

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E W T T E R

Volume 32, Number 1

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

September, 2007

— FROM THE EDITOR —

Welcome back to a new academic year and a new volume of *WLN*. There have been some changes with *WLN* (see p. 9), but our ability to publish your excellent articles continues. In this issue you'll find engaging and positive ways to move your writing center forward and help tutors professionalize.

Elise Bishop and Susan Stadig start us off with a narrative tracing their problems and solutions for creating a successful collaboration between Bishop's college writing center and Stadig's high school. As a result of Bishop and Stadig's work, Tiffany Martin's Tutors' Column details her encouraging interactions with tutoring fifth and sixth graders in Stadig's school. Davie Davis continues the theme of creative ways to move forward with his narrative of a writing center spurred to growth and expansion that began with adding coffee to the center.

And there's more forward movement in Margaret Mika's realization that her tutors' reactions to a previous Tutors' Column presented an opportunity for a thoughtful discussion among her tutors about tutoring, differences among tutors, and their recognition of their ability to discuss all this in a professional way and turn their conversation into publishable form. And Mika adds yet another dimension by taking a step backwards to examine her own position as director in the midst of all that intense discussion. We also have another in his series of "Ungrammatical Verses" by our *WLN* Poet Laureate, John Blazina (see p. 7). Yes, the new semester is hectic, and you're feeling besieged by it all, but find a quiet corner and a soothing beverage of your choice and enjoy some excellent reading. Invite your tutors to join you.

◆ Muriel Harris, editor

INSIDE

Bringing Public Schools to Writing Centers: A Tragi-Comic Tale of One Director's Efforts

◆ Elise Bishop and Susan Stadig ◆

Page 1

The Universe in a Coffee Cup: The Evolution of a Writing Center

◆ Davie Davis ◆

Page 6

Ungrammatical Verse 4

◆ John Blazina ◆

Page 7

Introductory Note about "Talking in Another Middle" and "Response to 'Prattle of the Sexes'"

◆ Margaret Mika ◆

Page 9

Response to "Prattle of the Sexes"

◆ Natalie Cook, Sarah Freese, Dani Hartke, Beth Jamnik, Joseph Kautzer, Michael MacDonald, Craig Medvecky, Justin Moody, Max Neibaur, Anna Reidy, Peter Strangfeld, Matt Wilson ◆

Page 11

Tutor's Column: "A Writing Assistant's Role in Bringing Public Schools to Writing Centers"

◆ Tiffany B. Martin ◆

Page 14

Calendar for Writing Center Associations

Page 16

BRINGING PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO WRITING CENTERS: A TRAGI-COMIC TALE OF ONE DIRECTOR'S EFFORTS

◆ Elise T. Bishop (*College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, MO*)
and Susan Stadig (*Branson Intermediate School, Branson, MO*)

THE WRITING CENTER DIRECTOR'S ROLE

Setting the scene

Shortly after becoming the director of the Center for Writing and Thinking (CWT) at the College of the Ozarks (C of O) in January 2001, I began to consider service-learning projects. After all, improving the quality of life for the community is an integral part of C of O's mission. I scripted what I thought was the perfect approach to proposing a writing center for my children's high school. One of the English teachers there was a C of O graduate. Not only that, but as a student she had worked in the CWT as a writing assistant! If I could interest her in my plan, she could pitch the idea to her administration and fellow faculty from an inside position. Although this was my first attempt at setting up a writing center in a high school, I sensed that teachers would not appreciate the proposal coming from an outsider, especially one in higher education.

Fully versed in writing center theory and pedagogy, the C of O alumna loved the idea and agreed to present it to her school. She also vol-

continued on page 2

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Managed and Produced by
The RiCH Company, LLC
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3238 S. 92nd Street
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Subscriptions: The newsletter has no billing procedures but can issue invoices through the Web site. Yearly payments of \$25 (U.S. \$30 in Canada) by credit card are accepted through the Web site or sent by check, made payable to the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, to The RiCH Company, Attn: WLN. Prepayment is requested for all subscriptions. For international WLN subscriptions, please contact support@writinglabnewsletter.org. For IWCA membership and WCJ and WLN subscriptions, see writing-centers.org.

Manuscripts: Recommended length for articles is approximately 2500-3000 words, 1500 words for reviews and Tutors' Column essays, in MLA format. If possible, please send as attached files in an e-mail to submission@writinglabnewsletter.org.

unteered to serve as the center director, with no increase in salary, and already had a location in mind, an unused room off the library. Because she was the director of the school's A+ program, she even had an ensemble of ready tutors.¹ She told me that everyone she had spoken to was enthusiastic about establishing a writing center. The principal e-mailed me and said, "I believe this would be a great asset for the students" and "I really appreciate all of your hard work and hope to work with you soon on this project." The stage was set.

At this point, the teacher with whom I had initially made contact deferred to the head of her English department, just to avoid stepping on any toes, she said. To my surprise, the department head—who had supposedly received the idea favorably—would not respond to my efforts to contact her by phone or e-mail. Finally forced to abandon the project altogether, I wondered: Did her subordinate's deference indicate some behind-the-scenes politics? I discussed my failure with a colleague, who already knew of my interest in helping schools organize writing centers. We commiserated; then I went back to directing the CWT and looking for other ways to stick my foot in someone else's door. Members of my staff who went on to student teach in local schools were regularly charged to discuss writing centers with their supervising teachers. Their reports back to me were not encouraging: no one wanted to undertake such a time-consuming venture. After reading Richard Kent's *A Guide to Creating Student-Staffed Writing Centers Grades 6-12*, I was more determined than ever to project what we in the writing center community already know: writing centers are necessities, worth the time they consume.

The exciting force

The opportunity I had been waiting for debuted two years later. Dr. James Bell—the colleague with whom I had commiserated—had been invited to conduct writing workshops for fifth and sixth grade students at the local intermediate school. While there, he had met the school's new literacy coach, Susan Stadig, and mentioned to her my interest in working with public schools. We all arranged to have lunch together and talk about writing. At the time, I naively believed that everyone in the country was teaching writing as a process. I now know I should have first asked Susan about her school's philosophy of teaching writing. Her answer might have improved my understanding and our communication early on in our collaboration. [See "The Literacy Coach's Role," page 4.] Before we met for lunch, I decided not to mention the words "writing center" (too much, anyway). From my experience with my children's high school (in another district), I had learned that imposing my ideas upon teachers and administrators does not work.

Even though I was anxious to take my staff to the intermediate school to provide Reader Responses (what we call our individual writing conferences), Susan seemed interested in something different, so I followed her lead. Patience and flexibility became my watchwords. I focused on what Susan wanted, which turned out to be busing students to C of O to introduce them (and their teachers) to the concept of a writing center. It was important, Susan believed, for students to see that colleges value writing so much, they actually have entire centers devoted to its practice! Susan knew that visiting the center was essential for the teachers, too. As Kent points out, "Since there are writing centers in post-secondary schools, this fact may be the largest selling point in creating one at your school" (2).

The tying of the knot

The first group of students visited the CWT in the spring of 2006 for approximately one hour. Susan had arranged the field trip and planned for lunch on the grounds of the campus as an added treat. Meanwhile, I debated how to handle twenty-five sixth graders. We did not have enough staff to work with students individually on the rough drafts of the persuasive arguments they were bringing with them. We compromised by working in small groups, reading thesis statements and discussing major supports. We repeated the performance with another group of students the following day. Final exams and summer break prevented us from hosting more intermediate students that semester, but to my delight, Susan was enthusiastic about continuing our relationship in the fall. All summer, I brainstormed ways we could collaborate. The next

semester, Susan and I jockeyed with ideas. I continued to offer to bring my staff to her school; she didn't say *no* outright, but she didn't say *yes*, either. Instead, she said, "I feel like our kids might respect yours more right off the bat if they see yours in their COLLEGE environment. That's so impressive for them."

When asked what the teachers needed from us, Susan would typically respond with something like this: "We're champing at the bit to actually start writing. So, what do you have in mind for our next step?" or "We're game for anything. You know much more about writing than we do." I didn't realize then that she was actually trying to say "HELP!" She needed specific suggestions while I—still a little hesitant from my previous experience—was trying not to be too directive. The situation was frustrating for both of us. Here she was begging for guidance, and there I was trying to avoid telling her what to do. My only concrete suggestion (to go to her school) was rebuffed.

Looking back, I think there were issues she needed to work out, such as where to put us and how to schedule which teachers, classes, and students would work with us. At the time, I couldn't appreciate the logistics from her perspective. I'm grateful neither one of us gave up. Susan and I eventually decided that three classes of intermediate students would visit the CWT on three consecutive Friday mornings. One group completed a short showing-instead-of-telling activity, using excerpts from Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's *Shiloh*, followed by work in small groups on personal narratives. Later that day, Susan sent me this e-mail: "This afternoon the 5th graders that were with you made a connection to what they did with you. While listening to a read-aloud, they really latched on to the descriptive words and said that they could really see what was happening just like they did at C of O! The descriptions are jumping out at them like never before! Thanks." Even though things seemed to be going well, I was concerned that our small group lessons overlapped the ongoing workshops Dr. Bell was conducting at the school. We weren't doing what we do best: working with writers one-to-one.

The point of no return

Susan abruptly accepted my long-standing offer almost immediately after the visits to our writing center were complete. As a result, on November 3, 2006, two of my staff and I paid our first visit to the Branson Intermediate School. Susan had reserved the school's conference room for us. On the door she had posted a laminated piece of paper that read "Writing Center." Just seeing that simple sign made me tingle with satisfaction. My staff stood on either side of it while I snapped a picture. For that day and the two Fridays that followed, my students sat at opposite ends of the conference table conducting Reader Responses. I set up shop at a desk in the corner. In this way, we were able to meet individually with a total of fifteen students during each visit.

Before our arrival, Susan would arrange a schedule with interested teachers, who would then send students to the center for fifteen-minute conferences. Each one-and-a-half-hour session seemed more productive than the last. [See Tiffany Martin's article "The Writing Assistant's Role" in the Tutors' Column, page 14, for a staff member's perspective.] My team and I helped students with everything from fictional narratives to persuasive letters written to the district superintendent about the importance of installing seatbelts on school buses. We were impressed with the quality of the students' work and their enthusiasm for writing.

Some of the children I worked with expressed a desire to attend C of O after graduation, and I envisioned them as college students sitting in my freshman composition classes. Maybe they would re-

"[I]n order to 'get your foot in the door' of a public school, . . . [a] writing format needs to be in place. Without it, there will be little understanding of the necessity for a writing center."

member the writing center and how much it had helped them. Maybe they would remember the joy of talking about writing. They would certainly be familiar with the writing process itself. And maybe—just maybe—they would still be “champing at the bit to start writing.” I can’t wait to find out!

Encore

As a new semester begins (Spring 2007), my writing assistants and I plan to staff the intermediate writing center eight times between now and the end of the school year. Things should go much more smoothly for everyone involved this time around. We have even arranged for one of our staff to go to the school once a week to work in a classroom on a day when the intermediate writing center is not open. Thanks to Susan’s tenacity, our project has caught the attention of one of the Springfield news stations, and I’m hopeful that a story about our efforts will lead to interest in writing centers from other area public schools.

It wasn’t until Susan and I collaborated on this article that I realized our goals have been the same from the beginning: to conference individually with students. She just had a different route in mind. Now that we are on the same page (so to speak), one of our new goals is to persuade the local high school’s A+ coordinator to partner with us in training high school students to keep the writing center open even more hours during the week. And if we should eventually help the high school recognize the benefits of establishing its own writing center, what an ovation that would be!

THE LITERACY COACH’S ROLE

The play within a play

As a literacy coach responsible to create a burning desire in all students to want to write, I thought forming a relationship with the writing center at College of the Ozarks was a “no-brainer.” Why wouldn’t we want to take advantage of the knowledge that Elise Bishop, the director of the school’s writing center, and her staff possess? In regards to the question “How can college writing center people get into public schools?” I can only speak of my experience. As a literacy coach, I have the full-time job of supporting the teachers in the instruction of reading and writing, which brings in another layer of support to the students. I work closely with the teachers in their classrooms, helping them to reflect on their teaching, and give advice about research that I have done regarding reading and writing instruction. I am considered our school’s professional development leader, living within the walls, as opposed to someone unknown coming in from the outside to help train the teachers. I feel that it is necessary to find a school that has someone, such as me, whose only goal is to help teachers teach reading and writing. I did not even think twice about pursuing this relationship with the CWT because I could not see how it could hinder us, but it would be hugely beneficial to both the students and teachers.

If you can find a school with a literacy coach, you can be sure that they teach writing through the student-driven workshop approach, which looks like this:

1. Start with a short writing lesson.
2. Follow the lesson with thirty minutes or more of independent writing.
3. Conduct individual teacher/student conferences.
4. Conclude with a short share time relating somehow to the day’s lesson.

This approach is quite different from the traditional method of teaching, which is more teacher-centered, with less attention on the individual and more focus placed on the final product. Because each student is at a different place in the writing process, the workshop model emphasizes the writing process and changing the writer instead of focusing on the end result. I believe that in order to “get your foot in the door” of a public school, this writing format needs to be in place. Without it, there will be

little understanding of the necessity for a writing center. Many schools across the country are beginning to teach using this style, whether they have a literacy coach or not.

Our teachers are new to this workshop method, so they are craving any modeling, advice, or help that they can get in order to improve their conferencing techniques. By seeing how to work with small groups and sitting in on individual conferences in the college writing center, our teachers are becoming more confident in their conferencing abilities. For example, according to Betsy McQueen, 5th grade teacher, “After the visit to the writing center at C of O, it was very helpful to me as a teacher to see the modeling of how to conference with students. Writing workshop was still such a new thing to us. It validated some things I was doing right, and it helped me to see ways to improve in areas I did not feel as confident.”

Our teachers, the ones in the “trenches” day in and day out, love the collaboration effort that has begun between the school and the college. Kelly Neal, 5th grade teacher, states, “Peer mentoring is a big deal to my students. Seeing college students out in the real world writing helps them to understand that writing is always going to be part of their lives.” Mary Arnold, 5th grade teacher, admitted, “My students are more willing to take advice from them [college students] because it is somebody different, they’re cooler than I am, and they are someone the students can look up to.”

After having a student return to her class from visiting the writing center, McQueen noticed, “It provides a fresh set of eyes for students. For instance, one of my students was stuck writing about one topic, but when the college tutor suggested she branch out from her comfortable genre, it was as if she had heard it for the first time.” Logistically, setting up the writing center is the biggest problem. In an elementary setting, students cannot just come and go as they please. The only times that students can attend the writing center is when their teacher has finished the daily writing lesson. Students cannot miss instruction in any content area in order to visit the writing center. Coordinating teachers’ schedules and times that tutors have available is a challenge. This sometimes requires the teachers to be flexible with their schedules, which in turn, can disrupt the entire day’s plans. This obstacle, in my opinion, could be the biggest in implementing writing centers in schools. Again, in order for it to work, it has helped that I am fully involved in reading and writing, so this has been a natural addition to my responsibilities. I am the coordinator of the writing center schedule, and I plan which classes can send students at specific times. This requires much communication with classroom teachers, as well as sending weekly reminders.

Even though we are young in the process, it is evident that the writing center has the potential to be a huge success. Our students are excited about writing and getting advice from “real college students.” As well, our teachers love that their students are getting advice from an outside perspective. Why wouldn’t we welcome any effort that would raise our students’ writing abilities? [For more information on literacy coaches, go to the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (LCC) website at <www.literacycoachingonline.org> or <www.arliteracymodel.org>.



¹ Students enrolled in the A+ program are required to tutor, among other things, in exchange for free tuition at some Missouri community colleges and technical schools.

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NEWS

WRITING CENTER DIRECTOR UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA— HUNTSVILLE

The University of Alabama in Huntsville <<http://www.uah.edu>> seeks an assistant professor as Writing Center Director for a tenure-earning position beginning in the fall of 2008. Ph.D. in Composition Studies by time of appointment. Preference for applicants with experience in writing center administration. The teaching load for this position is two courses per semester plus writing center administration. Applicant must be capable of teaching upper division and graduate courses in writing, including graduate courses in composition theory and writing pedagogy, as well as first-year composition.

The department offers the B.A. and M.A. in English. Send letter and vita by Nov. 15 to Dr. Rose Norman, Chair, Dept. of English, Univ. of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL 35899. The University of Alabama in Huntsville is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UIC WRITING CENTER CONFERENCE FEB. 29 AND MARCH 1, 2008 CHICAGO "RACE IN THE WRITING CENTER: TOWARDS NEW THEORY AND PRAXIS"

We invite panel and individual-paper proposals for the University of Illinois at Chicago Writing Center and Public Space conference series. We are seeking new and exciting work that explores the relationship between writing, race, tutoring, and writing center spaces and practices.

The conference will also host presentations and several roundtable workshops. Roundtable discussion will begin with 2-minute statements by each of the participants. Undergraduate tutors are highly encouraged to participate.

Information on proposals for presentations and roundtable workshops will be available on the UIC Writing Center website <www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing>. During the conference, there will also be a meeting for representatives of writing centers from the Urban-13 universities. Several travel stipends will be available for students from these universities.

250-word proposals (100-word for roundtables) are due December 17, 2007. Also provide your name, institutional affiliation, mail and e-mail address, and a telephone number. Panel proposals should include panel title, description of panel theme, name of chair, one-page abstracts of each paper, and contact information for each presenter. Please mail or e-mail conference proposals to:

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THE UNIVERSE IN A COFFEE CUP: THE EVOLUTION OF A WRITING CENTER

◆ *Davie Davis*
University of Central Missouri
Warrensburg, Missouri

The beginnings of our present-day writing center can be traced back to a conference in Baltimore, where my colleague and I ran across a poster presentation by Bob Marrs' writing tutors from Coe College. We were entranced by the joyous abundance of creativity evidenced in the display: t-shirts featuring a clever tutor's "writing centaur" design, an in-house literary magazine compiled by the tutors and bound by the campus print shop, colorful fliers advertising free coffee, tutor-produced brochures describing a wide range of writing center services, and several group photos of the tutors themselves, radiating exuberance and *esprit de corps*.

Happily for us, Bob was in the vicinity and came over to chat about his peer tutors and their projects. These many years later, I remember my surprise when he explained that the free coffee was actually a friendly ploy to lure faculty and staff from across campus into his facility, where he and the tutors would then inform them about the writing center and its services. On the plane ride home, as we excitedly reviewed our stash of new ideas from the conference, we little dreamt that Bob's coffee concept would provide a major impetus for our own writing center revolution.

Back home, as our post-conference glow began to somewhat fade, we soon realized that we had no money and few resources for literary magazines, free coffee, or t-shirts. In fact, we had no peer tutoring program, and therefore no peer tutors to wear the shirts, make the coffee, or attract students to the writing center with their friendliness and enthusiasm. Like many centers of that era, what we did have was an old-fashioned writing "lab" manned by a handful of rotating adjunct faculty, a cramped room with some aging computers, and a bowlful of change from students using the cranky old printer. After much consternation, we decided to implement the one project that seemed within our immediate means: with the print money (supplemented by some of our own), we bought a secondhand but restaurant-quality coffee machine on E-Bay and some coffee and cups from a local warehouse store. We couldn't afford to provide free coffee, but we put up signs suggesting a 50-cent donation per cup or, for a real bargain, a 5-dollar fee to join the hastily created Writing Center Coffee Club.

As coordinator of our center, I then turned my attention toward developing a credit course to train peer tutors. While I drew up plans and tried to enlist faculty and administrative allies for this rather daunting project, the coffee service slowly began to take off. Our first customers were from our own department, which houses multiple learning support services, but over time, we experienced an influx of people from facilities located elsewhere in the building: psychologists from the counseling center, military officers from ROTC, computer gurus from IT, and instructors from Safety Science and Criminal Justice on the second and third floors. Suddenly, the writing center, usually a place of barely-audible murmurings between teacher and student, developed a backdrop of water-coolerish talk about last night's television and this morning's election results.

One day, in a confidential aside, the director of counseling told me he had overheard one of our instructors incorrectly describing the structure of a brain synapse to a student. "Of course, I didn't say anything to interrupt them," he assured me.

“But you should have,” I countered. “Anyone in the writing center who has knowledge to contribute to the conversation should feel perfectly free to do so.”

He was pleasantly taken aback by my response, and as a matter of fact, so was I, never having consciously considered this issue of writing center conversation before. However, I instantaneously sensed that opening our dialogue to visitors was a move in the right direction. If, as Stephen North wrote, a writing center is a place whose primary responsibility is to “talk to writers” (79), then why shouldn’t the dialogue be open to everyone? Why shouldn’t our military personnel share their insights on the coup d’jour? Or our IT guys contribute their perspectives on how job seeking, role playing, and dating on the Internet were impacting life in the twentieth century? (Yes, it was that long ago.) We began to actively encourage coffee drinkers to “interrupt” our tutorial sessions and join our conversations.

One of our most loyal Coffee Club members was a transplanted Louisianan, as well as a dedicated scholar and teacher, and a geyser of enthusiasm for her own and everyone else’s ideas. Upon learning of the Coffee Club, Rhonda pronounced the idea “Gre-eye-ate!” in that lyrical three-syllabic way that only southerners can and thereafter paid her membership dues by the year. Usually, she took her coffee on the fly, stopping long enough to share a few comments about the book she was writing or the ingenious way she had incorporated fly swatters into her classroom discussions. (I can’t remember exactly how this worked, but the students liked it.) Then she would disappear down the hall, a whirlwind of high heels and papers and books.

One day, Rhonda overheard me voicing my frustrations over my unfruitful efforts to engender support for a peer tutoring course on a campus where no one had ever heard of such a thing. On her next visit, she came laden with enormous stacks of paperwork from courses she had developed: examples of proposals, rationales, syllabi, and responses to critiques from curriculum committees. In the days following, she lengthened her coffee breaks enough to help me through the maze of forms and approvals required to get my project off the ground. However, her most valuable contribution was the way she exuberantly encouraged me to keep pressing on in the face of general apathy, always assuring me that the course was a “gre-eye-ate” idea. Thanks in large part to this wise counselor and one-woman cheering section, my course eventually passed through all the hoops of the administrative bureaucracy and entered the pilot stage.

That first semester, my colleague and I team-taught the course, an arrangement which resulted in our outnumbering our student two-to-one. Moreover, because of our small class size, no one was willing to give us a room in which to meet with her. Undaunted, we held class in the student union or, on nice days, on benches around campus. Because Laura was a hot chocolate drinker, we added hot water and packets for tea and chocolate to our menu, inadvertently gaining a whole new market segment in the process. As we sat under the trees with our books and paper cups, we imbued Laura with our vision of a future writing center that would be a model of collaborative learning, talking, and thinking. Laura, however, had never seen such a writing center, so she listened much as a child listens to a tale about the yellow brick road, curious about the magical destination, but uncertain how the City of Oz might manifest itself in reality.

To remedy this situation, we planned a trip to the University of Kansas writing center, where the director, Michele Eodice, graciously set aside a day for us to tour her facility and meet her crew. Finally, Laura was

UNGRAMMATICAL VERSE 4: BAD GRAMMARIANS

◆ *John Blazina*

York University, Toronto, Ontario

Glory be to God for broken things,
For prose unformed, stricken, straight,
For sentences that stagger out of sense
And clauses clotted with the gore of
thought.*

Praise be to those who flaunt the rules,
Who claim disinterest in predication,
And loose there way were spell-check fools,
And look to us for their salvation.

But we who man the borders (pencils
poised),
Who know appositives from absolutes,
Need them as much, or more, then they need
us,
Need blunderers, need sheep and goats;
For whom would hire us (connoisseurs of
mess),
If not for sinners wondering in the wilder-
ness.

* Q1: Besotted by a heady draught of
thought.

Folio: And couplets quartered too a core
of thought.



able to see firsthand how a truly collaborative writing center functioned and to interact with tutors like herself. Besides its friendly, welcoming staff, one of the KU center's most impressive features was its beautiful glassed-in satellite center in the library, the product of a grant obtained by Michele. All three of us were intrigued, and on the way home, Laura excitedly announced that she had already thought of a possible location in the basement of her residence hall. To my amazement, the housing office not only agreed to give us the room, but offered to pay the wages of the peer tutors who worked there. Now we suddenly had an unforeseen increase in our staffing budget, a way to expand beyond our original crowded room, and a classroom to boot.

By the time the course had produced a sizeable group of tutors, I had leisure to notice that the Coffee Club was actually producing money—not a lot of money, but enough to order writing center t-shirts for everyone. For our first t-shirt design, the director of counseling, revealing himself to be a covert motorcycle enthusiast, sketched a motorized flying pen captioned by a play on one of Harley-Davidson's slogans: "Live to write, write to live." Corny or not, the shirts drew attention to the peer tutors as they went about campus and drew more students into the writing center.

Our center was now blossoming in unexpected ways. Lured by positive word-of-mouth, coffee drinkers from outlying parts of campus joined our group, and some were faculty members who recommended the new course to their students. We experimented with giving our t-shirts, now available in multiple designs, to our coffee clientele—for a small additional donation. With the resulting funds, we added all manner of flavored creamers and condiments to our coffee menu. Over hot chocolate, one of the aviation instructors told me how to make whiteboards out of cheap showerboard from the local lumberyard, and so we were able to create spaces where the tutors could share the word of the day, messages, cartoons, and artwork. Cramped room notwithstanding, visitors began to comment on our warm, hospitable environment, our interesting decor, and our refreshing openness to their suggestions and ideas. I knew our writing-center community had congealed into something marvelous when I walked in one day to find one of our more conservative ROTC captains, sleeve rolled up, and one of our more punked-out peer tutors, shirttail raised, comparing tattoos.

These days, we have a full cadre of bright, spirited peer tutors who provide vigorous and challenging feedback to writers, as well as create all sorts of impressive student-centered publications and learning tools. We have a bulletin board crammed with photographs of our tutors, students, and visitors, all engaged in the lively, continuing conversation that has become the norm in our busy center. Our first satellite center was so successful that our housing office allowed us to establish a second satellite on the opposite side of campus. We have finally become what we envisioned in Baltimore: a community of talkers and writers for whom learning is truly a social construct, forged and refined in a noisy exchange of ideas and inquiry. And we still serve cup after cup of the magical brew that fuels our camaraderie, as well as fills our coffers. We may never be a threat to Starbucks, but we are ever in debt to Bob and his tutors, who gave us our starting point and our inspiration to begin.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE ABOUT “TALKING IN ANOTHER MIDDLE” AND “RESPONSE TO ‘PRATTLE OF THE SEXES’”

My tutoring staff at UW-Milwaukee read a Tutors' Column (“Prattle of the Sexes,” WLN 31.2 [2006]: 14-15.) and had some difficulties with it. After some spirited discussion, they decided to write a response. As I watched the process of their writing unfold, I had some questions about how I would stay in the middle of the conversation as they talked and wrote. What follows is my reflection on that process, and then the response they wrote.

◆Margaret Mika, Writing Center Director
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

TALKING IN ANOTHER MIDDLE

In her classic essay “Talking in the Middle,” Muriel Harris situates writing center tutors in the academic universe. Neither teachers nor class assistants, tutors represent a different resource for writers, operating in a safe middle space in which they can speak and relate non-authoritatively to their peers with less stress, less censorship and no assessment. Like many writing center directors, I have often referenced Harris’ middle ground when speaking with writers, instructors and tutors.

Harris’ notion of “middle” took on new meaning as I considered my role when my center’s tutors collaboratively wrote the accompanying article, “Response to ‘Prattle of the Sexes.’” For a writing center director, does another “middle” exist, one that positions her somewhere between supervisor and colleague, teacher and peer? If so, how does she traverse it, facilitating and supporting but not directing, or at worst, dictating? Maneuvering through this project and these concerns, I found myself stepping slowly and deliberately while I explored the space.

Routinely enough, I had asked our Center’s eight undergrad and six graduate tutors to read *WLN*’s October 2006 Tutor’s Column, “Prattle of the Sexes”—a real conversation starter, I thought. Motivated by their forceful and colorful responses, I thought it begged for walk, not just talk. I coincidentally mentioned our tutors’ lively reactions in an e-mail to *WLN*’s editor, Muriel Harris, who encouraged a submission. I suggested that the tutors collaborate on a response, and then I purposefully stepped back. If they planned to submit their work as a Tutor’s Column, tutors had to take the lead from then on. I set a few other ground rules for myself. Practically, I could function as a facilitator and even secretary, but it was ethically imperative for the purpose, content, tone, and format of the final product to be 100% tutor-crafted.

Setting and keeping boundaries during the tutors’ ensuing writing project was somewhat stickier than I first thought it would be. Should I inform or influence any of the tutors’ writing choices, I wondered. What if my input filled in gaps in tutors’ knowledge or corrected a false assumption? In those circumstances, I decided I should enter the conversation. Therefore, in an e-mail exchange referring to audience and tone, I posed a question and offered what an informed writing center administrator—but perhaps not all tutors—would know: “How mature and experienced are the tutors who wrote the column? Not all centers employ strictly advanced . . . students, as we do.” Although I entered the discussion, I clearly felt I had to justify the intrusion, evidenced by this from the same e-mail, “Matt’s reply prompts me to let you in on something I’ve wondered from my administrator’s stance and from knowing how many different [tutoring] centers there are even on this campus. . . .”

TAKE NOTE

CHANGES IN WLN

Price increase: The most noticeable change for *WLN* is a price increase from \$20 to \$25 for U.S. subscribers and U.S.\$30 for Canadian subscribers. (For international subscribers, please check with support@writinglabnewsletter.org for pricing.) This increase was foisted on us by a major price increase in postal costs for bulk mailing. We stay afloat only with subscription income, and we use that money only for printing and mailing. So like too much else today, *WLN* prices must increase.

WLN archives: The RiCH Company staff, spurred on by their CEO Richard Hay’s dedication to writing center scholarship, has worked diligently this summer to make the entire archive of previous *WLN* issues word searchable! To do so, they’ve taken down the old, clumsy archives and will reinstall it all when they are done. They are finishing up the last few volumes, so given their speed in working with 30 volumes of past issues, they expect to be done soon!

WLN asst. editorship: We hope to have a job description for applicants interested in working in an editorial position with *WLN*. The International Writing Centers Association will post that job description when it is finalized. The pay is non-existent, but the work is incredibly rewarding.

Questions about WLN: Several members of the International Writing Centers Association have raised questions that I didn’t realize needed public answers. So here goes:

1) *What does it mean that a commercial company has taken on the work of handling subscriptions and printing and mailing of WLN?*

As many of you remember, there

(continued on page 13)

TAKE NOTE

IWAC CONFERENCE

**Call for Proposals
International Writing Across the
Curriculum Conference
Austin, TX
May 28—31, 2008**

We invite proposals investigating how border crossings affect the shape of writing instruction, disciplinary tutoring, institutions, and global WAC conversations. For example, proposals might focus on how working with disciplines and their media in and outside class, and in writing centers influence our theories; how communicating across local (e.g.K-16), national and international borders changes definitions of disciplinary writing as well as teaching and collaborative practices; how we translate what we do so students, academic staff, administration, and those outside our institutions support the scholarship and curricular reform we promote. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/wac/conferences/iwacc/index/>.

Proposal deadline: Friday, September 28, 2007.

There will be a special writingcenters/WAC SIG!

Without a doubt, the roughest territory to negotiate for everyone was the divergent tone among the writers' responses. I personally struggled with two attendant issues. First, it is key to know that our staff got along splendidly and good-naturedly recognized their different personalities, styles, ages and interests. They all acknowledged the value of publishing (especially for those pursuing academic careers), and for example, voted specifically on whether or not to credit individual writers. Still, given their differences, I was hardly surprised at the range of approaches that developed. Some argued forcefully for an irreverent, humorous (nearly scatological) response; others felt a more serious response was in order and that the misguided or ineffective humor that doomed the "Prattle" article for them, would doom their piece as well. The dilemma became known as "taking the high or low road" or responding with "sass or class." Even though tutors discussed what public image they wished to present, after several weeks they had still not resolved their disagreement.

Whatever direction they took, I hoped the tutors would seriously consider the short and long term consequences for all the stakeholders—the writers of the piece to which they were responding, themselves, our writing center, our institution, and the writing center community. I hoped their efforts would result in a piece that was appropriate and respectful of those in the profession. Further, I hoped it would fairly represent the considerable intelligence and empathy so evident in their tutoring, and that they would be proud of their work in the long run.

The longer that tutors debated and held their positions, the more concerned I became about souring any individual's spirit, our community bon homie and the likelihood of their finishing. I therefore intervened via e-mail to acknowledge the tension and to suggest a meeting:

Since I originally asked everyone to read . . . and . . . respond, I feel responsible for facilitating some sort of resolution—whatever the outcome may be—that we can all be content with. . . .

We know that this effort to collaborate on a piece for the *WLN* is taking up time and sense that it is also becoming frustrating and stressful for some. This stress is the last thing that I intended when I asked for your reactions to the column. . . . Whatever the outcome I respect and appreciate everyone's contributions.

As I thought about addressing the tone conflict, graduate assistant coordinator and tutor Elizabeth Florian suggested to her peers that they all review a few more *WLN*s to remind themselves of its *typical* tone and content. A few more e-mail exchanges later, tutors found a solution that they all could live with. For me, their resolution was a good reminder to trust the process and the writers; given enough time and reflection, they can solve their own issues.

Once the flurry of responses came to a halt, momentum waned. Not wanting to see so much work go for naught, I called for another meeting. At that gathering, I tried to avoid being the driver. But I was not a silent passenger either. With only four of us able to participate that day, it was hard to resist joining the fast, informal and fun conversation. I suggested we organize the photocopies of e-mails according to author. We then jointly selected at least one response from each pile which seemed to be the best and most representative of that writer. In surprisingly short time, we unanimously agreed on our final selections. Elizabeth agreed to type them up and draft an introduction and conclusion.

The piece you see here is not far removed from that meeting's work. Tutors reviewed it before scattering for winter break and again when classes resumed this term. They approved the format, the range of opinion and tone, and the introduction. Looking back, I realize that in many ways the tutors made it easy for me to remain in the middle as much as I did. Advanced writers all, they hardly needed anyone to micromanage or monitor the task. Even with strongly differing approaches and dialogue that boomeranged from smart and scholarly to silly and extreme, they remained open and generous in accommodating others' viewpoints and styles.

TAKE NOTE

NEW ECWCA DATE

Please note that the dates for the East Central Writing Centers Association conference for next year have changed, from March 21-22 to April 11-12, 2008.

I did, however, underestimate the difficulty of rapidly producing even a very brief response. (All told, it took from late November 06 through February 07.) If I hadn't been so concerned about being non-directive, perhaps we would have all benefited from my being a more assertive traffic manager. Particularly with group projects, I have found that deadlines are difficult to meet unless someone plays chief nudge. I also wish the project had not been so drawn out so as to better capture the tutors' original energy and to make it a more timely response to the October 2006 Tutor's Column. Admittedly, tutors first began their project at semester's end with final papers and exams looming. I am not sure I could have asked for more given tutors' busy schedules.

And the tutors' piece itself? Yes, we recognize the inconsistencies that remain. Responses still fall into two different camps. Roughly half are in a "Letters to the Editor" mode; the others venture into more substantive comments about sexism. Tutors saw this divergence as a more comprehensive and honest representation of their thinking than trying to compromise away the differences. Also problematic is the introduction and format which forecast a dialogue, one which genuinely occurred among the tutors. But their back and forth conversation did not translate into the final version as well as it could have.

In the end, I would have liked to see those issues better resolved. I am also confident that given more time, the tutors would have done so. Nevertheless, this exercise was a good case of the process being as worthwhile as the product. For some, it was a first attempt at workplace collaboration—at least with publication as the ultimate goal. It provided a chance to get the "feel" of a very large collaboration, similar to what Harris tells us about tutoring sessions allowing students to "get the feel" of unfamiliar projects (33). And just as Harris believes that tutors can affect writers' confidence and motivation (35), I hope this ultimately collegial experience will inform their future collaborative work. If nothing else, it was an excellent lesson in negotiating writing within a large group and remaining on speaking terms when all is done!

The 'middle' territory I explored with its sometimes foggy and shifting boundaries was certainly thought provoking for me. I recommend other writing center staffs attempt such collaborative projects, hoping they will raise new questions and engender more discussion for all of us.

Work Cited

Harris, Muriel. "Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Needs Writing Tutors." *College English* 57.1 (January, 1995): 27-42.



RESPONSE TO "PRATTLE OF THE SEXES"

◆ *Natalie Cook, Sarah Freese, Dani Hartke, Beth Jamnik, Joseph Kautzer, Michael MacDonald, Craig Medvecky, Justin Moody, Max Neibaur, Anna Reidy, Peter Strangfeld, Matt Wilson, tutors, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

As a staff, we reacted strongly to "Prattle of the Sexes: A Debate Regarding the Differences Between Male and Female Writing Tutors" (*Writing Lab Newsletter*; October 2006). We began a dialog on our staff e-mail reflector, spent a portion of our monthly meeting talking about it, and began to compose a written response. This collaborative response has been heated, frustrated, active, and difficult. We learned about our differences as writers and scholars, even as we agreed on a simple premise: we didn't like the article and wanted to address the issues we took with it. Our response became a living document that took shape over time. Some of us met to try to combine our voices and ideas into one document. We

struggled with specific questions Justin had raised in our staff meeting a possible response to “Prattle,” such as:

- Why don't we like the article?
- Should we take a “high road” or “low road” approach? Is this one of our issues?
- Who is served by our responding? Is a humorous response simply self-serving?
- What kind of effect will our article have on our University, the Writing Center, and/or writing centers in general?
- Where would we like the audience to take our ideas?
- Who is our audience? (Thinking about the readers of the *Writing Lab Newsletter*: tutors, faculty members, WPAs, writing center directors and coordinators, etc.)
- What is scholarship? Is this scholarship? Does it matter?
- Finally, do we want to answer with sass or class?

Although not all of our responses could be represented here, we've selected a few to represent our views:

Elizabeth: The *Writing Lab Newsletter (WLN)* is a recognized, peer-reviewed, scholarly publication. Having an article published in *WLN* is considered a professional accomplishment. If you've read *WLN*, you'll notice that its tone is normally not as casual or as “funny” as “Prattle” tried to be.

Max: The problem I personally have with the “Prattle . . .” article is not that it uses humor, but that it seems to focus so heavily on that aspect that the main point becomes lost, not to mention poorly researched. These tutors weren't trying to do a real analysis of gender. They were just playing on stereotypes in an attempt to be funny and get some attention. Our letter does not suggest that the *Writing Lab Newsletter* should not ever include humor; it just suggests that humor must be used smartly and carefully.

Peter: “Prattle of the Sexes . . .” was a mishmashed, myopic disaster that managed to somehow be both offensive and unfocused. Gender differences have been the center of much debate in this country, from early grassroots suffrage and equality movements to the work of contemporary artists to maintain the equities that have been gained while still striving for more. This debate has always been respectful and informed, moods deserving of such a sensitive issue.

Craig: I'm not sure how helpful generalizations and stereotypes about gender are. Something more constructive could have come from a discussion of the issues without making it boys vs. girls.

Joe: While gender dynamics may play a role in the course of any particular session, what do we really accomplish from categorizing and stereotyping male and female approaches to tutoring? Isn't reinforcing such a dichotomy counterproductive to the aims of a writing center?

Sarah: If gender bias in tutoring is really a problem, then solutions need to be offered or sources need to be cited or studies need to be completed.

Michael: I think gender is an issue, but in obviously a really complicated way. I think it would be more in the assumptions that people have about each other, but not in the WAY tutors work. I think it would be more of a cultural thing. I also don't think it would have to do with ways of writing and the writing process, but more in how males and females interact with each other. I don't usually like those articles about “boys learn this way” and “girls write this way.” I think that those articles might be true, but are less relevant in the writing center, having more to do with literacy and learning. The writing center should focus on the collaborative aspect of tutors and writers, and that's probably where the gender issues come into play, as would race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.

Peter: I've had pleasant sessions with males and horrible sessions with males. I've had pleasant sessions with females and horrible sessions with females. The individual is what matters. When all other factors are set aside, good tutoring sessions involve a dialogue, and both males and females are capable of a dialogue. Labeling broad categories as good or bad is a sure way to make people angry (or at least call attention to the fact that you don't know what you're talking about).

Matt: Gender issues are real and unfortunate and unfunny, and they need more earnest discussion.

Sarah: While there may be gender differences among tutors within writing centers, what should tutors do about this? Are there training techniques available to discourage gender bias? Is this the biggest dilemma with which tutors need to be concerned? How can writing center directors promote less gender bias? What professional development courses can be initiated to demote gender bias within writing centers?

Peter: Writing Centers have had to fight to find respectability; indeed, many schools still consider tutoring to be a specialized form of cheating. "Prattle" is a giant step backward in this fight for respect because it hands adversaries of tutoring new fodder: If writing tutors cannot write an erudite, thoughtful piece, then how can they be trusted to guide the writing of others?

In our quest to craft a creative, reflective response to "Prattle," we often stumbled over our own differences. To best represent our unique voices, we choose a dialogic format. Our hope is that our discussion over differences in our Writing Center will continue indefinitely, the better to serve our various clients and to represent our own unique tutoring and writing styles.



CHANGES IN WLN

(continued from page 9)

was a crisis last fall when an academic institution suddenly and unexpectedly ended its support, at the very moment when subscription checks and manuscripts were coming in and I was almost done with several letters that editors write to review committees in early fall for people whose *WLN* publications are listed on their CVs. I panicked (that's a mild representation of my state of mind). Could I send letters for a publication that might have to go on hiatus at the very time when it needed to be visibly active for review committees to look at? Those of you who began looking into having *WLN* move to your institution tried gallantly to find institutional support, but as you found, institutional commitment of resources is rarely granted without months of paperwork, pleading, and tedious meetings. Then, the RiCH Company, headed by Richard Hay (a former grad student tutor in several writing centers) gallantly offered to have his company take on the work of handling subscriptions, printing, and mailing. What does this mean? Well, an excellent Web site went up quickly (that, like the IWCA subscription site, permitted the use of charge cards), archives were rapidly moved, the subscription list was cleaned up (so that some of you who had paid finally began to get issues, and others who no longer subscribed were dropped), a support staff was assigned to handle subscriptions and manuscript distribution, and the printing was being done more quickly and more inexpensively than in the past. The RiCH Company does not charge for any of its services and does not want any editorial control. (They keep all our funds in a separate account.) They are simply providing what was provided in the past, managerial support at no cost to *WLN*. Yes, Richard Hay had previously developed WOnline, a software product for writing centers, but I had to insist many times that the least we could do as a way of thanking him was to have a link to WOnline from our home page. He refrained from doing so for a long time before my nagging won out. As many of you know, I can be relentless about insisting on something. In my mind, it was a win-win situation, and in terms of *WLN*'s survival, I am deeply grateful (and I hope you are too). And we never missed sending out an issue last fall. With major support from the RiCH Company, it was a seamless transition, accomplished in less than a month that cost newsletter subscribers and our little *WLN* fund nothing.

2) *Is WLN a refereed journal?* In short: YES. It's a double-blind process in which I forward manuscripts that come in to reviewers, and they review and send back their responses. If they agree, I will pass along their names to the authors, and in some cases they have worked closely with authors through drafts (and drafts and drafts) to revise and reach publishable form. We have reviewers who are committed to the finest principles of writing center theory and pedagogy. Many of their responses are models of great online tutoring, and their willingness to collaborate in an admirable tutorial manner reinforces my sense of why writing center colleagues are a special population of generous people. I have been greatly remiss in not publicly thanking them, and in the June issue of each volume, I will now list their names. I hope that those reviewers who have indicated that they wish to remain anonymous will permit me to include their names in the list.

And finally, the *Writing Lab Newsletter* is your publication. If you have further questions and comments, let me know.



TUTOR'S COLUMN

A WRITING ASSISTANT'S ROLE IN BRINGING PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO WRITING CENTERS

◆ *Tiffany B. Martin*
College of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, MO

Almost thirty students and a few teachers filed into the Center for Writing and Thinking (CWT) at the College of the Ozarks. My fellow writing assistants and I stood in the back of the room, smiling and eager to begin the long-awaited workshop session. After our writing center director made introductions between the staff members of the schools—one a college, the other an intermediate school for fifth and sixth graders—we were ready to begin.

As a college writing center assistant, I did not expect to have the opportunity to help students other than the college-age variety. However, due to my director's endeavors [see "Bringing Public Schools to Writing Centers: A Tragi-Comic Tale of One Director's Efforts" by Elise Bishop, page 7], I have had the opportunity to assist elementary-age students with their writing—something I value and enjoy as highly as working with fellow college students. Although the logistics were sometimes difficult to coordinate, all of the preparation was worth the moment when we could meet with the children. Although there are some obvious differences between college students and children, I have found working with children to be quite similar in terms of how to help them with the writing process.

Our first workshop with the fifth graders in small groups went well. Most of them were rather quiet as they found seats at the computer desks, some twirling in their chairs, others dangling their legs awkwardly. Joining a group of four girls, I listened as my director explained the writing assignment of expanding their narratives with sensory details and changing their verbs from past tense to present tense.

The girls in my group were a bit shy, so I discreetly scanned their work and pointed out some ways to improve their writing. I also had the girls read through their papers and decide what parts needed heightened sensory detail, such as describing how the ice cream tasted and not only how cold it was. The more questions I asked and suggestions I gave, the girls seemed to grow increasingly comfortable, which helped me relax as well. Sometimes, I pointed out a spelling error or that they needed to add or delete punctuation marks, but I made sure not to overcorrect their papers or explain grammar rules in words beyond their understanding.

At another workshop, I collaborated with three girls. After briefly adding descriptive details to their papers, each girl read hers aloud, and I led the girls in responding with positive feedback and giving constructive criticism. For example, I asked the group, "What did you like about the story? What would you like to hear more about? What do you think doesn't work as well and needs to be improved?" It was exciting to see the girls giving each other suggestions gently and praising what they liked.

Interacting with a class or small group is a rewarding experience and beneficial to the children, but I believe that working with one child at a time is even better for all concerned. The child tends to feel more comfortable and to be more talkative, and the writing assistant can completely focus on the child's individual needs. Just as a writing assistant encounters every possible personality and experiences rewarding and frustrating writing conferences with college students, I experienced the same with the children.

My director, a fellow writing assistant, and I were eventually able to visit the intermediate school and work individually with the students. One of my first sessions was a little frustrating. When I was filling out a form for my Reader Response (what we call our personal writing conferences) with Mark, I had to ask him to repeat his last name for me since it was unusual. Because he seemed uncomfortable, I didn't press him to respell the name for me, and thankfully, I noticed his name on his paper and copied it from there. It was an awkward session because Mark replied noncommittally to most of my questions, rarely made eye contact, and stared straight ahead as if he were daydreaming. Starting to feel a little desperate, I decided to ask him to expound on his science-fiction story, and he suddenly opened up, his voice rising in excitement when relating how he would clobber the alien invading his neighborhood. Relieved that he was now interacting, I listened and

asked leading questions (“What does the alien look like?” and “Is the story going to have a happy ending?”) so that he could flesh out his ideas. Occasionally prompting Mark to make his own notes about the details he wanted to include, we both used adhesive notes to jot down ideas that he could remember when he revised his story. I didn’t belabor our conference since I could tell through Mark’s body language (staring straight ahead, few gestures, and stiff posture) that he wasn’t thrilled about what we were doing. I concluded our time within ten minutes, making sure to tell him I enjoyed his story so that I hoped he left on a positive note. Even though it was a frustrating session, I didn’t take his behavior personally, a response I have learned from conferencing with the occasional disinterested college student.

In comparison with Mark, Kyla was quite different, providing me with one of those refreshing experiences that make up for the less-than-positive encounters. She sat down with a shy giggle, and we started reading through her fairy tale. I was delighted with her ideas concerning a fairy who lived in a flower, and Kyla grew more enthusiastic as we brainstormed for details to develop her story. She had been unsure how to shape her fairy tale, such as what powers a magic wand should have, so she was happy to resolve her uncertainty about how to complete her story. Kyla and I also made notes together on sticky notepads (quite useful for papers that are already covered in words) so that Kyla would remember what we discussed when she made her revisions later. Throughout the session, we talked about non-writing related topics, establishing common ground (e.g., we both loved fairy tales, she knew one of my professor’s daughters, etc.). She asked me if I would like to look at another piece of writing she had in her folder. “Of course, I would love to!” I replied. Smiling, she laid out another page of large lines scrawled in pencil. We read it and discussed improvements. Although we were out of time, she had some formatting and punctuation questions about a short letter that I glanced through for her. As we concluded, Kyla exclaimed how much fun she had had, and we were both happy about the progress we had made. Lingering with her hand on her chair, she asked when I would be coming back because she wanted to conference again. Sadly, I had to tell her that was the only time I would get to work with her that semester. I felt as if we had become friends in a brief twenty minutes and simultaneously accomplished quite a bit toward her understanding of the writing process.

Most students I have worked with fall somewhere between Mark and Kyla in terms of responsiveness and enthusiasm. Recently, I’ve had the blessing of being “embedded” in a classroom once a week for an hour, during which time I support the teacher’s role by individually conferencing with students at any stage of the writing process. I usually have students read their papers to me, and we discuss what concerns or questions they have. If students are still in the beginning stage of their papers or have yet to start writing, we generate ideas based on what direction they would like their papers to take. The conferences usually take about ten to twenty minutes with my balancing questions and suggestions, directing and pacing our time together according to the children’s needs and ability to focus on the task. Always, I have students write down the ideas we discussed, and I end the sessions with some form of praise and a “thank you.”

Our writing center does not have statistics or data to attest that this approach of our helping children with their writing is successful. However, we do know how well writing centers have affected college students, and we believe writing centers can benefit children, too. Working with children is actually quite similar to and just as rewarding as working with college students, so I would like to encourage all writing center staff to take advantage of service learning and outreach opportunities with children. If such options are not available, consider starting a partnership with a local school as my director and her staff members did. For me, the smiles, “light-bulb moments,” and bursts of enthusiasm are enough to know that what I am doing matters to a child and could very well inspire that child’s growth as a writer, thinker, and person. And for me that is motivation to continue.



CALENDAR FOR WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATIONS

Sept. 8, 2007: Northeast Ohio Writing Centers Association, in Burton, OH

Contact: Jay Sloan at jdsloan@kent.edu & Jeanne Smith at jrsmith3@kent.edu. Conference Web site: http://fpdc.kent.edu/regional-center/lc_0607/w_matters/.

Oct. 19-20, 2007: Michigan Tutoring Association/Michigan Writing Centers Association, in Muskegon, MI

Contact: Conference Web site: http://www.michigan-tutors.org/mta_conferences.htm.

Oct. 25-27, 2007: Midwest Writing Centers Conference, in Kansas City, MO

Contact: Thomas Ferrel at ferrelt@umkc.edu. Conference Web site: <http://www.usiouxfalls.edu/mwca/mwca07>.

Oct. 26-27, 2007: Middle East and North Africa Writing Centers Association, in Doha, Qatar.

Contact: Cecelia Hawkins at cecelia.hawkins@qatar.tamu.edu.

Nov. 7-8, 2007: Hellenic American University, in Athens, Greece

Contact: writing@hau.gr. Conference Web site: <http://writing.hau.gr>.

Feb. 7-9, 2008: Southeastern Writing Center Association, in Savannah, GA

Contact: Deborah Reese: reesedeb@mail.armstrong.edu, 912-921-2329.

March 6-8, 2007: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Norman OK

Contact: Michele Eodice at [\[ou.edu\]\(http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/scwca08\). Conference Web site: <http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/scwca08>.](mailto:meodice@</p></div><div data-bbox=)

April 11-12, 2008: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Columbus, OH

Contact: Doug Dangler at dangler.6@osu.edu.

June 19-22, 2008: European Writing Centers Conference, in Freiburg, Germany

Contact: Gerd Braeuer at braeuer@ph-freiburg.de; Conference Web site: <http://www.ph-freiburg.de/ewca2008/>.

Oct. 30-Nov.1, 2008: International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, in Las Vegas, NV

Contact: Conference Web site: <http://departments.weber.edu/writingcenter/IWCA.htm>.



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