



The **International**
Writing Centers
Association newsletter

UPDATE

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The Conflict Between Assessment and Accreditation—According to Sue Grafton
By Jon Olson

“I knew he’d be quick to see my conflict: the comfort of isolation versus cloying suffocation; independence versus bondage; safety versus betrayal. It was not in my makeup to imagine emotional states in between” (Grafton, Q 152). If you didn’t know that Kinsey Millhone, the main character in Sue Grafton’s eighteen mysteries, was describing her work as a private detective, you might think she was a writing center director describing the conflict between assessment and accreditation.

Grafton—novelist and resident of Louisville, KY—is scheduled to be a plenary speaker at *Writing at the Center*, the 2004 Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Louisville October 7-9 (www.louisville.edu/a-s/english/watson/). And dedicated scholar that I am, I’ve been preparing for this conference by catching up on Grafton’s Kinsey

www.suegrifton.com/).

While reading Q, I came across the passage I quoted to open this essay, a description that triggered my thinking about an important issue we all should consider once again. At the Watson Conference during the IWCA “town meeting” scheduled at a lunch period, I propose that we revisit this issue of assessment vs. accreditation. If you are planning to attend the Watson Conference,

Syn
t
a
x
Words fall onto the page . . .
Yet, never in neutral patterns.
We pay the price – the tax – for the syn of miscommunication.
—Beth Godbee

please bring your box lunch to this forum, where you can engage in a productive dialogue that is often impossible during IWCA’s open business meetings at CCCC, NCTE, and IWCA conferences.

The topic of accreditation is an important one, so important that it doesn’t go away, despite the fact that IWCA (it was NWCA at the time) voted in favor of an assessment plan and against accreditation at the 1999 NWCA conference in Bloomington, IN. That vote came after six years of study by two committees and after a roundtable discussion by experts—including Edward M. White from the Council of Writing Program Administrators—had considered the matter just prior to the business meeting where the vote took place. Five years later, does a majority still favor assessment? Has accreditation gained more supporters? Or can the polarity of assessment and accreditation yield a *creative* tension that finds something better in between? Many other tensions inform our perceptions and misperceptions of assessment vs. accreditation, to be sure, but none more than the tension Graf-

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Millhone mysteries. Years ago, I had read “A” Is for Alibi and on through the list to “M” Is for Malice. I’ve just finished “Q” Is for Quarry and am eager to devour her latest, “R” Is for Ricochet. (See

ton's character identifies of independence vs. bondage. Which brings me back to Grafton's novel.

While investigating the body of a murdered Jane Doe that had been dumped near a quarry along a California coastal highway, Millhone finds herself once again engulfed in a subplot that had begun in a previous novel. Millhone's parents had been killed in a car accident before she was old enough to remember them, and suddenly, disconcertingly, Kinsey discovered a grandmother, aunts, and cousins living nearby whom she had not known existed: "A fluke in an investigation three years previously had turned them up like a nest of spiders in the pocket of an old overcoat" (Q 144). Her mother and Aunt Gin had been on one side of a deep rift that had split the family, and Aunt Gin, the sister who raised Kinsey, "seemed to relish the split." Kinsey is not sure why her Aunt Gin felt that way, but she suspects other issues are involved; after all, as her Aunt Susanna said, "any time someone makes such a big deal about autonomy, it's probably a cover for something else" (150).

I do not mean to suggest that the issue of assessment vs. accreditation has divided the writing center field through a quarrel that parallels the split in the Grafton character's family. On the contrary, it seems to me that we have gone about this hot issue in exactly the right way: we studied accreditation in a long and careful manner, made a democratic decision, and have subsequently sustained a dialogue that checks to see if the decision continues to be a good one.

I also do not want to make too much of the analogy that Grafton's novel affords. Clearly, the analogy allows me to promote the upcoming Watson Conference by referencing one of its featured speakers, and it lets me tell you about the IWCA lunchtime forum. But I use Grafton's passage for more than a mere advertising gimmick: issues of autonomy—freedom vs. constraint—seem to explain which side we take in this debate. One side seems to argue that the autonomy of the writing center field would be strengthened if IWCA were to develop a system of writing center accreditation; the other side seems to argue that the autonomy of indi-

vidual writing centers would be threatened if IWCA were to impose accreditation standards on the diverse writing centers around the world.

The tipping point often comes when budget cuts loom over Centers and when job security is threatened. Autonomy may feel comfortable when all is well, but if an

Autonomy may feel comfortable when all is well, but if an administrator higher on the ladder wants to eliminate our Center, then identification with an influential organization can suddenly feel quite comfortable.

administrator higher on the ladder wants to eliminate our Center, then identification with an influential organization can suddenly feel quite comfortable. With our job on the line, conformity can feel better than independence. But does this have to be an either-or situation?

Whether you believe that a system of accreditation would benefit writing centers in the same way they benefit disciplines in health services and engineering, or whether you think formalized assessment is the answer, I believe we will find solutions through cooperation, public dialogue, and group action. Solutions are likely to be hybrid. Take, for example, a recent CCC initiative reported by Joan Mullin at the IWCA business meeting (for a quote from Mullin's report, see "Report on IWCA/WPA Consultant-Evaluator Assessment Collaboration" in the 25 March 2004 minutes printed in this issue of [IWCA Update](#)). After discussions across various organizations, Mullin reports that the CCC executive committee "has tentatively proposed a certification of excellence which would post models of outstanding writing programs." After considering "the concerns about the effectiveness and potential damage such a certification process might unwittingly promote" that Mullin said the Consultant-Evaluators had expressed, the CCC launched the CCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence <http://www.ncte.org/college/section/inbox/116259.htm>. At the request of CCC Chair Kathleen Yancey last June, I announced the initiative to the IWCA Executive Board and asked regional and at-large representatives pass the announcement along to their constituents. I also posted an announcement on www.writingcenters.org.

In the creative tension between assessment and accreditation, a certificate has emerged.

Will this certification program help a writing center fend off program cuts? Will programs who do not win a certificate eventually be stigmatized? I don't know what the WPA Consultant-Evaluator's concerns were about the program, and I don't know what the CCC Executive Committee did to address them. We will only know the effect of this new initiative if we test it. One director whose Center received a certificate nomination said that he and his staff were modest about calling themselves "exemplary." Nevertheless,

comma

Using a comma correctly is almost never a matter of taste or inspiration, it is even less a matter of following the ancient, Junior High formula of tossing in a comma "to indicate a pause", different people pause, for breath and emphasis, in different places, and every punctuation mark, indicates a pause, of some sort, periods, semicolons, and dashes no less than commas, when errors, in comma, usage occur, they are most often, the result of, the writer's, being, comma, happy, putting in, too many, commas,

— Gary Charles Wilkens

they took the exemplary attitude that even if they are not awarded a Certificate of Excellence, they will learn from the process. As the director wrote to me, "in spite of some reservations, we would like to go ahead, not least because we think that this self-assessment according to external criteria will help us to see our own weaknesses."

One thing that strikes me about the director's response is his commitment to self-improvement according to criteria developed by others. He seems to be making choices that preserve his autonomy while also drawing on the collective wisdom and resources of an organization. This does not seem like a comfort in isolation (to invoke Grafton again) but rather a comfort in organizational participation on one's own terms. He seems to have found a middle ground between autonomy and conformity.

What else can he do—can any of us do—than be open to that which will help us see our weaknesses? Well, one more thing we *must* do is address those weaknesses once we see them so we may become stronger. This is where accreditation would seem to have an advantage over assessment and certification: systems of accreditation have a built-in movement that carries programs forward. If accreditation is lost, then time and guidance are given so the program can meet the standards. Certification tells us where we are, assessment shows us where to go, and accreditation makes us go there. And once accredited, we have to keep up. Whether we use accreditation, assessment, or certification, we must formalize a movement toward greater strength so that this movement becomes part of our everyday structure of operation (DeCiccio). Is there a way to do this without resorting to a system of forced compliance to outside criteria of excellence? Let's keep talking about it—at the IWCA open forum in Louisville October 7-9. I hope to see you there. And let's make sure our resistances are not a cover for other issues.

"My life wasn't perfect, but I knew its limitations," Millhone reflects. "I remembered Susanna's comment about a passion for autonomy serving as a cover for something else. When she said it, I'd been too startled to wonder what she meant. She'd been referring to Aunt Gin . . . Had she been alluding to me as well?" (Q 152-53).

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The IWCA Summer Institute at Clark University: The Theories and Practices of Friendship and Writing Center Scholarship

Beth Burmester

A Postcard Poem to Remember IWCA SI 2004

Beth Burmester July 2004, Closing Luncheon in Tilton Hall

Because collaboration was at the center of our Summer Institute, I wish with these remarks to honor all the participants and leaders with a group portrait of our week together, using overheard conversation and comments from our plenary sessions.

in the beginning . . . books, binders, tote bags, maps, and email
. . . and they actually arrived!

Just a few quick announcements, What we value—

Cootie catchers, ice cream in the afternoon,

Kids in the cafeteria,

The Corner House, Jonas Clark Hall, Tilton Hall, the Bistro,

upstairs computer labs, dorm rooms, shuttle buses. . .

write with us. . . get off email and go back to writing!

I noticed that from the Gekko. . . this happened to me the other day:

FY? FYI. . .

when it comes to budgets, size matters.

Can I do it all? Am I in Help? I am Weary. . .

I like the idea of intersections, but I don't want to get killed.

Use your pizza wisely.

"marinated in a good cause for three days, then cooked on skewers"

Dining Recommendations? Anne's Favorites: Bijou Cinema and Dining, Fantastic Pizza and Falafel, House of India, Dalat Vietnamese Cuisine, and Shiraz Armenian Cuisine (times two)

Browsing at Tatnuck Bookstore and Café; the movie SIG: "It should have been somebody else"

Drinking is always better in a group.

Come join us at the Writer's Block Party! (Bring Your Own Brain)

Ambiance; round tables with umbrellas; who took my parking spot?

Collecting: free books, back issues, bibliographies, coffee cups, pencils, bumper stickers. . .

This pen was full of ink on Monday, and now it's all used up!

Leading ships? Can you lead a horse to water?

Does it show we care?

On the staircase—look up; woman with the stripes, move up a step.

Cardinals and Chemistry; Challenging Convention, Changing the World (before you die)

Michele, how do you say your last name?

The Art of Writing: Jill's henna tattoos, Paula's Trading Places, Howard's shirts; Neal's music.

Pilates for Dummies;

People don't do stupid things (yet)

Is that a SIG? We have to sing?

No, I never read it.

Artifacts of the Week

I wonder what everybody is writing?

Hot dog! We love those wieners!

The IWCA Summer Institute embodied our field's commitment to collaboration, but not in the strictly pedagogical or intellectual ways that I anticipated when I first arrived at Clark University's lovely campus, and joined the participants and leaders for a dinner reception on Sunday evening. Like any writing center(ed) conference, I anticipated that the workshops and presentations on our agenda would be collaboratively led, and that there would be many opportunities for participants to collaborate with each other. And all of this indeed took place; however, another kind of collaboration quickly came to the fore.

The co-chairs and co-leaders didn't just appear for their contribution and then disappear, as usually happens at large conferences. Instead, they became participants, too, while participants were able to shape the agenda of workshops and discussion topics and speak frequently throughout the day to our entire group. In other words, the collaboration was completely mutual: all the participants and all the co-chairs and leaders were bound together and involved in everything that was planned from the instructional content to the social dinners and after-hours gatherings.

In this way, the practice and theory of collaboration and of writing center work merged with friendship. Friendship is based (drawing from the models proposed by Aristotle and Cicero) on equality and reciprocity, and while the co-chairs, leaders, and participants certainly represented wide diversity on any number of points, our similarities were brought out and friendship fostered. Through conversation and good food and drink, I made friends, as much as I made progress in my development as a professional in the field of writing center studies. No amount of reading or attending conference sessions could substitute for the situated learning and the personal connections that the Summer Institute makes possible.

When I registered for the Summer Institute, I did not anticipate that leaving would be so difficult, and that I would feel the separation from my new friends and colleagues so sharply. The largest benefit for me as a participant was recognizing how I fit into the field as it is comprised of individuals, and how much I can contribute to it as an individual, and through collaborative relationships. My professionalization was directly achieved through relationships that gave me the inspiration and the practical grounding to see myself as a leader and an innovator: to bring my ideas back to my home institution and enact them. I am moved by the generosity and experiences shared by everyone who participated, and by the support offered by all. And I am excited by the prospect of strengthening these relationships and participating in new collaborative conversations and projects.

IWCA Summer Institute: A Most Stimulating Bootcamp

Sherie Brigham Western Illinois Univ. Moline
A most stimulating and pleasurable boot camp, the Institute provided focused, detailed guidance and instruction regarding

when to use a colon

A sense of anticipation: soil after rain,
expecting the first green shoot.

Introducing items in a series: the sun,
the moon, and the morning star.

An elaboration of what was just said:
light falling over brown leaves.

The expression of a rule or principle:
Green shoots one day drop leaves
beneath failing light.

— Gary Charles Wilkens is a Master's student in
English at Sam Houston State University and tutors in the
SHSU Writing Center.

pedagogy, theory, training, ESL tutoring, faculty relations, assessment, leadership, technology, ethics, and outreach. And, as if those weren't enough, special interest groups mushroomed daily to address in greater detail items such as faculty complaints and diversity issues. For me the most useful activity was "Writing as Hard Labor," an opportunity to workshop (throughout the week) a piece of professional writing with participants and leaders. I began with a mushy, unfocused report and finished with a highly effective and persuasive proposal for the location, configuration, and design of a new writing center. The poster session, "Trading Spaces" and the breakout on center design informed my writing, while the sessions on reports, budgets, and funding helped me shape and express my proposal appropriately. My writing group provided me with a most helpful and responsive audience. The result epitomizes collaborative writing at its best, I think, and I consider the Institute the most valuable professional development I've ever experienced.

IWCA Outstanding Scholarship Awards

Jon Olson

Congratulations to the winners of the 2003 IWCA Outstanding Scholarship Awards. The following awards will be presented at the Watson Conference October 7-9:

Best Book: Pemberton, Michael A., and Joyce Kinkead, eds. *The Center Will Hold*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2003.

Best Article: Lerner, Neal. "Writing Center Assessment: Searching for the 'Proof' of Our Effectiveness." *The Center*

Will Hold Ed. Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead. Logan: Utah State UP, 2003. 58-73.

Many thanks to the Book Award Committee (Shevaun Watson, Chair; Penny Bird; Meg Carroll; and Craig Crist-Evans) and the Article Award Committee (Carol

Haviland, Chair; Brad Hughes; Roberta Kjesrud; and Barbara Lutz).

IWCA Business Meeting, CCCC, San Antonio Thursday, March 25, 2004

(Approved May 6, 2004)

Attending (according to sign-in roster): Kim Abels (U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Beth Boquet (Fairfield U), Tracy Hamler Carrick (Colby College), Meg Carroll (Rhode Island College), Leah Cassorla (U of South Florida), Pamela Childers (The McCallie School), Frankie Condon (St. Cloud State U), Dagmar Corrigan (U of Houston, Downtown), Nita Danko (Purdue U, Calumet), Rebecca Day (Indiana U of Pennsylvania and Rock Valley Coll.), Diane Dowdy (Sam Houston State U), Michele Eodice (U of Kansas), Clint Gardner (Salt Lake Comm. Coll.), Paula Gillespie (Marquette U), Katrin Girgensohn (Euro. Assoc. for the Teaching of Academic Writing), Wendy Goldberg (Stanford U), Shareen Grogan (National U), Carol Haviland (Cal State, San Bernardino), Allison Holland (U of Arkansas at Little Rock), James Inman (U of South Florida), Harvey Kail (U of Maine), Roberta Kjesrud (Western Washington U), Neal Lerner (MIT), Bill Macauley (Mount Union Coll.), Jon Olson (Penn State U), Jill Pennington (Lansing Comm. Coll.), Rose Richards (Stellenbosch U), Vicki Russell (Duke U), Leigh Ryan (U Maryland, College Park), Tracy Santa (USAF Academy), Pat Saunders (Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS), Evelyn Schreiber (George Washington U), Donna Sewell (Valdosta State U), Steve Sherwood (Texas Christian U), Mitch Simpson (Purdue Univ., *Writing Lab Newsletter*), Trixie Smith (MTSU), Janet Swenson (Michigan State U), John Tinker (Stanford U), Marcy Trianosky (Hollins U), Shevaun Watson (U of California, Irvine), Mary Wislocki (New York U), Beth R. Young (U of Central Florida), Lisa Zimmerelli (U of Maryland, College Park)

Meeting was called to order at 7:55 P.M. by President, Jon

Olson.

Introductions and Acknowledgements

Jon Olson began the meeting by acknowledging the healing power of a caring community and by sharing that three members of the audience, Pamela Childers, Harvey Kail, and Leigh Ryan (who are currently, or have recently been, members of the board) were facing life-threatening illnesses.

Those board members present introduced themselves.

Committee Chairs introduced the following committees and their members: Best Article Committee (Carol Haviland, Chair), Best Book Committee (Shevaun Watson, Chair), Constitution Committee (Jill Pennington, Chair), Diversity Task Force (Paula Gillespie, Chair), Finance Committee (Beth Boquet, Chair), Research Awards Committee (Bill Macauley, Jr., Chair), Scholarship Award Advisory Committee (Pam Childers, Chair), and Web Editorial Board (Clint Gardner, Editor)

Past President Paula Gillespie was formally thanked for her 2001-2003 work as President, specifically for having established the Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals that was first held in Madison, WI, the home of the Oscar Mayer Wiener. President Jon Olson praised her for having been an 'all-meat wiener' as a President.

Reports

Reports were submitted to the Board online (IWCA-L) from regional representatives, the IWCA Treasurer, and the editors of *WCJ*, *WLN*, *IWCA Update*, writingcenters.org, and IWCA Press

Graduate Research Award: Bill Macauley announced this year's Graduate Research Awards winner, Karen S. Rowan, a doctoral candidate at SUNY, Albany. The title of Rowan's dissertation is: "Composition Theory and Pedagogy: Graduate Student Administrators and Professional Development in Writing Centers"

Who Am I?

Speaking Spanish with a migrant worker, a coworker asks, "Are you Mexican?" Studying in Spain, a US-American says, "I took you for a Spaniard!" Buying a bagel from a Middle-Eastern deli, the cashier asks, "Are you Lebanese?" Showing a photo of my Russian boyfriend to a friend, she says, "He looks more American than you!"

You look *exotic*,
Your hair's *black*,
Are you *foreign*?
Maybe...
Latina or Chicana,
or Arab,
Italian or French,
or Indian/s.

— Melissa Hasbrook

IWCA Summer Institute:

Neal Lerner reminded participants that the 2nd IWCA Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals will take place July 11-16, 2004 at Clark University in Worcester, Mass. Hosted by: Anne Geller, Paula Gillespie, and Neal Lerner; Institute Leaders: Michele Eodice,

Dawn Fels, Carol Peterson Haviland, Harvey Kail, Howard Tinberg, and Jill Pennington

IWCA/NCPTW 05: Frankie Condon reported that planning is underway for the combined IWCA/NCPTW 05 combined conference. Hotel arrangements have been made for the Minneapolis Hyatt. A conference website is under construction at <http://www.writing.ku.edu/2005/>.

Proposals for Hosting IWCA Spring 07 or Fall 08 Conferences: The South Central WCs Association expressed a possible interest in hosting in '07 or '08. This region hosted the very first IWCA conference '94 (New Orleans) and may provide an exciting venue as the organization approaches its 10th conference anniversary. The Southeastern WCs Association also expressed an interest in possibly hosting an upcoming conference in Nashville, although the regional Board has not yet discussed this proposal. Individuals within what used to be the Pacific Coast WCA are interested in hosting in the future as well, but cannot commit to anything yet, as the Southern California WCA and the Pacific Northwest WCA are new regionals. Frankie Condon suggested that we develop a proposal process for those interested in hosting (including guidelines for how to build a proposal, proposal content, and a time-table for submitting the proposal). Michele Eodice also suggested developing post-conference guidelines.

Scholarship Award Advisory Committee: Pamela Childers reported that the Scholarship Award Advisory Committee's recommendations had been accepted unanimously and will soon be on the Web.

Finance Committee: Beth Boquet submitted the final report of the finance committee, which includes 11 recommendations. Frankie Condon moved that we accept recommendations 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10, over which there were no objections, and that we table recommendations 2, 4, 7, and 11 for further discussion. Neal Lerner amended the motion to include endorsing items 2, 4, 7, and 11 and allowing IWCA President, Jon Olson, to determine an appropriate mechanism for further refining them. Shevaun Watson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Janet Swenson suggested we might consult with NCTE finance people for recommendations.

Report on IWCA/WPA Consultant-Evaluator Assessment Collaboration (This report on the agenda was canceled, along with the open discussion of assessment that was to follow, because WPA CE representative Joan Mullin could not stay to give the report due to the late start of the meeting. The IWCA SIG had run overtime. Mullin did, however, deliver the report to those who were waiting outside for the SIG to finish and the board meeting to begin. The text of that report was provided by Mullin in an e-mail to IWCA Secretary, Jill Pennington, on March 31, 2004):

Recent discussions of administrative decision-making and

budget cuts on WCenter addressed their negative effects on our Centers. Similar concerns have emerged in conversations among teachers, faculty and executive committees of WPA, CCC and NCTE. The WPA CE discussed, in its annual meeting at the Cs Saturday afternoon, issues of accreditation and/or certification: how we might make it work for us; the fears associated with terms like "accreditation" and "assessment"; ways in which we might join our common voices to create a system that would provide effective and strong support to Centers and Programs that are trying to uphold standards in our field. Sensitive to the multiple constituencies we serve and to our demographic differences, the WPA CE group began this discussion with CCC, which, in turn is in conversation with NCTE. The CCC executive committee has tentatively proposed a certification of excellence which would post models of outstanding writing programs. WPA CEs expressed concerns about the effectiveness and potential damage such a certification process might unwittingly promote. Our concerns will be taken back to the CCC executive committee.

As representatives of WAC and writing center programs, Joe Law and Joan Mullin will continue to represent these programs' interests in such discussions and will report any substantive news as it is communicated to them. IWCA may want to begin its own discussions about assessment/

Whiteness

It means something

when I'm asked, *What are you?*
and my response, *Mostly German and English,*
leaves the questioner disturbed,
and my response, *A little Cherokee,*
leaves the questioner satisfied.

It means something

when I share my memory work
--its uncertainties and challenges,
and I hear, *Why can't White people just accept they're White?*
and I hear, *When I first met you, I thought, She's just a White girl.*

It's not simply changing colors,
or coming-to-race.

It's something internal and external,
working its way
--simultaneously--
outward and inward.

It is

--and is about--
the body.

— Melissa Hasbrook

accreditation/certification in preparation for future inter-

organization discussions, and connect to conversations through representatives to WPA, CCC and NCTE.

New Business

IWCA Relationship with the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW): Katrin Girgensohn, representing EATAW, reported that the organization included 300 teachers of writing and researchers in Europe and was led by a six member board from five countries. It will hold its 3rd conference in June 2005 in Greece. Girgensohn commented that the great diversity in teaching and tutoring writing in Europe may be of interest to the IWCA. Paula Gillespie moved that a member of the EATAW board be added as an ex-officio member on the IWCA Board. Frankie Condon seconded the motion. Motion carried.

International Writing Center Week: Tracy Carrick read a statement by Katherine Theriault proposing that we establish an International Writing Center Week, as an occasion for recognizing and celebrating the work of writing centers around the world. A discussion of whether fall or spring would be appropriate for the event took place but a resolution was not possible given time constraints. Neal Lerner moved that we table the motion and take it up on WCenter. Pamela Childers seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Pennington
IWCA Secretary

International Writing Centers Association Executive Board NCTE 2004-NCTE 2005

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One Question

Jo Ann Vogt University of Missouri-Columbia

Our tutoring service for students enrolled in Writing Intensive courses has been available for more than fifteen years. Throughout that time, we have maintained a policy of confidentiality, releasing aggregate statistics but refusing to reveal who sought our help and why unless students requested that we communicate directly with their teachers. We established our policy because we reasoned that students who know their visits are confidential are more likely to

- seek help
- speak freely with tutors
- view tutors as writing coaches, separate from authority figures like teachers and TAs

If students can trust that their visits are confidential, we thought, those who are worried about the possible stigma of seeking help will be less hesitant about making that first appointment. Students burdened with writing anxiety or frustrated with a particular assignment or course, we argued, will more readily share their concerns if they know that what is said in the tutorial stays in the tutorial. Confidentiality will benefit both tutors and students, we reasoned, because both will be reminded that a tutoring session is separate and distinct from conferences held with teachers or TAs.

Those simple convictions led to a policy that we believe has served our tutors, students, and faculty well, but we have only anecdotal evidence to substantiate our belief. We also realize that others have made different choices and are equally satisfied with the results. Given our sense that what we are doing is right for us, coupled with our inability to demonstrate the validity of our decisions, our question is this: How can writing center administrators know whether a particular policy regarding confidentiality best serves the students who seek help at their centers?

Please watch for discussion of this and other topics on Wcenter (visit writingcenters.org for access information).

At-Large Reps:

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Sharifa Daniels (2006), Writing Lab (Afrikaans), Stellenbosch University, Crozier St., Stellenbosch, South Africa, (021) 808-2902, Fax (021) 808-3676, sdaniels@sun.ac.za

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New IWCA Board Members

Jon Olson

At the March 25, 2004, IWCA Executive Board meeting, the board voted to invite the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW) to seat one of its board members on the IWCA board as an *ex officio* member. We hope this courtesy position will increase collaborative learning opportunities between the two organizations.

Filling the new position is Otto Kruse, a professor of psychology in Erfurt, Germany, who is currently on a leave for two years to work now at the Zurich University of Applied Science. What brought him from psychology into writing? "I noticed that writing was kind of an invisible activity at our universities," he explains. "There was no communication about it; it was kind of a vacuum that existed around academic writing and this vacuum slowly started to absorb me till I found writing more interesting than psychology." In Zurich, he created a Center for Professional Writing, in which he offers training for writing tutors and faculty.

He helped found EATAW in 1999. "Our next event," he says, "will be the 2005 conference in Athens (22-24 June, see <http://eataw2005.hau.gr/>), and I would be happy to welcome you all there. June, by the way, is the best time to travel in Greece, as Europeans do not have holidays yet and you will have all the beautiful islands for yourself."

I'm also pleased to announce that we have a new board member, the new Pacific Northwest Writing Centers Association Representative, Roberta Kjesrud. She is the Writing Center Coordinator at Western Washington University. Allow me to share a paragraph from the message Roberta sent me:

I'm happy to report that the PNWCA board convened for its first meeting last Friday. I can see our region will have its own flavor. For example, since we include the province of British Columbia, we had to revisit the regional's name (B.C. is actually the Pacific Southwest of Canada!). The name "Pacific Northwest" will stand, but I think we all feel challenged to think like North Americans rather than just Americans. I like it! Anyway, we drafted bylaws, assembled a ballot, and settled several issues associated with our forthcoming regional conference. We got

a lot accomplished.

Now IWCA has two regional WCA's that span the borders of more than one country. Welcome to the board, Otto and Roberta. --Jon

Revamped IWCA Web Site

Clint Gardner IWCA Web Editor

The IWCA Web Site has been completely revamped and resides at a new url: writingcenters.org. The new site was developed with the interests of IWCA members in mind as well as the writing center community in general.

Services include news and announcements; information about the IWCA; resources for peer writing tutors, writing center directors, and about online writing centers; discussion forums for the IWCA and writing center community; and generic resources for writers who come upon the IWCA site looking for writing-related information.

In the near future the IWCA web site will be instituting a database of online writing center web pages; a comprehensive membership service that will allow IWCA members and those interested in IWCA to pay membership dues, subscribe to journals, and vote in IWCA elections. For further information about the purpose and goals of the IWCA Web Site, I refer you to <http://www.writingcenters.org/aboutwebsite.htm>.

We need to ask what more we can do, determine with our writers what works best and what can be revised. . . . simply asking the questions is not enough.

Noting Our Notes (or Trying to Make Something out of Nothing)

Michael Mattison

Boise State University

Balthasar: Note this before my notes; there's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Don Pedro: Why, these are very crochets that he speaks! Notes, notes, forsooth, and nothing!

-William Shakespeare

It is not for nothing that I begin with these lines from *Much Ado about Nothing*. Notes, notes, I have, and nothing in the notes. Nothing after nothing after nothing—but I think it's something. In fact, I want to make some ado about the nothings that I have. Here are, for instance, some of my many nothings:

Nothing.

Nothing more.

Nothing, thanks.
 Nothing I can think of.
 Not a thing.
 Nothing at the moment.
 Nada.
 Nothing, it was great.
 Nothing much.
 Nothing.
 Nothing as of now.
 Not too much.
 Nothing yet.
 Nothing at this point.
 Nothing really.
 Nothing I'm aware of.
 Nothing so far.
 Nothing.
 Nothing.
 Nothing.
 Nothing.

These are the nothings that are on the notes at the Boise State Writing Center. More specifically, they are nothings given in response to one question on our evaluation sheet: "What more could the Writing Center do to help you with your writing needs?" More than a quarter of the responses to this question were either some version of "nothing," or were literal nothings—blank space. And as wonderful as we might think it would be to hear nothing in this case—sweet nothings whispered in our consulting ears, sweet nothings that say we have done all that we can do—I am not convinced. As another Shakespearean character claimed, "Nothing will come of nothing, speak again."

Now, I do want to note that these nothings from last year are a gain over the previous year. Before, we had nothing even to collect the nothings. There was no feedback sheet, no evaluation process for our writers to give any indication about how their consultations went or to offer suggestions to us about improving our work. The writers were silent as to the consultation process because we had not given them a voice. They said nothing, and that type of nothing is the most worrisome. We in the Center were determining what worked best for the writer, talking and thinking about consultations from one side only.

To end that nothing, we designed a five-question evaluation form that we now ask writers to fill out at the end of a session:

1. Who was your consultant?
2. What did you work on?
3. How would you describe your session?
4. How would you rate the help you received?
4-Excellent 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Poor
5. What more could the Writing Center do to help you

with your writing needs?

This is a start for us, a something. Many other writing centers have this something, too; collecting responses from writers is a common practice, and with good reason. Joan Mullin says, "I think it vital to hear from tutees about their experiences in the Writing Center." We need to ask writers for their thoughts. Evaluation sheets show our writers (and remind our consultants) that we want to be, as Anne DiPardo says, "perennially inquisitive and self-critical," to become "students of students" and thus of ourselves (366). We need to ask what more we can do, determine with our writers what works best and what can be revised.

Yet as we (and other writing centers) have discovered, simply asking the questions is not enough. We do not always receive the substantial comments that can help us reflect on our work. We sometimes have nothing to build on. So, assuming again that we have not yet perfected our consulting practices, we should continually look to provide writers with different ways to respond to us if the original prompts do not provide substantial answers. How and when to ask for evaluations is a recurring theme on WCenter (most recently in January 2004—the "Client Evaluations of the Writing Center" thread), and the thoughts posted there have certainly influenced our thinking about our nothings.

... and then we have the voices of the writers who visit us. What they say, and what they don't say, is what we have to hear.

For one thing, we can question our questions. "What more could we do?" is fairly broad. We could look to be more specific, more focused, in our forms, and perhaps utilize more yes/no questions:

-Did you feel in control of your paper?

-Do you feel our questions helped you better understand your assignment?

-Did we address all the concerns you had about your writing?

-Do you feel your consultation will help you with other writing situations?

-Did we refer you to relevant resource materials?

-Were our explanations about sentence structure clear?

-Will you come back?

Or, we could make a list of categories and ask students to rate our effectiveness in each: knowledge of writing strategies, attention to writing context, friendliness, professionalism, ease with reference materials. We could combine open-ended questions with these examples above, drawing out the writer's response.

Just as important as what questions we ask is when we ask them. At Boise State, we realize that we ask our questions immediately following a consultation, when writers are still considering their papers and when perhaps they might need to be at class, at home, or at work. We are primarily a commuter school, with a lot of non-traditional students who fit in consultations between the demands of job and family. Right after a consultation is not the ideal time to demand an in-depth consideration of the session (Kurt Bouman calls it

“a quick-and-dirty feedback process”). After all, we’re talking about taking time as consultants to consider our work—can’t we give the writers the same time to think back on it?

Other centers have addressed the timing of their evaluations by utilizing follow-up surveys. The percentage of replies received can drop, but students who do reply often have more to say. They can also be more critical as they are not responding in the flush of positive energy that might immediately follow a session. How has the session truly influenced the revision work for the paper? Were there as many suggestions and ideas as first thought? As one way to encourage writers to respond to such a survey, Sonja Bagby suggests using incentives, such as coupons for coffee. Another idea for soliciting feedback, put forth by Beth Boquet, is to gather together a focus group, a small selection of students who give in-depth responses (Lerner). Either a survey or a focus group would seem to be a good fit for our situation at Boise State.

Given all these possibilities for change, something will come of our nothings. We’re talking about them at Boise State—we are noting our notes and are in the process of revising our evaluation for next year. At the moment, we are keeping the post-consultation evaluation sheet, while planning towards other methods of soliciting responses (we are including a slot for email addresses on our sign-in sheets so that, when we are ready, we can conduct an email survey). So far, on our evaluation sheet, we have added two multiple-choice questions, which can be quickly answered, and have tried to offer more specific prompts for the writers to give written feedback—asking if a writer plans on returning and if she would recommend us to another writer. We’ve also changed the last question: “What suggestions do you have for us about ways we can better help with your writing needs?” True, asking for suggestions instead of asking what more we can do is not a major revision, but we hope the term “suggestions” will encourage writers to put down one or two ideas.

Certainly we will not completely avoid nothings. We hope, though, that our revisions will give us more some-things. And we will continue to note these evaluation notes each semester, looking to make them as relevant to our work as possible. We’re making much ado about all this because that is why we’re here—we always have voices from consultants and directors, from administrators and faculty, considering what writing centers can and should do, and then we have the voices of the writers who visit us. What they say, and what they don’t say, is what we have to hear.

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My Journals from the Writing Center — Practice, Theories, and Reflections Yingqin Liu Texas Tech University

In Spring, 2001, after fifteen years of teaching in the Department of English at Xi’an Foreign Languages University, P.R. China, I came to Western Kentucky University to study for my MA in English. To fulfill my graduate assistantship, I worked as a tutor in the Writing Center of the University, where I enjoyed a wonderful learning and training experience.

... these entries also encouraged me to explore the real meaning of being a tutor and inspired me to engage in more cross-cultural learning and working experiences.

The special characteristic of my tutoring job was that I, with other tutors, received professional training from the Department of English. Our trainer was Dr. Linda Calendrillo, who was both the Chair of the English Department and the Director of our Writing Center during that time. Our training class included taking a seminar class on tutoring theory and practice with Dr. Callendrillo and working in the Writing Center for twenty hours each week. In addition, we were also required to write a 400- word journal about our tutoring experience each week as our class assignment. I always believe that it was the process of composing these writing center journals that made our training program most exciting, beneficial, and enlightening. This is because writing the journals made me reflect on the rationales of the theories guiding the tutoring while drawing insights from my tutoring practice.

Among all the journal entries, I like three of them the most, for they reflect some important issues concerning the writing center such as the roles of tutors, the effective strategies of tutoring, and the application of theories into practice, and these entries also encouraged me to explore the real meaning of being a tutor and inspired me to engage in more

cross-cultural learning and working experiences. Here I would like to share these three journals with everyone.

Journal #1

Jan. 19, 2001

This week, I spent some busy and exciting time in the Writing Center. The first student I tutored was an American student. I should admit at the beginning I was a bit nervous, for I was not sure of myself as an international tutor, facing a native speaker. But quickly, as I helped her with her paper, I regained my confidence and calmed myself down. This feeling made me further understand the idea that “many students are intimidated by the tutorial itself, fearing another person’s judgment of their work and thus feeling anxious, insecure, and filled with self-doubt” (Murphy and Sherwood 6). I have realized that, as tutors, we sometimes also have this kind of psychological barrier that may affect our tutoring.

I also tutored two Asian students, but their problems in writing were a bit different from those of American students. Besides errors in grammar and punctuation, the Asian students had more problems in sentence structure, paragraph organization and understanding the ideas of the given texts. In addition, they seemed more timid and worried when they came to us for help. I can understand this situation as a second language learner; they are bound to meet more psychological and academic difficulties in the second language learning environment. So, I will try to help them in every way possible.

This week’s busy work also made me ponder on whether we had offered students some solutions to their writing problems too quickly. For they are actually able to solve many problems on their own; for example, after I asked one student to read very carefully a poorly written sentence twice, she finally replied, “I see the tense is wrong, and I should replace ‘give’ with ‘supplied.’” Therefore, I think that we should pay more attention to encouraging self-motivated and independent learning styles for students as a way of preventing students from becoming overdependent on the tutors’ help.

Journal #2

February 15, 2001

Murphy and Sherwood state, “The goal of most tutors is to assist students in making long-term improvements in their writing” (12). To some extent, I think this also means that teaching writers how to improve involves teaching them how to revise, saying that revision is the primary way that both thinking and writing evolve, mature, and improve (Murphy and Sherwood 12). However, many students think that tutoring equals proofreading. They might be mainly concerned with making sure their papers are grammatically and mechanically correct and only secondarily interested in the tutor’s evaluations on the quality of their ideas and the effectiveness

of their organization. “This attitude can really put the tutor and the student at cross purposes, creating a central dilemma

for the tutor about how much to intervene in the student’s overall writing process” (Murphy and Sherwood 12).

I actually experienced such a dilemma this week. Discussing a paper with a student, I found the patterns of sentences in the paper were very monotonous-- filled with simple sentences. I tried to explain to the student that his sentences were repeating each other and that the meanings of

. . . [c]ultural expectations have everything to do with the success or failure of any tutoring sessions, just as wind velocity has everything to do with a successful sailing expedition.

some sentences were not clear enough. To my surprise, however, the student said, “My teacher only cares about whether we have written incomplete sentences,” which implies, I suppose, as far as my sentences

are complete, why should I bother? At that moment, I really wanted to tell him that he was learning something for himself, not for his teacher and that he shouldn’t judge his work only by meeting his teacher’s minimum requirement. Considering that I might hurt his feelings, I did not share my thoughts out. Instead, I revised two sentences by joining them into a compound one. Then I asked him to read the revised sentence and decide which one, the original or the revised sentence, actually expressed his ideas better. He pointed at the compound one. “Why?” I asked. “By using *but* to combine the two simple sentences, I can see there is a contrasting relationship between the ideas in them,” he answered. “Exactly!” I agreed. I further explained that simple sentences have their important role in an essay, but too many of them throughout an essay could produce monotony for readers; even worse, the writer would fail to express his ideas efficiently and precisely.

I believe the reason for the student’s reluctance to revise might be more complex than what I have discussed. There might be some psychological factors functioning here such as self-esteem and fear of being evaluated by others. I will continue exploring this issue in my tutoring practice.

Journal #3

March 23, 2001

I tutored a student who appeared very gloomy and depressed when he came to the writing center the other day. I found out that the student was frustrated with the low grade his paper received: 67. Then, I immediately realized that the student needed some special help in addition to the normal academic type.

Christina Murphy points out, “While the teacher’s role is primarily informative and focused upon the method of presentation that will best convey instruction to the class as a whole, the tutor’s role often is primarily supportive and affective, secondarily instructional, and always directed to each

student as an individual in a unique, one-to-one interpersonal relationship” (43-44). At that moment, I sensed that I could feel the weight of the real meaning of “supportive and affective”: the students come to the Writing Center voluntarily because they believe they can get help they need and because they trust us and think we may understand them and treat them as friends or at least as unique individuals.

So I was especially warm-hearted and thoughtful when discussing the paper with the student. Certainly I knew his problems were not only academic, but psychological as well because I could see he was very nervous, sad and uncertain about himself as we talked about his paper. I tried to encourage him by stressing the strong points of the paper. I told him he expressed many of his ideas clearly and his knowledge about the topic helped make the paper interesting. Meanwhile, when I discussed the weaknesses of the paper with him, I pointed them out mildly: “If you can pay more attention to tense and punctuation, you will make your ideas move more smoothly; if...” Anyway, while the student was leaving the writing center, I could see he appeared relaxed and cheerful.

This experience made me further understand that as a tutor, “to be supportive” is the ability to find students’ problems and to help them cope with them; “to be affective” means to be able to understand students’ feeling, to show proper compassion and to encourage them to face their problems bravely and never to give up.

To conclude, these writing center journals not only made my tutoring experience more meaningful and unforgettable but also showed me how working at the Writing Center in a cross-cultural academic setting could enrich my intercultural communication knowledge. I wish I could work as a tutor in the Writing Center again, continuing my writing center journals on and on.

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Book Review: Shanti Bruce & Ben Rafoth. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton /Cook Publishers Heinemann. 173 pages.

Reviewed by Candace Stewart, Helen Szymanski, Albert Romano, Zisca Burton, and Valerie Combie
Ilona Leki introduces *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* as “the first book-length attempt to address the issue of how the promise of the writing center can be realized for L2 students” (xi). Affirming that the text presents both theoretic

cal and practical ESL students, Leki notes that *ESL Writers* hopes to help tutors with writers whose abilities vary “probably more widely in fact than tutors” (xi). The book is divided into three parts: Part I, “Cultural Contexts” (ch. 1 & 2), provides in-depth information and background for intercultural tutoring sessions; Part II, “The ESL Tutoring Session” (ch 3-12), provides advice and realistic examples to bolster tutors’ confidence; and Part III. Finally, Part III, “A Broader View” (chapters 13-15), offers some final “context and perspective.”

The two chapters in Part I, Nancy Hayward’s “Insights into Cultural Divides” and Theresa Jünling Tseng’s “Theoretical Perspectives on Learning a Second Language,” provide important theoretical frameworks for understanding cultural expectations and complications of learning second languages. Hayward asserts, “[c]ultural expectations have everything to do with the success or failure of any tutoring session, just as wind velocity has everything to do with a successful sailing expedition” (1). Her comprehensive definition of culture, supported by Samovar and Porter, Edward Hall,

Sapir, and Whorf, reinforces the all-pervasive influence of this concept, especially in the relationship between tutor and L2 students, for “culture underpins our personal beliefs, our values, and our practices. If we are to begin to

understand other cultures, we must first strive to understand our own” (4). That quest for “cultural self-awareness” must include self-examination of assumptions, perceptions, behaviors, and social relationships. The chapter is completed with “The Cultural Roots of Intercultural Communication,” which describes expresses cultural underpinnings of such nonverbal communication as eye contact, physical distance, and issues of privacy.

The cultural and theoretical conversation continues in Theresa Jünling Tseng’s essay, which argues that ESL writers are influenced by different theories of second-language acquisition based on their cultural orientation. The behaviorist theory emphasizes “that repetition can be a helpful strategy for learning new material” (17). This point is important in second language acquisition where “the language habits of L2 learners’ first language (L1) influence their learning of the second language” (17). Innatist theory, cognitive psychology, and interactionist theory are discussed and engaged to help the reader understand the impact such theorizing can have on the L2 learner.

Part II of the text begins with an essay by one of the editors, Shanti Bruce. “Getting Started” illustrates the psychological and cultural hurdles an ESL student confronts in seeking writing center help. Shyness, anxiety, cultural taboos, or “feeling intimidated, fearing being judged, worrying about taking risks, or being unfamiliar with the assignment” (30) are just a few of these hurdles. Bruce offers several tutoring strategies and techniques, stressing the importance of a col-

***Who has authority over the text?
Who controls the language
choices: the student, the in-
structor, or the tutor?***

laborative effort between the tutor and tutee so that the participants share “the responsibility of the session” (31), and can gauge together the accomplishments of the consultation.

Once tutors are comfortable “getting started” with an ESL writer, they must learn how to read an ESL text. Paul Kei Matsuda and Michelle Cox’s “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text” offers insights for doing so. They argue that many ESL errors “are not deficiencies ... [but] may reflect the writer’s advanced knowledge of conventions in other languages...” (40) that is unfamiliar to the tutor. Matsuda and Cox also stress that ESL students may be stronger in either written or spoken English. Matsuda and Cox draw from Carol Severino’s work (1998) to explain three stances a reader of ESL texts can take: assimilationist, accommodationist, and separatist (42). The authors describe each stance and their features as “ways of reading difference, and analyze whether tutors should read to ““correct” difference, explain difference, or overlook difference” (42). Matsuda and Cox include a variety of detailed strategies for reading ESL texts.

Carol Severino’s “Avoiding Appropriation” parallels “Reading an ESL Text” nicely, showing how easily a tutor or instructor can inadvertently take ownership of another’s text and how doing so might cause an ESL writer feelings of humiliation or shame after her writing has been “corrected” to the more sophisticated, accurate voice and language of her instructor or tutor. Severino discusses the concept of reformulation as “correcting and revising second language writing, making it not only more grammatical, but more idiomatic and native-sounding” (49). She shows the distinctions between reformulation and appropriation, which is “a loss of voice, ownership, authorship, or emotional and intellectual connection to the writing and how it was composed” (50). She explains that if the author has worked on the changes and given consent to them, then the work has “not been appropriated” (50).

For Severino, one key component of appropriation is the issue of control and ownership of the text and language. Who has authority over the text? Who controls the language choices: the student, the instructor, or the tutor? She cautions tutors that an ESL writer who has not learned enough of the language may not communicate easily or fluently enough to grasp the well-intended tutor’s questions, answers, or instructions. Severino answers these concerns and more, providing ten strategies for avoiding the appropriation of a student’s writing.

Amy Jo Minett’s chapter, “Earth Aches by Midnight: Helping ESL Writers Clarify Their Intended Meaning,” helps tutors comprehend an ESL student’s paper, and suggests ways to “help clarify meaning at four levels: essay, paragraph, sentence, and word” (61). Minett stresses the importance of tutors talking with the ESL writers about contrastive rhetoric—ways that culture may inform how writers structure their essays. Not all cultures have the same expecta-

tions. “Topical structure analysis” (63) asks students to draw connections between sentences, topics, and the whole essay, which can help students analyze their writing, stay on topic, and focus the reader. Tutors can also pay attention to the student’s “subtle signals” (67) that suggest when the writer is ready to receive help.

“Looking at the Whole Text” by Jennifer Staben and Kathryn Dempsey Nordhaus stresses the importance of focusing on the entire essay even though ESL writers may request a focus on grammar. The authors claim that tutors don’t have to “choose between substance and grammar” (80), or abandon all talk of language in order to address higher order concerns. Tutors who talk to the writer first, before looking at the text, can help “focus the student’s attention...on the larger textual issues from the very beginning” (75). Staben and Nordhaus suggest asking questions like “How can I help you achieve your goals?” (75). Being directive—“telling writers what they *have to do*” (76)—can become second nature for tutors, but instead this essay reminds tutors that they can inform students about “academic expectations, essay conventions” (76) and model how L1 writers might build an essay.

Cynthia Linville’s “Editing Line By Line” focuses on a familiar dilemma:

... *ESL writers need more creative and informal interaction with English as part of their language development.*

“frustrated tutors are often tempted either to give the student too much help with errors or to give none at all, directing the student’s attention to rhetorical issues instead” (84). According to Linville, tutors can facilitate line-by-line editing by helping the student to “learn what her most frequent errors are, and learn to recognize and correct her own mistakes, then she will be a proficient self-editor” (84). Linville advises tutors to address errors that are the most “frequent, serious, and treatable” rather than “crossing out errors and writing in corrections,” a strategy that does not “promote student learning” (86). Linville further suggests tutors should focus on six error types, and use texts such as *Writing Clearly: An Editing Guide* by Janet Lane and Ellen Lange to explain grammatical errors. Through a process of showing the student how to see the error and then asking the student how to correct the error, a tutor permits the L2 student to develop skills in identifying and correcting the error. Linville does admit the limitation of this strategy: “Granted, this method is excruciatingly slow” so “tutors need to fight down their own sense of urgency” (90). Meanwhile, she also provides a useful set of examples and resources to help tutors practice these strategies.

Ben Rafter’s essay, “Tutoring ESL Papers Online,” provides a comprehensive look at a particular problem in the IUP writing center emerging from online tutoring with ESL students: too much feedback. Tutors gave an overwhelming array of detailed commentary diverging from “the more open-ended and collaborative quality” (96) of their writing center’s practices. Rafter shares an ESL writing excerpt, includes a writing tutor’s ‘all-over-the-map’ responses, and then applies Matsuda and Cox’s approaches to working with ESL

papers. Shifting from the assimilationist stance to the more useful accommodationist and separatist positions led tutors to the realization that they could read the papers more closely for “language problems involving unclear meaning” (99), a more helpful strategy than trying to offer ideas for everything all at once. The essay ends by listing lessons learned from this experience, including a helpful strategy of encouraging tutors to offer a “consistent and repeated message” in their online interactions with ESL writers.

Though tutors should try to understand L2 behaviors based in cultural orientation . . . tutors’ ages, nationalities, and experiences may pose problems for some L2 writers who need help.

“Raising Questions About Plagiarism” treats the sensitive issue of plagiarism from the point (s) of view of ESL students. Kurt Bouman tells peer tutors they are in “a good position to help ESL students learn more about [their] institution’s values and conventions regarding using sources in writing” (106). He presents the rather complicated interpretations of what constitutes plagiarism, then discusses plagiarism and cultural practices, using many illustrative examples to clarify tutors’ understanding of different values and attitudes concerning the documentation of sources. Bouman concludes by urging tutors to clarify plagiarism issues by talking with writing center staff and also with ESL writers (and the writing center director), as issues surface. He includes a rich set of pertinent references on plagiarism and ESL students.

Paula Gillespie’s “Is This My Job?” raises and discusses the very important question of boundaries for writing center staff. This chapter extends these questions to the tutor/international student conference at the graduate level. Gillespie states, “Sometimes what a writer needs is an editor, someone to help with correctness, someone who will submit the proofread draft back to the writer” (120). Gillespie advocates for flexibility in tutors’ responses to these questions, even when they appear to violate principles of tutors’ theoretical training and writing center policy. Using a number of tutors’ stories to illustrate that complexity, she gives tutors ideas for discussion and research. Gillespie avers that the issue is a complex one. Despite (or perhaps because of) that, working with international students “can be among the most rewarding, most enjoyable work we do” (126).

The last essay in Part II is Kevin Dvorak’s “Creative Writing Workshops for ESL Writers.” Dvorak posits that ESL writers need more creative and informal interactions with English as part of their language development. Arguing that “creative writing is too often an overlooked and undervalued form of literacy training in the academy, especially when it pertains to learning English as a second language (ESL)” (127), Dvorak provides rationales and activities that

illustrate how such literacy training might be developed. The activities include informal writing experiences that encourage “ESL writers to take risks” (138), and practice in writing that connects to ESL writers’ complicated dual social identities. Dvorak provides multiple genres for this literacy training including collaborative fictions, free writing, visual texts, and textual self-portraits, and includes a useful template for developing these workshops.

Part III of *ESL Writers* opens with Gerd Bräuer’s essay, “The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad.” Bräuer offers a cultural framework for both writing and writing center experiences ESL students might have had prior to studying in the US. Bräuer notes first that Anglo-American writing perspectives in higher education tend toward pedagogies of process while Continental perspectives tend toward more specific grammar help. He then discusses the rhetorical differences between the traditions of Anglo-American and Continental “ways of writing” (136): Anglo-American writing often helps the reader “reproduce the text,” while Continental writing assumes the reader will “co-produce” the text, invaluable distinctions for tutors who regularly work with European students. Finally, Bräuer underscores the complications resulting from the continuing lack of self-reflective work international faculty often have regarding their own writing processes, validating only the final draft as if it appeared full-blown. This deception can make students think their complicated writing processes are somehow inappropriate. Bräuer offers suggestions for dealing with these problems in the writing center, including providing generic information sessions, thinking about developing ESL writers’ communities, and collaborating with ESL faculty.

“Trying to Explain English” presents a brief introduction to some difficulties English poses for ESL students. Ben Rafter’s “stroll along a few linguistic paths through the gardens of English grammar” (140) provides glimpses into the theoretical underpinnings of modern linguistics, in order to enable tutors’ explanations of what comes naturally to them, which is often maddeningly puzzling to non-native learners—and writers. He first debunks the notion that English is the most difficult language to learn, but admits that English’s large word-store can prove problematic for ESL learners. He analyzes English vocabulary to highlight features such as our enormous number of borrowings from other languages, the strange spellings as vestiges of our history, the high incidence of our relatively few irregular verbs, and the language’s flexibility in converting verbs to nouns and/or adjectives. Rafter reminds tutors that ESL students come to writing centers seeking explanations for these (and other) anomalies, and then discusses adjective-noun ambiguities that abound in English to help tutors clarify these oddities, first for themselves and then for the ESL writers they want to help. His breezy style is enjoyable, his examples clever. A minor drawback is his limited set of references.

Shanti Bruce closes out the book with “ESL Students Share Their Writing Center Experiences,” which validates points made throughout the book. Though tutors should try to understand L2 behaviors based in cultural orientation, Bruce also reminds us that tutors’ ages, nationalities, and experiences

may pose problems for some L2 writers who need help. Bruce also reiterates the importance of advertising the writing center's presence and mission. One particularly important point is that "most writing centers are no longer considered primarily places of remediation" (154); instead, students visit the writing center because "they know the value of having a second reader" (154). Bruce reminds us that cultural overtones in the writing center environment are significant because such cues can impact the writing center relationship in negative ways if we are not careful.

Bruce and Rafoth's *ESL Writers* examines ESL issues in a comprehensive and energetic manner. The informative chapters provide theoretical background as well as practical

advice for discussion and action, and the glossary of terms included at the back of the book can be invaluable. This is an engaging, interesting and educational book. *ESL Writers* is an excellent guide not only for writing center tutors, but also for students, instructors, non-linguists, and others interested in working with ESL learners and/or international writers. That it is the first of its kind is impressive enough; that it delivers in such a fine way marks it as essential and significant.

Awards & Announcements

Southeastern Writing Centers Association 2005 Awards & 2004 Conference

The 2005 Southeastern Writing Center Association's Achievement Award

The Southeastern Writing Center Association Awards Committee is pleased to announce the 2005 SWCA Achievement Award. The SWCA Achievement Award is presented annually on a competitive basis to any writing center administrator at an educational institution in the Southeastern region for his or her outstanding service to the SWCA. Research and service contributions to the nominee's writing center and the writing center community will also be considered. The SWCA Awards Committee will review all submitted materials. The winner will be announced and presented with the award (a plaque and a check for \$250) during the 2005 SWCA Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. The recipient will also be invited to present a speech on excellence in writing center administration at the 2006 SWCA Conference.

The 2005 Southeastern Writing Center Association's Peer Tutor Award

The Southeastern Writing Center Association Awards Committee is pleased to announce the 2005 SWCA Peer Tutor Award. The SWCA Peer Tutor Award is presented annually on a competitive basis to a peer tutor at an educational institution in the Southeastern region for his or her outstanding contributions to his or her writing center, SWCA, and the writing center community. The SWCA Awards Committee will review all submitted materials. The winner will be announced and presented with the award (a plaque and a check for \$100) during the 2005 SWCA Conference in Charleston, South Carolina.

Nominees' submission packets should be received by **December 1, 2004**, at the following address (also the contact for further information):

Mary Alm, SWCA Awards Committee University of North Carolina at Asheville University Writing Center,
CPO 2130
Asheville, NC 28804 malm@unca.edu

At its February 2004 conference in Atlanta, the Southeastern Writing Center Association was pleased to welcome Peter Elbow as its keynote speaker. The opening program included a featured panel, "Digital Media, Tutoring and Writing," with Jay Bolter of Georgia Tech, Kathleen Blake Yancey of Clemson and James Inman of the University of South Florida.

About 200 writing center administrators, peer tutors and staff attended the conference, hosted by Kenesaw State University. The Southeastern region was well-represented among the conference attendees and presenters. The results of the annual election held at the conference were as follows:

- Marcy Trianosky of Hollins University in Virginia, President, 04-06
- Jennifer Liethen-Kunka of Francis Marion University in South Carolina, Vice President, 04-06
- Jane Smith of Winthrop University in South Carolina, Secretary, 04-06
- Trixie Smith of Middle Tennessee State University, at-large member, 04-06
- Leah Cassorla of the University of South Florida, at-large member, 04-06

Remaining on the board will be Karl Fornes of University of South Carolina at Aiken, Treasurer; Pam Childers, the McCallie School in Tennessee, At-large member; Mary Alm of the Univ. of North Carolina at Ashville, At-large member; Christine Cozzens of Agnes Scott College in Georgia, Southern Discourse Editor; and Bob Barrier of Kennesaw State Univ. of Georgia, Immediate Past Conference Coordinator. James Inman, Immediate Past President, will also remain on the board for a year. For more information on the Southeastern Writing Center Assoc., go to the region's website: <http://www.swca.us> <<http://www.swca.us/>>

Midwest Writing Centers Association 2004 Conference

The Midwest Writing Centers Association is pleased to announce its 22nd annual regional conference. "Talk Like a River: Discourses, Faith, Ethos, and Writing Centers" will be hosted November 4 – 6, 2004, by St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The keynote speaker **Min-Zhan Lu will discuss ideas from her current essay:** "An Essay on the Work of Composition: Composing English against the Order of Fast Capitalism." Forthcoming in *College Composition and Communication*, September 2004. The program will be up on the web site soon. Check <http://www.k.edu/~mwca/conference/> for details on lodging, registration, and other conference events. All members of MWCA and beyond are welcome to attend. Contact Tim Fountaine, the local host, tfountaine@stcloudstate.edu with questions.

2005 CCCC Bring-A-Book Project

As we begin to think about 4Cs 2005, I wanted to solicit some help from the group here. I am coordinating the CCCC/Working-Class Studies SIG Bring-A-Book Project again this year, and I need some help. I am trying to generate a short list of potential recipients for the donated books. We always focus our attention on working-class, poor, diverse neighborhoods, and/or facilities that provide literacy services to challenged communities within or very near the host city. In the three years we have been donating books in CCCC host cities, we have collected and donated over 2500 books to those whose literacy needs are the greatest. It is an easy way to give something back to the communities that both host us and can benefit most by our presence. So, if you know of these kinds of programs/facilities/services/centers in the greater San Francisco area or can point me to someone who might, I would greatly appreciate your help.

And please, don't forget to bring new or gently used books for children or developing adult readers to 4Cs and drop them off at the Registration Area. Thanks, in advance. Bill Macauley can be contacted at macaulwj@muc.edu or (330) 823-8440.

New Assistant Director @ Yeshiva Writing Center

The Yeshiva College Writing Center is happy to announce that Allison Smith has become the new Assistant Director this Fall. She joins us from the University of California at Riverside, where she is completing a Ph.D. in English and served as Assistant Director of the Subject A High School Outreach Program. T. Kenny Fountain, the former Assistant Director, is pursuing a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication at the University of Minnesota. We wish him all the best!

Mitch Simpson Steps Down as WLN Managing Editor

Mitch Simpson, the Writing Lab Newsletter Managing Editor, is (sadly) leaving us to accept a full-time teaching position in the English Dept. at Purdue. In a few weeks, the person who will attempt to replace him is Shawna Burton. She will assume Managing Editor work, in addition to her clerical work in the Writing Lab there. The address to send subscription questions and manuscripts to remains the same: wln@purdue.edu. I'm sure WLN subscribers will join me in thanking Mitch for his superb work, his willingness to go above and beyond the job requirements to help subscribers, and his general good nature. Our loss is first-year composition (and professional writing) students' gain.

— Mickey Harris, WLN Editor

Calls for Papers/Proposals

Council of Writing Program Administrators 2005 Summer Workshop, Institute, and Conference: 3-10 July 2005

Anchorage, Alaska

Proposals accepted beginning 22 September; review begins 15 October

The theme of the conference is "Writing as Writing Program Administrators." Proposals addressing the conference theme or other issues of interest to WPAs are invited for concurrent sessions, including (1) full panels involving several speakers addressing related topics, (2) individual presentations to be grouped together by the program committee, and (3) roundtables on a single topic. Proposals for multimedia presentations, poster presentations, or other presentation formats are encouraged. Review of proposals will **begin October 15, 2004** and will continue until the program is complete. Successful proposals will be acknowledged at the earliest possible date. Beginning September 22, proposals may be submitted at <http://moose.uaa.alaska.edu/wpa2005/>

CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN WPA WORK

Proposal deadline: 1 October 2004

In the wake of calls to understand writing program administration as intellectual work, the premise of the proposed text, *Critical Issues in WPA Work*, is that the intellectual agenda of writing program studies should necessarily include the social and historical contexts of that work. In other words, writing program administration, like teaching, is a political act with consequences. *Critical Issues in WPA Work* provides a space for critical exploration, analysis, and reflection on writing programs, writing centers, WAC programs, WPAs, and other WPA-related entities, texts, and contexts. What are the larger implications of the work of writing program administration? In what ways might a critical perspective produce new approaches to actually practicing writing program administration?

We invite proposals for chapters treating critical issues in and critical reflection on WPA work. Essays that address the issues and practices of writing programs, writing centers, and WAC programs from a cultural, social, political, historical, ideological, or other critical perspective are welcome. We welcome a range of authors, approaches, and topics, including, for example, the following:

- The absence of the writing program/WPA in histories of rhetoric-composition
- The WPA in the managed university
- Writing programs/WPA work and race/ethnicity/cultural difference
- Gender and writing program administration
- The cultural context(s) of material writing program conditions
- "Ersatz" writing programs/non-discipline-based simulacra
- Revisiting early WPA critiques (i.e., *Textual Carnivals*) and documents (i.e., "Intellectual Work of the WPA")
- Altdis [alternative discourses] in the writing center/program
- Networks of power in writing programs

Send 1-2 pp. proposals by October 1, 2004 to Donna Strickland (stricklanddg@missouri.edu) and Jeanne Gunner (gunner@chapman.edu).

Call for Submissions: *Rhetorically Rethinking Usability: Theories, Practices, and Methodologies*

Proposal deadline: 1 October 2004

The editors of *Rhetorically Rethinking Usability: Theories, Practices, and Methodologies* are seeking 15-25 page articles for a collection discussing how usability studies have impacted theory and practice in writing and English studies. The editors invite submissions from a wide range of topic areas and perspectives. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to, usability and its relationship to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| · Rhetorical situatedness | · Writing practices |
| · Pedagogical/Teaching practices | · Distance learning |
| · Hybrid/blended classes | · Learning objects |
| · Writing software | · Access issues, including language, format, media |
| · Adoption/adaptation of technologies | · Critical literacies |

- ` Assessment methodologies
- ` Redefining usability & its relationship to rhetoric/writing
- ` Research practices, theories, and methods
- ` Course Design

The editors are particularly interested in pieces that explore how these issues might challenge conventional categorizations and/or definitions of usability and rhetoric/writing in current scholarship and expand definitions, practices, theories, and methodologies in these disciplines. Articles might consider current scholarly work on usability from a variety of fields, to include educational technology, distance learning, technical communication, computers and writing, and usability engineering, among others.

500-word abstract: October 1, 2004 Draft of manuscript: January 10, 2005 Final manuscript: August 1, 2005. Please send abstracts or questions to: Susan Kay Miller and/or Shelley Rodrigo, Co-Editors
 Department of English Mesa Community College 1833 W. Southern Avenue Mesa, Arizona 85202
 skmiller@mail.mc.maricopa.edu/(480) 461-7861 rrodrigo@mail.mc.maricopa.edu/(480) 461-7780

Praxis: A Writing Center Journal

Submissions deadline: 7 November 2004

Praxis: A Writing Center Journal is an online publication that represents the collaboration of writing center consultants and directors across the nation. We invite article submissions for our upcoming issues. The theme for the spring 2005 issue is technology in the writing center; the deadline is November 7, 2004. The fall 2005 theme will examine whom we serve: who visits the writing center, why, and how we can help. This issue's deadline is April 10. In addition to pieces on these themes, we invite short article submissions on other writing center-related topics from consultants and administrators. *Praxis* is a project of the University of Texas Undergraduate Writing Center. View the complete call for articles and submissions guidelines at: http://uwc3.fac.utexas.edu/~praxis/Static/Pages/Submissions_s04.html. Also check out the fall issue of *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* at <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/praxis>. In this issue, we hear from innovators in two of the fastest growing areas of the writing center community: secondary school and community writing centers.

Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters: 3-4 March 2005

Ypsilanti, MI

Proposal deadline: 11 November 2004

The Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters calls for abstracts to the Rhetoric and Composition section for its 2005 annual meeting. Proposals are invited in all areas of rhetoric and composition, concerning areas such as: writing center research, rhetoric and composition theory, writing pedagogy, writing program administration, digital and online writing spaces, teaching English as a second language, service learning, visual rhetoric, etc. Abstracts should be 250-words or less, and include the presentation title, as well as the applicant's name, educational institution, department, address and email contact information.

Abstracts are due to William Knox, section chair, by November 11, 2004 and can be mailed to: William Knox, Northern Michigan University, English Department, 208 Gries Hall, 1401 Presque Isle Avenue, Marquette, MI 49855-5363; or sent by email as an attachment (rich-text format) to wknox@nmu.edu. This year's meeting will take place March 3-4 2005 at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI. Information about the academy can be found at: <http://www.umich.edu/~michacad/about.html>.

Association for the Tutoring Profession: 10-12 April 2005

Nashville, TN

Proposal deadline: 3 December 2004

The Association for the Tutoring Profession (ATP) invites you to submit a proposal for presentation to its First Annual Conference. The conference, "New Beginnings," will be held April 10-12, 2005 in Nashville, Tennessee at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel, and will focus on topics such as tutor training and tutoring center management. Visit the ATP website at <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/edprof/atp/> for more information and a submission form. Please join us in our efforts to provide support and new ideas to tutoring professionals.

The Center that I cannot find is known to my unconscious mind. — W. H. Auden

South Central Writing Centers Association: 3-5 March 2005

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Proposal deadline: 15 December 2004

WRITING CENTERS AND TIME Keynote speaker is Dr. Muriel Harris, Professor Emerita of English, Purdue University, founder of the Purdue Writing Lab in 1976, originator and editor of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* in 1976, founder of the Purdue OWL, and the author of numerous books and articles on writing center work, teaching writing, writing centers and WAC programs.

We encourage all members of your writing center staff, especially undergraduate and graduate students, to attend and present at this conference. Presentations that address one or more of the following questions, as well as those that invite audience participation and discussion, are especially encouraged. We are particularly interested in your interpretations of the theme of time.

- ` How has time dictated changes in your center?
- ` How does time influence your decision-making in the center?
- ` Can an investment of time compensate for the lack of finances? Whose time and whose finances?
- ` How can a center best allocate its resources in terms of time?
- ` How has time affected theoretical approaches to writing center work?
- ` How can we best use the time we have to prepare our consultants? To work with writers?
- ` How can a center keep pace in a time of rapidly changing technology, campus policies, and curricula?
- ` And is time really on your side, as the Rolling Stones claimed? Or was Art Buchwald more accurate when he said, "Whether it's the best of times or the worst of times, it's the only time we've got?"

Proposals should include a title, the names and contact information of all presenters and a description of the presentation (250 words for individuals; 500 words for panels, roundtables, and workshops) and a 50-word abstract.

All presenters must be conference registrants.

Deadline for Proposals: All proposals must be emailed or postmarked by Dec. 15, 2004. Electronic submissions should be sent to jcaprio@lsu.edu. If you prefer to send your proposal by surface mail, send two copies to the LSU Writing Center, B-18 Coates Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803ATTN: J. Caprio.

Conference of the Center for Working-Class Studies: 18-21 May 2005

Youngstown State University : Youngstown, Ohio

Proposal deadline: 3 January 2005

NEW WORKING-CLASS STUDIES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE In 2005, the Center for Working-Class Studies will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its founding. In honor of that occasion, we are planning a conference that will reflect the diversity, creativity, and energy of New Working-Class Studies. The conference will feature plenary sessions reflecting on the development of the field, taking stock of where we stand today, and looking ahead to new possibilities and challenges. Our conferences always include arts exhibits, film screenings, poetry readings, and other events. The 2005 conference will also include a business meeting of the Working-Class Studies Association.

We invite proposals from students, workers, faculty members, organizers, artists, and activists in all fields, from literature to geography, history to filmmaking, union organizing to neighborhood activism. Along with papers, we invite performances, film showings, roundtables, and presentations of all kinds. In addition, we invite proposals for three-hour interactive workshops and field trips, which will be scheduled for Saturday morning. We encourage proposals that explore literature by and about the working class; working-class and labor history; material and popular culture; current workplace issues; geography and landscape; journalism and media; sociology; economics; union organizing and practice; museum studies; the arts; multiculturalism; ethnography, biography, autobiography; pedagogy; and personal narratives of work.

Presenters should describe the presentation they would like to give, including the suggested presentation format (panel, roundtable, reading, workshop, etc.) and length. Proposals should be no longer than one page and must be received by January 3, 2005. Address written correspondence to John Russo, Biennial Conference, Center for Working-Class Studies, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio 44555. Fax or e-mail inquiries should be sent to Patty LaPresta, (330) 941-4622 and pmlapresta@ysu.edu. The Center for Working-Class Studies's website is

located at <http://www.as.ysu.edu/-cwcs/> and its discussion group at CWCS-L@lists.ysu.edu.

cwcs-l mailing list

cwcs-l@lists.ysu.edu

<http://lists.ysu.edu/mailman/listinfo.cgi/cwcs-l>

European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing: 22-24 June 2005 Athens, Greece

Proposal deadline: 15 January 2005

Proposals are invited for the third conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, which will be held from 22- 24 June 2005 at the Hellenic American Union, 22 Massalias St, 106 80 Athens, Greece. The theme of the conference is "Teaching Writing On-Line and Face to Face", but there is a wide range of sub-themes. Full details and all update information on the conference are available on the website: <http://eataw2005.hau.gr> For further details, contact George Exadaktylos <gexadaktilos@hau.gr>

Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference: 4-5 March 2005 Orem, UT

Proposal deadline: 28 January 2005

"Returning to Our Roots" is a theme that can be personalized by tutors, fellows, students, and administrators. You may present as an individual or group for a poster presentation or a 20-minute or 40-minute presentation. Suggested topics include:

- ` Becoming better tutors by becoming better writers
- ` Examining the roots of tutoring
- ` Learning from or with students
- ` Helping different kinds of writers
- ` Helping students with writing basics
- ` Experimenting with your writing style

Please send completed proposal forms to: Lisa Bell, UVSC WC Coordinator, MC-176

800 West University Parkway Orem, UT 84058-5999 Email: lisa.bell@uvsc.edu

Phone: 801-863-8099

Fax: 801-863-7060

Proposals must be received by January 28, 2005.

East Central Writing Centers Association: 1-2 April 2005 Adrian, Michigan

Proposal deadline: 11 February 2005

Writing Empowerment Throughout the Disciplines In the same manner students struggle with the written form, writing centers grapple to empower their clients with the skills necessary to succeed in a variety of environments. As though this task were not daunting enough, a large percentage of students arrive from courses or institutions that have not equipped them with the skills necessary to effectively respond to writing center services. Thus, how do we work with those students who are not prepared to be empowered, and how does that assistance translate into independence? In addition, what practices or skills must peer writing assistants adopt to prevent students from becoming dependent on services that are offered in the writing center? Given the limited resources in academic communities, it has become imperative for peer writing assistants to function with equal proficiency when working with students of all disciplines, to ensure investment in writing centers. Thus, how can we make writing centers interdisciplinary, and how do we encourage faculty to view the writing center as a valuable resource for their courses? Additional topics are also welcomed, including the following: How can the writing center empower students in such a way as to assist in retention efforts? What impact does the use of technology have on writers from all skill levels? What standards have we adopted to prevent writing centers from becoming marginalized in the academic community? What methods can be utilized to convince stronger students that the writing center can offer more than assistance with basic skills?

Proposals: All proposals must include a 150-200 word description, abstract, title, and should be post-marked by February 11, 2005. **Presentations:** Presenters may choose to give a 25-minute presentation, joined with another of a similar topic, or a group presentation of 50 minutes. Please indicate presentation selection with proposal.

Media Request: Please indicate the equipment necessary for the presentation(s). **Personal Information:** Please provide name, phone number, E-mail address, and institution of all presenters. **Web Address:** <http://>

www.sienahts.edu/~eng/ECWCA/ecwca.htm Please send all inquiries to:

April Mason-Irelan Siena Heights University 1247 East Siena Heights Drive Adrian, Michigan 49221
(517)-264-7638 E-mail: amason@sienahts.edu

Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference: 10-12 February 2005 Charleston, SC

“Writing as Learning: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in the Writing Center” We invite faculty, administrators, and students to explore this year’s theme, “Writing as Learning: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in the Writing Center,” and to submit proposals for individual and panel presentations, roundtable discussions, workshops, and poster sessions. Presentations that address one or more of the following questions, as well as those that invite audience participation and discussion, are especially encouraged:

- ˆ How do we define critical thinking? How can we use writing as a tool to stimulate intellectual growth and critical thinking? How does the writing center foster such growth? How do we assess such growth?
- ˆ How can the writing center impact cognition and behavior through significant learning experiences? How can we connect interactive writing/learning sessions, learning styles and writing conferences? How do we address motivation, organization, and self-directed learning in the writing center?
- ˆ What is the role of the writing center and writing instructors in developing intellectual competence with issues of multicultural appreciation, social equity, communication and the complexities of their own lives?
- ˆ How can we expand the boundaries and influence of the writing center program? How can we work with WAC WID programs to implement effectively writing-to-learn techniques throughout the institution?

Proposals should include a title, the names and contact information of all presenters, the presentation format, a description of the presentation (250 words) and a 50-word abstract. We encourage you to submit proposals electronically at the SWCA Web site (www.swca.us). Questions should be addressed to Trixie Smith at tgsmith@mtsu.edu.

***Open Words* Call for Manuscripts**

Open Words is accepting manuscripts for its inaugural issue. Open Words will be a refereed, twice-yearly journal dedicated to disseminating research, theories, and issues focused on the teaching of composition, reading, and related courses in open-admission colleges and universities. We will publish articles that focus on the unique experience of open-admissions students as they negotiate the required or remedial first year courses in English and Language Arts departments. While we are particularly interested in attempts to utilize cultural studies or critical theory in these classes, we are also soliciting practical or research-based submissions about classroom materials for first-year students, technological innovations, narratives about difficult moments in teaching open-admissions students, institutional critiques, the relationship to student services, and program development. We encourage potential contributors to explore the particularities of issues surrounding the identifier of open-access, the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and the range of competencies students bring with them to classrooms. We also look for submissions that take into account what interactions with students teach us about the broader, democratic goals of open access education and literacy education.

We will consider manuscripts of any length but prefer 15-25 pages. Please use MLA format for documentation. Please send electronic submissions to John Tassoni at tassonjp@muohio.edu or William Thelin at wthelin@uakron.edu. If you prefer to send hard copies, please submit three copies to John Tassoni, Department of English, University of Miami at Middletown, Middletown, OH 45042 or to William Thelin, Department of English, University of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-1906.

International Writing Centers Association and National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing : 19-23 October 2005 Minneapolis, MN

IWCA and NCPTW are pleased to announce their 2nd joint conference. “Navigating the Boundary Waters: The Politics of Identity, Location, and Stewardship” October 19 - 23, 2005. The conference will be held in Minneapo-

lis, Minnesota and hosted by the Midwest Writing Centers Association.

Minnesota's Boundary Waters stretch along the border of the United States and Canada and are one of the few remaining wilderness areas within the continental U.S. Although they are renowned for their primeval and pristine beauty, the history of the Boundary Waters is one of bounty and exploitation, the meeting, clash, and contestation of cultures and nations, the fluidity of borders, and the struggle for adaptation, preservation, and sustainability. This complex history challenges those of us who love the wilderness to examine who we are in relation to the region's natural and human history, what role we and our ancestors have played in that history, and how and to what extent we may better understand and sustain what is and transform what is to be.

Historically positioned in the margins of the Academy, the writing center's experience is also one of both bounty and exploitation. As a discipline, we have noted the heterogeneity of our institutions, organizations, philosophies and practices and, simultaneously, attempted to secure some measure of permanence and universality. We have sought a more stable sense of identity, institutional and disciplinary recognition, and an understanding of the ways in which the illusion of permanence co-opts as well as enables writing center theory and practice.

Like the history of the Boundary Waters, the story of writing centers has not yet been fully told. We have not yet explored the degree to which this fluidity of identities challenges and channels tutors' and directors' relationships with student-writers, with one another, and with the institutions in which we are located. We are only beginning to account for the impact of internationalism and globalization not only on individualized writing instruction, but also on the organizations in and through which we create our teaching, tutoring, directing, writing lives.

Writing Center tutors, directors, and staff are cordially invited to submit proposals that address one of the following questions or prompts. You may also choose to develop and propose your own topic. Proposals should include a fifty-word abstract and a 350 word description. Please consider a variety of formats as you write your proposals including, but not limited to workshops and mini-workshops, facilitated discussions, roundtable discussions, panels, and/or presentation of research at the research fair. Information about submitting proposals will be forthcoming soon. Questions about the 2005 IWCA/NCPTW Conference and Call For Papers may be directed to Frankie Condon at fvcondon@stcloudstate.edu.

- How or why might writing center directors and tutors engage in anti-racism work in their writing centers, their institutions, and beyond?
- In what ways do global Englishes challenge writing center directors and tutors to reconceive writing center theory and transform practice?
- How and in what ways do (or don't – and why?) class politics and class struggles inform writing center theory and practice?
- How or why do identity politics and/or the politics of location shape writing center scholarship and practice?
- How or why does gender shape writing center practice and perceptions of tutors' and directors' identities and why?
- How are writing centers working in Tribal Colleges? Or, how are writing center directors and tutors at any institution connecting and working with American Indian students?
- How and in what ways are American Indian tutors and directors contributing to and challenging writing center theory and practice?
- How or why do (or could) explorations of queer theory inform writing center theory and practice? How or why might questions, theories or practices focusing on sustainability intersect with, inform, or argue against writing center theory or practice?
- What might we mean by, or how might we talk, write and think about the ecology(ies) of writing centers? What are the connections between histories and ecologies?
- What is Stewardship in writing center administration and/or of the discipline of writing center theory and practice, and how might it be practiced? What are excess and / or simplicity in the context of writing center practice and theory, and in what ways might an understanding or exploration of these concepts churn the waters of Writing Center theory and practice?
- Fluidity, turbidity, solidity, and damns: Internationalism, nationalism, insularity, imperialism: the growth and development of the International Writing Centers Association
- Navigating histories: who's steering this boat? Why are canoes steered easier from the rear?
- Just camping out – just passing through – settlers, explorers, and tourists in Writing Center histories.



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