

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WRITING LAB
TO COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

BY

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M. A., Emporia State University, 1979

A Master's Report
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
Master of Arts
Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

Approved by:


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Since many of us in the field of composition view writing labs as only convenient dumping grounds for problem students, or at the most, as adequate remediation centers for the borderline student, we often fail to see that the lab has any potential for service beyond its original purpose. However, our view of what a writing lab is or does is not necessarily something for which we are entirely to blame. The writing lab is a relatively new program on many campuses, with the majority of labs being less than ten years old. This means that most labs are in a state of perpetual growth and that material about what labs have done or are doing is relatively new and sparse. Even the writing lab's involvement in such organizations as CCCC and NCTE is still rather limited, although writing lab directors did form a 4Cs special interest group in 1979 and are currently working to form a similar group, complete with a board of directors, in NCTE.

Since most of the written work concerning writing labs is in the nature of "how-to" papers (how to set up a lab, how to train tutors, how our lab handled this particular problem), it is much easier to point to influential names in the field than to influential works. Probably one of the best known names is that of Muriel Harris (Purdue), who edits the Writing Lab Newsletter, the most significant source of information concerning writing labs, and who, besides publishing many articles on the subject, has finished editing a collection of essays entitled Tutoring Writing:

A Sourcebook for Writing Labs, which is scheduled for publication this summer by Scott, Foresman. A second well-known name is that of Kenneth Bruffee (Brooklyn College--CUNY), whose article, "The Brooklyn Plan: Attaining Intellectual Growth Through Peer-Group Tutoring," Liberal Education (Dec., 1978), and book, A Short Course in Writing, are standard reading for those interested in using peer tutors or for those interested in the benefits gained through the use of peer tutors. On the other hand, those interested in using the lab as a supplement to a basic writing course would be most familiar with "The Comp-Lab Project: An Experimental Basic Writing Course," Journal of Basic Writing (2:2), written by Mary Epes, Carolyn Kirkpatrick and Michael Southwell (York College--CUNY). They have also published a book entitled The Comp-Lab Exercises (Prentice-Hall, 1980). Finally two other works which serve to introduce one to what is happening in our writing labs is a dissertation by Stephen North, Writing Centers: A Sourcebook (SUNY--Albany, 1979) and a collection of essays, New Directions for College Learning Assistance: Improving Writing Skills, edited by Thom Hawkins and Phyllis Brooks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1981). Even these names and works may not be familiar to many because much of this work and many of these names are new on the market and in the field of composition, respectively. The sad thing is that these little-known materials do provide interesting insights into how writing labs are

furthering the cause of composition instruction through expanded service to students, faculty, and the community.

Therefore, I wish to use this paper as an introduction to why and how these labs have been able to further the cause of composition by an extension of their services. First will be a discussion of the two basic styles upon which most labs are modelled, followed by a presentation of how the lab has branched out from its primary purpose of remediation into student and faculty education and research. And, now seems a particularly good time to do such a report, since it ties in well with the theme for the 1982 CCCC program, "Serving Our Students, Our Public, and Our Profession," something writing labs seem to be doing especially well.

The University of Iowa is credited with having the oldest continuing writing lab, although, due to a loss of records, it is not clear whether the lab began in the 1920s or the 1930s. Whatever the date, it is certainly a pioneer as most other writing labs were not established until some time during the last fifteen to twenty years, with most of them springing up throughout the country from 1974-1979.¹

These writing labs began primarily because the schools discovered that many students needed extra help beyond the classroom to make it through their composition

programs; therefore, the labs were looked upon as remedial centers or "dummies dungeons." Although as remedial centers the labs served a useful purpose, many schools, for various reasons, gradually altered or changed the direction of the lab's focus. Therefore, for the sake of this paper, it is best to define the writing lab or writing center (these two terms are often used interchangeably) as a place which serves an entire school community by providing individual, one-on-one, and small group instruction in writing skills.²

Although nowadays most writing labs have moved beyond their original purpose, most of these labs were opened for two reasons: 1) as mentioned earlier, they were supplemental to the composition program in the English department of a particular school, serving primarily as the remedial tool; 2) they were a replacement which primarily served those students unable to demonstrate a certain proficiency in writing (as determined by the individual school) for the composition program.³ But, whatever the reason for starting a writing lab, it soon became apparent, according to Tobi Fulwiler (Michigan Tech), that "for many students, the lab is the best opportunity to obtain all important one-on-one instruction in writing, where there is time to explore each student's unique problems."⁴

There are primarily two kinds of writing labs, although many labs are actually hybrids of the two: 1) tutor-based, where the emphasis is on personalized, one-on-one instruction; 2) autotutorial, where the emphasis is on

material-based self-instruction. These two writing labs do have four things in common: All writing labs aim at improving skills; they employ tutors in some capacity; they are either a supplementary service, an extension of the classroom, or a replacement for a regular composition course;⁵ they utilize material designed by the staff, exercises borrowed from textbooks, programmed texts such as the English 3200 series, audio-visual equipment, and modules, which are "short units of work (4 to 10 pages long) designed to teach a student one skill or objective: i.e. learning to use a semicolon correctly, learning to avoid comma splices, . . ."⁶ (See App. samples 1-5)

Probably the most prominent autotutorial lab is the one operated by Carolyn Kirkpatrick, Mary Epes, and Michael Southwell at York College--CUNY. This lab is part of "The Comp-Lab Project," in which the lab supplements a basic writing course by providing self-instruction in grammatical correctness. Kirkpatrick describes the autotutorial lab in this way:

The method is defined not by the delivery system but by the organization of material to be learned. It is a kind of programmed instruction, although that term may be misleading, since it is so often reserved for particular kinds of written texts (English 3200 and the like). Self-teaching materials can include programmed workbooks, audiotapes, videotapes, slides, films, computer programs, or written exercises--used alone or in combination. The essential point is that autotutorial materials are designed so that students can work successfully on their own.⁷

The self-paced program requires that the student spend a minimum of five hours to complete the units, such as units

on sentence structure and mechanics. The units begin with an introduction to the error and then ask the student to work a series of exercises to give him practice in recognizing that error. For further practice in identifying the error, the student is then asked to find it in the context of a paragraph. These exercises serve as valuable editing practice, since they require the student to rewrite a given paragraph. Not until the final page of the unit is the student asked to write a paragraph of his own. The student's progress is "audited" periodically by a tutor who checks the student's writings, which are recorded on a special type of sheet that makes duplicate copies--one for the file, one for the student.⁸

In an argument for this autotutorial system, Kirkpatrick discusses the value of such a lab:

Since answers are built into the system, students can check their own work as they go along. They work at their own pace, stopping for help only when they need it. At the end of a unit or at points along the way, there is a mastery test. The mastery test, not the calendar, determines whether or not a student is ready to go on. In this sense, the work is always individualized, even if many students are working on the same assignment.⁹

She goes on to emphasize that such a self-instruction system is a powerful learning mode because it engages the student actively by asking him to learn something and then put that learning into practice. Secondly, the step by step approach puts the emphasis on the material to be learned rather than on a human mediator. Since the program makes the learner an active participant, the method heightens his awareness

of whether or not he is learning.¹⁰ And, Kirkpatrick goes on to stress that the autotutorial method is especially valuable for basic writing students because the privacy afforded by self-instruction provides the student with a dignified way to learn material that is usually classified as remedial. Kirkpatrick says that interviews with such students have two constant themes: "the relief (for both slower and faster learners) of being able to move at their own speed, and the pleasure of realizing that it is truly possible for them to teach themselves."¹¹ In the reaction of those students, we see, perhaps, the greatest strength of the self-teaching method: It offers a practical way to help students become autonomous and self-confident in their learning.¹² Finally, the autotutorial lab has greater potential for coordination with the classroom. As Kirkpatrick says:

Carefully assembled lab materials offer explanations familiar and acceptable to teachers. Under ideal conditions, these explanations are so well known to teachers that classroom instruction can assume the presence of common information and a common vocabulary. In fact, whole sections of a course--for all students, not just those who are having difficulties--can be moved to the lab, allowing the teacher to concentrate on areas where a teacher's help is most needed.¹³

Kirkpatrick does not, however, advocate the autotutorial lab above the tutor-based lab or any other kind of writing lab. Her argument is that this kind of lab works better than another kind of lab only under certain circumstances:

Thus, although the self-teaching method cannot teach everything, it can teach some things uniquely well. It is a more efficient way for students to learn technical information than the conventional teacher-learner interaction--efficient both in terms of the learners' time and the power of the instructional method. It provides a special opportunity for presenting organized material systematically. It can provide the crucial dimension of practice with linguistic forms.¹⁴

Kirkpatrick also emphasizes the idea that far from stifling students' independence (as some fear), "a good lab program can help develop their ability to learn on their own and can foster a sense of achievement that carries over to other areas of their learning."¹⁵

The autotutorial lab approach also eliminates some of the problems that can arise with tutors: "a haphazard approach, misinformation, inexperience in instruction, too much help with assignments, possible personality conflicts, encouragement of a dependent relationship."¹⁶ And even when tutors are experienced and highly competent, a student can only meet with his tutor for, at the most, one or two hours a week, whereas he can spend as much time as needed in the autotutorial lab. The self-teaching method is seen by Kirkpatrick as having a great deal of flexibility. Students do not have to come at a set time, which saves endless hassles over scheduling, missing appointments, and at least in the case of York College, the paying of tutors when their tutees fail to appear. Finally, once developed, a lab system is in place whereas good tutors are hard to find, have to be trained, work limited hours, and graduate or move on in short order.¹⁷

‘ In fact Kirkpatrick herself says, "instead of asking 'Which method is best?' we should ask, 'What, precisely, can each method do best?'"¹⁸ For, in actuality, York College operates a dual facility: the self-teaching lab and across the hall a writing skills center offering one-on-one and small-group tutoring. When students working in the self-teaching lab have trouble understanding a complicated point or need help composing, they can be referred to the tutor-based lab for more intensive one-on-one help than the autotutorial lab is designed to give. On the other hand, using the self-teaching lab approach for technical learning and structured practice frees the time of tutors for kinds of writing instruction that demand a personal approach--giving support and advice, responding to work in progress, and explaining complicated concepts. In short, as Kirkpatrick says, "when properly used, the lab approach stretches tutor time and the tutoring budget."¹⁹

The autotutorial lab thus has its place as does the tutor-based lab. The self-teaching approach is not an impersonal, dehumanizing process as some would argue, but it serves some students better than a tutor-based lab and it can work well in conjunction with the classroom and a tutor-based facility as is the case at York College. And, most importantly, its advocates, especially Carolyn Kirkpatrick, recognizes its shortcomings and would be the first to say that an autotutorial lab cannot benefit every student who needs help with writing because sometimes "students need a human teacher."²⁰

‘ In the tutor-based lab, instruction occurs in an individualized setting which provides one-on-one and/or small group instruction in writing skills. This lab is staffed with professional tutors, peer tutors, or a combination of professional and peer tutors. In a tutor-based lab, the usual procedure, if a student has not been referred with problems already diagnosed, is for a tutor to administer a diagnostic writing assignment, determine what the student's major weaknesses are, and, with the student, decide upon the appropriate course of action. Whatever the course of action, the tutor periodically checks the student's progress, discusses this progress with the student, and makes himself/herself readily available to the student during the scheduled session. Students can be teacher-referred or self-referred and usually attend lab on a regular basis of once or twice weekly, meeting with the same tutor throughout a semester for appointments of one-to-two hours depending upon the set-up of the lab. Some labs allow students to enroll for one or two credit hours, while others do not. Labs in which one enrolls for credit require attendance for so many hours in a semester before credit can be earned. Tutor-based labs also usually take students on a walk-in basis, perhaps even allotting so many hours per week as walk-in times. Whatever the set-up, the purpose of the tutor-based system is to provide the student with individual, personalized help with whatever writing problems he has and immediate, constructive feedback on his writings.

Richard C. Veit, a professor and writing center tutor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, voices the reasons why many favor the tutor-based system over the autotutorial system. Mainly, Veit sees the tutor-based lab as the best way to deal with those students who need the assistance of a writing lab:

The poorest writers who come to us rarely come voluntarily. Most basic writers who visit our writing centers are burdened with long histories of failure. They do not believe they can write and have long ago come to hate writing. Most of them bear scars from past dealings with teachers who acted as evaluators and censors rather than readers and teachers, and whose instruction more often than not took the form of grammar drills and workbook exercises. What the students wrote was judged for its surface features, with content usually ignored, leaving students without any sense of writing as communication . . . These students come to our centers believing that writing is a mechanical, superficial activity; they do not need mechanistic, impersonal instruction that will only reinforce this misapprehension. More than anything--more, certainly, than segmented workbook information about writing--they need to have contact with a caring human being who can reverse past bad experience and affirm their worth, who will believe they can write and help them do so, showing them what writing really is about.²¹

With this purpose in mind, Veit explains that a tutorial approach is more beneficial than Kirkpatrick's self-instruction approach because a tutor can talk with the student about the difficulties they both encounter when they write; can share the often unsuspected information that anxieties, blocks and organizational difficulties are problems for good writers, too, and that it is both normal and productive to struggle with writing; can provide guidance in areas where the student is least knowledgeable, such as in how to get started, formulate theme topics, adapt

messages for particular audiences, and condense, organize, and revise writing, since basic writers need to develop an awareness of all aspects of the writing process; and can demonstrate a lesson that only direct experience with a human audience can provide: that writing really means saying something you want to say to someone you want to hear it. A tutor is also needed to guide the development of topics, since the topic a writer chooses should be one that is interesting and manageable to help making writing enjoyable.²²

Whatever the reasons, Veit, along with many others, sees the tutor-based system as the better system, since there has been a shift in emphasis from product to process in the field of composition instruction. Therefore, a conflict has arisen between those who advocate the tutor-based system and those who advocate the autotutorial system. Those favoring a process over product method feel that the autotutorial lab, because it emphasizes editing skills and the correction of mechanical problems, also emphasizes the finished product over the learning of the writing process. For this reason, they are highly critical of the autotutorial approach to remediation, forcing the autotutorial people to constantly defend their system. If we have listened to what Carolyn Kirkpatrick has had to say about the autotutorial lab, however, we should have readily realized that the conflict should have died a peaceful death long ago.

Although the autotutorial lab primarily caters to those students (basic writers in the case of York College) who have problems mastering word-form correctness and other grammatical skills, the lab does not preclude process-oriented material from its program. It is just not an area in which material has been developed for use in an autotutorial lab because of the nature of such a lab. Rather, the autotutorial lab does emphasize a student's involvement in his own learning by making him responsible for some of what he learns and by giving him confidence in his ability to teach himself some writing skills, and it does free tutors to deal with problems of writing that need a human touch. Considering these motivations for starting an autotutorial lab, it seems logical that it should emphasize the kinds of skills it does because they are probably the easiest skills for a student to learn on his own, thus generating in the student the kind of confidence in his abilities that a basic writer needs. Also, his previous teachers have probably been most critical of the student's grammatical skills, so that if the student can learn how to handle these skills on his own, it may be the quickest way to generate confidence in his ability to handle other writing skills.

Specifically, remember that Kirkpatrick's lab, which is probably the best known autotutorial lab, operates in conjunction with a tutor-based lab and does refer students who have problems best handled by tutors to the tutor-based lab. The existence of an autotutorial lab

simply implies that many writing problems can be handled without the aid of a tutor.

For those people wondering what type of lab to implement in their school, it is best to determine what services would be most beneficial for the students. Writing labs should not only provide individual instruction for each student, but they should also be individualized for each school. For, as Muriel Harris puts it:

. . . there are threads of commonality that link all writing centers. Each one offers individualized help in a form more flexible than the traditional classroom provides. Each one is also a response in some way to the realization that the classroom, hindered by constraints of time and large groups, cannot provide all the instruction needed to help students become effective writers. Moreover, all labs and centers are tailored to the particular concerns of their own institutions. They are responsive to student needs and faculty demands, and because they are responsive, they are constantly reforming, changing, and growing. All are dedicated to helping students improve those particular writing skills that students must have to succeed, first in the college classroom, and later on, in careers.²³

It is this dedication, then, to the cause of writing which has prompted writing labs to use the carte blanche afforded them by the nature of their purpose to develop or utilize, with much greater ease than other contributors to composition instruction, approaches and programs for facilitating instruction in writing skills. Unless it involves a matter of budget, writing labs normally do not have to go through a series of committee deliberations and other similar red tape before they implement a reform or change in the way a lab operates, as does a department seeking to add a new course or a new program. Instead, the lab is an

open-ended service whose only function is to provide help with writing skills in the most effective way possible. In pursuit of this goal, then, writing labs are furthering the cause of composition instruction by branching out into the area of faculty education and into new areas of student education and by discovering the lab's potential as a research facility.

Probably the most well-known educational program advanced by use in writing labs is peer tutoring, for certainly the best known study on the effects of peer tutoring is the one done by Kenneth Bruffee in the lab at Brooklyn College--CUNY. This and other studies have shown that the use of peer tutors in a writing lab is not only of educational benefit to the tutee but to the tutor as well. According to George Welch, Miami-Dade Community College--South Campus, having peer tutors in the lab helps convince the student clients that there is such a thing as an academic community of students and that the student himself makes learning happen, rather than that learning is something given to him like a pill or a shove. Along with other features of a lab, peer tutors help to create, Welch says, "a context like that of a student service in which the student could see himself, not as part of a hierarchy but as a volunteer participant."²⁴ Also, the presence of the tutors, because they are students like their clients, provides opportunities for casual contact and exchange by sharing and discussing ideas. Therefore, the use of peer tutors serves

to relax the client and to create the feeling of an academic community composed of students. Also, Welch points out that many of the student clients are more inclined to attend a scheduled lab session because they don't want to disappoint a tutor (a friend?) who is waiting for them and expecting them to attend.²⁵

Although it is important that the client be the primary beneficiary of peer tutoring, the tutor also reaps educational benefits from the experience. These peer tutors come from primarily two groups of students--English majors and non-majors. The non-majors are either recommended by an instructor because of their expertise in writing or volunteer to work in the lab because of their interest in writing. The English majors usually plan to teach after graduation and have thus volunteered to tutor in the lab to gain experience or have been required to tutor in the lab by their methods course instructor because of the experience it affords them. Bruffee says that besides offering training in how to teach writing skills and the enjoyment of being part of an academic community, a peer tutoring program develops in the tutors two inextricably related functions of the educated: "evaluative judgement and verbal thought and expression."²⁶ Those would be two valuable assets for any well educated person to have. Bruffee also claims that peer tutoring develops a type of awareness in the tutors because as peer tutors and peer critics, students in the

peer tutoring program face ideas as "fluid, growing forces in their own minds and those of their peers, not as artificial entities fully formed in an abstract state."²⁷ And, because they confront these forces and the personal and proprietary interest people feel for their own ideas, the awareness they develop is that mental work is not only fragile and uncertain, but also filled with an inherent excitement and pleasure.²⁸ As Bruffee writes:

Peer tutoring therefore attacks the 'writing crisis' at its root, which is not lack of 'skills,' but students' inability to recognize, formulate, and express ideas of their own and to integrate education into everyday social, emotional, and practical life.²⁹

Because of that experience, they may recognize nuances of the writing process that may never have occurred to them before.

On a more practical level, the writing lab provides an opportunity for the peer tutor to sharpen his/her own writing skills. Richard C. Veit (University of North Carolina at Wilmington) reports that their writing center faculty offers a course each semester in editing and tutoring, which trains peer tutors to work in the writing center. Those selected for the course are chosen from among many applicants. These tutors not only work well with the student clients, but they learn a great deal about writing as well as about teaching, and they find this experience a valuable credential when they seek employment.³⁰

Perhaps more to the point is what three students who were peer tutors at the University of Michigan-Flint say

about peer tutoring. They stress the fact that peer tutoring enabled them to get experience they would need as teachers and gave them a great deal of responsibility for what went on in the writing lab. From their experience came the ability to diagnose, on their own, student needs and abilities, give assignments, respond to and evaluate individual assignments, keep track of student progress, and make final evaluation of student work, discussing with each other in groups how they themselves could deal with all but the most severe problems.³¹

Finally, a peer tutor program specifically benefits the English Education major. At West Virginia University, Rudolph Almasy and David England have developed a peer tutor program for English Education majors where they train the students to work in the writing lab as peer tutors and then, after the students' experience in the lab, discuss with them in the methods course classroom how the experience in the lab relates to regular classroom teaching. From the discussion in the classroom about the students' experiences in the lab, Almasy and England, reaching much the same conclusion as Welch, Bruffee, and Veit, say that they learned that the prospective teachers could do the work required and that well-trained English Education majors could answer questions of rhetoric and composition beyond merely the use of commas:

In their work in the lab, they were not simply marking and correcting exercises which their clients had done. Instead, together with the student writers,

they struggled with real compositional problems in real writing tasks. They were called upon to comment on the order and flow and logical development of multi-paragraph writing. They reviewed coherence, organization, and transition in paragraphs actually written for them in the lab. As they played the role of teacher-editor, they examined the syntax of sentences and the precision and specificity of diction. Student tutors knew what to look for and what questions to ask as they encouraged their students to revise and to learn about writing from such revision.³²

What is most interesting about the peer tutor program at West Virginia University is the fact that the teacher training course focuses on how to apply their recently acquired lab skills in regular classroom activities by reviewing procedures for organizing writing activities in order to achieve the greatest possible amount of individualized instruction, by further practicing the analysis of examples of high school composition in order to determine the most important and obtainable objectives for individual writers, and by discussing strategies for diagnosing writing weaknesses and methods for organizing small groups in the classroom on the basis of writing problems common to members in each group.³³ Other important instructional strategies stressed in the methods class to make writing laboratory experiences applicable to real classrooms are: the analysis of commonly used writing texts and handbooks in terms of their potential for individual, small group, and large group instruction, the procedures for designing teacher-made, independent learning modules in specific skill areas, and the evaluation of student writing in a manner which focuses on the measurement of individual growth in written

composition.³⁴ Peer tutoring, then, does have far a reaching effect in composition instruction. It not only provides inexpensive staff for the writing lab, but it also helps to instill in members of a future generation a reverence for and understanding of the skill required to produce a piece of writing. It is most especially a boon for English education as it provides the public schools with people possessing valuable training in the teaching of writing.

Because the writing lab has been a proven training ground for peer tutors, both professionals and non-professionals (i.e. majors and non-majors), the writing lab has been recognized as having an even wider potential for service to the students, faculty, and even the community. Many labs began to branch out and attract more students through the mini-course, as originally developed by the Purdue University Writing Lab.³⁵ Mini-courses are usually one or two session, non-credit workshops on such subjects as Essay Exams, Research Resources, Invention and Arrangement, and Punctuation and Mechanics. At Emporia State University (Emporia, KS), where the writing lab offers approximately one mini-course per month, each staff member is encouraged to develop and conduct his/her own mini-course. Each mini-course is usually a one session, one hour workshop, accompanied by a handout for participants. The handout, in fact, becomes an essential part of the mini-course, so that students or faculty unable to attend the mini-course may come to the lab and receive a handout, plus a

capsulized version of the mini-course from any staff member. That means, also, that each member of the lab's staff is briefed on the mini-course and the handout.³⁶

More important, perhaps, is the fact that these mini-courses are not limited totally to a presentation within the confines of the lab. At J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and Emporia State University, many of these mini-courses are taken directly into the classroom upon a request from a faculty member. Some mini-courses are even developed specifically for a certain course. For example, the lab staff may construct a mini-course on the business letter for a business course.

The development of these mini-courses has contributed directly to the involvement of writing labs in programs of writing across the disciplines. Because the lab offers a flexible form of writing instruction, it can respond promptly and easily to writing needs without waiting for the slow creaking of administrative machinery. This flexibility, along with its contact with a wide range of students, puts the lab in a particularly good position to offer writing instruction across the curriculum and to sponsor faculty development programs, which many writing labs are currently pursuing, some with the help of grants. Pioneers in programs of writing across the disciplines are Assumption College (MA) and the University of Oregon followed closely by Beaver College (PA) and West Chester College (PA), all of which received major NEH grants to pursue interdisciplinary programs.³⁷ Interdisciplinary programs entail opening

the lab to the entire student community (something most labs already do), utilizing lab facilities to provide workshops, mini-courses, and help in developing writing assignments for students and faculty, and finally training in how to teach and evaluate writing for faculty from all disciplines.

For example, the writing center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY) has one of its primary purposes that the center's "materials and staff will also be a resource for faculty, and we will work with individual faculty members to improve writing in their courses."³⁸ The writing lab at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, which is under the direction of Mary Croft, acts as a repository and resource center for materials in varied media on writing and the teaching of writing, provides teachers and speakers for off-campus presentations, in-service programs, panels, workshops, and consultations, and holds programs in which noted writers or writing specialists talk informally with students "who crowd the facility to hear them."³⁹

At J. Sargeant Reynolds the writing lab staff has helped faculty members to develop assignments and tests which call upon the students to use writing skills. The writing lab staff has worked with a faculty member in the biological sciences to develop study questions, which require short essay answers from the students and allow the professor to construct essay tests on such subjects as the functions of the kidney (See App. sample 6). They have

also developed models of abstracts (See App., sample 7) and book reports (See App., sample 8) for student use.⁴⁰

The writing lab at Augustana College (Illinois) developed a writing across the disciplines program out of necessity. Their lab had been set up for eight years and contained \$10,000 worth of sophisticated hardware, but was used by an average of only twenty students per quarter. The problem was that even though the English Department tested entering students, it could do little more than encourage the high risk students to seek remedial help. Few students came, fewer lasted, because the lab was viewed by students and faculty as just another invention of the English Department. Roald Tweet, the director of the lab, writes:

To remedy this indifference, we invited department chairmen and other faculty, a few at a time, to sessions in the writing lab. We asked these faculty to identify their students with writing problems and to send them to the lab. Further, we wanted the faculty member himself to provide the muscle by making his student's grade dependent on satisfactory performance in the lab. This way, the English Department would not be the bad guy, other faculty would become a part of the writing process, and students might just begin to see that writing was not an exclusive concern of English teachers.⁴¹

To consolidate the gains Tweet and his colleagues made, they obtained a grant to hold a two week Workshop on Writing as a College-Wide Concern during June 1978. The grant paid stipends to fifteen key faculty members from fifteen different departments in addition to three members of the English Department who set up the workshop. Discussions and presentations ranged from writing theory to the politics of curricular change.⁴²

‘ Already there are indications of change, according to Tweet:

Our reading/writing lab now handles a minimum of 50 students per week. Many of these are faculty referrals from faculty who a year ago did not know the lab existed. But many of the students have begun to come in on their own to seek help. It has dropped the title 'remedial' and is used almost as much by pre-med and pre-law students who are facing major exams or who simply want to become better readers and writers. The lab staff has gone wholistic; the lab is now a place where student skills are taught, not just vocabular [sic] or spelling drill.⁴³

Another change that has also occurred as a result of these innovations at Augustana College is that several departments are incorporating writing into their curricula. Two departments, Biology and Chemistry, have begun writing courses for one or two credits, a separate writing course has become a requirement in several majors, including public administration and accounting, and the Psychology Department has announced that a senior level seminar paper will be a graduation requirement for that major.⁴⁴

Augustana College illustrates an innovation that is occurring on campuses across the country--writing across the disciplines programs where faculty training is a primary key to success. At Beaver College (PA) the entire faculty of the university has been trained in collaborative learning techniques. As a result, the whole campus serves as a sounding board for ideas that can be incorporated into student papers. The writing lab there is the axis of a web that extends from one end of the campus to the other, even

to the student dormitories where peer tutors are available well into the night.⁴⁵

The writing lab is using its position in the university community to sponsor all kinds of programs to bring to forefront the importance of possessing good writing skills. Another example is the project at East Texas State University entitled Individual Writing Instruction in the Humanities. This project extended writing instruction across the curriculum by selecting five instructors--one each from art, music, drama, history, and political science--to attend a five-week workshop during which each received the training and assistance needed to design or restructure a course in his or her own discipline so that it included writing instruction as well as the usual course content. During the following fall semester the instructors taught these experimental courses with the help of graduate assistants from the English Department who had previously had experience as tutors in the writing lab.⁴⁶ According to Jeanette Harris, "As a result of the project, which emphasized writing as a process and as a tool for learning, the Writing Center became involved in several new disciplines and established itself as a resource for instructors as well as students."⁴⁷

At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Jennie Skerl, director of the writing lab, says the writing across the disciplines program developed gradually. In her first year, she spent time simply meeting with faculty individually and in groups, persuading them to emphasize writing in their

courses, to use her as a consultant, and to make use of the lab as a backup resource for their own teaching efforts. In her second year, she did extensive consulting with individual faculty members concerning the writing assignments they gave their students. She advised them on teaching methods and designing assignments. During the third year of operation, the lab at RPI offered a series of seminars and workshops for faculty in order to educate them about the nature of the writing process and the learning process.⁴⁸ Skerl says that since active faculty participation in a writing program entails faculty education about the writing process as well, this is an important way in which writing labs can become faculty resources.⁴⁹

Finally, USC and Kansas State University have carried the writing across the disciplines concept one step further by operating month-long conferences for high school and college personnel. These conferences are not only supporting writing in the college but in the high school as well.⁵⁰ All these faculty workshops expand the awareness of teachers in every discipline to help them view writing as a "process"; teachers can then make more intelligent use of writing through such methods as peer group criticism, multiple-draft paper assignments and student journals. They also know more about which students need referral to the lab and which might be helped by some other means.

In some schools, the writing lab has even developed outreach programs which involve the community. One is the

Writer's Hotline at Emporia State University--an 800 series telephone number one can call for the answer to any question about writing. Some of its clients include professors, businessmen, and the office of the governor of the state of Kansas. If the staff cannot provide an immediate answer to a question, they will take the caller's number, research the question, and call back with the correct answer. The hotline has been in operation for about four years.⁵¹ Other outreach programs are reported by Janice Redish:

Mary Croft's staff at the University of Wisconsin/Stevens Point gives training in writing to off-campus groups such as the police and legal services staff . . . Janice Neuleib's center at the Illinois State University at Normal/Bloomington also has an outreach program to the community and to other departments on campus.⁵²

Finally, at the University of South Carolina tutors give instruction at two Columbia prisons. The lab also hopes to establish workshops for government employees. For example, they might help secretaries and executives from the state highway department to organize business letters or reports.⁵³

Because of the interest generated by campus-wide and community programs, writing labs and their directors and staff have recognized that labs may move into new areas of service with very little hassle from administration. This interest in such programs has created a growth in the labs that indicates, on many campuses at least, an interest in writing, both on the part of faculty and students and the community, and an increasing awareness that a lab is at least one way to meet these needs. As Joyce Steward says:

- There is new awareness that writing is not taught once, probably to freshmen, and then 'finished,' but that there must be provision for extra remediation and for on-going help, usually through individualized teaching, at higher levels of education.⁵⁴

The writing lab, as has been demonstrated, can provide just exactly that and in numerous ways.

The writing lab does not, however, merely contribute to composition instruction by training students or by spreading an interest in writing across the campus and even into the community. The writing lab also serves as a classroom, a library, a resource center, and a research center for instructors and students in its own discipline--English. Besides the learning that occurs because one is a peer tutor, the writing lab can also be a classroom for students of composition theory. Muriel Harris, Purdue University, and Faye Vowell, Emporia State University, have both sponsored students in independent study programs involving work and research in the lab.⁵⁵ In some schools, the writing lab has become a resource center for instructors. Muriel Harris describes how this function of the lab evolved at Purdue University:

It didn't occur to us to advertise our homegrown collection to the rest of the composition staff because we were fully aware of how modest our efforts really were. What we didn't appreciate as we groped along was that our instructional materials had, however, been field-tested. In elbow-to-elbow situations with our students, we got immediate feedback in the form of puzzled stares or inappropriate responses. Most of the truly useless and/or confusing materials were being discarded as we devised better ones, so that what the students carried out of the lab were exercises that were reasonably clear and comprehensive.⁵⁶

Because the instructors were interested in procuring copies of these exercises, Harris and her staff wondered what other ways they could make the writing lab useful for composition instructors. Perhaps the staff should put together another file drawer of material about composition teaching. To determine what would be most useful, a questionnaire was sent out to the staff, asking what they would want in the proposed file: "Honest voices replied: could the lab collect a file of sample graded papers to browse through? Could the lab gather some successfully used theme assignments to look at for suggestions?"⁵⁷ The end of the semester turned out to be the appropriate time to gather these kinds of materials as the teachers gladly cleaned out their own files and gave Harris' staff extra copies of assignments and armfuls of unclaimed graded papers. The teachers also sent along copies of their handouts, thus providing a means for exchanging materials, a service which is normally not convenient for a staff as large as the one at Purdue University. To this material, the writing lab staff added bibliographies and resource lists, along with copies of journal articles on paper grading, pedagogy, classroom strategies, and composition research. The staff also dipped into their carefully hoarded lab budget to purchase copies of some of the more useful books and collections of articles on composition that beginning instructors would most probably not yet have acquired for their own libraries.⁵⁸

Not only has the lab established this resource file, but it also is what Harris calls a working library for the teaching of composition:

At a table where a lab instructor and a student are discussing some punctuation problems in the student's writing, there may also be a composition instructor leafing through a self-instruction module on word economy and taking notes for her own presentation. Another instructor may come in to ask for copies of our sentence-combining exercises after returning to the Resource File some journal articles discussing the effectiveness of this technique. A new instructor who doesn't yet have a folder of sample argumentative themes from previous classes comes in to pull from our files of graded papers a few argumentative themes for his class to examine before they finish writing their own papers. Another instructor may ask for our handout on parallel structure to distribute to the class after they discuss the subject.⁵⁹

Finally, these contributions of the writing lab at Purdue have turned the lab into a faculty exchange where colleagues trade techniques and theories, hash over mistakes, discuss some student's progress in the lab, or debate a fine point of grammar. In fact, Harris thinks that probably the most useful resource the lab offers is a meeting ground where composition is spoken, a gathering place to talk and to exchange suggestions on that most complex of tasks, learning how to help students write.⁶⁰

Mary Croft (University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point) has worked with other English department members to develop a number of innovative writing courses, some of which operate in conjunction with or through the lab. These new courses include Development English (a flexible alternative to first-term freshman English), Independent Writing (for anyone from foreign students seeking to Americanize

their English to housewives editing organizational reports or newsletters), Teaching of High School Composition (for experienced teachers as well as graduate and undergraduate students), Editing and Publishing (offering practical experience in the preparation of manuscripts and production of books), and a Practicum (offering advances students practical experience and college credit in return for tutoring services in the lab). One significant effect of these additions to departmental offerings has been to make possible a minor in writing, "which has recently been adopted and is meeting with considerable interest."⁶¹ Some of these courses have come about, not only as a result of the lab's contact with the campus community, but as a result of the kinds of research that can occur in the writing lab.

Many labs provide opportunities for case-study work--testing the effectiveness of various pedagogies and materials, observing writers as they write, and examining the other kinds of writing students do beyond the freshman year. At the same time, these labs allow insight into the processes of both skilled and unskilled writers at different stages of their development. In fact, some very significant research has already been accomplished by using the lab as a research center. According to Aviva Freedman, Thom Hawkins, coordinator of the Writing Center and tutor supervisor at the Student Learning Center at Berkeley, has explored some of the massive journal documentation accumulated at the Student Learning Center. These documents offer

fascinating insights into student attitudes toward academic language, tutors' attempts to help them master that code, and the dynamics of the tutor-student relationship.⁶² Similarly, the study conducted by Suzanne E. Jacobs and Adela B. Karliner is a model of the kind of investigation possible and necessary in writing centers. Jacobs, Co-Director of the Writing Workshop at the University of Hawaii, and Karliner, Director of the Muir College Writing Program and Director of the Writing Clinic at the University of California at San Diego, studied the transcripts of conferences, and the rough drafts and revisions related to them, in order to discover why the one-on-one conference is an extremely useful tool in fostering more intelligent writing. The key to a successful conference was in the way the student and instructor perceived their roles--as student and teacher or as two conversants. If a student-teacher relationship existed, the result was usually a mere patching of the rough draft. If the two became two conversants, the result was significant change in the cognitive level of the revision.⁶³ Karliner, as Freedman points out, has also said that when an instructor acts as a collaborator rather than as an evaluator, the student is more likely to take an active part in writing conferences and to initiate substantive changes in the writing.⁶⁴ Aviva Freedman says of the research: "Pedagogically, such studies are immensely suggestive. Equally important, however, is the potential they reveal for investigating the nature of teacher-student

relationships as they focus on writing."⁶⁵ Of course, this is only an indication of what research can be done in a writing lab.

Even the statistical information and other records kept by labs could provide useful information for researchers. Also, the lab, especially one such as Muriel Harris' at Purdue University, could provide a researcher with samples of the specific kinds of writing problems he/she may be researching. And, as mentioned earlier, the lab is also a more than adequate testing ground for exercises, other handouts, and modules. The important thing is that whatever research one does on the composition process, the writing lab may be the place to do it.

In conclusion, although the first mission of a new writing lab is usually to supplement or to be integrated into the freshman writing course, labs have begun to respond as well to the needs of writers throughout their years at college. It has also become the flexible arm of writing programs, both for composition courses beyond the freshman level and for courses in other disciplines in which writing instruction in some form will be included. This flexibility of the writing labs in serving the broader writing interests of the university community is one key to its vitality. Whether the lab serves as a classroom or library for students, tutors, or faculty, it is indeed a center for writing, as articles in every issue of the Writing Lab Newsletter

already testify. As Muriel Harris says, "the strong interest in teaching writing as a process assures the writing center an equally healthy future."⁶⁶

Whatever the reason, according to Muriel Harris:

writing labs are thriving and, while still in a state of growth, have already become one of the major areas of concentration in the field of composition. In the 1979 4C's program, writing labs were listed as one of the seven major topics dealt with in multiple conference sessions . . . From all this, I have a strong sense not only of the continued growth of labs but also of the establishment of labs as integral parts of composition programs.⁶⁷

And, this last statement by Harris has been proven a hundred times over since she made it in the May 1979 issue of Writing Lab Newsletter. In fact, the theme of the 1982 Conference on College Composition and Communication, "Serving Our Students, Our Public and Our Profession," could very well be the theme for writing labs themselves.

ENDNOTES

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- 33Almasv and England, 161-162.

- .³⁴Almasy and England, 161-162.
- ³⁵Redish, 12.
- ³⁶Interview with Faye Vowell, Director of the Writing Lab, Emporia State University, 14 April 1981.
- ³⁷Fulwiler, 4.
- ³⁸Jennie Skerl, "The Writing Center at RPI," Writing Lab Newsletter, II, No. 4 (Dec., 1977), 5.
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APPENDIX

(materials in this appendix come from a handout distributed at a workshop on Writing Across the Disciplines, which was conducted by J. Sargeant Reynolds staff at the Special Interest session for Writing Lab Directors at CCCC, Dallas, 27 March 1981, a handout developed by Thomas Nash and distributed at the Special Interest session for Writing Lab Directors at CCC, Dallas, 27 March 1981, and handouts used in the Writing Lab at Kansas State University and developed by Eleanor Rochat, Director of the Writing Lab.)

SAMPLE 1

COMMA SPLICE

Do not confuse the structure of a sentence by the misuse of a comma where an end mark of punctuation ought to be.

The use of a comma instead of a period or a semicolon between two main clauses not joined by a connective is called a comma splice. Since a reader assumes, rightly, that a comma is an internal mark of punctuation, a comma splice will suggest to him that the sentence is not finished. He will therefore read through the comma and may become confused by the unclear structure of the sentence--for example:

He has never before been suspected of theft, to the best of my knowledge, he has been employed by his present firm since he graduated from high school.

To which main clause does the underlined modifier belong? Which statement is the writer qualifying: that the man has never before been suspected of theft, or that he has always worked for the same company? The reader is free to guess, but he will get no help from the sentence. This comma splice brings about a real failure of communication, the worst kind of sentence error.

Because the comma splice sometimes causes this kind of confusion, many teachers strongly condemn all comma splices, even though some cause no real break in communication, and even though comma splices are not rare in the writings of some competent professional writers. It would better accord with the facts to say that, at its best, the comma splice is unconventional and, at its worst, it makes communication impossible. The sometimes indiscriminate condemnation of comma splices by college instructors is a result of painful experience with the latter type.

Comma splices may be corrected by one of three methods.

1. The simplest way is to change the faulty comma to a period or a semicolon, whichever is more appropriate:

Comma Splice

His chances of election are not good, because the independents do not like him, it would be safer to nominate another candidate.

Revision

His chances of election are not good, because the independents do not like him. It would be safer to nominate another candidate.

Comma Splice

This is the best book I have ever read, it kept me up all night.

Revision

This is the best book I have ever read; it kept me up all night.

2. A second method of revision is to provide a coordinating connective between the two main clauses, thus making the comma conventional punctuation:

Comma Splice

She says she does not like football, I doubt that she has seen two games in her whole life.

Revision

She says that she does not like football, but I doubt that she has seen two games in her whole life.

It will cost a great deal of money, there is no guarantee that the plan will succeed.

It will cost a great deal of money and there is no guarantee that the plan will succeed.

3. The third method is to subordinate one main clause to the other:

Comma Splice

He is discouraged about flunking, I think he will quit school.

Revision

He is so discouraged about flunking that I think he will quit school.

When two main clauses are joined by a transitional connective--consequently, however, moreover, nevertheless, therefore--the conventional punctuation between them is a semicolon, though a period is not unusual:

I admit that he is honest and conscientious; nevertheless, I will not vote for him.

When two short clauses are felt to be closely related, informal usage sometimes prefers a comma to a semicolon:

I passed, Mary doubled.
The women like him, the men don't.

COMMA SPLICE: Exercise

Using whatever method seems best, revise the comma splices in the following sentences.

1. The two days preceding the Spring Carnival are filled with much excitement, all the houses and organizations try to create interest in their floats.
2. There is still plenty of opportunity in this country, if a young man really cares about building a career, his chances of success are as good today as ever.
3. There are two wires sticking out from two small holes in the center of the dash, they have to be crossed to turn on the ignition.
4. The school had an attendance of 1500 students, this number included night school enrollment.
5. Do you believe that children should never be spanked, or do you believe that moderate spanking helps them to develop self-discipline, this is a question on which many parents disagree.
6. The difficulties are great, but not insuperable, although the answer is not in sight, it can be obtained by patient and persistent work.
7. There are too many students for each teacher, no one receives any direct help or attention.
8. In all three of these bills there is free choice of doctors, dentists, and hospitals, the only requirement is that they must be participants in the plan.
9. I remember how I used to spend hours living in a dream world as I sat in my room and followed the adventures of men who had superhuman powers, some of them stopped bullets which bounced off their bodies, others jumped over buildings and flew through space under their own power.
10. Their vocabularies seem to be made up of twenty-letter words, their sense of humor, if they have one, is very dry.
11. I had to fight temptations which led me away from my music, much to my dismay, the temptations quite often won.
12. The wages are low and the work is monotonous, moreover, the job offers little chance of promotion.

SAMPLE 2

HANDOUT ON PARALLELISM

- I. For the expression of co-ordinate ideas a noun should be paralleled with a noun, an active verb with an active verb, an infinitive with an infinitive, a subordinate clause with a subordinate clause, and so forth.

Awkward: Let us consider the origin of engineering and how engineering has progressed.
(Noun//subordinate clause)

Parallel: Let us consider the origin and progress of engineering.
(Noun//noun)

Awkward: As a young man he had been in Africa, fighting in Greece, and following his general to India.
(Verb//participles)

Parallel: As a young man he had been in Africa, had fought in Greece, and had followed his general to India
(Verb//verb)

- II. Whenever necessary to make the parallel clear, repeat a preposition, an article, an auxiliary verb, the sign of the infinitive, or the introductory work of a long phrase or clause.

Awkward: I admire Tennyson for the ideals in his poems and his style.

Parallel: I admire Tennyson for the ideals in his poems and for his style.

- III. Correlatives (either . . . or, neither . . . nor, both . . . and, not only . . . but also, whether . . . or) should be followed by elements that are parallel in form.

Awkward: He was not only kind but also knew when to help people in trouble.
(Adjective//verb)

Parallel: He was not only kind but also helpful to people in trouble.
From Harbrace College Handbook

- B. All of the following sentences violate the principles of parallelism in one way or another. Correct above the line the faulty structure by substituting or deleting words whenever necessary.
1. He was attached to the Federal Bureau of Prisons and then he got a station at the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg.
 2. His approach was considered enlightened because he preferred to help the inmates rather than abusing them.
 3. The inmates were taught the use of tools and how to make furniture.
 4. Dr. Linder's latest book, The Fifty-Minute Hour, brought him fame and he was popular.
 5. His book reveals a man of taste and ability and one who has insight.
 6. It was praised highly because critics like a book with an exciting story and which has a readable style.
 7. James Dean was ideal for the lead in the movie version of the book: He had a rebellious expression, and he had an unkempt appearance.
 8. In the book, the protagonist fails to learn that social adjustment means cooperation, obedience, and fair to others.

SAMPLE 3

A WORKSHEET FOR INVENTION

from Richard L. Larson, "Discovery through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," College English, 30 (1968).

WRITING ABOUT PROPOSITIONS (statements set forth to be proved or disproved)

The proposition: That the state of _____, through its legislative government, instruct school, college, and university faculties to teach the theory of "scientific creationism" in science classes and to give it equal weight with other theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution.

1. What must be established for the reader before he/she will believe it?
2. Into what sub-propositions, if any, can it be broken down? (What smaller assertions does it contain?)
3. What are the meanings of key words in it?
4. To what line of reasoning is it apparently a conclusion?
5. How can we contrast it with other, similar propositions? (How can we change it, if at all, and still have roughly the same proposition?)
6. To what class (or classes) of propositions does it belong?
7. How inclusive (or how limited) is it?
8. What is at issue, if one tries to prove the proposition?
9. How can it be illustrated?
10. How can it be proven (by what kinds of evidence)?
11. What will or can be said in opposition to it?
12. Is it true or false? How do we know (direct observation, authority, deduction, statistics, other sources)?
13. Why might someone disbelieve it?
14. What does it assume? (What other propositions does it take for granted?)
15. What does it imply? (What follows from it?) Does it follow from the proposition that action of some kind must be taken?
16. What does it reveal (signify, if true)?
17. If it is a prediction, how probable is it? On what observations of past experience is it based?
18. If it is a call to action, what are the possibilities that action can be taken? (Is what is called for feasible?) What are the probabilities that the action, if taken, will do what it is supposed to do? (Will the action called for work?)

SAMPLE 4

PREWRITING EXERCISES FOR CHARACTERIZATION

from Thomas Nash "Hamlet, Polonius, and the Writing Center,"
The Writing Center Journal, 1 (1980), 34-40.

Today's assignment involves prewriting for a character sketch. First, discuss with your tutor the person you have chosen to study. Then make a catalogue of what you know about him or her by answering, in your notebooks, the questions below.

1. What single word (friend, priest, lover, confidant, mentor, tormenter) best describes this person and the relationship that you share?
2. Has that relationship changed since your first meeting? If so, in what ways?
3. Is there a single event or moment or incident that best describes your relationship with that person? Describe briefly.
- *4. Your tutor will rapidly mention ten personality traits or physical features (fat, nasty, clever, melancholy). Write down, without pausing to think, the first words that come to mind as you consider your character (slightly chubby, quite pleasant, A-student, moody).
5. Is any of the answers to item 4 the most notable characteristic of your subject? If not, try to decide which other characteristic you most often notice.
6. Think of your character in terms of (a) a movie character, such as Robert Redford or Annie Hall, (b) a comic strip character, or (c) an animal (antelope, ant, sturgeon). Explain some of the reasons for your comparison. Look for a possible analogy here.
7. Write one or two typical sentences that you've heard this person speak (in any situation). Is there a common phrase that he/she uses?
8. Describe a typical outfit that your character wears on Wednesday at noon and a typical outfit for Saturday at 10 p.m.

*The tutor should prepare a list of characteristic traits for question 4 after an initial discussion with the student about the subject of his/her study.

9. Name a place where this character would probably feel most at home (the gym, biology lab, dorm room, Kiss concert). Why?
10. Name a place where this character would probably feel most uncomfortable (church, Kiss concert, downtown Detroit). Why?
11. Would you be able to have a similar relationship with this person if he/she were (a) changed to the opposite sex, (b) changed to another race of people, (c) aged by twenty years? Which change would have the most profound effect? Why?

It should be clear that the tutor and student-writer can expand any of these questions in the interests of generating ideas about character. Furthermore, the fourth item allows the tutor to interact directly with the student at a point early enough in the prewriting phase that the tutor can use the word-association exercise as a catalyst for even more probing questions. The exercise also allows the student to invent analogies (6) and to speculate about contrast, variation, and distribution (11).

SAMPLE 5

A HEURISTIC FOR DESCRIPTION

from Newman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk, Understanding and Using English, 3rd ed. (New York: Oddyssey, 1958), pp. 162-172.

The Sense of Sight

1. What objects are stationary in the scene? List five specific features of each object mentioned.
2. How are these stationary objects arranged? Do they form any definite pattern or shape with relation to one another?
3. Can this pattern or shape be compared to the pattern or shape of more familiar objects?
4. Does the scene as a whole have any definite shape?
5. What objects are moving in the scene? List five specific features of each object mentioned. How are these features related, if at all, to the object's motion?
6. How can the quality of this motion be described? Intensity? Direction? Rhythm?
7. Does this motion form any kind of pattern?
8. Can the quality or pattern of this motion be compared to the quality or pattern of the motion of a more familiar object?
9. What are the colors of the scene? Is there a dominant color?
10. Can these colors be more vividly conveyed by appealing to well-known objects?
11. What is the source of light in the scene? If the scene is out-of-doors, what is the quality of sunlight, if any?
12. How does the sunlight, or absence thereof, affect the visual aspects of the scene? Shadow? Haze? Glare? Clarity?

13. If the scene is in-doors, what is the source and quality of the light? How do these affect the visual aspects of the scene?
14. What is the most striking feature of the objects mentioned?
15. What is the most striking feature of the scene as a whole?
16. Why are these features striking? Do they form any common impression?

The Sense of Hearing

1. Is the scene relatively noisy or relatively quiet?
2. Can the sound of the scene as a whole be generally classified?
3. What are the specific sources of sound in the scene?
4. How might each of these specific sounds be generally classified?
5. Can any of these sounds be compared to the sound of a more familiar object?
6. What is the intensity of each specific sound?
7. Do these sounds form any definite pattern or rhythm?
8. Can this pattern or rhythm be compared to the pattern or rhythm of the sound made by a more familiar object?
9. Are the sounds in any way musical? Can they be associated with the sound of any specific musical instrument?
10. Can words be found which in their own sound carry a suggestion of the sound they name?
11. What are the most striking sounds of the scene? Do they form any common impression?

SAMPLE 6

DIAGNOSTIC EXERCISE FOR PREDICTING STUDENT DEFICIENCY
IN SIMPLE ESSAY TEST-TAKING

1. What is the meaning of TA?
2. Define "antidiuretic".
3. What are four factors that can cause a person's urine volume and concentration to vary?
4. Give two effects alcohol may have on urine formation.
5. Distinguish between the normal effects of hot weather on perspiration and urination.
6. Name two abnormal conditions characterized by increased excretion of urine.
7. Distinguish among polyuria, oliguria, and anuria in terms of effects on urine volume.

SAMPLE 7

WRITING AN ABSTRACT

Definition: An abstract is a brief summary that gives the important ideas and conclusions of an article.

Suggestions for reading the article:

1. Note carefully the title. It usually summarizes in a few words the main point of the article.
2. Note carefully the headings and large-type sub-topics for sections of the article; these will suggest the main divisions of the article.
3. Study the charts, graphs, and tables and their captions.
4. Look for numbered sentences that begin with figures (1, 2, 3) or words (first, second, third); these are usually important.
5. Identify and underline the topic sentence in each paragraph.
6. Look at the last paragraph(s) or conclusion. How does it explain the title of the article?

Model for an abstract:

"Title of Article," Last name of author,
First initials.

Title of Journal. Volume number in Roman numerals:

Month, year, page numbers.

The author of this article discusses (number)
major points related to the topic of _____:
(1) _____, (2) _____, and (3) _____.
He/She offers evidence (or argument) to prove (or suggest)
that _____, because
_____.

The importance of his/her research is that he/she gives a

_____ in the place of the
older theory (or practice) of _____.

SAMPLE 8

BOOK REVIEW - HISTORY

Writing a review of a historical book requires hard thinking and organization. Your teacher will tell you what she expects of a review. Your review must include the following parts:

I. Statement of purpose of the book

This is usually given in the book's preface or introduction. For example, in a review of Benjamin Quarles' Allies for Freedom, you might begin your paper by summarizing Quarles' preface. Always give the full title, author, and date of publication in the first paragraph. This could be the opening for your first paragraph:

The history of John Brown and the slave uprising at Harper's Ferry has been difficult to understand because of untrustworthy sources as well as the lack of sources. In his book, Allies for Freedom, Benjamin Quarles looks at the relationship Brown had with Black people. He examines Brown's reputation after his hanging.

II. Summary of the method, periods or topics covered in the book

The table of contents and the preface are good places to begin your summary. Two or three sentences should summarize each chapter. If there are many chapters, you may want to combine some of them. Begin this section of the review by telling how the chapters are arranged. For example:

In Allies for Freedom, Quarles uses the flashback. He begins on August 17, 1906, forty-seven years after John Brown's hanging, and moves backward to the events surrounding the violence at Harper's Ferry. Chapters II-V discuss Brown's life, the recruitment of Blacks for the uprising, and the terrible bloodshed. Chapters VI-VIII are devoted to the effects and aftermath of the bloody events of 1859.

III. Evaluation of the book

This section of the book review will praise the author for special insights and/or condemn him for certain mistakes or omissions. You may give your personal reaction

to the book in this section. If you believe the author shows a bias, give examples from the book to illustrate that bias. Finally, close with an overall judgment of the book from your point of view.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR BOOK REVIEW

_____(title)_____, by _____(author)_____,
is a book about _____(subject, time covered)_____. Its
purpose is _____.

The author is well known for _____.

The author has organized his/her subject matter by means
of _____(What technique? Chronological order? Comparison/
contrast? Some other technique?)_____

This makes the book _____(difficult/easy)_____ to follow
because _____.

Chapters _____ through _____ cover _____
_____. Continue this
process for all the chapters in the book.

In my opinion, _____(author)_____ was most effective in
_____(author's most convincing argument/point/technique)_____
because _____.

The weakest part of the book was _____(section/technique/argument)_____
_____,
because _____.

The author _____(did/did not)_____ show a bias about _____;
for example, _____.
I feel this bias caused the book to be _____.

All in all, I feel the book was _____
because _____.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WRITING LAB
TO COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

by

Suzanne Campbell

B. S. E., Emporia State University, 1974
M. A., Emporia State University, 1979

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

Abstract

Since many of us in the field of composition view writing labs as only convenient dumping grounds for problem students, or at the most, as adequate remediation centers for the borderline student, we often fail to see that the lab has any potential for service beyond its original purpose. However, our view of what a writing lab is or does is not necessarily something for which we are entirely to blame. The writing lab is a relatively new program on many campuses, with the majority of labs being less than ten years old. This means that most labs are in a state of perpetual growth and that material about what labs have done or are doing is relatively new and sparse. Therefore, this paper serves as an introduction to why and how these labs have been able to further the cause of composition by an extension of their services. First is a discussion of the two basic styles upon which most labs are modelled, followed by a presentation of how the lab has branched out from its primary purpose of remediation into the areas of student and faculty education and the area of research. And, this report ties in well with the theme for the 1982 CCCC, "Serving Our Students, Our Public, and Our Profession," something writing labs seem to be doing especially well.