

WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

Member of the NWCA:NCTE Assembly
Information Exchange Agreement

Vol. VIII, No. 5 (January, 1984)

A member of our newsletter group at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Garitt Griebel, writes that the newsletter "performs a valuable service in keeping us all in touch," while Bradley Hughes at the Eastman School of Music notes that it "brings us closer together." Certainly the articles keep us informed of each other's work, and conference announcements remind us of places and dates when we can meet. But an additional service which I hope the newsletter performs is to serve as a means to ask questions and exchange information. This month's queries seem to be particularly urgent as people ask for help in locating money to purchase computers, ways to generate revenue for the lab, information about interdisciplinary programs, and teaching techniques for dyslexics. Your help in answering these questions is definitely needed. And if you need some answers, let us know.

In the meantime, keep sending your articles, announcements, names of new members, queries, and \$5 donations (in checks made payable to Purdue University, but sent to me) to:

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

From the Chronicle of Higher Education:

Headline in the Drew University
Acorn:
WRITING CENTER OPENS IT'S DOORS
And not a day too soon.

A BLUEPRINT FOR WRITING LAB EXERCISES

For those of us in Writing Centers who believe that traditional exercises--fill-ins, multiple choice questions, error-based paragraphs--are incapable of habituating basic students in "correctness," the question of alternatives still remains. Are there exercises which avoid the confusion and lack of design that characterize traditional exercises and offer the average developmental student repeated acquaintance and practice with correct forms? While a small number of texts that focus on copying, rewriting, and guided composition has appeared, at Onondaga Community College we have decided to construct our own Lab exercises. Full-time and adjunct faculty, assigned to the Writing Center for 6 hours per week (in lieu of 3 classroom hours), tutor only five hours and use the extra hour to devise exercises that work particularly well with basic students.

Before offering the specifics of the blueprint, I would call attention to the implications of the term "exercise." If a lesson that one practices is to train or condition successfully, it must be carefully designed and persistently applied. Haphazard movements do not warm up a jogger's muscles; a single movement, no matter how well designed, is equally useless. In designing our exercises we kept foremost the requirement that they compel the student to work mightily rather than necessitate that the tutor explain extensively. After all, what the student learns depends on what he does, not on what we say. The novice picture hanger will learn more from tapping the hammer than hearing an explanation of the procedure.

The exercises are designed with the

following principles in mind:

1. Each exercise attempts to teach only one specific skill.

The diagnosis used at OCC differs from familiar diagnostic sheets in that it analyzes within categories. Rather than accepting the comment "subject-verb agreement errors," we seek to determine the precise type of error within this very broad category. The student, for example, might have difficulties only when prepositional phrases intervene, or only when he uses conjunctions, or only when he uses there is. Even if the student errs in more than one area within s-v agreement, we attempt to teach him each situation separately. We have thus designed separate exercises for each item within s-v, rather than offer a catch-all s-v agreement exercise that has one or two examples of different types of agreement errors.

2. Exercises should be non-error based whenever possible.

We seek to have students become habituated in correctness. Teaching by contrast--offering incorrect examples--seems to work against that objective. By offering only correct examples we seek to teach the correct image, to help coordinate hand and eye to the configurations of correctly spelled words and correctly punctuated sentences. We do not offer error-filled passages that would further weaken the average basic students' already shaky sense of what is "correct."

3. Exercises should use at least the paragraph forms, but they would ideally be short essays.

Students are never required to write ten unrelated sentences, one beneath the other. Nor are they ever required to fill-in a word or circle one. An exercise should enable students to practice the kinds of writing they are generally required to do, rather than offer them artificial situations. Pronoun agreement has to operate throughout a paragraph, as do verbs, point of view, and person. The paragraph or short essay provides the necessary context for the learning of the particular skill.

Keeping these principles in mind, we construct the actual exercises for the writing lab or basic/introductory classroom

as a sequence rather than as a single exercise.

1. The first exercise in the sequence is an exercise for recognition or identification.

The objective is to familiarize students with correct versions of the grammatical situation they are attempting to master. Traditional exercises think to teach by having students identify and correct errors. Our alternative attempts to sensitize students to the correct form. A sequence for teaching the s marker would begin with a paragraph (perhaps in a foreign language, a la Gould), in which students are asked to underline every s in the final position. To begin a sequence in the teaching of the apostrophe, we present a paragraph containing apostrophes (of one type only!), and ask the student to circle them (or write them) and to circle and write the words "possessed." To teach there is/there are, we offer a short essay filled with those phrases and ask students to select and write the word in each instance that determines the use of is/are. Again, everything in this essay is correct, and students are reassured that there are no "booby-trapped" sentences. They are expected to notice relationships and familiarize their hands and eyes with correct situations. The instructions to the student in this first step may be split into two parts. First, he could be asked to select the correct term by merely underlining or circling. The instructor and student could check the selections. If they are correct, they would be then written out. This last is essential. Unless hands and eyes work together, they labor in vain. Merely looking at right answers, even circling them, will not habituate the writer's "automatic pilot" into correctness.

2. The second exercise in the sequence enables students to practice the required skills through rewriting.

"Rewriting" is a convenient term to describe exercises that contain no errors. Where traditional exercises attempt to teach s-v agreement, tense consistency, pronoun reference, and other desired aspects of grammar by offering passages which contain incorrect examples of these items and asking students to make necessary corrections, "rewriting" offers passages in one form and asks students to rewrite them into another

form. A short essay in the present tense for example, is rewritten into the past. An essay in which the subject is singular is rewritten in the plural. An essay about a man is rewritten about a woman. In each case, students rewrite the entire selection, altering or making changes only in the required areas and copying the rest. The virtue of this approach is that it never presents students with errors. Since the problem of most basic students is that they lack a firm sense of correctness, this method avoids adding to the confusion. Instead of exposing students to errors, it provides them with many instances of correctness, asking them subsequently to rewrite, rather than correct errors.

As one constructs these rewriting exercises, one must keep in mind the principles enumerated earlier. If devising a passage in the present to be rewritten by students into the past, the instructor would be wise to select only regular or only irregular verbs. Some students have no difficulty writing irregular verbs in the past but consistently drop -ed endings. An accurately designed exercise teaches one or the other, not both at once. Similarly, in teaching pronoun reference, one would not wish to complicate the change from singular pronouns to plurals by also asking students to concern themselves with subject-verb agreement. A selection entirely in the past (and without verbs of being!) will enable students to concentrate exclusively on the changes in the pronouns as the subject changes from the singular to the plural.

As with Identification, the first step in the sequence, students embarked on Rewriting can be asked to select the word or words they think need to be rewritten. After the tutor or instructor checks the selections, students can go ahead and make the changes they feel are necessary, always rewriting the entire selection, rather than the individual words being changed.

Part of the design for these small essays would include correct examples of the skills the students are trying to master. A passage mostly in the singular may contain, for example, a sentence correctly in the plural, so that students working to rewrite the entire essay into the plural might have that sentence as a guidepost. Other considerations might include making the contents relevant to the skill, e.g. an eyewitness account of the Wright Brothers'

flight, written in the present tense, would justifiably be rewritten today in the past tense. Finally, the paragraph or short essay would be carefully constructed to follow accepted organizational schemes or rhetorical modes, so that in the process of rewriting the grammar, students would also be unconsciously practicing correctness in the areas of style or organization. The theory behind this entire scheme is, of course, a familiar one. Instructors are often conscientious about assigning prose pieces by masters of style, assuming that exposure to "good style" or "good writing" will prove beneficial. "Rewriting" exercises avoid the negative of that axiom. By refusing to expose basic students to bad grammar, they seek to prevent incorrect forms from becoming familiar and comfortable to students. And in designing these exercises with accepted principles of organization and style in mind, the original theory is adhered to, faithfully. Naturally, the burden is on the designer of the exercise. Given these various principles to keep in mind, one cannot simply take a passage by some well-known writer and by paying for permission, assume to have fulfilled all his obligations. The effective exercise must clearly be carefully crafted.

3. After a number of exercises in Identification and Rewriting, students can be offered a mastery test.

True mastery can be demonstrated, of course, only in the students' general writing. However, mastery tests can be administered at this point in ways which help strengthen the skills "Identification" and "Rewriting" have sought to teach. Three possibilities exist. The obvious is to let students write their essays in other courses and examine those papers for mastery of the desired skills. One problem with calling such a determination a "mastery test" is that students can easily avoid confronting their weaknesses by avoiding the situation, writing very short sentences, for example, to avoid run-ons, or using of the to avoid the possessive. To test truly, one must require students to face the grammatical situation. One method, then, would be to use the familiar multiple choice, fill-in, or even error-based exercises (provided they are limited to one type of error). Those traditional exercises, as I have argued elsewhere, test rather than teach anyway.¹ A preferable alternative would be to test

for mastery by asking students to write controlled or guided compositions, specifically designed to elicit the particular grammatical situation the exercises have been attempting to teach. By this I do not mean the sort of requests one can find in self-designated "controlled texts" that seem only vaguely acquainted with the principles of guided composition. Instead of asking students to "Write three sentences in which the singular possessive appears," a true mastery test devises a situation in which the use of the apostrophe is unavoidable, saying, for example, "Describe a family meal. Instead of naming the members of your family, identify them by their relationship to your mother. For example, write my mother's husband, not my father." In testing for mastery of tense consistency or subject-verb agreement, I ask students to compare a car they once had to one they drive now. Whatever else an instructor hopes to find in such an essay, he or she will undoubtedly discover if students have mastered the use of the past, the present, and of subject-verb agreement.

By the time a student has worked his way through the type of sequence--Identification, Rewriting, Mastery--described here, one may safely assume that he has exercised mightily. One cannot say the same thing about the haphazardly constituted exercises in the traditional text or workbook. Moreover, since a majority of the traditional exercises are also error-based, are in fact, multiple error-based, not only do they generally fail to teach "correctness," but quite often familiarize students with "wrongness." The issue of how to teach students to eliminate errors--fragments, run-ons, misspellings, incorrect capitalization--without letting them see those errors, is a challenging one, but one I hope to address in another "blueprint."

The strictures enumerated here for alternative exercises may make it appear that their construction would be quite difficult, demanding attention to a variety of details and taxing severely the time and ingenuity of tutors and instructors. Such a perception would be quite accurate. Care, love, enterprise, and ingenuity on the part of instructors have always been available, however. Unfortunately for the basic students at all levels of education, those talents have been lavished on how instructors were presenting, explaining, or illustrating their material. Surely those

admirable skills can be rechanneled to serve in the creation of exercises that students have to do. Our most exquisite explanation does not do a tenth of the good that a well-constructed exercise does, as it engages a student's hands, eyes, and mind in practicing a skill.

Finally, behind these constructions discussed here stands the spectre of "control." Advocates of exercises are accused of rigidity, of straight-jacketing, of stifling, of limiting the student writer. I would say simply this: In the sciences a successfully controlled experiment merits the highest accolades. If variables can be controlled, the experiment can be repeated and its success independently measured. It is only in this sense--of controlling variables, of isolating steps in a sequence--that I urge the use of these "controlled" exercises and compositions. At the same time, please remember that "control" is never absent in the composition class. Instructors control topics, rhetorical modes, length, organizational schemes, essays for discussion, tone, level of discourse, even, as at UCLA and (experimentally) at Bard College, the contents and strategy for the entire course. I ask only for control of the practice sessions, not of the on-field execution. Certainly control, employed in the structuring of exercises, seems legitimate.

Thomas Friedmann
Onondaga Community
College

¹ Thomas Friedmann, "Teaching Error, Nurturing Confusion: Grammar Texts, Tests, and Teachers in the Developmental English Class," College English, 45 (April, 1983), 390-399.

(ed.: Professor Friedmann has kindly agreed to send interested readers samples of his exercises and asks that the name of the exercise's creator remain on the exercise, that the exercise not be sold for profit, and that all requests include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Professor Friedmann's address is Dept. of English, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY 13215)



1984 CCC SPECIAL INTEREST SESSION ON
WRITING LABS

The Special Session of Writing Lab Directors and Personnel for the 1984 CCCC promises something for everyone. In eight separate workshops running simultaneously, participants from across the country will present information from designing and operating a writing center for those new to the field to extending its influence beyond the immediate sphere of the university into the community. For example, Jeanette Harris from Texas Tech and Joyce Kinkead from Utah State will present a workshop on designing and operating a writing center, including tips on funding, staffing, organization, methods, and management; Renee Riley from DePaul University will present a workshop on integrating reading into the writing clinic, stressing the reading and writing connection primarily through vocabulary and comprehension; and Carol Haviland from Montana State will describe a project for extending the writing center's sphere to other university areas and outwards to the community, offering in the process some advice on implementing such a project. Underscoring the versatility of computers in the writing lab, Faye Vowell from Emporia State University in Kansas will describe how to design specific programs for the writing lab by working with data processing students while Bob Leonard and John Marchisotto from Huntington High School, Long Island, New York, will present a "hands-on" workshop using microcomputers and printers which will stress reader/response strategies using the potential of commercially available software pertaining to the writing process. Emphasizing the needs of special students, Bill Strong from Utah State will present some new sentence combining techniques designed especially for the basic writer while Sue Shanker from Queens College will discuss the difficulties ESL students face in adapting to regular English classes, presenting in a workshop techniques for mainstreaming them smoothly into an already-existing curriculum. Finally, since peer tutors are a viable part of most writing lab programs, and since training them adequately is a challenge with limited funds and time, Susan Glassman of Southeastern Massachusetts University will present a workshop on the cost-effective technique of training peer tutors using video tapes. With such diversified and pertinent topics available, all writing center directors and personnel should be

able, in attending this special session, to find answers to questions and gain valuable information which will enable them to make their writing centers an even more efficient part of the total writing program.

Jan Ugan
Utah State University

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Writing Centers Association: East Central announces its Sixth Annual Conference, to be held on May 4-5, 1984, at Raymond Walters General and Technical College of the University of Cincinnati. The theme of the conference is "Writing: 1984." Papers, panels, and workshops should address standard concerns of writing centers, including using computers and writing across the curriculum. Persons interested in participating should submit a substantive one-page proposal (plus 3 copies) by January 15, 1984.

In addition, writing centers and labs are invited to set up tables to display their materials and services. There will also be Materials Exchange Tables available for those who wish to share instructional materials from their writing centers. If you plan to participate in the Materials Exchange, please send us, by April 1, a brief description of the types of materials you wish to submit and indicate the amount of space you will need to display these materials. Those interested in submitting requests for display booths and space to display materials should do so by April 1, 1984.

Please send all proposals, requests for display space, and inquiries regarding registration to:

Phyllis A. Sherwood
9555 Plainfield Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

A Reader Asks...

Am making a survey of Interdisciplinary Programs often called "cluster courses" to be presented at the Conference on Basic Writing Skills which will take place at the 1984 CCCC in New York, March 29-31, 1984. This information will later be shared with

Writing Lab Newsletter subscribers.

Am particularly interested in those that have English as one of the component classes.

Please send me a description of such programs or any such programs of this type that you have heard about. Thank you.

Vivian Rudisill, Professor
Department of English
San Antonio College
San Antonio, Texas 78284

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

On Friday, April 6, 1984, the Writing Center of Old Dominion University will host its 4th Annual Developmental Writing Workshop. The goal of the workshop is to share ideas on how to better educate the basic writing student. Educators from the post-secondary and secondary levels are invited to attend the day-long workshop which in the past has attracted people from North Carolina to New York, with a nucleus of participants and presenters from Virginia. If you are interested in attending, want to be a presenter, or desire more information on the workshop, write or call Steve Fletcher, Coordinator of the Developmental Writing Workshop, Writing Center, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 23508 (Telephone: (804) 440-4112).

A READER ASKS...

I am interested in information pertaining to writing lab techniques that would be particularly helpful to visual students. I am chairman of the Academic Department at Moore College. Our population is made up of visually oriented artists. Although many of our students with writing problems can be reached with traditional methodology, there is a core, some of whom are dyslexic, who would profit from other approaches, perhaps geared to their visual orientation. Any information or references would be greatly appreciated.

Joan C. Stevens
Academic Dept.
Moore College of Art
20th and Race Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

USING ERROR-ANALYSIS IN THE WRITING LAB FOR CORRECTNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

"Is this a complete sentence? IF I WANTED TO DO IT."

"No."

"What about WHEN A COLLEGE CAN BAN A SPEAKER."

"No. That's not."

"Good and how about I WOULD BE WRONG TO DO IT."

"That's okay."

"What about this: IF A COLLEGE WOULD BAN SUCH A SPEAKER. THE COLLEGE WOULD BE INFRINGING ON MY RIGHTS AND EVERYONE ELSE'S."

"That's okay, too."

"All of it?"

"Yes."

"What if it read: IF A COLLEGE WOULD BAN SUCH A SPEAKER."

"That's all?"

"Yes."

"Then it wouldn't be a sentence."

"So you need the second part to make it complete."

"Yes."

"Good. Now let's talk about how to punctuate when this happens."

In the above dialogue, an instructor tests whether error-analysis has indeed revealed the cause of a student's fragments. Previous to this lab session the instructor had observed that the student, a basically sound writer, wrote fragments only in the environment: subordinate clause, main clause, and had concluded that the student knew what a complete sentence was but had a mistaken impression of how to handle subordinate clauses in context.

Error-analysis seeks to discover the hypotheses or assumptions underlying mis-

cues in a writer's text. Perhaps because error-analysis has its roots in ESL error evaluation, it is usually linked with grammatical miscues and their associated hypotheses. But error-analysis can also be used to gain insight into assumptions underpinning rhetorical misjudgments. As such, error-analysis becomes a tool for evaluating both the correctness and the effectiveness of a writer's work.

Let's first review how error-analysis can reveal the assumptions underlying grammatical miscues.

The assumptions underpinning grammatical mistakes can often be detected by looking for patterns of error in a student's work. Consider the following sentences, taken from four separate themes written by one student.

1. A point that was brought up almost immediately by my friends from residence halls was that it was cheaper to live in the dorms, as one said, "I don't mind 'frats;' that much, they are just too expensive to live in."
2. One way to adjust your snow plow is to spread the tails of your skis farther apart, this will make the wedge bigger and effectively slow you down.
3. I saw an ad in the paper, it said, "1969 Triumph Spitfire. Needs work. Good project car. \$700 firm. 294-0780."
4. I have never been much disturbed by the controversial speakers on campus. My roommate, however, starts shouting matches with them and calls them "radical pigs."

Here the data suggest that the student commits a comma fault when the subject of the second independent clause is a pronoun.

During subsequent tutoring, the student indeed consistently identified sentences with pronoun subjects as incomplete, "because you don't know who or what the subject is." In other words, the student had devised his own grammar rule for this particular syntactic situation. Unfortunately, the rule was based on a faulty premise.

Assumptions which negatively influence rhetorical effectiveness can similarly be

detected through error-analysis. For example, the following sets of sentences taken from themes by one student reveal assumptions affecting rhetorical choice:

1. In the following paragraphs I shall describe the results of the Black Students' Organization's Big 8 Conference on Black Student Government.

a. After Maynard Jackson's addressial, a recreational dance was given, and the closing of the conference.

b. The following day (February the twentieth, Nineteen-hundred and Eighty-two), workshops began at 10:30 a.m. and lasted until 11:30 a.m. There were four workshops to choose from: "Black Male-Female Relationships," "Creative Thinking," "Real World: Rights and Responsibilities in Work," and "On Becoming" in which I personally phicilitated.

2. In the following paragraphs I shall describe the personality of my friend (John Harris), and scrutinize the motives behind why I feel and how I feel his personality in particular came about.

a. In my observations of John trying to figure out why is he so faddish orientative I decided to take a look at the environment from where he came from.

b. And if he didn't know what the latest best "tune" was he was stigmatized as being a "generic" (or square). So all of this keeping up with the crowd was nothing more than a period of personality molding for John. And it was so instilled into his psychology that he still functions like that developmental period.

Although there is a lot going on here, an initial assessment suggests that the student assumes it is rhetorically effective to begin every theme with an expressed statement of the writer's plan and to use large words, many words, and fancy spellings of words. (Indeed, the student automatically knew the conventional spelling of "facilitate" when asked.) In any case, this writer's assumptions represent his idiosyncratic context for composing.

Indeed, to paraphrase David Bartholomae,

we cannot evaluate the grammatical correctness or rhetorical effectiveness of a piece of writing without considering the "activity" that presented the grammatical or rhetorical form "as a possible solution to the problem of making a meaningful statement."¹

The primary reason the cognitive activity must be considered is that remediation of incorrect or ineffective structures depends upon changing that activity, upon altering the assumptions producing the miscues.

Take the case of Peter, our comma splicing student. When class lectures on correct punctuation and individual grammar reviews failed to correct his problem, Peter was sent to the Writing lab for tutoring. Only after the invalidity of his assumption about pronoun subjects was pointed out to him was Peter able to eliminate the error. He then did so by keying on pronoun subjects during proof-reading.

Similarly, Michael, our wordmonger, effectively simplified his style and, in the process, eliminated his predication errors only after he became convinced that readers were more impressed with clarity than with cleverness.

Despite its benefits, error-analysis does have disadvantages.

1. Sometimes a large amount of data is needed to expose significant patterns of error and the hypotheses underpinning them. In such cases, the writing lab instructor must have access to a number of themes before accurate analysis is possible.

2. Analytical integrity can at times be compromised by an instructor's enthusiasm for discovering patterns of error and ingenuity in reconstructing associated hypotheses.

Nevertheless, error-analysis remains a powerful tool for evaluating, and then effecting, correctness and effectiveness in a writer's work.

Underlying its power may be its ability to deal with three factors crucial to any communication situation; that is, error-analysis can cope with the grammatical, rhetorical, and assumptive elements of a

writer's work.² Error-analysis can evaluate miscues involving literal, textual, and contextual meaning. And, because of its cognitive base, error-analysis can offer suggestions concerning how to improve a writer's individual composing procedure. For example, Diane's writing was inconsistent: some of her themes were tightly organized and well-developed; others had no direction or detailed support. Error-analysis of Diane's composing procedure revealed that if the theme could be organized according to the who, what, where, when, and how rubric, Diane did well. If not, she became lost. Early in her composing, she characteristically looked to the journalist's framework for her organization and then tried to force her material into it. Through error-analysis, the faults in Diane's composing procedure became evident, and Diane was tutored in various heuristic methods of theme development. In short, error-analysis is a process-oriented method of evaluating both the composing process and its products.

Helen Rothschild Ewald
Iowa State University

¹ David Bartholomae, "The Study of Error," College Composition and Communication, 31 (October 1980), 257.

² Speech act theorists view utterances as acts with locutionary (grammatical), illocutionary (rhetorical), and perlocutionary (social) elements. The parallel between their triad and the writing instructor's concern with grammatical rules, rhetorical convention, and assumptions affecting composing procedure is a potentially fruitful one.

A NOTE OF THANKS TO AUTHORS OF
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES...

I think you should know that your publication (I have been an avid reader for some years now) during the last year and a half has attained real standards of excellence.

I want you to know how much your Newsletter is appreciated. It is solid, substantial, and informative. It is an invaluable forum for ideas and an indispensable resource. I could go on and on.

Paul Takis
Dowling College

The State University of New York at Buffalo is seeking a Director for the University Learning Center located in the Faculty of Educational Studies. The Learning Center provides developmental education for the entire university. Its clientele currently consists of approximately half educational opportunity and half regularly admitted students. The Center offers basic courses in reading, writing, mathematics, study skills, and computer orientation.

The Director, with the aid of an Assistant Director and three Area Coordinators, is responsible for approximately 30 graduate assistants teaching over 60 course sections per year.

The Director must also be eligible for a tenure track appointment in one of the graduate departments of the Faculty of Educational Studies: Counseling and Educational Psychology; Educational Organization, Administration, and Policy; Learning and Instruction. The Director will be expected to engage in scholarly activities and graduate teaching in his or her field.

A doctorate in education or a related field is required of candidates. Some experience in developmental or remedial education is also a necessity.

The person selected will begin duties on August 15, 1984. Nominations and applications together with supporting vita and recommendation letters are due by January 15, 1984 and should be addressed to:

Professor Gerald R. Rising, Chair
ULC Director Search Committee
367 Baldy Hall, SUNY at Buffalo
Buffalo, New York 14260

A READER ASKS...

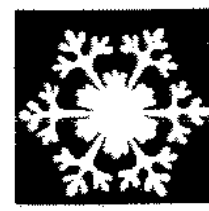
I would like to find out from any Newsletter reader how her/his lab acquired funds to purchase computer equipment. Please mail information to me, Writing Lab Director, Indiana Central University, 1400 East Hanna Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46227.

Richard Marshall
Indiana Central
University

The Instructional Resource Center of the City University of New York announces its national conference, "Microcomputers and Basic Skills in College," to be held in New York City, April 13-15, 1984. Papers are invited on the use of microcomputers in postsecondary basic skills instruction in the following areas: writing, English as a second language, reading, speech, mathematics (arithmetic through precalculus), and other areas of developmental education. Abstracts must be received by January 15, 1984.

Forward abstracts or inquires to:

Geoffrey Akst, Conference Chair
Instructional Resource Center
The City University of New York
535 East 80th Street
New York, New York 10021
212-794-5425



A Reader Asks...

Our Writing Center has been staffed for five years by English faculty who received released time for their tutoring. We have consistently received very good evaluations from faculty and students. Now the college feels it can no longer support the Writing Center because the center produces no revenue for the college. We have scheduled three one-credit labs for Winter quarter, but the walk-in tutoring service will be discontinued. Does anyone have suggestions for us about successful credit lab ideas, or other ways to generate revenue? Has anyone tried charging a fee for walk-in service? Please respond to me or to the Writing Lab Newsletter. I need some response as soon as possible.

Mary Grattan
J. Sargeant Reynolds
Community College
P.O. Box 12084
Richmond, VA 23241
(804-786-6129)

The English Department at California State University, Chico, wishes to hire a specialist in rhetoric and composition for a tenure-track position beginning at the rank of Assistant Professor. Qualifications include a completed Ph.D., substantial experience managing basic writing programs and training and supervising tutors, and research competence in rhetoric and composition sufficient to direct research-based M.A. thesis work. The candidate should also have generalist teaching capacities. Salary ranges from \$19,044 to \$22,896. Tenure and promotion are based on publication record as well as on effective teaching and program administration.

This position carries half-time administrative responsibility for the Writing Workshop, a program which includes the University's basic writing course and the campus-wide tutoring service. The basic writing course provides pre-college writing instruction with small-group tutoring component for over 500 students each year. The tutoring service provides instruction in the writing process for 60 to 80 students each week. The Workshop coordinator is responsible each semester for hiring, training, scheduling, and supervising 10 to 15 paid

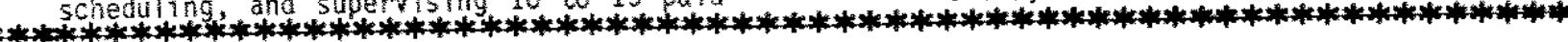
tutors and 15 to 30 tutors earning 4 units of class credit, as well as providing academic and administrative support for 10 to 15 instructors, including teaching assistants. He or she supervises a half-time clerical person and a \$10 - \$15,000 budget.

The coordinator will also play an active role in the University's writing across the disciplines effort, which includes a campus-wide writing test and courses in the disciplines which integrate writing as a learning tool, and should be able to direct Master's candidates doing research in writing pedagogy, peer tutoring, and the testing of writing skills.

In addition to administrative responsibility for the Writing Workshop, the position includes a half-time teaching load (two per semester) of basic writing, freshman English, and other composition, tutoring, language or literature courses.

Position begins fall 1984. Deadline for applications: January 15, 1984

David A. Downes, Chairman
Department of English
California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0830



WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER
Muriel Harris, editor
Dept. of English
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