

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 28, Number 4

Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing December, 2003

...FROM THE EDITOR...

In the last issue of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* for 2003, John Harbord challenges us to think more deeply about the concept of minimalist tutoring and how conferencing can differ in the setting of a European university. Jennifer Liethen Kunka reviews a book-length study of how first-year students understand (or don't understand) writing assignments. Laura Rich confronts the issue of tutoring in a faith-based institution, and Patty Wilde examines the effects of physical attraction in a tutorial.

For those of us considering spending some time during the winter holiday break writing an article for the newsletter, please note that guidelines are available on the *Writing Lab Newsletter's* Web page: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/newsletter/index.html>>. If you have questions about what you are writing (or might write), please send your queries to me (harrism@cc.purdue.edu). I enjoy e-chatting with prospective authors, but please note that I will be away from my computer from Dec. 14 to mid-January.

As we wrap up our work and plan for some leisure time, I wish us all the happiest of holidays, some high-quality R&R, and a 2004 in which peace will somehow return to the world.

• Muriel Harris, editor

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Minimalist tutoring— an exportable model?

The findings of Nancy Sommers' Harvard writing project suggest that, more than anything else, writing is a learning experience: students learn to think and to understand their discipline by writing. For many of us, this is hardly new. Yet Irene Clark and Dave Healy, among others, tell a different story: that of academics who worry "that tutoring students in a writing center will result in a plagiarized paper" (242). These people see writing not as a learning experience but a test, and writing centers might help students cheat at the test.

What does this view of writing mean? If writing is a test, then learning is a pre-stage to writing and the writing tests whether learning has occurred. This view of learning has been with us for a long time: the image of students' empty heads being filled with knowledge poured from the fount of the all-knowing teacher. This outdated view, still taken for granted by alarmingly many, has, I suggest here, prompted a false response on the part of writing centers. The strategy of non-directive tutoring, I will argue, is in part an accommodation to traditional teaching, and fails to take into account other views of teaching. While the non-

directive model may be of value within the American system, its shortcomings make it inappropriate for a European context. I present here an alternative underpinning for tutoring that is more compatible with our current understanding of teaching and learning, and

The Writing Lab Newsletter, published in ten monthly issues from September to June by the Department of English, Purdue University, is a publication of the International Writing Centers Association, an NCTE Assembly, and is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement. ISSN 1040-3779. All Rights and Title reserved unless permission is granted by Purdue University. Material will not be reproduced in any form without express written permission. However, up to 50 copies of an article may be reproduced under fair use policy for educational, non-commercial, use in classes or course packets. As always, proper acknowledgment of title, author, and original publication date in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, Purdue University, should be included for each article.

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newsletter/index.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/newsletter/index.html)

Subscriptions: The newsletter has no billing procedures. Yearly payments of \$15 (U.S. \$20 in Canada) are requested, and checks must be received four weeks prior to the month of expiration to ensure that subscribers do not miss an issue. Please make checks payable to Purdue University and send to the Managing Editor. Prepayment is requested for all subscriptions.

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 wln@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 an October issue).

better meets the needs of academic writer-learners in Europe.

Process tutoring

Two of the most widely-read articles on tutoring are Kenneth Bruffee's "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind" originally written in 1984, and Jeffrey Brooks' "Minimalist Tutoring: Making the student do all the work" written in 1991. Gathered, with others, in the *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*, these two articles have greatly influenced attitudes about non-directiveness in tutoring and the distinction between tutoring and teaching. Both are highly critical of traditional teaching. Bruffee sees peer tutoring as a way to escape the tyranny of the idea that "knowledge is information impressed upon the individual mind by some outside source" (214). "The person who does the most discussing in the discussion class," he adds, "is the teacher." (213) Brooks echoes this critical view of the traditional teacher: listening to the student's needs, he says, "is more than most teachers can do" (220). Both authors assume a negative and traditional view of the teacher.

Brooks and Bruffee buy into the idea of traditional teaching, I suggest, not because they like it, but because they have to live with it. They perceive it as an intractable part of the status quo of the education system. Both are writing in the context of a generalist education system, arguing against traditional teaching, and very eloquently, but from within that context. If helping the writer is cheating, because writing is a test, then minimalist tutoring is a way of working within these limitations. Brooks does not engage the establishment in battle over the role of writing; instead he proposes an alternative which is compatible with the view that writing is a test, yet allows opportunities for the writer to improve. No directiveness—no teacher holding the pen—it's all the student's own work. Whether the minimalist approach is the best way of helping students to learn to

write better is less clear, but I will return to this later.

It is in part out of dissatisfaction with this traditional role of the teacher that the humanist idea of process writing developed: that of students being involved in a learner-centered, discussion-based, exploratory approach to writing. Many humanist features are visible in Bruffee's article, especially where he says: "Learning is an activity in which people work collaboratively to create knowledge amongst themselves" (214). *Process tutoring*, in other words. Through peer tutoring, Bruffee argues, real learning will take place, not the head-filling that occurs in traditional teaching.

This is all very good; I do not take issue either with humanist teaching or process writing. Rather, I suggest first, that Bruffee and Brooks' model, though laudable, is based on an unduly negative conception of teaching, and second, that taking into account genre approaches to writing may offer us a perspective on tutoring more appropriate for a European context.

An alternative view of teaching

Most of us now know that the traditional head-filling model is not the most realistic representation of how learning occurs. We also know that teaching and learning do not fully overlap: what is taught is not always learnt, and what is learnt is often learnt without teaching. Teachers, we hope, are no longer "head-fillers."

Although I suspect it has seeped only slowly into general and state education, one of the most fundamental ideas that I took from the initial EFL teacher training course I took in 1984 was that of the teacher not as a head-filler, but as a facilitator of learning. If we see the teacher as *facilitator*, we can change our perception of the writing tutor. The tutor is no longer diametrically opposed to the teacher/head-filler, but can be seen to share goals and methods with the teacher as facili-

tator. The teacher as facilitator has many roles:

- To listen and find out about a learner's needs
- To create a learning environment and learning opportunities
- To monitor learning and when necessary show the learner that learning has taken place
- To help the learner to set and achieve goals
- To lightly guide the learner's discovery and thinking processes
- To encourage learners to think for themselves and foster learner independence
- To possess the knowledge so as to be able to do the above effectively

In short, one does not have to buy into the head-filling view of teaching in order to espouse the other, very laudable, points that Brooks and Bruffee make about learner autonomy and the sharing of ideas. Once we see teaching as the facilitating of learning, there is no longer a conflict between teaching and tutoring.

Product vs. process in tutoring

Like others in the field, my opinions on tutoring are shaped by the context in which I work, at Central European University, a graduate university of social sciences where students come to do a one-year MA through the medium of English, a language that is not their mother tongue. They have to write numerous term papers and a full-length MA thesis. Our doctoral students are engaged in writing in an even more extensive genre, as well as articles for publication. My colleagues and I both teach writing-in-the-disciplines courses and work with students individually in consultation. This is rather different from the situation at many US universities; maybe from that at many European universities as well. Nevertheless, it is probably closer to the European model in several respects: the education is specialist, not generalist; the demands on the students to be familiar with and refer to the literature are greater; and the genres required are more specifically academic.

It is here that we come into conflict with Brooks. Brooks is not only critical of the tutor as teacher, but also as editor. "The moment we consider it our duty to improve the paper," he says, "we automatically relegate ourselves to the role of editor" (219). In this role, he explains, we "have been of little service to [our] student" (219). In student writing, "the process is much more important than the product" (221). In other words, the two page comp class essay—a common genre in the U.S., but rather less so in Europe—has no value in itself.

In contrast to this typical American genre, my colleagues and I frequently work with students who are engaged in research writing projects of eighty

pages or more. For the graduate student, it is far from obvious that their writing ability in some indistinct future will be more important than their present thesis or dissertation, which may be the most sustained piece of academic writing they ever do. When a student consults us on their MA thesis, what future writing is this 'process' preparing them for? What is more, if we refuse to help students improve the present text when it is part of a thesis, what benefit can we make them see to coming to the writing center at all?

The very different requirements of graduate writing in a European context mean that we approach tutoring rather differently from most writing centers in the U.S. The table below highlights the key differences:

The U.S. Model

- Papers short and often non-academic.
- Paper often not discipline specific.
- Paper brought unseen by the tutor, therefore tutor has no knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.
- Tutor and student may not know each other. Tutorial may be a one-time encounter.
- Tutor and student are near to being (though not quite) peers.
- Student comes (ideally) with a list of concerns about the paper.
- Tutor asks questions in order to find out about students' goals, context etc. in this paper.
- Student reads aloud, for tutor to follow, those parts of the paper he¹ is concerned about.
- Tutor (as peer) has the role of acting as a sounding board.
- Tutor is not guilty of assisting plagiarism because she does not advise.
- Objective of the tutor is to help the writer; the paper is not there to be improved.

¹*I adhere here for convenience to the convention common in EFL writing of referring to the teacher as 'she' and the student as 'he' so as to avoid confusion of reference.*

The Central European University model

- Papers longer and academic.
- Paper nearly always discipline specific.
- Paper received and read through in advance. Teacher evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.
- Teacher and student have an ongoing working relationship. Consultation is part of a year-long relationship and directly linked to the writing course.
- Teacher is not in a peer relationship with student.
- Teacher and student both come with list of questions/concerns about the paper
- Teacher asks questions in order to find out more about context of paper and to compare student's aims-in-mind with what has been written.
- Teacher pinpoints and asks student to read aloud parts of the paper that cause her concern.
- Teacher has in mind a set of conventions of good writing and of the relevant genre that it is her job to help the student acquire.
- Teacher is no more guilty of plagiarism than anyone else in the university who attempts to educate the student.
- Paper is (probably) improved, and through sharing in and being a prime agent in this process of improvement, the writer himself develops.

In dealing with graduate writing, therefore, we are forced to re-examine Brooks' claim that the text is unimportant. While to focus only on the product would indeed reduce the teacher/tutor to the role of editor, to only focus on the process, when the student and the academic community as a whole are primarily concerned with the product, would be to restrict ourselves to an ivory tower of process philosophizing. One could make a plea for compromise: treading a fine line between process theory and product theory. To do so, however, while pragmatic, would lack rigor. Rather, the next section will consider a third theory which can underpin a tutoring approach that is both directive and facilitative, namely genre theory.

Genre tutoring

Section one above showed how the downplaying of the teaching role in Bruffee and Brooks can be traced to a fundamental misperception of that role. Both writers see process as important in the learning of writing, and the non-interventionist/peer model as the most effective way of ensuring that. More recently however, led by the work of Swales, the genre approach has gained considerable strength. Just as Brooks and Bruffee seek to model process tutoring from process theory, this section will frame a model of genre tutoring from genre theory.

In fact, the genre approach is not so new. As early as 1982, Pat Bizzell argued that academic writing:

should not be viewed solely as an individually-oriented, inner-directed, cognitive process, but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions which arise from preferred ways of creating and communicating knowledge within particular communities. (Swales 4)

The kernel of what I wish to address here is already present in Bizzell. "Learning," Bruffee says, "is an activity in which people work collabor-

atively to create knowledge amongst themselves" (214). A peer relationship, in other words. If, as Bizzell claims, learning to write involves "an *acquired* response to the discourse *conventions* which arise from *preferred ways* of creating and communicating knowledge" (Swales 4), then helping another to write better must therefore entail helping them to acquire conventions that the helper knows but the helpee does not. In other words, not a peer relationship. That does not perforce mean the filling of heads with information, but it does mean one party is in some way "expert" and is charged with facilitating the other party's acquisition of conventions and preferred ways of communicating—in short, being a teacher.

Students come to us with a range of genres: research papers, thesis proposals, annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, and of course, the thesis itself. Hoping they will *guess* the conventions of these genres by "work[ing] collaboratively to create knowledge amongst themselves" (214), as Bruffee puts it, is akin to hoping that monkeys with typewriters will succeed in composing Shakespeare. Hoping that they will absorb these conventions "by osmosis" from their own reading is also a hit and miss process. What we would hope to see in the classroom is a process of *guided discovery* whereby the teacher, the "knower," helps the students to establish for themselves the conventions of the genre through their examination of examples of that genre.

This in itself is not new. Neither the role of the teacher as guide in student discovery nor the importance of understanding conventions of writing in the disciplines is particularly groundbreaking. What seems not to have happened systematically, however, is the carrying over of this perspective into tutoring. Much of learning to write in the disciplines does not happen in class. Even if students do discover con-

ventions by genre analysis in the classroom, they do not usually put them into practice then and there. While Swales and Feak do suggest activities like "now identify move one in this introduction; now write your own move one," there is a limit to how far one can break down serious research writing and get students to do it in class by numbers. Most writing is done in students' own time. The prime opportunity for assessment of how well a student has succeeded in acquiring conventions of the discipline and the genre is therefore in the one-to-one tutorial.

What then does a genre approach to tutoring entail? First, the tutor should be able to recognize the features of the genres in question. In other words, *expertise*; at least, a greater degree of expertise than the tutee. This is hardly radical. In practice, peer tutors do have some expertise (we don't deliberately choose the blind to lead the blind); in the theory, however, this expert role has been downplayed so as to emphasize the importance of the peer relationship vs. the teacher/student or filler/receptacle relationship.

Secondly, it means that the text, particularly when it is a genre which is not written multiple times, has an importance in itself. At the same time, these genres are long enough that they are not written at a single sitting: what is learnt in the revision of one chapter can be put into practice in later chapters. Writing, then, is *learning* to improve the *current* text. The tutor's role is not to edit, but to use her expertise to help the student to master conventions and structure by discussing together the weaknesses and strengths of the draft at hand. This will lead to a better revised draft of that chapter, and better first drafts of subsequent chapters, because the tutor will seek to induce general principles of good writing from what is revised in the consultation.

Thirdly, and this is a general principle of good pedagogical practice, the tutor's role is to use her skills to facilitate the development of the student as a competent writer in the most effective way. The tutor makes her decision not on what will most effectively improve the paper, or what will be least directive, but what will *most effectively facilitate learning*, and that may include giving the student the right answer.

I perceive no conflict here between Bruffee's very desirable objectives for learning through discussion on the one hand, and the role of the tutor as guide in the process of learning through discussion on the other. The teacher/tutor has as her objective that the student should succeed in expressing himself within the conventions of the genre in a way that most effectively helps him to develop as a writer and take responsibility for his own learning. The tutor gives just as little help as is needed: not more, because as much of the work should be done by the student as possible; but not less, because to withhold knowledge from those who need it and do not have it has no pedagogical justification.

In sum, within the framework proposed here, the dichotomy between teaching and tutoring raised by Brooks and Bruffee disappears: tutoring is teaching in miniature, tailored to the individual, but according to the prin-

ciples as classroom teaching. Reformulating tutoring within the theoretical framework of genre theory makes it possible to re-vision it as tool perhaps more appropriate for the more specialized writing needs of the European and graduate context.

Afterthought: Demise of the peer tutor?

What does this mean for the peer tutor? Does the implicit need for expertise in a genre approach sound the death knell of peer tutoring? Not at all. Rather, it will require us to realize that tutoring is a part of teaching, and demands many similar skills. Peer tutors need to be trained in the same way as teachers, in the skills of facilitating learning and fostering learner autonomy. Yes, it will cost. It may be cheaper to employ untrained peer tutors than properly trained teachers. That's a strong argument in our modern, cash-strapped world, and a tough one. But at that point the issue becomes clear: if we give in to the argument of cost, we are not employing peer tutors because peer tutoring has certain strengths over teaching, as Bruffee suggested; we are doing it because we cannot afford to train tutors properly.

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East Central Writing Centers Association

Call for Proposals
April 2-3, 2004
Greensburg, Pennsylvania
"The Many Faces of the Writing Center"

This year's theme, "The Many Faces of the Writing Center," invites participants to reflect upon our diversity and its effect on our work. We invite proposals that consider the following: Who is our staff? Who is our clientele? Where do we fit in our institutions? What is our experience level? How do these factors influence our writing centers?

Faculty, administrators, and students are encouraged to submit proposals for a variety of session formats. Related topics are welcome. Proposal deadline: January 30, 2004. For more information, see the conference website: <http://maura.setonhill.edu/~wc_conf04/ecwca.html>.

Book Review

Hunt, Doug. *Misunderstanding the Assignment*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 192 pp., \$25.

Reviewed by Jennifer Liethen Kunka, Francis Marion University (Florence, SC)

Levels of interference

As writing center professionals, we are invariably placed in situations where we need to explain, clarify, and demystify writing assignments to the students who meet with us in tutorials. I would suspect that many of us on occasion find ourselves wondering how little students are sometimes able to tell us about the writing they need to accomplish for their courses—the nature of the assignment, the purpose and audience of the paper, the due date, the expected page length, even the name of the book about which the paper is supposed to be written.

Doug Hunt's 2002 book, *Misunderstanding the Assignment*, attempts to provide educators with insights into such questions. In this ethnographic study, Hunt tracks the progress of six students and their composition teacher through the first few weeks of their first-year composition course at the University of Missouri. The work, written as a "nonfiction novel" (cover), juxtaposes interview responses, transcribed classroom discussions and conferences, journal entries, and student writing against Hunt's reflections about contemporary college students, learning styles, and the psychological development of young adults. This mosaic effect provides readers with an ambitious though uneven account of the decision-making processes by which students make choices about their writing and sort through the new demands college classes place upon them.

The most fascinating sections of this book for writing center scholars will be

the passages in which the six subjects in their own voices describe their family and social backgrounds, reasons for attending college, previous educational experiences, and responses to the writing process. This book is notable in that it effectively captures the haze in which first-year students sometimes float through their college classes. Consider "Katie," a young woman who found it easy to bluff her way through high school writing courses, coaxing ideas, sympathy, and good grades out of her teachers without exhibiting much thought or even cracking the books about which she was assigned to write. Once in college, Katie finds the blur of fraternity parties and fun roommates to be easy distractions from the work required in her classes. However, she finds her usual compensatory coping strategy—feigning confusion about assigned readings to get friends and teachers to explain the material that she never read—does not work well when she enters Rachel Palencia Harper's composition course, where she is challenged to analyze texts and draw conclusions about their messages and relationships to one another.

Another case in point is that of "Rob," a student who tends to view the world through a lens of religious dogmatism. His tendency to view texts only as moral or immoral impedes him from reading with a more critical eye to other themes or issues from which he may make meaning or draw conclusions.

Harper emerges from this text as a courageous and caring instructor who

enthusiastically probes and guides her students towards acquisition of deeper critical thinking, reading, and composing strategies. Harper should be credited for candidly opening her classroom and conferences to Hunt and his researchers' cameras and microphones. However, even Harper admits surprise in recognizing the gulf between her perceptions of her students, as gathered through class discussions and conferences, and her students' subjective positions. She notes that she never knew of Rob's deep-rooted religious convictions—"a remarkable absence since that seems to be all he talked about in his interviews" (154). Consequently, Harper was unable to make the connection that Rob's "religious values made it difficult for him to see the complexity" of texts discussed in the course, thereby affecting his understanding of the complex analyses expected in written assignments. In her "Afterword," Harper concludes that sometimes "it seems like an effective teacher is only a teacher who has said something to a student when he was ready to hear it" (154). After reviewing Katie's comments during the study, Harper soberly concedes that Katie was "technically enrolled in the course, but she didn't *really take* the course" (155). Harper's conclusions carry resonance for writing center professionals. When the Katies of the world greet us in our writing centers, we must also question if and how such students are "ready to hear" us as well.

Hunt's study underscores the value of one-to-one conferencing as a mode of inquiry that stimulates critical think-

ing. Perhaps the most illuminating section of the book is Chapter 4, in which Hunt transcribes the conferences Harper conducts with her students, confirming that individualized discussions can help to clear away patches of foginess and can guide students to a more sophisticated level of comprehension and composition.

While Hunt's text provides insight into the levels of interference that swirl between students and their comprehension of assignments, the study suffers from some organizational and methodological weaknesses. The organization of Chapters 2 through 5 parallels the first four weeks of the course. Entries—often transcribed class and conference discussions or interview material—are provided for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays of each week. For Tuesdays and Thursdays—the days class does not meet—Hunt interjects various sorts of material, including information about Harper and individual students, reflections on the psychological and educational development of young adults, an e-mail from a student, and an "Imaginary Dialogue" between himself and Harper (107). This juxtaposition at times results in a disjointed commentary. A broader, more cohesive and unified discussion regarding Hunt's theories and conclusions about the students in this study would help to provide more of an understanding of the nature of the distances between instructors and students. Similarly, it would be helpful to see Harper's reflections about these six students more regularly throughout the progression of the text.

Furthermore, Hunt's allegiance to the daily journal organizational style seems forced. Each date starts with a brief blurb about current events—the Clinton impeachment trial, military activity in Kosovo, weather reports, Mark McGwire's meeting with the Pope, and debates regarding the drafting of a campus non-discrimination clause, among others. While these lists suggest a desire to provide readers with a temporal and cultural context for the classroom study, one must ask for whom these events are important. It seems that the six students targeted in this study are so immersed in the clouds of their own daily pressures and conflicts that they may be completely unaware that many of these events have even occurred. A more fruitful inclusion might be a more comprehensive list of the events and issues on these students' social radars that divert their attention away from (or bring their attention back to) class each day. Hunt's rigidity to the journal style in the early chapters is also reflected in the endnotes where he admits to changing the date of an email from a Wednesday to a Thursday "to allow the reader a breather" (165). Such liberties with data, both here and in other admitted "flirtations with fiction" (144), such as in Hunt's "Imaginary Dialogue" with Rachel (107), raise questions about the overall focus of the study.

Ethnographies by nature are invariably shaped in part by selection, collection, and interpretive processes. However, both Hunt and Harper con-

cede that the progress of the study itself may have altered the behavior and language of students enrolled in the course (145). Hunt cites the presence of cameras and tape recorders as unavoidably impacting the level of discussion in the classroom. More seriously, however, Hunt suggests that two members of the interview team with a "zealous commitment . . . to critical or liberatory pedagogy" skewed students' interview responses by asking pointed questions that deviated from the open-ended interview protocol followed in the study (145). Though Hunt notes that he has "not relied on any statements . . . extorted from the students by a desire to please an overzealous interviewer" (143), he notes that interviewers' comments may have negatively altered students' overall attitudes towards the course, ultimately impacting their progress and final grades (145-46).

Ethnographies serve as important modes of research for both composition scholars and the writing center community because they illustrate the subjectivities of our students and illuminate the many factors that impact students' responses to college-level writing. Though the results of this study were distorted by the modes of research, *Misunderstanding the Assignment*—as Wendy Bishop states in her introduction to the book—provides "a needed vantage point" from which classroom dynamics can be better understood (viii). Hunt's work provides a building block from which other theorists can learn about the processes and pitfalls of ethnographic studies as well as probe the conscious and unconscious influences that shape students' responses to writing.

Northeast Writing Centers Association

Call for Proposals

April 17, 2004

North Andover, MA

"Facing the Center: Centering, De-centering, and Changing the Face of the Writing Center"

Keynote Speaker: Paul Kei Matsuda

Proposals are welcomed for presentations, workshops, and panels that explore how our histories have informed our theories and practices in regard to clientele and staff, tutoring strategies, program assessment, research, technology, and design and location. Submission deadline: December 27, 2003. For proposal information, please contact Kathleen Shine Cain, Merrimack College, North Andover, Massachusetts. E-mail: Kathleen.Cain@merrimack.edu. Conference web site: <http://merrimack.edu/newca>.

VOICES FROM THE NET

Designing a program review

Recently, a discussion on the WCenter listserv about program reviews for writing centers resulted in responses that are reprinted here for those who may find such answers useful in the future.

Q: From Douglas King

Friends,

I've just gotten notice that I am to conduct a Program Review for the Writing Center, and am reaching out to ask if anyone has experience with such a process. I'm particularly interested in the problem of being asked to conduct a process clearly designed for Academic Programs; for example, the template the Dean has given me asks questions about how students in the Program are assessed, how courses reflect program goals, and so forth.

My impulse is to ask to be allowed to design a Review process that makes sense, which would be some work for me, but at least work that wouldn't be so nonsensical. Does anyone have experience with creating such a process, or know of existing ones that could be used/adapted?

Thanks in advance,
Douglas

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A: From Neal Lerner

Douglas, a document you might find helpful in terms of conducting the review on familiar terms is the self-study questionnaire put together by Jo Koster. You can find it at <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/nwca/nwcadraft.htm>. The context for the document is for the possibility for NWCA (now IWCA) accreditation of a writing center, which was not put into place. However, the areas covered in

the questionnaire provide an important heuristic for any writing center.

Good luck!

Neal Lerner
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A: From Joan Mullin

Douglas, We have done this time and again, and I suggest you use the template you've been given: administrators expect it. However, you can adapt much of it: how students in the Program are assessed; do you follow-up the success of your tutoring? (looking at students' grades, surveying them about their success after you worked with them; surveying the success of students from the faculty members' point of view.), how courses reflect program goals; how the very idea of tutorials reflects the mission of your unit; also, how the unit itself reflects the mission of the institution (providing quality learning experience, retention, students success, etc.)

When it comes to questions of FTEs generated, etc., you need to think in terms of student success—have you done any assessment whereby you (or feedback from students or faculty) can prove that the work in the writing center kept students in classes? in the college?

Also, find out your college's benchmark institutions. Look at their guidelines for program review: sometimes they are spelled out much more clearly and you can get a better idea of what

you need to provide (for example, check out <http://www.umsl.edu/services/academic/Assets/PDFs/ProgramViabilityAudit.pdf>) and http://www.umsl.edu/NCA/id9_m.htm.

Finally, I hate to say this folks, but we are going to have to get creative in this latest attack on education budgets. I also hate to admit that when my dean has to choose between hiring a faculty member to enable a department to teach its required courses for its majors, and not cutting my funding, it's a no-brainer: my funding will be cut. Now, while I can think of creative ways to preserve both, our institution doesn't move very fast. Had the powers-that-be had the vision to follow through on a plan I forwarded two years ago, we wouldn't have had cuts in the writing center this year—now they are implementing it—two years too late, but at least it will stop the bleeding in the future.

Good luck!
Joan

Joan Mullin
University of Toledo
Toledo, OH
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A: From Bobbie Silk

Douglas,

I'm about to make a shameless plug for two chapters in *The Writing Center Resource Manual* which may be of particular interest to you in this situation. The first is Penny Bird's chapter "Program Assessment and Reporting" and the second is Joan Hawthorne's

“Assessment in the Writing Center.” Both offer definitions, concepts, and excellent suggestions for setting up procedures and reports. For your immediate needs, you may want to look at Penny’s sections on Tutor and Director Portfolios. Both types of portfolios may give you useful ideas, but the Director’s Portfolio, in particular, offers a report structure that will be familiar to administrators and academics. Joan’s background on assessment and her section on sources of data might be very valuable in your current process. You’ll like the second part of Joan’s article title, “Not a Horror Story.” Once you start using the terms and concepts of assessment to think about what you and your writing center have been accomplishing all along, you’ll probably find it much less daunting to write a program evaluation. And remember that you can also report that you are “developing” more extensive (or comprehensive) assessment procedures. Administrators can appreciate that finding the right assessment procedures and instruments is a process, so long as you eventually follow through.

Bobbie

Bobbie Silk
Illinois State University
Normal, IL
bbsilk@ilstu.edu

A: From Bob Barnett

Douglas,

I, too, have been asked to conduct a complete program review—by the end of the semester. Michigan is facing another round of state budget cuts (the first one in Sept. was 10%—and our enrollment dropped 6%). The next one, we’ve been told, will be 10-15%.

The future of our Writing Center is on the line, and the program review is intended to guide the provost’s decision for cutting programs/positions. I’ve been handed a list of questions I need to address in my review. If you

send me your fax number, I’d be happy to send it to you, for whatever it’s worth. Our Center generates credit hours through our developmental writing program, and I am gathering data that reflects our retention efforts. We have been touted in a recent newsletter from student affairs as being an important retention tool; I plan to use that endorsement in my review. I’m also including a strategic plan, which will map out the future direction and growth projections for our Center. This, too, will become central to my argument that our services/budget should not be cut.

Bob Barnett
U. of Michigan-Flint
Flint, MI
rbarnett@spruce.flint.umich.edu

(Bob Barnett later sent the following questions for this reprint of the discussion):

Here are some of the questions from our Program Review list:

1. Assess academic quality, including current faculty, value and character of the program, and student performance. Compare the program you offer to comparable comprehensive Michigan public universities. In what respects is the UM-Flint program similar or different? In what ways is the UM-Flint program better, or deficient?

2. How central is the program to the University Mission?

3. Using program cost data provided, in what ways might program costs be reduced either through combination of existing programs, through program relocation, through resource sharing, including joint appointments, or through other means? What would the academic consequences of such steps be?

4. What is the service function of the program? Please be specific.
5. Summarize external accreditation reports, if applicable.
6. Are there locally competing programs? Does the UM-Flint program have articulation agreements with state community colleges? Would it be desirable for it to do so?
7. Summarize outcomes assessment data and its influence on the program.

A: From Mary Alm

Doug

A great resource (discovered by our colleague Isabelle Thompson at Auburn) is Virginia Commonwealth University’s WEAVE model. WEAVE: A Quality Enhancement Guide for Academic Programs and Administrative and Educational Support Units. Writing Centers are clearly more Educational Support Units than Academic Programs: <<http://www.vcu.edu/quality/pdfs/WEAVEManual2002.pdf>>.

Good luck!

Mary

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TUTORS' COLUMN

When theologies conflict: Reflections on role issues in a Christian writing center

“Who’s next on the agenda?” I asked as I glanced down at the schedule. When I looked up, I saw Adam, a familiar face from my University Seminar class I co-taught last semester. I handed him the couple pages of paperwork while he handed me his paper to read. I continued with my routine process as we began to discuss his paper. It was exceptionally well-written for someone whose primary language is not English; Adam is from the Middle East. He was writing about how his mother is a very influential person in his life. As we discussed the overarching issues of his essay, Adam stated, “She’s the one who’s gonna get me into Heaven.”

“Oh . . . kind of like Jesus,” I retorted, somewhat in jest. He laughed, but he wasn’t joking. An awkward pause penetrated the cubicle in which we were working. What was I supposed to do? Obviously, particular views of each of our faiths did not agree. At a faith-based university, where integration of faith and learning is stressed and evangelism is expected, my role of tutor collided with my faith’s demands.

A tutor’s role

As tutors in writing centers, we fall into the category of educators. We have certain responsibilities that we need to accomplish during a tutoring session. With the particulars left up to our discretion, we are to look at the student’s writing and ask specific questions as an unbiased audience to clarify his/her writing on a macro, then micro, level. Some sessions are more produc-

tive than others, and a shoal of ideas and personal opinions are represented. We are to be unbiased in our approaches, allowing the writer’s original ideas to flow. During Adam’s session, I dealt with the issues of structure and the overall purpose for his audience. We discussed ways in which he could further organize his ideas into a logical paper. As evidence of his religious preference conflicted with mine, I casually mentioned my beliefs, but chose instead to focus on my duties as a tutor. Perhaps I planted seeds of faith that would be harvested later, I decided. But as I struggled through this session, I began to question the priority of my roles.

A perspective of faith

This confusion of roles lies in the fact that I tutor at a faith-based university. Abilene Christian University’s mission statement is “to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.” The one-to-one relationship with a variety of students in the Writing Center promotes an ideal setting in which to emulate our mission statement. Carrying out that statement is, in essence, our philosophy of education. Yet, before this session, my personal philosophy of education had never been challenged. Difficulties arise because all students do not personally profess common ideals of the Christian faith. Adam believes in God, but his particular beliefs beyond that differed with mine. In retrospect, to comply with the mission statement of the school, I should have followed up at a later time to discover the differences in our cultures and faith

beliefs—outside the context of the Writing Center.

At Abilene Christian University, we hear the phrase “faith-integrated learning” over and over until the meaning is diluted in its repetition. Instead of embracing that statement as something we’re already doing, I would argue that we need to more actively integrate faith into our community; this is appropriate and necessary, and takes effort, especially in one-to-one situations. However, one must proceed carefully because risks accompany actions when sorting through contradictory issues such as religious preference.

Faith in practice

Framing a tutoring session with a faith-based perspective is appropriate at a faith-based university. As in the previous example, clients often express personal thoughts and opinions during the session. Tutors provide writers helpful feedback about how we perceive their written thoughts. If a dynamic sentence presents itself, we comment; if a writer is especially attentive to detail, we notice and affirm. In the context of giving feedback, I believe it can be appropriate to respond personally to issues arising from textual concepts. We ask questions to clarify our thoughts and our perceptions of their work. Through such questions, we can help writers clarify their thoughts. Instead of retorting with a comment, I should have asked Adam a question such as, “Is this a metaphor, or does your religion truly believe that parents are your ticket to heaven?” Inoffensively, I would have

likely opened the doors for spiritual conversation and thus appropriately integrated my faith into my tutoring. In Adam's situation, I would have first asked appropriate open-ended questions.

I hasten to add that a feasible alternative to overt integration exists. Many times in situations such as mine, especially at a faith-based university, one tends to speak and preach about problems in an attempt to resolve them. In tutoring situations, perhaps an alternative would be not to speak. Tutors should carry out their professional duties first, establishing trust with our clients in a non-threatening way. Then, if the opportunity presents itself, we can lay the groundwork to springboard into

deeper religious conversations, apart from the tutorial. I have found through observation that many students of other faiths at ACU are turned off by Christianity because once some people find out about the different faiths, they start preaching and trying to convert. Through the professional relationship of tutoring, trust can be established and separate conversations can eventually take place.

Final thoughts

It is difficult to share our faith with others of different backgrounds. Ironically, I have had numerous encounters with Adam since he came into the Writing Center, but I have not brought up the issues I had with his paper. We have not discussed anything concern-

ing religious beliefs or preferences. But, I have always said, "Hi," with a smile and have genuinely asked about his day. Therefore, I have become a friend who, when other situations arise, will be able to express my beliefs more acceptably. Because of my experience with Adam, I have come to realize that integrating my faith in my tutoring can be appropriate and necessary, especially in the context of a faith-based university, yet it is difficult. In future happenings such as this, I will be better prepared to confront religious issues as I keep my roles—my tutor role and my faith role—separate entities that are mutually beneficial.

Laura Rich
Abilene Christian University
Abilene, TX

Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association

Call for Proposals
April 24, 2004
Dundalk, MD
Keynote speaker: Robin Becker

Tutors, teachers, and researchers in the teaching of composition are invited to submit proposals on any subject including the relationship of the tutor and teacher, tutor training, faculty/writing center relationships, and balancing teaching and writing center work. Presentation formats include 20-minute presentations, 60-minute workshops, 60-minute roundtable or panel discussions, and poster presentations (easels and tables provided).

Please submit, in triplicate, a one-page abstract with a cover sheet that indicates the type of presentation, names and addresses (include e-mail) of presenters, and a two-to three sentence informative description by January 30, 2004 to: Brenda Stevens Fick, Student Success Center, CCBC Dundalk, 7200 Sollers Point Road Baltimore, MD 21222. Phone: 410-285-9877; Online submissions: bfick@ccbcmd.edu.

Midwest Writing Centers Association

Call for Proposals
November 4 – 6, 2004
St. Cloud, MN
*"Talk Like a River: Discourses, Faith, Ethos,
and Writing Centers"*

We invite proposals in the following areas: Writing centers, social justice and peacemaking; writing centers and sustainability, service learning, ethos, excess, simplicity or spirituality; rereading theory as praxis; ethical tutoring/ethical writing; stewardship in writing center administration. Proposals for individual and group presentations, panel discussions, roundtables, workshops, and research displays are welcome. We particularly encourage proposals for interactive, discussion-based sessions. Proposals should include a presentation title, the names, titles, and contact information of all presenters, the presentation format, a 350-word description of the presentation and a 50-word abstract. We encourage you to submit proposals electronically at the MWCA website: <http://www.ku.edu/~mwca/>. If necessary, proposals may be mailed to Frankie Condon, Conference Chair, Department of English, 720 Fourth Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498. Proposals must be postmarked by March 1, 2004 for consideration.

IWCA 2003 Awards

At the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Conference in Hershey, PA, in October 2003, the following awards were announced:

The Outstanding Book Award for 2002 went to *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*. Ed. Paula Gillespie, Alice Gillam, Lady Falls Brown, and Byron Stay.

The Outstanding Article Award for 2002 went to Sharon Thomas, Julie Bevins, Mary Ann Crawford. "The Portfolio Project: Sharing our Stories." *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*. Ed. Paula Gillespie, Alice Gillam, Lady Falls Brown, and Byron Stay.

The Muriel Harris Outstanding Service Award for 2003: Every three years, the IWCA membership nominates and the committee of previous winners selects the winner of the IWCA Muriel Harris Outstanding Service Award. Jeanne Simpson, 2000 Award recipient and IWCA president in the early 1980s, presented the 2003 IWCA Muriel Harris Outstanding Service Award to Pam Childers. Below is a copy of Jeanne Simpson's speech:



Pam Childers

This year's recipient of the Muriel Harris Outstanding Service Award is one of two nominees, both excellent members of our professional community. I thank all who submitted nominations for their time and for the generous spirit with which they were offered. And I thank the committee for their work and for making things easy by choosing this year's recipient in a unanimous vote.

Our recipient is one of the most loved members of the IWCA. Her creativity and humor have delighted us all for many years. She smiles, keeps up with our lives, and shares in our celebrations and sorrows. With every presentation or workshop she offers, she expands our vision of how to teach, how to involve and be involved, how to take risks. Above all, she reminds us constantly that taking our work seriously doesn't require us to be solemn; she loves uninhibited silliness and can persuade the most reluctant to participate.

Pam Childers is a past president of the IWCA and has served continuously on the executive board for so long, she probably thinks it is a life sentence. She was responsible for the *Writing Center Directory* for many years, securing funding for the directory from The McCallie School. She has served the IWCA and published on writing centers without the support or the rewards that a college or university faculty member can expect, attending many IWCA Executive Board meetings at NCTE, CCCC, and the IWCA Conferences.

No one has done more to promote high school writing centers than she, and there isn't a close second here. Her collection, *The High School Writing Center*, is the only book on the subject and is essential reading for anyone who is directing or wants to direct a writing center in secondary education. In fact, it is essential reading for all writing center personnel, as a means of expanding their vision of how writing centers function. This book is just one of her many publications to support high school writing centers.

She makes sure that the IWCA keeps K-12 issues and situations in mind in its promotion and support of writing centers, and it is appropriate for the IWCA to recognize the importance of K-12 writing centers with the service award. As Jim McDonald wrote of Pam, "There are many deserving of recognition for their service to writing centers, but when I think of what service means, I can't come up with a better nomination than Pam Childers."

My friends, it is with deep pleasure that I present the 2003 Outstanding Service Award to Pam Childers.

For your reference shelf

Ayto, John. *The Oxford Dictionary of Slang*. NY: Oxford UP, 2003. 480 pp. \$14.95.

This dictionary, which brings together over 10,000 words and phrases common to 20th century English, is organized thematically, with slang words gathered under such headings as "the body and its functions" and "sustenance and intoxication." The book has a comprehensive

A-Z index of all the words included, and citations include origins and illustrative quotations.

Order from Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10016-4314. Phone: 212-726-6000; fax: 212-726-6447. Web site: <www.oup-usa.org>.

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).

An APA booklet

• St. Mary's University of Minnesota Writing Center

<http://www2.smumn.edu/deptpages/~tcwritingcenter/>

With a staff of two, I created a writing center here at faculty request. The online WC and the booklets (I have one for AMA and another for undergrads) are my attempts to deliver services without adequate staff.

To counteract the myriad of conflicting "APA cheat sheets" circulating around campus, I wrote a booklet for graduate students that has been adopted campus wide. The booklet is not intended to replace the APA manual, but to interpret the manual for novices, to offer suggestions about how to use it, and to supplement it with other writing tips. The booklet is sold in our campus bookstore and is available in PDF format from our writing center home page at <http://www2.smumn.edu/deptpages/~tcwritingcenter/>. Be sure to open the PDF bookmarks to navigate the booklet without scrolling.

Cheryl Prentice
Director, The Writing Center
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
School of Graduate & Special Programs
cprentic@smumn.edu

Exploring issues of attraction

(continued from page 15)

Despite this subject's particular relevance, physical attraction in writing center tutorials is a subject that is rarely addressed in tutor-training sessions and writing center-related literature. Physical attraction is a topic that may make us feel awkward because it raises questions about professionalism and appropriate behavior during sessions. However, having broached the subject to Xavier's tutors at our monthly staff meeting, I found they were both open and responsive to the topic. We discussed both the results of their questionnaires and Kaplan's studies. While some tutors noted they had previously thought little of the impact of physical attraction in the writing

center, others found the discussion reassuring. However, all indicated that the material helped them to consider, or reconsider, how they dealt with the issue of physical attraction. It forced them to ask questions such as

- "How do I respond to an attractive student?"
- "Is my response appropriate?"
- "Am I considering each student's needs equally and fairly?"

The tutors felt that the information made them more aware of how physical attraction may impact a tutorial, and by addressing it directly and acknowledging the possibilities, they

were better able to recognize and handle such a situation.

Patty Wilde
Portland Community College
Portland, OR

Works Cited

- Jackson, Linda. *Physical Appearance and Gender*. Albany: State University of New York P, 1992.
- Patzer, Gordon L. *The Physical Attractiveness Phenomena*. New York: Plenum P, 1985.
- Kaplan, Robert M. "Is Beauty Talent? Sex Interaction in the Attractiveness Halo Effect." *Sex Roles*. 4.2 (1978): 195-203.

Exploring issues of attraction in writing center tutorials

Writing center directors aim to prepare their tutors for a number of situations that may occur during a tutorial; tutors are taught how to work with the terse student, the emotional student, the angry student, the reluctant student, even the violent student. While many bases have been covered with this approach, there is a particularly plausible circumstance that has received little attention: the issue of physical attraction. While a tutor's attraction to a student may appear to be a trivial topic, it is one, in fact, that merits an earnest discussion. Writing centers are typically staffed with college students, and as such, it is likely that they have as much interest in dating as they do in writing. Tutors also often assist their peers and classmates in the writing center, merging the social pool with the tutoring pool. These factors increase the probability that tutors, at some point, will find themselves attracted to a student whom they assist. Further, there is evidence that suggests that a tutor's attraction toward a student may affect the tutorial: the structure of a session is likely to be altered and the writing may be perceived more or less favorably. For these reasons, it is important to explore and discuss the effects of physical attraction in writing center tutorials.

In order to better understand the effects of a writing center tutor's attraction, I informally surveyed the staff of Xavier University's Writing Center (Cincinnati, OH), where I worked as a graduate assistant from 2001-2003, by means of anonymous questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered in the spring of 2002 to nine tutors and in the winter of 2003 to ten tutors. Twelve females and seven males participated in the survey; their ages var-

ied from nineteen to twenty-four. In addition to the tutors' responses, several psychological studies that considered how physical attraction affected the discernment of writing samples and perceptions of intelligence were examined. The culmination of these discrete elements allowed for a more complete investigation of physical attraction as it pertains to the specific environment of writing centers.

The writing center tutors at Xavier indicated on the administered questionnaires that, on occasion, they were attracted to the students they tutored. One male tutor commented that "Every so often I find myself attracted to a tutee, but usually I am not aware of physical attractiveness." The female tutors tended to have comparable responses; one female tutor wrote that she did "not generally notice tutees, unless they are *so* attractive." While, on average, Xavier's tutors did not frequently find themselves attracted to students whom they tutor, they did express that such an event was likely to pique their attention. According to the questionnaire responses, the majority of tutors were very aware of tutoring a student they found attractive. One female tutor wrote, "I think that it's hard to *not* notice when you're sitting in such close proximity to someone you find attractive." Similarly, a male tutor remarked that "It's difficult not to notice an attractive woman while sitting with her for 50 minutes." Although tutors were not often attracted to students, they were attentive to such a situation when it occurred.

In addition to the questions pertaining to the frequency and extent that attraction occurs in a writing center tutorial, the tutors at Xavier were also

asked about how the overall structure of a session might be affected by issues of attraction. According to their responses, attraction to a student is likely to alter the structure of a tutoring session in a number of ways. Some believed that attraction had a positive effect on tutorial sessions; these tutors commonly indicated that their tutoring skills were improved by the circumstance. A male tutor wrote that he "might be prone to smile more, or be more kind." Another male also noted positive modifications: "I have found that I will prefer working with a female whom I am attracted to. I cover the necessary points in each session whether male or female; however, I find that my level of enthusiasm changes whether I am attracted to the female I am working with or not." Some female tutors also believed that attraction to a student had positive ramifications on a tutoring session: "We are naturally more drawn to attractive people and would therefore affect a more positive, friendly attitude." Although a significant number of tutors (over one-third of those surveyed) believed that attraction to a student positively affected a tutoring session, the remaining tutors responded with contrary feelings.

About one-fourth of the Xavier tutors revealed that attraction to a student had negative repercussions on a tutorial session. Specifically, some tutors tended to feel less at ease with a student to whom they were attracted, and this, they believed, hindered their tutoring skills. One male tutor wrote, "I feel less comfortable [around attractive females]; consequently, I might tend to ruin things and be less outgoing. I am shy like that." Another male tutor, too, indicated that he felt unnerved; he has

found himself “holding back somewhat for fear of flirting with [attractive females],” and he “may not address certain topics.” Some female tutors shared like feelings. One female tutor wrote that she felt “uncomfortable” with students whom she found attractive, while another female tutor wrote of “feeling intimidated” in such a situation.

While almost seventy percent of the tutors at Xavier indicated that attraction to a student had either a positive or negative effect on a tutorial, the remaining believed that it had little, if any, effect. One male tutor noted that he will “notice if a tutee is attractive, but that doesn’t affect the session.” In a similar manner, another male tutor wrote, “Other than my awareness [of attraction], there is no discernable effect.” A female tutor also indicated that attraction, for her, does not affect a tutorial; she explained, “To be totally honest, [attraction] doesn’t really affect the session much, but I think that it is because I am in a relationship.” The array of responses to questions of attraction in the writing center may be elucidated through the examination of studies that examine the relationship between attraction and perceptions of intelligence.

A number of experiments have been conducted to determine if and to what extent attraction influences assessments of intelligence, and the results of these findings provide further insight into how attraction may affect a tutorial session. David Landy and Hal Sigall’s study, conducted in 1974, surveyed sixty male participants to determine how physical attraction affected their judgments of writing composed by females (Patzer 102). Two essays were used in this experiment: one had been previously judged to be of high literary quality, while the other had been judged to be of low literary qual-

ity. Attached to the essays were photographs of females either of high or low physical attractiveness. The low quality essays associated with physically attractive females were consistently evaluated as having “better ideas, possessing better style, being more creative, and generally being of higher quality,” while the less attractive females with the same low quality essay were rated lower (Patzer 102).

Robert Kaplan, in 1978, reproduced, but more importantly expanded, the work of Landy and Sigall. Kaplan considered how both male and female subjects rated the writing of attractive and unattractive male and female writers. Although Kaplan’s tests do not pertain specifically to the writing center environment, a number of correlations exist between writing center tutors and Kaplan’s subjects. Like many tutors, Kaplan’s subjects are undergraduate students. In total, 260 male and female undergraduate students from a large university participated in Kaplan’s study (Kaplan 197, 202). Further, the structure of these experiments loosely resembles the structure of tutoring sessions. In Kaplan’s experiment, male and female subjects were asked to read a short essay that had been previously established as low quality and provide feedback on both the essay and its author; attached to the essays were photographs of the supposed male or female author who was previously determined to be of high or low physical attractiveness (Kaplan 197). While tutors do not make such formal judgments of students or their work, they are asked to read and to a certain extent evaluate the writing (of varying quality) of a student.

The results of Kaplan’s experiment indicate different responses to attractive and unattractive male and female authors. Kaplan reported that the male subjects tended to view the low quality

work of attractive females more favorably than the low quality work of unattractive females, while the female subjects were not inclined to be significantly affected by the female author’s attractiveness or lack thereof (Kaplan 200, 203). Kaplan’s work also showed that neither males nor females were significantly swayed in any direction by the low quality work of attractive or unattractive males (Kaplan 202).

Neither Kaplan’s studies nor the informal questionnaires administered to the writing center tutors at Xavier University provides an infallible read on how tutors respond to attraction in a writing center setting. While none are as oriented toward writing as Kaplan’s study, there are various other studies that continue to debate how attraction influences perceptions of general intelligence. Allan Feingold’s study, conducted in 1990, reveals that physical attraction has moderate effects on perceptions of intellectual competence for both males and females (Jackson 86). Feingold’s study did not find any evidence that supported that the attractiveness stereotype differed for males and females; that is, both males and females perceived the given subject as more intelligent based on a high level of attractiveness (Jackson 86). In this regard, Feingold’s results do differ from those found in Kaplan’s study. While Kaplan, Feingold and others offer various perspectives and possibilities concerning attraction and intelligence, they do illustrate that attraction, in some way, influences their subjects’ perceptions. Further, thirteen of the nineteen Xavier tutors surveyed indicated that attraction had a positive or negative effect on a tutorial. For these reasons, it is reasonable to assume that attraction also affects writing center tutorials.

(continued on page 13)

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; 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. 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; Conference Web site: <http://ncwca.stanford.edu>.

April 2-3, 2003: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Greensburg, PA

Contact: Conference Web site: http://maura.setonhill.edu/~wc_conf04/ecwca.html.

April 17, 2004: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in North Andover, MA
Contact: Kathleen Shine Cain, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA. E-mail: Kathleen.Cain@merrimack.edu. Conference web site: <http://merrimack.edu/newca>.

April 24, 2004: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Dundalk, MD
Contact: Brenda Stevens Fick, Student Success Center, CCBC Dundalk, 7200 Sollers Point Rd., Baltimore, MD 21222. Phone: 410-285-9877. Online Submissions: bfick@cpcbmd.edu.

November 4-6, 2004: Midwest Writing Centers Association, in St. Cloud, MN
Contact: Frankie Condon, Department of English, 720 Fourth Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498. Web site: <http://www.ku.edu/~mwca/>.

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

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