TEN

The Writing Center and Tutoring in WAC Programs

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Working with student writing is one of academia's most labor-intensive activities. All writers need—and benefit from—readers with whom they can interact as a paper takes shape, skilled coaches who can offer appropriate guidance as the writer moves through the various writing processes, and responders who can offer meaningful response to and evaluation of a final draft. In WAC programs as in composition classes, that evaluator is appropriately the instructor who reads the last draft of a student's paper in the context of the goals of the course and of the student's growth as a scholar. But those other types of interaction, the more collaborative efforts of readers and coaches, are also needed. Writing, as we have come to recognize, is neither a solitary activity nor solely the product of the writer. The elaboration of theories of the social nature of writing have helped those in the field of composition to acknowledge what writing center specialists have known since our earliest interaction with students in tutorials: Writers need knowledgeable, skilled collaborators. Some WAC instructors, however, go it alone; they are both the collaborators and evaluators, handling course content and all phases of assistance with student writing for the course. But such instructors are not only shortening their expected life-span, they are also very likely to be short-changing their students. Making available tutorial assistance with writing is a far better option, which is why tutoring offered through a writing center is thus not only a widely practiced feature of WAC programs but also pedagogically and theoretically a sound approach. But this assumes two considerations, both of which need further examination: first, that there is a rationale for tutoring writing and, second, that there is a rationale for tutoring through a writing center.

RATIONALE

Advantages of Tutoring

In universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, tutors are so firmly entrenched in the academic system that rationales are rarely discussed, but in American institutions where the weight of historical precedent argues strongly for the model of learning via teacher (with all the concomitant passivity on the part of the student that this approach inherently mandates), there is a need to look at the implications of an alternate pedagogy such as tutoring. A major factor that

differentiates tutoring from traditional instruction is that it involves collaborative learning, an assumption that student and tutor actively work together in order for the student to move forward and acquire new skills. A helpful analogy for this is that of tutor-as-coach, a common metaphor (Harris "Roles a Tutor Plays") because it readily calls to mind the role of

the coach who stands at the sidelines (not in the center of the playing field), offering encouragement and advice based on experience and training, while the player expends the needed effort to succeed. Or, from a different perspective, Albert DeCiccio describes tutoring as operating on the principle of "shared authority" which offers a process of conversation and support that "empowers writers and tutors alike who constantly see the world anew...making use of the process of negotiation and compromise to reach insight and to achieve identification" (12).

Tutors, because they function in a non-evaluative, supportive environment, offer writers the opportunity to write, think, and talk with someone who through this collaborative talk and questioning helps the writer use language to develop ideas, to test possibilities, to re-see and rethink in the light of feedback from the tutor. McLeod, in "Defining Writing Across the Curriculum," describes this kind of talk as heuristic and clarifying. Other kinds of tutorial talk introduce students to the language and conventions of the academic discourse community for which they are writing. Peer tutors are especially helpful with this as they are particularly sensitive to the possible confusions and stumbling blocks their fellow students might encounter as they seek to enter what may be a bewildering new world. Tutorial conversations are also helpful in providing opportunities to try out and learn how to use the language appropriate for that community. Peer tutors, with a foot in each camp—as students themselves and as more experienced writers—become bridges to this new discourse astutely (although perhaps a bit cynically) described this process as helping fellow students "learn how to toss around the power lingo of the field."

Equally important to students' developing independence as writers is that they can ask peer tutors more honest questions in the collaborative setting of a tutorial. Such questions are all too often the ones teachers wish students would ask in class but ones that they won't because of a mistaken fear of appearing inadequate. "This is probably a stupid question, but..." is often an opening gambit in a tutorial that initiates a very useful discussion because the student has voiced an honest concern or confusion. Moreover, writers working with tutors are free from the constraints of listening primarily for what the teacher wants (a major goal in any dialogue with a teacher about a paper) because the tutor's comments can be ignored, rejected, or built on. As a tutor I have learned that when a student puts aside what I've just offered with a comment like "Well, okay, I see why you're asking that, but what I think I want to emphasize here is . . .", the tutorial is doing exactly what it should be doing, helping the writer through dialogue to develop her own ideas, not what she thinks will please or pacify me. To accomplish all this, tutors need to be available through all phases of writing, from the earliest planning, through drafting, and into revising. The ability to individualize and truly attend to each writer's needs, questions, and problems also means that tutors accomplish more when they meet with a student through various stages of writing than is possible when a writer brings in a last draft that is less open to change. (Most student writers clutching a last draft as they enter a writing center are more often interested in proofreading for sentence-level errors than they are in receiving feedback, comments, and suggestions. Students who come in with a paper already graded get little more than a postmortem.)

Advantages of a Writing Center

Tutors also function effectively when they are working in the supportive environment of a writing center. The ability of a tutor to be a peer and to establish the kind of relationship that permits honest dialogue and openness means that tutors are not teachers. Once they become, in Kenneth Bruffee's famous phrase, "little teachers" (463), they are no more than front-line graders wielding the first of the red pencils that students will encounter. Collaboration does not thrive in such an atmosphere. But if we recognize that a major strength of tutors is that they are not teachers, that they usually inhabit some middle world between the less experienced writer (or two untrained writers in a classroom peer response group) and the more experienced and knowledgeable teacher, we must also recognize that tutors too need support, assistance, and guidance. Working in the context of a writing center means that the tutor has easy access to the director, to a support group of other tutors, to materials and resources, and to meetings where tutors can ask for help in solving problems. But there are other and equally valid rationales for having a WAC tutoring program based in a Writing center.

When a WAC program works with or through a writing center, there is a visible focus, a focal point, a place for writing on campus, a center for writing. Such a room will be stocked with resources, available for students during most working hours, will have a support staff to handle appointments and direct students to appropriate resources, and will have a director to run training programs for tutors and workshops for students and faculty. The message to students who come into a busy writing center, amid the noise, informality, coffee pot (and/or popcorn machine), and where people are talking vigorously is a particularly powerful one. Here is a place where writers write, where they talk, where there is institutional commitment to writing, where it is apparent that writing is a very real activity for students all over campus. This environment says that collaboration is a normal part of writing and that writers really do write for readers. Writers in the midst of other writers also learn that they are not the only ones who are apprehensive or overwhelmed by a writing task. Because we talk about discourse communities, communities of writers and reader/writer negotiation of text, we should recognize that the bringing a student into a roomful of writers and readers at work is a vivid demonstration of the social nature of writing.

We should also recognize, on a more practical plane, that students lives are as busy and complicated as ours and that having a writing center, a place open and available at all convenient hours, means that they will use it more appropriately—when they really need help. Because of this, most writing centers have extensive drop-in or walk-in hours, times when students come in for unplanned for tutorials because that's when the need arises or when they are ready to work on their writing. My years of tutoring have proven to me that many of the most productive tutorials I have been in have been with students dropping in because they have been working on their paper in the library (or their room) and come to the writing center because they are actively thinking how the paper will develop, what should be included, who the reader is, how the information should be organized, and all those other real concerns of writers. In a drop-in tutorial students need a few minutes to shuffle through their notes to see what they wanted to talk about (or what it was that they are supposed to be writing about). Planned appointments are, of course, a more organized way to work, but they also have less immediacy. They tend to occur not when the writer is in the midst of thinking and writing. For this reason, some writing centers are situated in libraries or residence halls, to take advantage of the ability to be at the right place at the right time.

Writing centers also contribute to the growth and success of a WAC program, because they can often open new lines of communication to faculty who become interested in WAC after their students have used the center. Because most writing centers are open to the whole student population on campus, students find their way there even when faculty have not encouraged them to seek out tutorial assistance. A faculty member whose student suddenly shows noticeable improvement, who receives and attends to the tutorial report sent from the center, or who hears from the student about a successful trip there may call to thank the director or to inquire about the center's services. An enterprising director who fields such phone calls and follows them up with a visit to the faculty member's office often finds instructors interested in adding more writing to their courses. Sometimes even a negative faculty response can be turned into a positive one. For example, the end result of a recent call to our writing lab by a faculty member disgruntled with a tutor's note to him (after a student in one of his political science courses had come to the lab) was that the faculty member got far more information than he intended to solicit when he asked somewhat irately, "So what do you people do over there?" (His concern was that the tutor might have written the paper for the student.) Having heard what tutoring is all about, he is at present negotiating with his department to fund a political science tutor in our lab to work with courses in his department.

STRUCTURE AND SERVICES OF WRITING CENTER IN A A WAC PROGRAM

Basics: Facilities, Services, and Training

Although writing centers all too often manage to cope with whatever physical facilities are assigned to them, a center with intentions of operating successfully should have a large, conveniently located room that is comfortably furnished and looks inviting. Round tables are needed so that tutors and students can side by side, not in the adversarial relationship created by desks. It is important to have couches, plants, a coffee pot, and whatever else announces to students that they have come to a place where they can drop the passive, submissive student role and become active members of helpful discussions. Students forced to enter a cold, rigidly structured or formal classroom setting will not easily enter into the collaborative work that is essential for successful tutorials. The room should also be set up with areas for small group workshops, have cabinets full of helpful instructional handouts, bookshelves filled with appropriate reference books, and a reception desk with clerical help to greet students, direct them to appropriate tutors, answer that constantly ringing phone, and keep records. If possible, the room should have computers for student use and some self-instruction materials—if and only if students want them. A center whose rational is that students need and benefit from individualized help should have available a variety of instructional materials, in a variety of instructional modes so that all students can choose according to their preferred modes of learning. Do they want to talk to a tutor? Listen to a tape on commas? Take home a handout with some visually appropriate diagrams? Try an interactive computer program? Sit quietly by themselves at a table near some needed references and resources?

When students meet up with tutors, they should be working with other students who have been trained to talk in useful ways, to question, to listen, to offer feedback, and to explain, when

needed. The tutor should know how to assess the situation, gather the needed information, start the tutorial off on a friendly, note, and have a variety of tutorial strategies to use. The training provided can be by means of credit-bearing courses (often highly prized resume items and valued by education departments that recognize the value to prospective teachers in being involved in this different kind of experiential learning), pre-semester workshops, and/or in-service weekly meetings. Resources for training include a number of tutor-training manuals (see B. Clark; I. Clark; Harris, *Teaching;* Meyer and Smith.)

The staff to be trained can be undergraduates who can be compensated by hourly wages or course credit, graduate students, professionals, volunteers, faculty, and retirees in the community. The director who oversees all this has a variety of responsibilities, because that person must set the goals and operating philosophy, hire and train staff, purchase or develop instructional materials, publicize the facility, handle the budget, act as liaison with faculty, meet with administrators and write reports—especially those crucial end-of-the-semester reports and evaluations of the center's work—develop new services, plan for future growth and development, and cope with the daily crisis management that seems to define the nature of writing centers.

WAC Coordination

The major concern of a writing center director who either directs the WAC program, assists the WAC director, or is on a campus where there is a WAC program is that of coordinating the work of the writing center with the faculty involved (see Hilgers and Marsella ch. 7). At Lehigh University, Edward Lotto's approach to integration of the writing center and the writing-intensive courses was to interview instructors and collect information about various faculty members' perceptionsof what constitutes good writing in their discipline and what the problems are when students write for their courses. Lotto's goal was to build a picture of the differences in various disciplinary contexts for writing that would help tutors work appropriately with students writing for different disciplines. Another way to integrate the writing center with the faculty is to hold orientation meetings at the beginning of the semester. At this meeting, the director can review the goals of the center and its policies, suggest ways to encourage students to the center, and listen to the faculty share ideas about how they see the center meshing with their course work. At the end of semester another meeting can be a time for discussing problems and sharing accomplishments.Integration can also be achieved by means of training tutors in the center and then attachingthem to specific courses. In some WAC programs, tutors attend classes and either tutor in thecenter or spend some of their tutoring hours working in an area near the faculty member's office.

Other tutors meet with the faculty member and learn what the expectations are, how the assignmentsare structured, and what is expected of them. At Troy State University, the writing center serves as the base for their WAC program, with the WAC coordinator working in the center and supervised by the center's director. Troy State's center is responsible for preparing materials that are used in workshops held in the center. Workshop topics requested by the faculty include writing concerns such as how tohandle various documentation styles or how to write book reviews, critiques, position papers, progressreports, abstracts, and so on (Lee). The emphasis of the WAC program at Troy State is writing to learn, an approach chosen after a survey conducted by the writing center director (World). A somewhat different—and unique model—is the writing center at the University of Maryland where students working on papers for

the university's upper-level writing requirement can find retired professionalswho volunteer as tutors in the center. Thus a student working on a management paper may meetwith a retired businessman; a student doing a paper for a government class is likely to work with aretired lawyer.

At Montana State University, Carol Peterson Haviland describes the writing center's WAC projects as being of three types: those primarily involving faculty, those primarily involving students, and those involving faculty and students. The faculty-centered projects include assistance with designing writing assignments and presenting them to classes as well as help with evaluating writing, the projects for students are workshops held in the center, and the faculty/student projects focus on collaborative instruction in classrooms and one-to-one collaboration in the writing center. Haviland reports that their College of Nursing found the integration and collaboration with the writing center so effective that a center staff member has been asked to participate at the college's faculty meetings. Other signs of the success of this model are that the number of participating faculty grew in three years from fewer than a dozen to more than 100, that broad faculty support has brought permanent funding for the WAC program, and that students are using the writing center more productively, coming in earlier with rough drafts rather than at the last minute for proofreading help. At Lawrence University, Geoff Gajewski reports that their system of having tutors who are assigned courses meet initially with instructors before even meeting with each student—to set the goals for the tutoring and to learn the instructor's expectations—results in a partnership between the faculty and writing center that stresses joint responsibility for thestudent's growth.

Despite the variety of ways in which writing centers are structured to work with the particular features of the WAC program on their campus, it is apparent that an increasing part of writing center directors' responsibilities is their work with faculty across campus. A survey, conducted by Joan Mullin, of more than 100 writing center directors indicates that greater than 50% of the directors reported that they act as consultants to various classes across campus or to the faculty. Many directors reported on their expanding roles in WAC programs, being asked to hold faculty workshops, to educate teaching assistants in composition theory and conferencing techniques, to handle requests for tutors in classrooms, to serve as consultants to departments developing writing intensive courses, to sit in on classes to see how writing can be incorporated into the course, to serve as a campus resource for writing in various disciplines, and to collect from the faculty articles on discipline-specific writing. Mullin, who serves as the writing center and WAC director at the University of Toledo, also coordinates a bimonthly writing workshop of faculty members who read their works in progress to each other and "discuss writing in general, exchange journals which welcome interdisciplinary writing, and serve as resources for grants, and have devoted a meeting to the writing of successful (and unsuccessful) grants"(12). At Boise State University, the director of the writing enter, Rick Leahy, issues a widely read campus newsletter, *Word Works,* to assist faculty adding writing assignments and to keep them abreast of composition pedagogy. Subjects discussed in *Word Works* include designing assignments; writing the research paper; writing the long research report; writing the summary, the synthesis, and the critical analysis; using discussion and peer-response groups; creating short write-to-learn assignments; using journals; responding to student writing; and responding to the writing of students learning English as a second language. A reader survey of the faculty brought responses from all over the campus, including comments from faculty members who noted that they used ideas from the newsletter in their teaching and that they had applied ideas to their own writing.

Offering workshops for faculty and students is a frequent activity in many writing centers. For faculty interested in learning what they can expect their students to gain from tutorial instruction, workshops focus on topics such as what goes on in a tutorial, what faculty should expect from tutorial help, and what goes on in tutorials (with mock tutorials as examples). Other workshops forfaculty deal with structuring assignments by reviewing effective and ineffective assignments or by having tutors discuss student difficulties with papers on various topics. Workshops in classes can offer brief reviews on topics that instructors request. For example, "to build bridges with departments across campus" (Fitzgerald 13) the director of the University of Missouri-St. Louis Writing Lab talked with instructors so that she could offer lecture demonstrations in classes to explain the instructors' writing assignments, to review research skills, to offer information on format and documentation, and to discuss writing processes. An alternative to such in-class workshops are the noncredit short courses held in the Writing Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Feirn).

Writing centers can provide a variety of other services to assist campus writing activities. For example, offering computers in center and providing students with instruction in word processingensures that students in all courses have access to this effective technology. Most centers offer a variety of handouts for students, some tailored to specific courses and others geared to general writing needs such as methods for handling sources, distinctions between paraphrasing and plagiarizing, strategies for proofreading (a particularly popular handout in our lab), punctuation rules, general guidelines for good writing (such as handouts from the Writing Center at Harvard, distributed by Linda Simon at the Conference on College Composition and Communication), and so on. Students also use our lab to meet for peer editing sessions assigned by teachers (and are joined by peer tutorswhen teachers request this), to read journal entries to each other, and to locate material or do research for their papers. For example, sociology students come to our Writing Lab to observe students from other cultures as they interact with tutors; educational psychology students come in to study the use of different learning styles by students in the lab; business and organizational communication students observe the flow of communication in our large, busy facility; technical writing students write manuals for our computer users; and graduate students in our doctoral program in rhetoric and composition study tutorial instruction in writing. Similarly, the new writing center at the University of Illinois plans to have a research component on writing.

GETTING STARTED

When a writing center is first established, the most important work of the new director is to define the goals of the center and to see that the center is appropriately integrated into the writing program at that particular institution. Writing centers exist in many forms and shapes, but the most successful ones are not merely clones of other centers the prospective director has seen, read about, or heard a description of at a conference. Writing must take their shape in ways that meet the needs of the students and faculty on that campus and must be enough to continue to grow as the writing program grows and develops. Typically, writing centers expand to meet perceived needs, adjust to changing conditions, and develop in close coordination with the director's growing awareness of what a writing center can really offer a particular program. But this is not to say that there is not a wealth of general information and resources about writing centers that introduces newcomers to the more theoretical perspectives as well as to the nuts-and-bolts information that is needed when starting up a tutoring center (these resources

include Harris, *Tutoring;* Harris, *Writing Centers;* National Writing Centers Association; *Writing Center Journal; Writing Lab Newsletter).* The National Writing Centers Association meets twice a year, at the National Council of Teachers of English and at Conference on College Composition and Communication.[1] Various regional groups that hold yearly conferences are coordinated through the national organization and are announced regularly in monthly issues of the *Writing Lab Newsletter.* The two publications the *Writing Center Journal* and the *Writing Lab News* differ in that the *Writing Center Journal* is published 2 times a year and contains journal-length articles focusing on theory and research and the Writing Lab Newsletter is published 10 times a year and contains brief articles focusing on practical aspects of writing center administration and pedagogy.

Major practical considerations for any new center include the following: (1) choosing the home base for the center (e.g., whether it will be a university service administered through a dean's office or a student services office or whether it will be an English facility), (2) preparing the physical facility, (3) deciding on services to be offered, (4) setting up the budget for operating expenses, (5) developing the administrative structure (e.g., record keeping, scheduling, and so on), (6) establishing a tutor-training program, and (7) constructing an evaluation system. The published resources listed above deal with these issues as do conference presentations on writing centers at the yearly meetings of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (in March), the National Council of Teachers of English (in November), and the numerous regional writing center association conferences held throughout the year. The National Writing Centers Association provides contact information for these regional associations, and both the *Writing Center Journal* and the *Writing Lab Newsletter* regularly announce meetings.

When new writing centers are being established to coordinate with WAC programs or when existing centers expand to work more closely with writing across campus, there are also some special considerations tied to this role. In particular, there are three concerns that have to do with working with students in content courses: (1) tutors should be selected and trained in ways consistent with the needs of working with discipline-specific writing, (2) appropriate resources should be added to the center, and (3) lines of communication should be established with instructors in content courses and with the WAC director—if that person is not already a part of the writing center.

When tutors are to be selected and trained for working writing in content courses, one of the first questions directors must confront and answer for themselves is the degree to which the tutor should be familiar with the content matter. Should directors seek out and train potential tutors from the disciplines intending to refer students, or should the director rely on traditional pools for tutors in writing centers such as English majors? Unfortunately, there is no quick answer to this, just as there is no guaranteed selection process when interviewing applicants for tutoring positions. As Susan Hubbuch, the director of the writing center at Lewis and Clark College, reminds us, tutors "cannot afford to be parochial, entering a session with a student with inflexible, monolithic concept of 'good' writing" (25), a concept that might be forged from knowing only the writing conventions papers for English courses and thinking that "good" writing is whatever she has produced and been rewarded for in these classes. When Hubbuch examines the merits of the knowledgeable tutor (one who to some extent knows the content of the student's field), she notes that such tutors know the questions to ask and know the necessary technical information about the writing conventions of that field. But they are prone to giving

answer or taking an authoritative stance that can drive the student back to a passive role. Training for such tutors must include strong reminders of the ease with which they can slip into this role. An advocate of selecting tutors from other disciplines, Leone Scanlon, offers an overview of the content of a training course for such students in "Recruiting and Training Tutors for Cross-Disciplinary Writing Programs."

On the other hand, tutors who are ignorant of the subject matter may miss the important conventions that should be present. But they have the advantage of trying to understand the argument from what they read in the paper, and as they do, they are forced to focus on the logic of the student's ideas. As Hubbuch notes, this in turn forces the student to explain what needs to be explained. It also, I have found, forces the writer to examine her reader's knowledge more closely. "Will your reader know the background you just explained to me?" I ask, thereby requiring the writer to reexamine who the intended reader really is or what the purpose of the piece of discourse is. Questions a tutor unfamiliar with the content must ask may lead back to the purpose of such a paper and can sometimes help a writer re-see the whole project. For example, when a student writing a summer internship report for a political science professor came to our writing lab with only a vague two-page draft (and some angry comments by the professor demanding that she expend more effort), I had great difficulty understanding the content, understanding the content, which focused on intricacies of how members of the British House of Commons prepare for sessions of the House. Seeing my struggle with both the facts and the terminology, the student poured out all sorts of useful information. Why, I asked, wasn't any of that wealth of information she had gained through her summer work in the paper? Her explanation, given in the patient tone of a parent explaining the obvious to a child, was that the professor knew all that. Once we defined the purpose of the paper—to demonstrate to the professor what she had learned from her internship, not to offer the professor new insights—she was able to produce a highly informative lengthy report. My ignorance had been the catalyst for a conversation in which she could see by her explanations to me how much she had learned.

The uneasiness I feel when enmeshed in details and jargon of a field I know little about is a common one among non-specialist tutors, and it needs to be dealt with in training sessions. For directors who choose non-specialists in the various disciplines, the training course should include some attention to discipline-specific concerns as well as the general principles of writing that pervade all effective writing. Inviting faculty to tutor-training meetings to talk about their discourse communities is particularly useful and helps to dispel tutors' fears of reading papers in fields where they are out of their own area of expertise. One solution for this is to offer tutors some basic introduction to the content of a field. For example, James Murphy, in "Tutors and Fruitflies," notes that at Clarion University when a genetics professor asked for writing center help with his students' papers, he offered a one-hour lecture on basic genetics to the tutors.

He then invited teams of tutors to come to his classes and take over sessions devoted to working on the papers for the course. The students, initially hostile to unknowledgeable tutors, were surprised to find out that they learned more about genetics and writing than they had anticipated from the small group session with their peers and the tutors, and the tutors were equally surprised to learn that their lack of knowledge about genetics was not crucial to their effectiveness as tutors.

Identifying the pool from which to draw tutors is another factor that directors must consider. Potential tutors can be drawn from the ranks of upper-class students who have successfully taken writing intensive courses or who are recommended by faculty or who respond to general

invitations issued to the student body. Some writing centers with low budgets make use of students, offer course credit in lieu of salary, or draw tutors from service organizations on campus that have volunteers willing to donate time. Other writing centers seek tutors from among professionals in the community, recruit graduate students from other departments (Kristen Benson describes such a program at University of Tennessee- Knoxville), or in the case of the writing center at the University of Maryland, rely partly on retired faculty and professionals from the community. In other cases, faculty writing centers at institutions where tutoring is recognized as part of faculty's teaching commitment or where faculty are given points toward promotion and tenure.

Letters for their files from the writing center director, as performance reviews, as letters of evaluation, or as letters of appreciation, are helpful.One option for including faculty from different disciplines is to arrange for them to be available at specific hours and list in the center's brochure or announcement the hours when help is available, for example, with social sciences or fine arts. Students can work with these members on the more discipline-specific concerns and with peer tutors for other aspects of planning, developing, and revising so that by mixing experience with both faculty and peer tutors, students can reap the advantages of working with both. This mix can be beneficial because faculty are, of course, not peers and cannot provide the setting for the kind of dialogue that peers engage in, but there are distinct advantages to faculty in the center. The experience permits them to get a close look at the WAC program and at the advantages of tutoring. Such faculty may go on to become enthusiastic supporters of the rising center and the WAC program as well as far more knowledgeable classroom teachers when they structure their own assignments and respond to their own students' papers. For a more thorough discussion of the advantages to teachers of having been tutors, see Kate Gadbow's "Teachers as Writing Center Tutors: From the Red Pen."

Faculty who work as tutors in writing centers can also be active contributors to the center's resources. In a writing center with a commitment to working with writing in various disciplines, there have to be resources in addition to the usual instructional handouts on various aspects of writing and reference books. The center should establish collections of papers in various fields so that students can see models for the kinds of papers they will be l rising and can see the variety of formatting concerns that exist. Articles and books on writing in various disciplines belong on the resource shelves as well as a number of reference books for different disciplines. In "The Writing Center: A Center for All Disciplines," Mary Pam Besser, the director of the writing center at Jefferson Community College in Tennessee, lists the following among the resources available to students in their writing center (pp. 184-85):

1. Handouts on writing in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, and the health sciences

2. Dictionaries (unabridged, etymology, foreign language [Latin, French, German, and Spanish], literary terms, social science terms, medical terminology)

3. Style manuals

    a. Modern Language Association (MLA)

    b. American Psychological Association (APA)

    c. *The Chicago Manual of Style*

    d.   Council of Biology Editors (CBE)

    e.   American Chemical Society

    f.   American Mathematical Society

    g.   *Style Manual for Guidance in the Preparation of Journals Published by the American Institute of Physics* (for Health Sciences)

4.   Sample assignments and papers from various disciplines

PITFALLS TO AVOID

While writing centers can and do work effectively with writing in the disciplines, there are some potential problems that directors can stave off by some preventative maintenance work. Perhaps the most commonly perceived problem is one that all composition faculty recognize, that instructors in other fields don't quite know what we do when we teach writing. If faculty in other disciplines are prone to seeing writing instruction as merely the teaching of editing skills ("get them to spell correctly"), then writing centers have even more difficulty in helping faculty in other areas understand what the one-on-one, non-evaluative, collaborative, interactive, individualized nature of tutoring is. Well-meaning but unthinking faculty are prone to sending their students to the writingcenter with papers that have sentence-level errors to have the writer and/or the paper "fixed."

Unfortunately, this is the same misperception shared by faculty in English departments, and writingcenter directors must patiently work toward educating faculty to recognize that writing centers are neither merely remedial facilities or Band-Aid clinics for grammar errors. In 1985, Stephen North's article "The Idea of a Writing Center" articulated this concern, which remained just as real in 1988, when Diana George found that faculty with whom she talked didn't know what writing centers do, what they offer, or how they work with students. George also found faculty suspicious that tutors write the papers for students. Rick Leahy's solution to informing faculty and dispelling their misconceptions about writing centers was to devote one issue of his center's campus newsletter, *Word Works,* to this. Leahy's article "Seven Myth-Understandings About the Writing Center" is reprinted in the *Writing Lab Newsletter.)*

Clearly, what is needed is extensive education: workshops with faculty in which the role of the writing center is explained or demonstrated and campus newsletters which continue the education process. Personal visits, contacts, discussions, and attendance at faculty meetings all help provide opportunities for the ongoing dialogue that can help faculty to know how and why they want students to get tutorial help with papers. Having tutors come to classes, asking faculty to nominate prospective tutors, writing a user's manual for the center (see, for example, Harris's "A User's Guide"), and sending reports of tutorials are other means of keeping channels of communication open so that faculty will see that writing centers are used by all students for dialogues about writing not just poor writers and that writing center visits are not punishments to inflicted on students who have not performed as expected.

Just as students should not "be sent" to the writing center, faculty should not be mandated to participate in the center's workshops or tutoring programs for various courses. When faculty agree to participate because they have an interest in writing, become, as Carol Peterson Haviland

notes, "willing, interested collaborators." In turn, says Haviland, writing center directors should not dominate, not appear "as experts wafting in to transform someone else's teaching" (29). It is equally important, Haviland notes, not to commit the mistake she did of being the person to introduce the writing assignment in the instructor's classroom. When she did, students grumbled about "having to do English in a nursing class." Instead, she encouraged the content instructor to present the writing tasks while she, as a representative of the writing center, was introduced as a resource. The transformation in student attitudes was, not unsurprisingly, "remarkable." "The English instructor became an ally, not a pest" (30).

The price of success, though, can be exhaustion. Successful centers that expand to meet all the various writing needs on campus, that serve large and thriving WAC programs, can send the center—and the director—into permanent overload. Writing center directors who step initially into budding programs to encourage writing in various courses can find themselves moving into a full-time WAC coordinating position, in addition to directing their centers. They need to remind themselves that no one but them knows that they are filling two (or more) full-time jobs. They and their administrators need to recognize that all the contact activity, workshop development, and attendance at various meetings represents a major expenditure of time. Assistance will be needed as their job description expands.

Equally important, administrators must recognize that when the writing center is overflowing, is covered wall-to-wall with students waiting for a tutor, more tutors will be needed. But the director needs to monitor this growth to see that quality does not fall by the wayside because of the pressures of quantity. Because there cannot be endless expansion, directors need to seek solutions. Small group workshops on topics of general importance provide some reduction in the overload situation. Other solutions are discussed in Ray Wallace's "The Writing Center's Role in the Writing Across the Curriculum Program: Theory and Practice." At the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, where the WAC program is coordinated through the writing center Wallace had to find solutions to counter the strain of an added program to the center's already overburdened mission. He found additional sources for tutors by turning to non-English majors, held two-day workshops with faculty in different disciplines to come to some general sense of what the instructors were all looking for in student writing (a time-saving solution as well as an effective way to coordinate faculty expectations), and developed a series of tutor-training sessions in which faculty came to discuss assignments, course materials, and goals.

When there is a turnover in the instructors involved with WAC programs, writing center directors will have a pressing and continual need to educate new faculty members about the real nature of tutorial instruction and about the work of a writing center. Tutors will need help in working with new types of writing and must be kept up to date about writing assignments and requirements in various courses. Attuned to the relative stability of working with writers in composition courses where there is a syllabus or where similar assignments are given, tutors will find themselves often treading into unknown waters. Directors need to keep a variety of people informed about each other's work.

Although the pitfalls mentioned here are very real, they also indicate some of the benefits of having a tutorial center. Despite the heavy influx of students, the rapid growth, the changing nature of the writing assignments in different courses, and the often noisy, informal (and at times, downright messy) nature of a writing center, it is the support system on campus for collaboration in writing. Students come here to talk, to write, and to learn about writing. The

comments they send back on evaluations are appreciative and heartfelt. They have learned about writing. They have come to a place that is a visible, tangible center for writing, the hub for writing across the campus.

NOTE

1. National Writing Centers Association's executive secretary is Nancy Grimm; the address is Department of Humanities, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan 49931.

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CHAPTER FOUR WAC on the Web: Writing Center Outreach to Teachers of Writing Intensive Courses. (pp. 62-74). Sara Kimball. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt46nzf8.8. Asearch with the Alta Vista online database for the keywordsWACandcurriculumreveals that many writing centers and writing programs now use the World Wide Web to communicate with faculty involved in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs. Larry Beason of Eastern Washington State University also provides a web page with a long list of links to other universities' WAC web pages (http://ewu66649.ewu.edu/WAC.html). Writing Tutor Resources. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). Writing Center Syllabus Statements. Learning Center. This year's EOU Writing Center group photo is via Zoom! EOU students will be able to schedule appointments with tutors from the EOU Writing Center very soon, and we're looking forward to seeing you! #goEOU #writingcenter #writing #writingtutor https://t.co/udiEBNWdj8. Twitter feed video. Reply on Twitter 1309235939173048320. WAC/WID. WAC/WID Resources. The Undergraduate Writing Center provides free, para-professional peer tutoring to support students as they clarify, develop, and best articulate their ideas. The format is peer-collaboration and dynamic conversation in which the writing consultant brings some knowledge of writing and revising for college and the student brings some knowledge about the content and their course and their ideas and goals relative to their project. We study the intersections of writing centers and social justice to deepen our understanding of the strategies we employ and the effects of those strategies. We use theories and frameworks such as critical literacy, contrastive rhetoric, critical race theory, and rhetorical listening as we attempt to enact a pedagogy of belonging. Teacher and Tutor Resources. Writing Instructors. Writing Across the Curriculum: An Introduction. Copyright ©1995-2018 by The Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, reproduced, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed without permission. Many colleges and universities have formal WAC or WID programs. Because of the national interest in WAC, some of these colleges and universities have sites for their programs that explain how writing across the curriculum works at their institution and that offer ideas and resources for teachers and administrators interested in WAC. Additionally, many sites include writing resources for students. A few of these programs are listed below