Included in this month's WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER, along with several announcements and a book review, are some articles which suggest new dimensions both for writing labs and for articles for the newsletter: a bibliography for training lab tutors, a description of a lab for business and technical writing, and a report on the use of some unusual teaching tools in a lab. We welcome such excellent and useful articles and look forward to more of the same from our readers, along with more announcements, reviews, comments, questions, names of new members, and donations of $3 (in checks made payable to me) to:

Muriel Harris, editor
WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
Dept. of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN 47907

For problem spellers, in addition to one of the texts on spelling, we make use of Betty Nelson's sand spelling technique. (Words are written in glue and sprinkled with sand. Students trace the letters with their fingers as they say them out loud.) Since sand spelling is new with us, the students are making their own sand words as they need them, which may be an added reinforcement. The sand pile in the Lab is making better spellers. Spellers also work cross word puzzles. Several faculty and staff members clip the cross word puzzles from the daily papers to keep a supply available without expense. Here, vocabulary development is an additional benefit.

We borrow from other disciplines to find an interest for the students. For instance, for the mathematically inclined student who couldn't get interested in "English," we borrowed several math textbooks with word problems. He enjoys the problems and then writes out an explanation of his solution.

Collections of cartoons are popular stimuli (Charles Addams is a favorite). Students find their observation powers and analytic abilities improve as they try to explain why a particular cartoon amuses them or to compare two cartoonists' styles. A cookbook has been the starting point for an explanation of organization and rhetorical analysis and has prompted some mouth-watering descriptions of food.

Non-Traditional Teaching Aids

While most of our instruction in the Writing Lab utilizes individual tutoring and fairly standard instructional material like textbooks and handouts, we have often found that something in our collection of non-traditional materials has provided a breakthrough for many students. Perhaps equally as valuable, judicious use of these tools can lighten the atmosphere for both student and teacher.
Art projects on loan from students and faculty serve as more than decor; they are tools for writing. Some art is inspirational by subject matter; some, like soft sculpture and three-dimensional paintings, prompt writers to guess how they were done. Since the projects are on loan, we have a renewable and changing source of writing ideas.

Toys are a resource that shouldn't be overlooked. Soap bubble blowing is excellent for process analysis and for description. It's fun, too, and we all profit from the association of pleasure with writing. Writing in response to a simple magic kit has ranged from process analysis to a philosophical exploration of appearance and reality. A kaleidoscope has stimulated writings about pattern, the effects of color, and one on the crazy ends to which teachers will go to get students interested.

There is no question about the serious purpose of our Writing Lab, but these non-traditional tools have gotten us results when more conventional means have fallen short. We expect our collection of toys and tricks to keep growing.

Dixie Elise Hickman
University of Southern Mississippi

Further inquiries about the conference should be addressed to:

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BOOK REVIEW

After plowing through countless rhetoric/readers, workbooks, handbooks, and other kinds of books concerned with writing problems, I found Diana Hacker and Betty Renshaw's A Practical Guide for Writers (Winthrop, 1979) a refreshing change. Although the authors classify this book as a rhetoric/handbook—and it certainly fits this category—its focus is different from that of other works of a similar nature. It does include such traditional topics as the paragraph, coherence, sentences, diction, description, narration, exposition, the research paper, punctuation, spelling, and usage, but the major concern of the book is the writing process. There are excellent chapters on getting started, writing and rewriting, choosing a voice, and shaping the paper. Each section discusses how people write, asks the student to think about his/her own method of writing, gives numerous examples from student papers, and concludes with exercises to generate discussion and thinking about the writing process. The chapters on the more "traditional" aspects of writing also stress the writing process.

Additional features of A Practical Guide for Writers are a chapter on dialect interference, a long list of writing topics, a collection of student papers, and its recognition of a diverse, non-traditional student population. Because it helps students to think about how they write, includes many specific suggestions, and is geared to the needs of a student population that uses a writing lab, this book can be used in a variety of ways in a lab setting. First, it can serve as the text for any programs offering developmental classes or minicourses. Secondly, A Practical Guide for Writers is a tutoring aid; tutors can assign appropriate chapters for students to read, discuss, and use as they work on improving their writing. Finally, all writing tutors should read the chapters.
on the writing process as part of their training.

Susan Glassman
Writing/Reading Center Director
Southeastern Massachusetts University

A BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TRAINING PERSONNEL
FOR WORK IN WRITING LABORATORIES

There are many reading lists for teachers interested in learning more about teaching composition. Teaching manuals for freshman composition texts as well as texts on English teaching methods often give good general bibliographies. To keep up to date with current concerns, teachers can also check out recent bibliographies in College Composition and Communication. Instead of offering one more general bibliography, I would like to present here a specialized bibliography—not for teachers in general who want to catch up on the field, but for new teachers of "basic writers," teachers who suddenly find themselves in writing laboratory situations and don't know how to get practical, enlightening advice about their students and the kinds of materials they can expect to be most useful.

No doubt everyone who has worked in or directed writing laboratories has his or her own collection of necessary reading. Here, however, I would like to focus specifically on short readings—the kind of readings laboratory directors can use in orientation workshops or inservice workshops for new or inexperienced tutors or teaching assistants.

Part I. Student Needs

For new teachers who are often unaccustomed to participating in programs that emphasize individualized instruction, for whom learning has generally been easy and straightforward, it is often difficult to recognize that not all students learn the same way, process information the same way, adjust to college the same way. To make such a recognition, new instructors may need an orientation to the ways students may differ. Once they recognize or become aware of student differences, these new instructors should have less trouble asking the right questions and helping to design the right programs.

1. Underprepared Students


Those who chose to teach English often are good students, students who know how to succeed and learn. They often do not recognize how they themselves learn, nor do they always understand the difficulties other students have learning. Particularly useful here are Maxwell's introductions to the characteristics of successful high-risk students and unsuccessful students.

2. Differences in "Cognitive Style."


Students' abilities or inabilitys to work with particular instructional programs may be directly related to their cognitive styles—the ways they attack problems or process information. Kogan presents an overview of ways used to categorize individuals' cognitive styles: field-dependency and field-independency, cognitive complexity and cognitive simplicity, convergence and divergence, image-dependency and verbal dependency, and serialism and holism.

3. Students with "Writing Apprehension."


Students differ in their apprehensiveness toward writing. Cope gives a quick review of the work done in the area with particular attention to recognition of and teaching techniques for students whose writing apprehension interferes with their work.


Arthur points out some of the problems non-standard dialect speakers face when confronted with classes in standard English. Others, of course, cover these issues in more detail, but Arthur gives a useful, brief orientation.
5. Special Problems of Non-Native Speakers.


Maxwell surveys cultural influences, special grammatical needs, and the effects of "cultural rhetoric" on the writing of ESL students.


Using examples written by students whose native language is Arabic, Kaplan introduces the problem ESL students face because their rhetorical strategies are not the same as those often taken for granted by composition teachers.


With the steadily increasing enrollment of older students--particularly older women--comes an increasing need to recognize the special problems of this population. Brandenburg introduces some of these problems and suggests ways to alleviate them.

7. Other Differences.


Linn's four case studies suggest the effects of psychological, sociological, historical and religious factors on student performance. These studies offer examples to beginning teachers of common problems that are not directly skills problems but, nevertheless, affect skills.

Part II. Methods and Materials

An introduction to teaching methods and materials should include information about systems in use, systems that have not been found necessarily effective, and systems that have been found more effective than others. No system of individualized instruction will be effective unless teachers can both prescribe for students specific programs of instruction and explain to them the rationale behind those programs.


Any writing laboratory instructor whose students are working on papers for other teachers should have a way of recognizing teaching styles and expectations. Nuthall and Snook introduce three models of teaching: behavior control, discovery-learning, and rational learning. According to Nuthall and Snook, these models represent "pervasive views of teaching which act as interpretive frameworks for assimilating information, for conceptualizing differences between teaching methods, and for posing and answering research questions" (p. 70).


The middle of this essay is particularly useful: Guth's characterizations of three "rhetorics"—the "rhetoric of order," the "rhetoric of discovery," and the "rhetoric of confrontation." Such characterizations are especially useful for understanding assignments and expectations of composition teachers who send students to a writing laboratory.


Woods introduces some of the important names in composition teaching: Ken Macrorie, John Dixon, Robert Zollner, Peter Elbow, James Moffett, John Mellon, Frank O'Hare, Frank D'Angelo, Richard Young, and Kenneth Burke.

2. "Grammar."


Beginning laboratory instructors often have unrealistic expectations of the usefulness
of teaching "grammar." Fraser and Hodson present a good general review of some of the problems surrounding the teaching of "grammar."


Strong's four-page introduction to sentence combining gives a brief, informative review of research on and possible reservations about sentence-combining. Although there are other important, longer treatments, Strong's discussion is perhaps all that is needed to begin with.


Carkeet describes two common problems of sentence structure—problems of "retention" and problems of "blends." More importantly, Carkeet models a way to look at student writing—by analysis of the mistakes student writers make.


Another discussion of student mistakes—with a helpful introduction to -s endings.

3. "Paragraphs."


_____. "A Discourse-Centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph." College Composition and Communication, 17 (1966), 2-11.

There are, of course, many essays on the paragraph and my choice here is not meant to deny other approaches. What is important, rather, is to help beginning teachers see a diversity of opinion. Rodgers' two articles here provide a hint of such diversity.

4. "Style."


English majors who come to work in a writing laboratory are often well-versed in MLA style or University of Chicago style. They may need an introduction into a less "literary" style such as the APA. Chapter I ("Content and Organization of a Manuscript") and Chapter II ("Writing Style") provide quick introductions to the kind of writing many students must write in courses outside the English department.


Kaiser gives advice to his colleagues about teaching report writing and points out that "the kind of writing your students are required to do in an English class does not really help them much when it comes to writing reports." Such an article provides a different perspective—not necessarily the only one, yet one that should be recognized by any teacher who must deal with students in many disciplines outside of English.

5. Copying.


This teacher's manual provides the background and rationale behind copy-exercises or "controlled composition."


Chapter II ("Review of the Related Research and Literature") is particularly useful. Fitzsimmons and Loomer briefly summarize and comment on seven methods of teaching spelling: using word lists, marking hard-spots, using the corrected-test method, using the test-study-test method, presenting words in list form, presenting words by syllables, and teaching spelling rules.


Shaughnessy presents some practical ways to approach spelling—despite the inconclusive research available on the subject.

In 1963, Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer wrote, "Like spelling, handwriting appears to be a field of research which more often than not has less to do with composition than one might suppose" (Research in Written Composition [Champaign, Ill.: NCTE], p. 50). Yet in writing laboratories, where students must write—often illegally—for teachers who may not be kind or patient, handwriting can be a major initial priority. Anderson's article, while largely concerned with children's handwriting, does offer a good summary of the work done with students who have handwriting problems.

8. Study Skills.

Maxwell, Martha. "Building Study Skills." In Improving Student Learning Skills, pp. 302-327.

Maxwell gives a good survey of methods in use and spends considerable time on problems of test-taking and "test anxiety."


Pauk's book is a typical study skills book. Chapter 3 ("Control Your Time"), 9 ("The Classroom Lecture: Take Good Notes") and 10 ("Master Your Textbook") are especially useful for those who have no background in the field.

Some may find this list too long; more likely, many others may find important items left out. There are, for example, no references to Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric or to work done on "invention," "evaluation," or the writing "process." Nor are there references to "rhetoric" or "English" or "creativity" or "counseling technique." Moreover, there is no mention of specific orientation problems likely to be important in different laboratories—problems of data collection, referral, publicity, etc., and problems of selection and development of specific teaching materials.

Instead, what I have attempted to do is to list some essential beginnings—information that can help to "rough out" the territory claimed by writing laboratories, the kind of information that can make specific programs and materials used in specific laboratories meaningful and understandable to new teachers of basic writing.

Ideally, anyone who works in a writing laboratory should have been exposed to many of the concerns addressed in this bibliography before he or she begins working with students. In practice, however, things don't often work out so well. Because student attendance in the writing laboratory I direct is voluntary and builds up gradually, we are able to close the lab during the first week of classes in order to hold initial staff workshops to cover much of the initial groundwork, including several readings from the first section of this bibliography. Later, we can hold weekly staff meetings to cover particular problems addressed in the second section of the bibliography. Other laboratories may have to organize their in-services in different ways. What is important, however, is that in some way, as soon as practical, beginning teachers in writing laboratories be exposed systematically to some—if not most—of these specific concerns of teachers of basic writing.

Irvin Y. Hashimoto
Idaho State University

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CCC
RESOLUTION ON PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Following the article in September's WLM, enough readers wrote me of their concern for the proposed resolution to insure that it can be submitted to the CCC at the annual business meeting in Dallas, March 28. The resolution calls for faculty status, access to tenure, and equitable salary scales for full-time writing lab professionals, as a similar resolution did for composition teachers which passed two years ago. Thank you for the response of those who wrote and also for the suggestions about the wording.

Bringing the resolution to the floor of the conference is not enough, of course. Many of us need to be present at the business
meeting from 10:30-noon on March 28. It is always tempting to take off early on the last day of a conference, but every vote is needed. I hope you will make your travel plans accordingly. See you in Dallas!

Mildred Steele
Coordinator, Communication Skills
Central College, Pella, Ia. 50219

The Applied Writing Lab at Auburn University

The Business and Technical Writing Lab at Auburn University serves its purpose in one primarily important way: the lab provides the student with a setting where he can receive both primary and auxiliary instruction in applied writing assignments.

PRIMARY INSTRUCTION

The lab is open about 30 hours a week, including a two-hour block on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The lab director is a departmental instructor who devotes half her time to supervising the lab. Other instructors on the 18-member applied writing staff spend one office hour per week on lab duty. Thus, a student has an experienced applied writing teacher available to answer questions and provide assistance.

AUXILIARY INSTRUCTION

The applied writing student finds several valuable learning resources in the lab: audio/visual Caramates, programmed tape recorders, library reference sheets catalogued by discipline, and a reading library of applied writing texts, grammar books, company newsletters, technical articles, house organ publications, and various annual and public relations reports. Additionally, the student may find sample reports and resumes which have been marked by his particular instructor.

Audio/visual Programs

To assist the student, the staff has written and designed a series of copyrighted slide/tape presentations specifically geared to applied writing problems. The most popular program is "Making a Literature Search." The student views a 40-slide program which familiarizes him with the research materials in the main campus library. The student sees a card catalogue entry, or a Business Periodicals Index entry, or an abstract entry, and hears an accompanying explanation of the information which the entry provides to the researcher. The result is two-fold: first, the student approaches the research report assignment with the confidence that he can locate and interpret the source material, and, second, the student spends profitable time in quality research which ultimately reflects itself in quality reports.

Other programs include presentations on Pronoun Reference, Parallelism, Sentence Variety, Modification Errors, Punctuation Errors, Sentence Fragments, Subject/Verb Agreement, Patterns of Organization, and the Basics of Outlining. For each slide/tape presentation concerning grammar and mechanics, the student receives an accompanying notebook with sample sentences to rewrite or correct during his audio/visual lesson.

Programmed Tapes

Teachers can record their own instructional units using the tape cassette players provided in the lab. For example, one teacher has a tape presentation which corresponds to a usage exam given in class. A student who does not do well on the usage exam can listen to the corrections which should have been made. In this case, the instructor does not have to spend valuable class time going over the exam after marking it.

Additional Material

The lab provides the applied writing student with a variety of additional instructional materials. After viewing the slide/tape on library research, the student receives a handout which alerts him to the reference material within his discipline. The accounting student, for instance, receives a sheet which lists by title and library location the pertinent research aids for the accounting field, such as Accountants' Index, Business Periodicals Index, Journal of Economic Literature, et al. Presently, the lab has reference guides for 33 different areas of study.

The lab is also a convenient repository for a number of other teacher-generated aids. Instructors use the shelf files to store reports, application/resume packages, and supplemental reading material.

Cost

A university grant in excess of $5,000 provided funds for the needed lab equipment. The lab purchased a 35 mm camera with Fl. 4
mm lens to take the pictures for the slides, and a Tiffin Showorder to synchronize tapes and slides. Another major purchase was an IBM Selectric II Typewriter for making attractive, readable slides. The lab bought ten Caramate II units to show the presentations at a total cost of more than $3,000. Other less expensive equipment included a slide mount heat press, slide mounts, slide sorter, see-through slide file, and a Tape Mate Cabinet.

**COMPUTER PLANS**

As the applied writing program at Auburn has grown (from about 500 students per year to over 3,000 students per year in the last 7 years alone), the need for increased supervision and management of report writing courses has grown too. Currently, students submit between 1800-2000 major reports annually. In order to index and manage this report volume, the lab will acquire an LA36 DECwriter II hardcopy computer terminal.

**Computer Input Procedures**

Each teacher requires the student to submit an extra copy of the abstract and list of references with the completed report. After reading the report, the teacher then numbers each abstract/list of references package with a numerical advancing stamp. (Of course, there is only one stamp which all instructors share.) Then, based on his reading of the report, the instructor pencils onto the abstract a key word or words from a list of words already in the computer bank. Finally, the instructor "loads" the reports into the computer by teacher name, student name, assigned number, report title, and key word(s). The report itself is kept on file in the instructor's office, and the abstract/list of references packages are filed numerically in the lab filing cabinet.

**Computer Retrieval Procedures**

The applied writing staff expects to gain several advantages from our newly "computerized" lab. If, for example, a student needs assistance in narrowing and clearly defining a report topic on energy alternatives, the teacher can go to the computer terminal and request a printout on that topic by typing in the appropriate key words—in this case, "Energy, solar" and "Energy, gasohol." The computer will then provide the index numbers for reports previously submitted on those topics. The teacher can then pull the abstract/list of references packages for those reports from the lab file and advise the student accordingly—perhaps suggesting a new focus or research approach to the problem.

The staff also expects the computer to militate against plagiarism. Knowing that previous reports have been "stored" in the computer, some few students, otherwise inclined to crib, are more likely to do their own research and writing.

**Cost**

The LA36 DECwriter II hardcopy terminal costs about $1,800. And, in order to reduce unnecessary hardcopy printouts, the lab will acquire a televideo CRT unit which costs about $1,000. Of course, these terminals will be available to the entire English department to serve a variety of additional record-keeping functions.

**CONCLUSION**

The applied writing lab at Auburn University is a service lab and expects to grow as courses continue to attract students. Presently, thirteen major degree areas require EH 304 (Technical Writing), ten major degree areas require EH 315 (Business and Professional Writing), and fifteen major degree areas require EH 415 (Letter Writing). And seventeen more degree areas recommend one or more of the courses as electives. For Winter Quarter 1980, the applied writing enrollment required thirty-nine class sections from which some 700-800 students will visit the lab. And, in addition to applied writing students, the lab attracts other students and faculty members who express an interest in the lab's services, especially help in preparing job applications.

And finally, as the program continues to serve students, better ways to serve will undoubtedly suggest themselves. Additional slide/tape presentations on specific types of business correspondence and computerized instructional programs are attractive possibilities.

Ronald Giles
Auburn University
CONFERENCE ON LEARNING SKILLS
April 7, 8, 9, 1981
LEARNING SKILLS: FOUNDATIONS FOR THE '80's
featuring
Dr. John E. Roueche
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A conference for learning skills specialists, educators, and administrators, providing an exchange of current ideas and future trends in the design, implementation, and evaluation of developmental/remedial programs at the college and pre-college levels.

Sponsored by the New York College Learning Skills Association (NYCLSA) in cooperation with Learning Skills, State University College at Brockport, N.Y. 14420. Location: Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn, Rochester, New York.

For more information contact:

Gladdys W. Church
NYCLSA President
Director of Learning Skills
The Center for Student Academic Services
State University Colleges at Brockport
Brockport, NY 14420
(716) 395-2471

ANNOUNCEMENT

Purdue University's Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Composition announces the publication of a series of working papers on writing research. The first three issues are:

The Composing Process (January 1981) $2.00
Evaluation and Error Analysis (March 1981) $2.00
Sentence Combining and Grammar Study (May 1981) $2.00

For copies, send to: Janice H. Lauer
Dept. of English
Purdue University
W. Lafayette, IN 47907

Please make checks payable to Purdue Univ.

HAVE YOU SEEN . . .

Punctuation: A Self-Teaching Guide, by Carl Markgraf, a concise manual with frame-by-frame self-instruction, self-tests at the end of every chapter, and explanations that emphasize the need for punctuation to express meaning. (John Wiley and Sons, 1979; $4.95; 116 pp.)

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER—Supplementary Mailing List #37

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