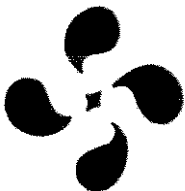


WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

Vol. III, No. 8 (April, 1979)

DID YOU RECEIVE A COPY OF THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER? Sporadic reports continue to filter back from people in different states who never got this issue. If you are among this group, let me know. We'll duplicate more copies and try again.

In the meantime, please continue to send your articles, names of new members, and contributions of \$2 (with checks made payable to me) to:



Muriel Harris, editor
WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
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The Autotutorial Lab at the CCCC

One type of writing laboratory which has received little attention until recently is the autotutorial lab. Autotutorial approaches have worked well and have been cost effective in areas like the sciences. However, administrative complexities and a lack of really effective self-instructional materials have generally prevented their application in areas like writing. At the CCCC in Minneapolis, there will be several opportunities for those interested in organizing an autotutorial writing laboratory, or in adding a self-teaching component to an existing multi-purpose lab.

On Friday afternoon, April 6, Mary Epes, Carolyn Kirkpatrick, and Michael Southwell will present a special session, "The COMP-LAB Project at York College, CUNY: An Integrated Program in Basic Writing." A two-year grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education has permitted them to develop materials and procedures for a self-teaching lab integrated into a basic writing

course. The COMP-LAB program has been adopted at two colleges besides York, and at three others, its laboratory component is being adapted to diverse student needs.

A selection of the self-instructional materials developed at York College will be available for examination at the Materials Exchange Table arranged for the Special Interest Session on Writing Labs. These materials will be published by Prentice-Hall late in the fall of this year. The exercises can also be used in a lab format, with supplementary audiotapes. The developers are available to consult with those who are developing or wish to develop an autotutorial lab or a writing course with a lab component. Readers who wish more information should write to Professor Epes, Kirkpatrick, or Southwell, Department of English, York College, CUNY, Jamaica, New York 11451.

Finally, one of the ten discussion groups in the Special Interest Session on Writing Labs focuses on the autotutorial lab. This will be a nuts-and-bolts session for those interested not only in the pedagogical effectiveness of the self-instructional approach, but also in the practical details of equipping and running an autotutorial lab.

Mary Epes
York College, CUNY

see you at CCCC

INSTITUTE ON COLLEGE LEARNING
CENTERS IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 1979

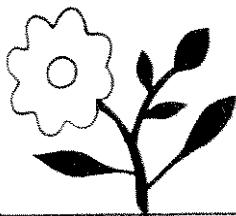
The third annual summer institute for directors and staff members of college learning centers will be held June 24-30, 1979 at the University of California,

Berkeley, under the auspices of the University's Education Extension.

Keyed to the theme, "Increasing the Impact of Learning Assistance Services," the institute will present current information, techniques and skills for administrators planning to start learning centers, directors who wish to improve an existing program and learning specialists who want to increase their skills in working with students.

Dr. Martha Maxwell, academic coordinator of the Student Learning Center at UC-Berkeley, will coordinate the institute program, aided by guest speakers and workshop leaders from other centers throughout the nation. Topics will include organizing and administering learning centers, selecting and training tutors, diagnosing learning difficulties, teaching reading to students of different ethnic backgrounds, dealing with writing problems, and materials and methods for improving study skills.

Details may be obtained by writing to Education Extension, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, or calling (415) 642-1171.



I believe my textbook, The Two R's: Paragraph to Essay, will be of interest to WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER readers. The text is written on a 6th grade level, and the reading selections range from 7th through 9th. Each chapter, introduced by a humorous cartoon and centered around a rhetorical mode, combines progressively more difficult reading and writing skills. Although the book was field tested at a community college in a class for nontransfer students, the answer section allows a student to work through the text alone.

Requests for complimentary copies can be sent to:

Ms. Carol Luitjens, Marketing Manager
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
605 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Shirley Fencil

BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE
ENGLISH LEARNING CENTER
AT DEL MAR COLLEGE

The English Learning Center has made significant progress toward becoming a truly comprehensive facility. Located in the English Building on the East Campus of the college, the ELC is operated by a full-time director, an assistant director, and seven student tutors.¹ This staff permits 62½ hours of service each week. Surveys indicate an average of 20 students per hour use the center during a full day of operation. Use has often approached the 50 student limit of the facility.

Equipment, Materials, and Catalog

The ELC is equipped with 34 carrels, each housing a tape player, a slide projector, and a viewing screen. Tables and chairs can accommodate another 18-20 students. In Spring 1979 computer assisted instruction will be available in the center through two computer terminals.

At present a variety of instructional materials are available within the ELC including multi-media packages (commercial and faculty produced),² programmed and standard texts, and brief study guides prepared by the faculty and the ELC staff. Computer assisted instruction will significantly increase the range of programs.

A detailed catalog of ELC materials has been prepared for distribution. Within it, materials are divided into subject areas such as grammar, punctuation, composition techniques, the research paper, and spelling. Subject areas are further divided according to format: computer assisted, multi-media, and textbook. An additional breakdown of materials into levels of difficulty and time requirements is provided for the student tutors. This breakdown assists them in making appropriate selections until they become familiar with the available materials.

¹Student tutors are carefully selected, and they are trained within the ELC. Since they are not considered a part of the work-study program, their hours are not limited.

²English faculty members are encouraged to produce new programs for the ELC: the ELC staff is available to assist them.

Scope of the ELC

A primary function of the ELC is to support the range of English composition programs at Del Mar College. Students, developmental or regular, may be assigned into the center by their instructors, but the majority are walk-ins. This is especially true when students are preparing for the departmental competency tests which are given at all levels of the composition program. The ELC provides specific study materials, practice tests, and individual tutoring,

In addition, afternoon study sessions which concentrate on specific areas of the minimum competency tests are held weekly. Instructors volunteer their time to hold these sessions which last approximately one hour. Though students are under no obligation to attend, 50-75 students have been present at each session. A Saturday morning session drew over 200 students. The possibility of expanding these study sessions into areas of composition and literature is being explored.

Beyond meeting minimum competency requirements, the ELC helps students eliminate errors within their compositions. Specific study and individual tutoring are again provided. Students are especially urged to seek ELC assistance if they are having difficulty understanding a writing assignment or getting started on an assignment. Further assistance is offered in proofreading and revision.

Students enrolled in sophomore literature courses are also encouraged to use the ELC. Basic approaches to writing on literary topics are provided through texts, media programs, and individual tutoring. Assistance with library research and writing the documented essay is also available. The research materials are used by departments within the college other than English.

Service to other departments is growing, with a significant number of students entering the ELC from history. The center also supports instruction within the Technical-Vocational school, and it is attempting to increase service in that area.

Courses Offered Through the ELC

Three courses are offered through the ELC each semester; each course carries one hour of elective credit. They are entitled Functional English, Building Vocabulary, and Spelling Improvement. An adult education class is also offered through the ELC; it allows enrolled

students to concentrate on any area of English language use they desire for a period of six weeks. In the future, short courses may be structured for specific groups, such as businessmen interested in writing a particular type of report.

Potential For Teacher Education

One of the most promising uses of any learning center is for teacher education. Few other environments can provide such a wealth of learning experiences with students differing in age, background, and level of ability. Few other environments can offer such an opportunity for research into instructional methods and materials. Because Del Mar College is located in the vicinity of two universities, the potential for teacher education through workshops, seminars, and internships is high, and such activities will be pursued.

For teachers already in the field, the ELC offers a unique opportunity to explore new instructional materials and techniques which can be applied to students at a variety of grade levels.

The Promotion of ELC Services

The ELC uses several methods of promoting its service to students and faculty. Notices of new materials, study sessions, etc. are periodically sent to individual faculty members for their information and for announcement to classes. Bulletin boards within the ELC and a prominent display case outside the entrance to the center are also used for ELC notices. Students are growing accustomed to checking these locations for information.

The newest method of communication is ELC Notes, a newsletter printed periodically to disseminate information about the ELC and the English Department. ELC NOTES often contains brief instructional materials such as study guides or practice quizzes. Copies of the newsletter are made available within the ELC and at other locations within the English Building and the English Annex.

The English Learning Center at Del Mar College has undergone rapid growth, and an expansion of services. In its commitment to excellence in communication skills it will continue to develop its comprehensive character.

Marc A. Nigliazzo
English Learning Center Director
Del Mar College



Where Does the Writing Center Fit in?



How should writing be taught in the university? Experience tells us that Freshman Comp. is not enough. That conclusion was substantiated some sixteen years ago by the "Dartmouth Report," which observed that if students are to maintain and improve their skills, writing must be required, and carefully criticized throughout the undergraduate years. (Albert R. Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College, New York, 1963, pp. 150-151.)

To implement writing throughout the curriculum, as many of us are discovering, is a painstaking and sometimes painful job. Setting up a series of courses in writing is easier than asking everyone to be responsible for teaching it. But if we assume that learning needs are individual rather than uniform, a pluralistic program which offers students various ways to learn to write seems desirable. At Clark we are trying to achieve the goal of writing throughout the curriculum by means of interdisciplinary and departmental programs and the Writing Center. The three parts of the program provide different means to the achievement of coherent, correct, and graceful writing, while sharing two common assumptions: (1) writing is a cognitive tool and (2) writing is a process. (Let me stress here that the Writing Center works from these assumptions as fully as the other two parts of the program. The Center's function is not limited to remedial work.) Working from these common assumptions, we hope to provide students with enough options to put together a four-year writing program suited to their needs.

The interdisciplinary part of the program is the Program of Humanistic Studies, an NEH-funded project stressing the teaching of basic communication skills. Attached to the courses in the Program are writing groups facilitated by undergraduate teaching apprentices. The courses attempt to teach the students to develop writing skills. Teachers and teaching apprentices attend a bi-weekly surseminar to train the TA's in running the groups and to involve teachers and TA's in a joint discussion of how best to frame assignments to allow for revision.

courses, for many students, developing writing skills may also require a course in itself. The English Department offers the basic expository writing course, which also stresses revision. Unlike its counterparts at many colleges, Expository Writing is not required. Instead, we provide alternative ways to reach the goals of the course. One of these alternatives is the Writing Center, of which I will speak in a moment. For those who wish to go beyond the basic course, members of the English Department teach Intermediate Composition and a variety of advanced courses. The Biology Department offers "Scientific Writing for Graduate Students," and the History Department offers "Writing for Upper Class Students in the Social Sciences."

Finally, the Writing Center offers free individual and small group tutoring to all students in the University. Individual tutoring supplements all courses by providing intensive, individual work. The center also supplements the curriculum by providing non-credit workshops such as "A Five-Part Workshop in Writing an Essay." In a pluralistically conceived writing program the Writing Center can do much more than fulfill its expected remedial function. It can extend yet another option to those students who want to work on their writing but who cannot schedule or do not want a regular writing course. To serve still another group of students we plan to have Center tutors set up writing groups in the dorms. These groups will extend peer tutoring in writing to those who are not taking courses to which such groups are attached.

Thus, I am suggesting that although Writing Centers specialize in editing for mechanics and usage, they need not, and probably should not, limit themselves to that job. No writing program should treat writing purely as mechanics or it will end by creating mechanical monsters. More flexible than most courses, Writing Centers can offer much-needed individual attention in all aspects of revision, whether conventional or intentional, and they can devise and schedule individual and group sessions to meet students' varied needs.

Leone Scanlon
Clark University

While writing should be taught in most



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