annihilation of Native Hawaiians and their culture<sup>2</sup> through the banning of the hula by the missionaries, the overthrow of their monarchy by American businessmen and the United States marines in 1893, and the banning of the Hawaiian language in 1896. Pidgin became the shared language of the immigrants brought to Hawai'i by the North American plantation owners as laborers. Space constraints prevent me from discussing the history of Pidgin in the detailed manner that would do justice to the complexity surrounding the evolution of and attitudes about Pidgin.<sup>3</sup> On one hand, Pidgin has grown to be an important part of *local* identity through its role as a shared language among the people who settled in Hawai'i and within many Native Hawaiian communities. At the same time, sociolinguistic scholars, such as Charlene Sato (1985), argue that, in the community, Pidgin is often stigmatized as a deficient form of English and is frequently blamed for Hawai'i's *local* students' poor academic performance. She states, "many [Pidgin] speakers have come to perceive their home language as a way of speaking to be corrected and eventually overcome . . . over the years, . . . [Pidgin] has been . . . forbidden in the classroom, declared not a language, [and] branded un-American" ("Linguistics" 267). The ambiguous positioning of the language, positively as an identity marker and negatively as a label suggesting linguistic and academic inferiority, influences attitudes toward Pidgin today, and the complexities are apparent in the interviews I conducted with Writing Center visitors.

In this project, I interviewed five students who visited the Writing Center over the last year. Information on each Writing Center visitor, including name,

first language, and grade level is kept in our database, which I used to profile potential interviewees. In an effort to fairly represent both non-native speakers from Asian countries and Pidgin speakers, I chose one undergraduate and graduate student for each language group. However, after conducting the interviews with the Pidgin speakers, I realized that both students had attended private high schools. I then located a Pidgin speaker who had visited the Writing Center and had graduated from a public school; this brought the total to five interviewees.

What became increasingly apparent to me in all my interviews is the misconception that the Writing Center is primarily a space for second language students. Some recent scholarship conflates students whose language puts them in a marginalized position, such as Pidgin speakers, with international students and claims both student populations operate under the same paradigm. Judith Kilborn argues that, "minority and international students, who already feel labeled by virtue of their race, language, or cultural background, are unlikely to attend services which stamp them with yet another label" (395). However, the presumption that the Writing Center is a place specifically designed to help second language students seems to play a significant role in perceptions about labeling associated with visiting the Writing Center. Jen, a Pidgin speaking graduate student, states, "when I went [to the writing center] I noticed that it's for people like ESL people, people that don't know how to speak English." Mariko, a Japanese graduate student, also thought the writing center was designed specifically to help second-language students, but she went further and talked about how this affected the way she viewed native speakers whom she saw at the writing center; she says, "[I]f I'm native and my professors said you need to talk to someone about your paper before you turn it in, and then . . . if I have been to the [center and] I see all the foreign students and if I'm

the only one, the native speaker, I'm maybe not comfortable. . . . One time last semester, someone was talking perfect English [in the writing center] and I thought is this a place for native speakers too? . . . I assume the [center] is for foreigners."

Although this perception about the Writing Center is inaccurate, it can have far reaching implications. The idea that the Writing Center is geared toward helping non-native speakers implies the unsaid notion that there might be something wrong with those who are not considered non-native speakers and visit the writing center. The fact that Pidgin is largely considered to be a substandard form of English rather than a second language puts Pidgin speakers in the category of native speaker. Therefore, Pidgin speakers are likely to associate negative labels with visiting the Writing Center if it is indeed seen as a place only for second language speakers.

Carrie, an undergraduate Pidgin speaker who graduated from public high school on Maui, talks about the confusion that surrounds Pidgin in relation to Standard English, and the assumptions that Pidgin speakers should not need help with Standard English; she says "a foreign language person knows that it's OK [to get help with writing] because they don't know the English language but a Pidgin person does basically know . . . well, not basically, but they more or less have spoken it all their life but they have the Pidgin." This is a sentiment echoed by Mariko who states, "[for] most of the native speakers, even Pidgin or whatever . . . English is their first language." Moreover, many Pidgin speakers position Pidgin negatively in comparison to Standard English. Throughout our interview, Jen refers to Standard English as proper English, she tells me, "I went to a private school . . . its kind of like a mainland school, . . . and they teach you very proper English." Then, she states, "I speak a lot of Pidgin when I'm with my friends,

[but in the classroom] I try to act more proper.” For Jen, and many other *locals*, Standard English is called proper English, subversively suggesting that Pidgin is improper.

This scenario may offer one possible explanation why *local* students are visiting the Writing Center at such low rates. Moreover, it is reminiscent of observations made by Stephen North in his 1984 article, “The Idea of a Writing Center,” where he argues that faculty perpetuate the viewpoint that the writing center’s main work is to deal with grammar and “bad” or “remedial” writers. North discusses misperceptions about writers and the writing center and how students frequently get sent to the writing center to have “their papers ‘cleaned-up,’” and of “well-intentioned administrators who are so happy that we deal with . . . ‘grammar’” (63). This idea that the writing center’s purpose is to deal with grammar issues is compounded by the perception that it also primarily services remedial writers. North argues, “In [some faculty’s] minds, clearly, writers fall into three fairly distinct groups: the talented, the average, and the others; and the writing center’s only logical *raison d’être* must be to handle those others—those . . . with ‘special’ problems” (65). The irony here is that these misperceptions about the writing center result in negative labels being associated with visiting the center. As articulated by the students I interviewed, it is acceptable for some students to need help with grammar and be remedial in writing, specifically non-native speakers, while it is not for others, specifically Standard English speakers, which many presume Pidgin speakers to be. Students like Mariko do not feel that needing help with grammar labels a non-native speaker the same way it does a Pidgin speaker; she says, “I don’t mind to go to the writing [center] to check my English grammar, but if I had a problem with my Japanese writing, I don’t want to go to the Japanese writing [center].”

The persistence of misunderstanding about the true purpose of the writing center is intricately related to the misconceptions about who the writing center is meant to service. That the writing center is frequently seen as a place where students go to “fix” their papers rather than discuss their writing complicates this situation; after all, when something needs to be fixed, it usually means it’s broken. If grammar is thought to be the primary focus of the tutoring session, a viewpoint often perpetuated by faculty, we can easily see how non-native speakers would be more comfortable than Pidgin speakers visiting the Writing Center. Pidgin speakers already see their language as deficient compared to “proper” English—needing help with broken writing would compound negative labels associated with Pidgin. For non-native speakers, the situation is quite different since they don’t see their native language as being a problem—they are not expected to have command of the English language and, therefore, it is perfectly acceptable for them to need help with their English writing.

The problem here is twofold: first, the purpose of the writing center is misunderstood; it is seen as a place where remedial writers go for help; and second, it is more acceptable for certain student populations to fall into the category of remedial than it is for others. Kilborn argues, “it is essential that these students, [“those labeled by race, language, or cultural background”], in particular, do not see our centers as remedial” (395). To overcome these misperceptions we need to vigilantly educate students about the writing process and the ideology the writing center is built upon. Moreover, in Hawai’i, as well as other places where a student population whose home language has not been privileged by the academy exists, special attention must be directed at how these students are made to feel about their language and how that might be affecting their willingness to seek help with writing. Changes must be made to

counter the perception that the writing center is only meant to service a particular type of student. While it is obvious that tutors need to be sensitive to social attitudes affecting how a writer negotiates herself, the tutor must first have the opportunity to work with the writer, which means the writer has to feel welcome at the writing center. I don’t have any easy answers as to how to address these issues, however. I hope coming closer to identifying the problem is a start.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Native Hawaiian is defined in section 201(a)(7) of the Hawaiian Home Commission Act, 1920, ch 42, 42 Stat. 109, reprinted in 15 HAW. REV. STATE. ANN. 331 (Mitchie 1997) as persons with 50% or more Hawaiian blood; this suggests that Part-Hawaiian, or Hawaiian refers to persons with less than 50% blood quantum.

<sup>2</sup> David Stannard has dedicated his book *Before the Horror*, to supporting his and many other scholar’s claims that the pre-contact Native Hawaiian population was somewhere between 800,000 and 1,000,000, but by 1900, the population of Native Hawaiians and Part-Hawaiians had declined to 37,656 (Kawamoto 193).

<sup>3</sup> In 1853, the first plantation at Koloa, Kaua’i was established marking the beginning of Hawai’i’s plantation era in the archipelago (Reinecke 39). Throughout the later part of the 1800’s through the turn of the century Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese and Filipino laborers were brought to Hawai’i to work on the plantations. The need to communicate between the groups and with the plantation owners created the perfect conditions for the establishment of a Creole, what would eventually become Hawai’i Creole or

Pidgin. At the same time as the immigrants began arriving, English was replacing Hawaiian as the language of power and prestige (Reinecke 32). The overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy (1893) and the subsequent banning of the Hawaiian language (1896) disempowered Hawaiians in their own land. The privileged language in Hawai'i became English, and Pidgin was perceived as deficient and inferior.

In 1924, the Caucasian community, whose children were attending public schools, began expressing concern that "Caucasian children should not be interacting with Pidgin English-speaking 'local' children" (Kawamoto 201). This eventually led to the establishment of the English Standard Schools in 1924, where children had to pass English proficiency tests in order to be admitted. The schools were attended "almost exclusively by Caucasian children," and "further stratified Hawaiian society" (Kawamoto 202). The English school system remained in place until 1948. English Standard Schools were established. These schools were abolished in 1948, but the stigmas attached to Pidgin in relation to education were entrenched in the community. After W.W.II, there was a dramatic push for Americanization by the *local* community, and to be American meant speaking Standard English. This drive to become American culminated in statehood in 1959. In 1987, Pidgin was a hot issue in education once again—the Board of Education tried to mandate that Standard English be the official language of instruction in all classrooms, and that Pidgin be forbidden. This move was met with a tremendous outcry from the community, and the mandate was watered down to a strong recommendation (Sato 1991, 653-654).

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# TUTORS' COLUMN

## Monday morning ethics: When a tutor knows too much

Last Monday morning, I walked into the Writing Center fresh and excited to begin my sessions for the day. Most of them went well, but one left me with an uncomfortable feeling that I could not displace. I walked out of the Writing Center disturbed, pondering an ethical problem that I had never before considered: what do you do when you have a previous, outside-the-writing-center relationship with a student you are supposed to assist?

When I began working in the Writing Center at Hamline University, a small Minnesota liberal arts college, I met a student whom I will call Joe. I helped Joe with a couple of his papers, and we established a relationship that was productive yet fun. Joe began to drop in while I was working and jokingly ask me to write papers for him. He approached me while I was waiting to eat with a friend and talked to me for a while. He even asked me (and my husband) to his party one weekend, an invitation which I declined.

One night while I was in the campus computer lab, Joe came in, greeted me, and took the computer next to mine. He asked what I was working on, and before I knew what was happening, commandeered my computer and called up plagiarism sites on the Internet! In less than a minute, he found numerous sites that supplied free essays on the topic I was researching. I expressed my shock, but he laughed and gave me a lesson on how to use those essays without getting caught. Feeling extremely uncomfortable, I cut off the conversation—and the Internet connection—and returned to my research, but it was hard to forget what had happened.

The session that disturbed me so much was the next time Joe came to me in the Writing Center. I had to reconcile our previous relationship with our professional one. He began to joke with me, and I gave him a courtesy smile but steered the conversation toward his writing. He took out a trick pen and began to perform magic tricks; I asked him direct questions about his assignment. My authority with him had been compromised because of our outside-of-the-writing-center conversations, and it was difficult for me to keep the situation professional. In order to focus on writing, I had to ignore our acquaintance and rebuff Joe's overtures. This complicated the session, but it was still manageable – until I looked at his paper.

I had seen Joe's writing before, and it was usually strewn with grammatical and punctuation errors. This paper was grammatically perfect—not at all like Joe's usual writing. At first, I didn't think anything of it; I complimented him on his progress and effort. But after a few pages, I noticed the paper assumed a split personality; the grammatical errors suddenly appeared, and the writing style became abruptly different. Because Joe and I did have a joking relationship, I asked him directly: "Joe, this writing is completely different than the first half. Did you write this paper?" He said that he had written the paper and that someone else had proofread the first half for him. I dropped the issue and continued the session as usual, but I was disturbed. I suspected that Joe was cheating on his paper and that I was somehow becoming involved.

I wrote about the dichotomy of Joe's writing in his session notes (our Writing Center notes leave room for tutor comments and are open to faculty). Then I sought out the Writing Center director to discuss why I was so disturbed and what I should have done. When I described the writing to her, she said I had done the right thing to address the dichotomy of the paper and then drop it after hearing Joe's response. After all, I had no proof Joe was involved in plagiarism. Suddenly, I remembered the time when Joe showed me the plagiarism sites. *That* was why I was feeling so uncomfortable and so suspicious. I became scared that I was complicit in Joe's shady paper tactics, that somehow I was at fault for his questionable paper. I hadn't wanted to help him with his paper—I hadn't wanted to help him make it any better than it was. I hadn't wanted to give Joe any tips that would help him reconcile the two halves of his paper. I felt that my own academic honesty had been compromised and that Joe had taken advantage of our relationship and my position in the Writing Center. I felt used.

Suddenly, on a previously carefree Monday morning, I was confronted with a troublesome ethical situation. Knowing what I knew about Joe, was I obligated to report my suspicions in the name of academic honesty? To whom should I report them – to the professor or to the university? What exactly would I report—the dichotomy of his paper or the simple fact that he had knowledge of Internet plagiarism sites? Should I have done that before or after I saw him at the Writing Center? If Joe hadn't cheated—if my suspicions were wrong—how would an accusation damage the Writing Center? What would I have done to Joe, a fellow



student who cares enough about his studies to come to the Writing Center? How would I have impacted Joe's relationship with other people in the Writing Center? Is reporting Joe a violation of confidentiality, an abuse of my writing tutor status? Or, because I didn't report him and helped him work on his paper at the Writing Center – knowing that his paper could have been plagiarized – am I complicit in his cheating?

Am I obligated to divorce my Writing Center dealings with Joe from what I know of him outside the Writing Center? Should I try to forget what had happened and what I knew and not let that affect my relationship with him? Should I treat him like I treat other students whom I don't know? Is that even possible?

Uncomfortable situations like mine and Joe's can easily arise at a writing center that serves a small school. They don't always involve plagiarism either. Imagine that your friend has told you that someone date-raped her, and he comes to you at your writing center. Should you work with him? If you don't, should you tell him why not? Someone else with whom you have had personal disagreements in a student organization comes to you. Should you help her? Maybe you'll mend your disagreements; maybe you can ignore them and focus on writing together. Or maybe you'll try to do that and it won't work; the session will be unproductive and your disagreement will have worsened. What should you do? A student comes to you with a paper—but you're in her class and you are working on the same paper at home. Do you help her? What if your papers are on different topics? Does that change anything?

Honestly, I don't know the answers to any of these ethical questions—but I do know that they must be considered and discussed, especially at smaller schools like mine. At some schools, the student population is large enough that writing center employees are rarely acquainted with the students they tutor. At smaller schools, everyone knows everything about everyone. It is common for me to

know something about half the students that come in to work with me. The relationship ranges from the gossip mill to a shared class to a friendship, but whatever the degree of acquaintance, it complicates the tutor-student relationship—not only in the ethical ways that I have described, but also in the related areas of professionalism and authority.

When you begin a session with a student you have not met, you have the ability to control the professionalism of the situation. You can introduce yourself, make small talk, and smoothly transition to the purpose of the session. In this way, you can easily maintain the focus on writing without other distractions or obligations. When you have had out-of-the-writing-center experiences with a student, the professionalism of the session can be undermined. To avoid appearing rude, you must acknowledge the relationship and engage in more personal conversation at the beginning of the session. This requires you to navigate the fine line between friendship and the slight distance required by professionalism.

The working relationship between you and a student with whom you have a previous relationship is further complicated because you lose the modicum of authority that accompanies the position of writing center tutor. Picture yourself in a session with a student you are acquainted with outside the writing center. The student is aware that you are a junior while he is already applying for graduate schools. He knows the grade you got on your last exam because you share BritLit with him. Your shroud of authority has been stripped from you. Some might argue that this is not necessarily bad, and it isn't. A previous acquaintance lessens the power imbalance between tutor and student and contributes to true peer tutoring. However, even in the phrase *peer tutoring*, authority is implicit (Trimbur 290). Without that authority, you have little control over the productivity of a session and it can become

difficult to wisely use time and even to draw the line between helping the student become a better writer and working on his paper for him.

In a small school, you will probably run into students at the writing center whom you already know. You will be unavoidably impacted and constrained by what you know of that student; how will you let that affect your working relationship with that student? Will you purposefully carry over what you know, or will you purposefully try to forget it? As a writing center tutor, I encourage you to discuss the ethical considerations that accompany this situation, including its effect on your professionalism and authority, before you get blindsided with a Monday morning ethical problem like I did.

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## Peer Centered Blog

Just a reminder of the existence of Peer Centered. Peer Centered is currently a blog or online journal where writing center folks can share their thoughts/ideas about writing center work. You can see the blog (it is somewhat inactive at the moment) at <http://bessie.englab.slcc.edu/pc>. If you or any of your tutoring staff is interested in joining Peer Centered, please email me or have them e-mail me at [Clint.Gardner@slcc.edu](mailto:Clint.Gardner@slcc.edu). Put "Peer Centered" in the subject line. By the way, it works a whole lot better if individual tutors e-mail me instead of having directors sending me lists.

Clint Gardner  
[Clint.Gardner@slcc.edu](mailto:Clint.Gardner@slcc.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).*

### Using instructional design on an OWL

#### • The University of Wisconsin—Madison Writing Center

**<<http://www.wisc.edu/writing>>**

The OWL at the University of Wisconsin-Madison recently debuted a new structure and design for its online writing handbook. More than a cosmetic makeover, this redesign is our attempt to apply some principles about organizing online reference materials based on research about how people actually use the Web. Not surprisingly, this research shows that most people don't read deeply online. Instead, most of us use the Web to obtain some information quickly in order to complete a task. We skip, scan, retrieve, and leave.

This means, thank goodness, that students aren't reading our online APA materials at 3:00 AM to learn all they can about APA. They're no doubt looking for support to help them perform a particular task—perhaps to format an item in their reference list. So a textbook organization—even if online it includes headings and hyperlinks—doesn't match this teaching and learning situation. Something else is needed.

Through a wonderful collaboration with Les Howles, an instructional design specialist on our campus, my colleague Albert Sheen and I have learned about “just-in-time” training materials, about organizing online “performance support,” and about “structured writing” (more about these in a future article). Following these principles, we've substantially revised our handbook, to rave reviews from student users.

Of course, this structure isn't appropriate for all types of writing support on the Web. And like everything else on the Web, our materials are a work in progress (for example, printer-friendly versions are on the way). But we'd love to have you take a look and let us know what you think about this approach. Head to [www.wisc.edu/writing](http://www.wisc.edu/writing). Click on “Writer's Handbook.” Within that, “Citing references in your paper” is a convenient place to start.

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# Composing in music and language: A flute instructor in the writing center

Writing tutors wear many hats: they are coaches, mentors, strategists, artists. In addition to these, another role I find relevant to writing centers is that of music instructor. In my roles of flute teacher and writing tutor, I draw upon similarities between how we learn composition in music and language. As Elizabeth Boquet asserts in *Noise from the Writing Center*, explorations into such connections foster innovative approaches to writing.

Mastering new concepts requires building upon familiar knowledge. The basic organizational structures and governing rules in musical compositions are similar to those in linguistic compositions. While theses, academic voice, or dependent clauses may not be concepts developing writers can relate to, music, often referred to as “a universal language,” offers a productive analogy for many writers.

The first thing composers in both mediums must consider is audience. The analogy is this: just as a heavy metal jam session probably isn't suitable to perform for a concert hall full of opera-goers, colloquialisms and sentence fragments typically aren't appropriate when addressing a scholarly audience. Audience is also something tutors need to consider when assisting developing writers. Each writer is at a unique stage in the writing journey and has a different level of musical experience. Therefore, I suggest two strategies for making the most of these musical and linguistic similarities.

The first I call “Pop.” This strategy works well for writers who have never formally studied music, as most will have at least a passing familiarity with songs they've heard on the radio. Writ-

ing tutors can compare an essay to a pop song, its thesis to the chorus. Whether sung or spoken, both the thesis and chorus embody the main idea of a composition; they represent the idea the writer wants her readers to walk away “humming” after hearing it.

Consultant and writer can then move forward with the comparison, envisioning supporting paragraphs as verses that lead into and out of the chorus by providing examples, anecdotes, or additional details that flesh out the main idea. Once these larger pieces of the composition are in place, they can focus on transitions, which serve the same purpose bridges do in songs: they move writer and reader smoothly from one idea—or verse—to the next. Sentence-level editing then becomes fine-tuning the rhythms and melodies; carefully considering word choice and adding metaphor becomes building complex harmonies. In both mediums, the main idea must be placed within a context, which the introduction and conclusion establish.

These same principles apply when working with developing writers who have studied music formally. In these cases, a direct comparison between an essay and a classical composition—a symphony, for example—works best. Here the thesis parallels the theme or motif. Typically, this theme (or main idea) appears within the introduction. The symphony's individual movements then parallel an essay's supporting paragraphs; they further explore, embellish, and expand upon the theme, often considering it from different vantage points and providing counterpoint. Modulations, or transitions, provide smooth connections from one idea to the next, and prevent new ideas from

jarring the listener or sounding like “wrong notes.” Musical breath marks, which are identical to commas in form and function, indicate the beginnings and endings of phrases. Harmonies, such as word choice and metaphor, provide richness and depth. Both forms of composition then end with a conclusion or coda, in which the composer returns to the original theme, incorporating ideas from the body and closing with a final thought about the theme.

The ability to put all of these elements together in an aesthetic and meaningful way—whether in music or language—takes regular practice. Most musicians wouldn't dream of performing a song they hadn't practiced. And yet, developing writers often expect, upon being given an assignment, to be able to step up to the microphone and bring the audience to its feet on opening night without the benefit of a dress rehearsal. Great writers, like great musicians, require practice.

My college orchestra instructor used to tell us, “Practice should never sound good; if it does, you're doing it wrong.” What he meant is that during practice, musicians rarely play a composition from beginning to end. Rather, they pick out the most troublesome spots, break them down into smaller pieces, and then practice them over and over at different tempos, volumes, and articulations until playing them becomes second nature. Their remaining practice time is spent strengthening and refining music's building blocks: scales, arpeggios, and chromatics.

Writing, too, is a messy process; it involves taking apart, rearranging, and putting back together ideas, sentences, and phrases. It involves drilling on the basics—grammar, punctuation, diction—and it involves reading one's work aloud. Musicians learning to play or write symphonies must hear their mistakes in order to correct them, and so must composers of language. For this reason, writing practice and writing center appointments shouldn't necessarily always sound "good" either, yet the sounds of writers and tutors working together through the tough spots makes a harmonious melody indeed.

*Lisa Whalen  
Concordia University  
St. Paul, MN*

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## *Calendar for Writing Centers Associations*

Feb. 19-21, 2004: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Stillwater, OK

**Contact:** Melissa Ianetta. E-mail: [ianetta@okstate.edu](mailto:ianetta@okstate.edu); phone: 405—744-9365; Conference Web site: <http://www.writing.okstate.edu/scwca/meetings.htm>

Feb. 19-21, 2004: Southeastern Writing Centers Association, in Atlanta, GA

**Contact:** Bob Barrier, e-mail: [bbarrier@kennesaw.edu](mailto:bbarrier@kennesaw.edu). Web site: <<http://frink.mypwd.com/proposal/call.html>>; <<http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/swca/>>.

March 6, 2004: Northern California Writing Center Association, in Stanford, CA

**Contact** John Tinker: [jtinker@stanford.edu](mailto:jtinker@stanford.edu); Conference Web site: <<http://ncwca.stanford.edu>>.

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