THE WRITING LAB

...FROM THE EDITOR...

Several themes tie this month's newsletter together. One is the inquiry into assumptions we need to rethink, or as Birgitta Ramsey describes it, to "re-see" as she inquires into a writing center in Sweden in order to reconsider the concept of writing centers as providing a service. Paula Braun, Courtney Patterson, and Sarah Abst write about their re-evaluation of directive vs. non-directive in tutor training manuals, and Beth Godbee questions the notion of "peerness" in peer tutoring.

You'll also find in this month's issue Susan Mueller's article that examines the underlying philosophies reflected in various documentation styles, especially the disciplinary values of MLA and APA. Kelly Wisecup shares with us their writing center's project to take tutors into large classrooms where writing is included.

Some new ideas to consider, some familiar assumptions to question. And the job announcements in this issue are both for job seekers and for those who are putting together their own job descriptions. The varied responsibilities in these announcements can serve to suggest or remind you of various aspects of your job to include in your own job description.

• Muriel Harris, editor

...INSIDE...

Re-seeing the writing center's position of service

In the spring of 2002 I made a journey to my native Sweden on a research mission to explore how Swedish universities have reacted to an influx of students from families without an academic tradition. Basically, the reactions have taken three forms: (1) introductory courses (something along the lines of University 101—voluntary courses, taken for credit and not remedial, noncredit courses); (2) mandatory short pedagogical courses for faculty (to help faculty members develop innovative classroom approaches); and (3) writing centers. Seemingly from nowhere, writing centers have begun to spring up on one university campus after another. I will use my experience from a Swedish writing center to complicate the picture of American writing centers both of today and of the past. Of particular interest to me is how writing center professionals view the position of service within their different systems.

I spent most of my time at a college called Södertörns högskola (or Södertörn for short) (with approximately 10,000 students) in the Stockholm area, where I conducted in-

terviews and observed classes. One of the faculty members I interviewed was Kajsa Sköldvall, who was in charge of the writing center, although this was only a small portion of her job. The writing center at Södertörn—quite possibly the first of its kind in Sweden—is

called Språkverkstan. This word literally means "language workshop." This name is appropriate since Språkverkstan and all other Swedish writing centers take a more holistic approach to language than what is typical in the U.S. and offer students help with both their written and their oral presentations. When I asked Kajsa Sköldvall what had prompted the establishing of a writing center, she explained:

> The reason for Språkverkstan's existence here at Södertörn has to do with the objectives of this school to be a college that caters to a diverse student population, that we expect [enrollment] by a higher percentage of students who are insecure for one reason or another. They can feel insecurity because Swedish is not their first language but also for many other reasons, and if a college is to recruit this type of students, the environment they come to will have to be supportive of them.

Sköldvall was careful and sensitive in her phrasing when she talked about the purpose of Språkverkstan. She said the need for writing centers had developed with the more diverse student population; yet she did not use words such as "basic" or "underprepared" when she talked about the new type of students that Södertörn consciously attempts to attract. Instead, she deliberately chose and consistently used the word "insecure"; nor did she want to single out one particular group of students, such as immigrants.

In spite of my best intentions to observe and to listen, I may have come to Sweden with the mindset of an American imperialist after all. Even though I am reluctant and embarrassed to admit it, the fact is that I had expected to find some acknowledged debt to American writing centers and conscious efforts to emulate American theory and practice among the Swedes I met with. When I asked the questions "Where did the ideas and the inspiration for a writing center come from?" and "Where did

you look for models?" I had expected the answer "From the United States," with some variations, either coming from or referring to Swedes who had visited American writing centers or at least read about writing centers in the U.S. and who had subsequently developed the desire to create similar institutions in Sweden. I should probably mention that the present political climate has created, if not outright anti-American feelings, at least strong anti-Bush feelings in Sweden. These sentiments, which may make Swedes reluctant to admit to any American influences, became obvious from the first day of my interactions with faculty and students. I still believe there is a strong American influence behind Swedish writing centers, but it may well be more indirect than direct, having come in via Denmark and Germany.

During my stay in Sweden, I felt at times as if I had experienced a time warp so that I not only had made a journey in space but also a journey back to the time when writing centers were new in the U.S. Språkverkstan clearly belonged to the ones that had what Peter Carino has called a "supplemental function," an emergency room to which students could rush their essays in progress, but this "emergency room" was open only two afternoons a week.

In the now classic article "The Idea of a Writing Center," Stephen North calls up horror images of the writing center as a "first aid station" and a "grammar and drill center," located in a "windowless classroom" or even "closet" under a low-status director (437). Even though North's view of early American writing centers has been challenged, I want to complicate the picture of an early writing center even more based on my experience from Södertörn. In one sense Språkverkstan could be viewed as an emergency room or a first aid station, but this function was such an integral part of its identity that the tutors would not allow students to prebook all the slots for a particular day; they felt compelled to leave openings for students with emergencies. And, although I saw tutors dis-

cuss the mechanics of writing with students, I would never call Språkverkstan a grammar and drill center. The tutors had no grammar worksheets to present to students, and the students' own writing was always at the center of the discussion. The emphasis was not on grammar and mechanics *per se*, but on genre and the specific requirements of academic texts. Also, in contrast to North's depiction, Språkverkstan had a central location, and the instructors who worked there had the same status as other faculty members. Of course, it may have helped that the writing center was just one part of their job and their professional identity was not defined by the writing center.

Differences in systems are important for the discussion about writing centers' identity and the service they provide to institutions and to individual students. Since there is no first-year composition program either at Södertörn or at any other Swedish university, Swedish writing centers do not run the risk of being identified as places mainly for freshman writers in need of remediation. Yet, there will always be professors who view a writing center solely or foremost as a remedial institution. The general opinion among instructors in Sweden is that their students' writing ability has declined, or, rather, that they see a growing group of students whose writing falls short of academic standards (Strand, *Akademiskt skrivande* 5). In a report titled *Akademiskt skrivande vid Stockholms universitet: undervisning, problem, önskemål* (*Academic writing at Stockholm University: teaching, problems, wishes*), Hans Strand points out that several professors have placed some form of writing centers on their wish list, viewing it as a place like an emergency room, to which they could send their weakest writers (6, 11, 19, 26, 45, 51, 54, 68).

During my visit to Språkverkstan at Södertörns högskola, I made my own observations, especially about how the facility differed from the writing centers I have experienced in the United States. On the positive side I noticed, as I have already mentioned, that Språkverkstan had a central location, on the third floor in the main building. It was highly visible and easily accessible. Every time before Språkverkstan opened, the tutor for the day put up two heavy but portable signs, one on the fifth and another on the third floor, announcing that Språkverkstan was now open.

Another positive feature was the diversity of services. In line with the overall integration between oral and written communication at Södertörn, Språkverkstan not only offers feedback on written work but also provides students with opportunities to practice an actual speech in front of a tutor. In fact, the Swedish and Rhetoric department, in cooperation with Språkverkstan, offers non-credit courses every semester for students who need help overcoming stage fright. Språkverkstan is also in charge of writing courses for students whose first language is not Swedish. Even though this kind of "language workshop," instead of a more narrowly defined writing center, would be unusual in the United States, it is not entirely unknown. John Trimbur describes the writing center at Worcester Polytechnic Institute as a "multiliteracy center that offers tutoring in oral presentations and visual design, as well as writing" (Nelson and Evertz ix). Yet the inclusion in a Swedish writing center of courses to combat stage freight is not necessarily a result of innovative thinking. As I heard several times during my stay in Sweden, the tabloid *Expressen* had recently run a survey, asking Swedes what they feared the most. Surprisingly, at least to most Americans, the most frequent answer was not death, sickness, old age, or even war—but public speaking. To overcome such widespread irrational fear has become a high-priority concern at Swedish universities and colleges.

A third strength I noticed was the importance placed on the writing center. Unlike the writing centers to which I had previously become accustomed, the three tutors who took turns in Språkverkstan were all faculty members and not students. In my interview with Kajsa Sköldvall, I asked her about the possibility of using students as tutors. "We have discussed it," she said. "It would be a possibility to use students from C- and D-courses [advanced courses] in Swedish to work with this. . . . But we try in other contexts to let students meet students . . . . So far we haven't done so in Språkverkstan, but we've had thoughts about it." The teachers who work in Språkverkstan are assigned this work in place of a regular course. According to Sköldvall again, "We in Swedish look upon this as a course like any other course." Sköldvall said that she always discussed possible tutors with the administrator who assigned courses to teachers and that her main concern was "that we don't get completely new teachers." To me, used as I am to the view that the writing center is a good place to *begin* one's teaching career, this was a most remarkable statement. It shows that Språkverkstan is indeed taken seriously both by the administration and by the teachers who work there. Sköldvall insisted that the small group of teachers who work as tutors on a continuing basis find the work very rewarding and have the feeling "that here you do something useful."

I know that this last statement is very controversial from an American point of view, linked as it is to the understanding of the purpose of writing centers. Nancy Maloney Grimm's book *Good Intentions* does its best to undermine such "good feelings" (82). Although I have tried to probe my Swedish contacts about resistance against a position of service, I have not –yet—been able to detect any resentment. It is striking how different institutional contexts can lead to diverging marketing strategies. Språkverkstan and other

Swedish writing centers obviously benefit financially from marketing themselves as filling a need as they cater to "insecure" students; this is how they lay claim to legitimacy. In contrast, American writing centers have more to gain by marketing themselves as more mainstream or as catering to all kinds of students.

On Södertörn's Web site, the information about Språkverkstan is brief, with most attention devoted to the center's hours and services. Significantly, however, one of the places where one can find this information is under the heading "Student Life" (as a service to the students). For comparison and contrast, I opened up the Web site for the writing center at Southeastern Louisiana University, where I presently teach, a university with just over 15,000 students. Southeastern's Writing Center is listed under "Academic Resources," and the following passage expresses a part of its "instructional philosophy":

> Instruction by Writing Center staff works from the premise that all writers—*expert writers included*—benefit from sharing and talking about their work on a regular basis with experienced and interested readers . . . . Because Center staff are not classroom teachers, we bring no pre-set instructional agenda to our conferences. . . . We seek not to assess your abilities or to put a grade on your writing, but always to find ways to help you improve the skills and essays you bring to us, even if you are the strongest of writers. (Emphasis original)

This instructional philosophy sounds assertive. Obviously this writing center is striving to distance itself from the idea that it exists mainly to remediate the weakest writers. The philosophy statement starts off by including "expert writers," and again at the very end turns to the students who would consider themselves "the strongest of writers." Here we are far from the "inse-

cure" students Kajsa Sköldvall talked about. Further, the members of Southeastern's Writing Center staff want to assert their independence; they consider it liberating that they are not classroom teachers and, therefore, presumably less likely to succumb to institutional pressures. Much like the idealized portrayal of writing centers that North was outlining in his "Idea" article as a desired alternative to the emergency stations, forgotten here is the fact that the students who find their way to this Writing Center (and all other writing centers) are part of an institutional context and usually come either because an instructor has sent them or because they are working on a paper that has been assigned by an instructor who is waiting to evaluate and grade the paper after it is finished. To sound as if the students and their tutors in the Writing Center can do exactly what they want seems at best hopelessly idealistic and at worst deceptive.

Certainly, I do not want to make light of the point that writing programs and writing centers have been, and still are, in the business of controlling undesirable features of students' language. Instead, I firmly believe that professionals in newly established writing centers in Sweden and other countries need to become aware of the conflicts and dangers that may lie ahead. On the other hand, I don't think that we need to resort to "miasmic cynicism," to borrow a phrase from Lisa Langstraat, and erase *all* the enthusiasm, dedication, and, yes, compassion that have driven at least some tutors. The picture of complete servitude that some still paint of the past may say more about our present cynical stance than about the original intent of writing centers. It should be possible to establish some middle ground where we can re-see and reevaluate the service that writing centers perform to students and to institutions in a way that allows us to imagine a fuller picture, one that includes the enthusiasm and the joy of learning and teaching

writing even within a system. A similar point was made already in 1985 by Jeanne H. Simpson: "[W]e must not lose either the energy or the commitment that characterized our initial stages"(39), and I believe this exhortation is well worth repeating today, especially in light of my first-hand contact with an early writing center in Sweden.

I have found much of value in Grimm's book *Good Intentions*. I am happy, for instance, that Grimm sees institutions not just as restrictive places but also as places that make critique possible; and that she doesn't simply point out problems with the unequal distribution of power in writing centers but offers solutions, such as making student tutors co-researchers and co-presenters with herself; and I fully agree with Grimm that good intentions are not enough. Nonetheless, I want to conclude by asking some questions that keep bugging me: Aren't we all, in one way or another, driven by "good intentions"? I find it hard to believe that those who criticize "liberals" for causing more harm than good with their unsophisticated ideas of helping students to adopt standard use of language and learn academic conventions see themselves as driven by *bad* intentions. And what about democratic intentions? Unfortunately, they are not exactly clear cut either but open to diverging interpretations. The ones who want to perform the service of giving students access to the tricks of the academic trade are motivated by democratic intentions to level the playing field. Those who want to change the academy itself and its ways of expression are motivated by a different set of democratic intentions. And both can be equally "good" or just about equally harmful to our students. Not surprisingly, the writing center has become an important battle field between these different sets of intentions.

Birgitta Ramsey
Southeastern Louisiana University

Hammond, LA

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Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

February 10-12, 2005. Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference, in Charleston, SC
Contact: Trixie Smith, Middle Tennessee State University, Department of English, P.O. Box 70, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. E-mail: tgsmith@mtsu.edu; Web site: <http://www.swca.us>.

March 3-5, 2005: South Central Writing Centers Association, in Baton Rouge, LA
Contact: Judy Caprio, B-18 Coates Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. Phone: 225-578-4438, e-mail: jcaprio@lsu.edu; Web site: <http://www.scwca.net>.

March 4-5, 2005: Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference, in Orem, UT
Contact: Lisa Eastmond Bell, Utah Valley State College, MC-176, 800 West University Parkway, Orem, UT 84058-5999. Phone: 801- 863-8099; e-mail: lisa.bell@uvsc.edu.

April 1-2, 2005: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Adrian, MI
Contact: April Mason-Irelan, Siena Heights University, 1247 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, MI 49221. Phone: 517-264-7638; e-mail: amason@sienahts.edu; Web site: <http:// www.sienahts.edu/~eng/ECWCA/ecwca.htm>.

April 9, 2005: Mid-Atlantic Writing Center Association, in Frederick, MD

Contact: Felicia Monticelli, e-mail: FMonticelli@frederick.edu, Frederick Communtiy College, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD 21702. Phone: 301-846-2619; Web site: <http:// www.english.udel.edu/wc/staff/mawca/index.html>.

April 16, 2005: Pacific Northwest Writing Center Association, in Bothell, WA
Contact: Becky Reed Rosenberg, e-mail: beckyr@u.washington.edu. Conference Web site: <http://www.ac.wwu.edu/~writepro/PNWCA.htm>.

April 16-17, 2005: New England Writing Centers Association, in Brooklyn, NY
Contact: Patricia Stephens, English Department, Humanities Building, Fourth Floor, Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, One University Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Phone: 718-488-1096; e-mail: patricia.stephens@liu.edu.

June 10-12, 2005: European Writing Centers Association, in Halkidiki, Greece.
Contact: Conference Web site: <http:// ewca.sabanciuniv.edu/ewca2005/>.

October 19-23, 2005: International Writing Centers Association, in Minneapolis, MN.
Contact: Frankie Condon, e-mail: fvcondon@stcloudstate.edu. Conference Web site: <http://writingcenters.org/2005/index.html>.

Documentation styles and discipline-specific values

Documentation in all its various forms is often viewed by students as a kind of academic hieroglyphics—meaningful to the priestly few, but largely unintelligible to the uninitiated. This in a sense is true, although it is more true of some styles than of others. There are countless documentation styles used by countless different groups, each having a slightly different view of the process. In our writing center at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy, we support four documentation styles—MLA, APA, NLM (National Library of Medicine), and AMA (American Medical Association)—and will probably include a fifth (American Journal of Health-Systems Pharmacy—AJHP) this year. Given that we are a small school, having just under 1000 students, and a small writing center, six tutors and me, that is a prodigious number of styles to support. However, having said that, the burden on us to support a panoply of documentation styles disturbs me less than the tendency of students and sometimes faculty to think that documentation styles are all the same. Or more precisely, that documentation styles are all an interchangeable hodge-podge, and no one can benefit by using one style above another. That, I would most emphatically put to you, is simply not true.

Documentations styles are developed by professional groups to document and preserve those characteristics of the underlying sources that matter to the discipline. Those of us who learned MLA with our mother's milk tend to believe that the values among disciplines are shared, that all disciplines share a common regard for the original text and perceive its relationship to the research paper at hand to be the same; in fact, they do not. Disciplinary attitudes vary widely. Documentation styles reflect different underlying value systems, and those values can clash with the subject at hand, including sometimes MLA. Students, who are prone to focus on easily recognized and memorized characteristics, often miss the values and points of view of particular disciplines. Writing centers can be of enormous service to students in helping and encouraging them to use the documentation style appropriate to the paper at hand. That style reinforces the values of its discipline and assists students to see "the big picture."

Disciplinary values differ principally in these areas:

- *Time:* How does the discipline view the age of a source? Does time and its passage matter?
- *Authorship:* How is authorship determined in this discipline? Is the author the person who wrote the words? The person who did the research? The person who supervised/authorized the experiment?
- *Users:* Who are the intended users of the documentation style? What is their level of sophistication in dealing with sources? To whom will the document (paper/article) be submitted?
- *Magnitude*: Is the style concerned only with documenting sources, verb tense, and overall presentation (margins, spacing)? Or does the style mandate specific headings for specific sections be included? Is the style rigid or flexible?

To illustrate my premise, let's look at three styles: MLA, APA, and NLM.

MLA

MLA is the most user-friendly of the common documentation styles, and strives to be accessible to students as well as practitioners. It is the only documentation style that has a separate publication for students. MLA style (or Modern Language Association style) is the one with which we—and students—are most familiar. It is the style most often taught to students in middle school or high school, and therefore the one they use the most. MLA is updated regularly—not all styles are—so it, at least theoretically, should be the most reflective of changes in the academic and technological environment. Now in its sixth edition, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* is still the foremost student source for research paper writing (Gibaldi xvi).

Implicit in MLA is a set of values that we writing center professionals enforce every day of our working lives. Chief among these are recognizing and eradicating plagiarism, and maintaining fidelity to the original text and its meaning. Both of these assert the rights of the original text and its author to be absolute and unchanging over time. Explication of text is at the heart of what the Modern Language Association is concerned with, and one of the principal skills we strive to teach to students. These values are reflected in the documentation style itself.

To wit, look at what MLA has us put into documentation notes that, as we tell students, must follow any information taken from a source: author's last name and the page number from which the information is taken. This does two things: it refers the reader to a listing on the Works Cited page, and it

allows the reader to find the specific information taken from the text. The reliability of this research document is determined by its faithfulness to its source documents, maintaining those documents as sacrosanct.

Beyond that, we stress to students that they must find their own insight into the material. This is not just a data dump. It is this student's original interpretation of the source material at hand, which the student presents in his or her thesis statement. The paper then becomes a persuasive piece in service of that statement. It demands strong verbs and an active voice. It is written in the present tense.

This emphasizes the individual's response to the text, both in terms of urging students to create their own and in terms of respecting the responses and research done by others. Perhaps more importantly, MLA (as we truly all know) is very concerned with teaching students to avoid plagiarism. The MLA Handbook devotes many, many pages to giving very detailed information to students on how to quote, paraphrase, and summarize information in addition to how to cite it. Not all documentation styles have these emphases.

APA

Take, for example, APA style. Like MLA style, APA style arose out of the concerns of a group of journal editors and managers (anthropological and psychological journals, in this case) about the uniformity and reliability of the articles they received. In the early years, its audience was primarily psychologists and psychological journals, but over time its audience broadened considerably; it is now widely used throughout the social sciences (American Psychological Association xix).

The APA *Publication Manual* itself—then and now—is more cumbersome than MLA's, probably because

the intended audience has always been different. It is directed at social science researchers writing articles for publication in journals. APA has no separate publication for students. The *Publication Manual* is it; students are welcome visitors, but they are not the main audience.

In "Codifying the Social Scientific Style: The APA *Publication Manual* as a Behaviorist Rhetoric," Chapter 9 of his book *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science*, Charles Bazerman makes the point that APA documentation style has evolved as the nature of psychology has evolved. He states:

The official APA style emerged historically at the same time as the behaviorist program began to dominate experimental psychology. Not surprisingly, the style embodies behaviorist assumptions about authors, readers, the subjects investigated, and knowledge itself. (259)

Bazerman points out that a large proportion of the *Publication Manual* is devoted to scientific reports, a specialized and highly formal genre. He says, " The prescribed form of fixed sections with fixed titles creates disjunctions between mandatory sections: the author does not have to establish overt transitions and continuity among the parts. The methods section is a totally separate entity from the introduction or the results" (260). In other words, many normal rhetorical conventions such as transitions, thesis development and support, flow, not to mention conclusions, do not apply here. APA style is focused on the social scientific/experimental model to the exclusion of normal prose. The focus is on the experiment and its results, not on the reader and not on the experience of the writer/social scientist. Previous editions of the *Publication Manual* mandated the use of the passive voice and the past tense, and APA still discourages the use of the first person.

Reflecting the social sciences, too, is APA style's emphasis on the date of a source. Unlike MLA, APA includes the year as well as the author in in-text documentation. As Carrie Shively Leverenz states in her article "Citing Cybersources: A Challenge to Disciplinary Values,"

By including the date whenever a source is mentioned, writers provide what most social scientists would agree is vital information regarding the value of the citations. Research in psychology is expected to build on past research and, by disproving or extending that research, to advance knowledge. By presenting the date of each research study cited, writers communicate to readers that they are, indeed, building on past knowledge and that their work addresses the most current work in the field. (189)

In short, time and its passage matter in APA.

In MLA, it doesn't, at least in theory. This contrast to MLA style is basic because MLA considers ancient texts and the scholarship done upon them to be timeless. The date is considered immaterial to determining the reliability of the source (189).

APA acknowledges the importance of attribution and of avoiding plagiarism, but devotes only a few pages of the *Publication Manual* to it. Because social sciences build on others' work, the relationship between documents is seen as more collaborative than it is under MLA.

This also underlies APA's strict rules about citing online sources. Documentation notes must "[d]irect readers as closely as possible to the information being cited—whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages" (APA 269). For APA, access to all research documents is critical. The transparency of underlying data to other researchers is one of

APA's ethical standards, so intervening copies, paraphrases, and interpretations are viewed suspiciously (348). A reader must be able to validate the authors' interpretation based on their original research data. Their interpretation alone is not enough. The interpretation is only one part of the process for APA; for MLA, the author's interpretation is the critical piece.

The differences in emphasis are continued onto the References page. For example, APA, which emphasizes the research rather than the researcher/writer, includes only the authors' initials, not their first names. Carrie Shively Leverenz asserts that this "downplays the particularity, the humanness of the researcher" (191). She also points to the inclusion of many researchers' names as authors as a singular convention, when most have not written a single word of the text. She believes that this flies in the face of our normal definition of the word author, but conforms to APA's bias about the importance of the research over the researcher (191).

NLM

Let's consider a third documentation style: NLM, put forth by the National Library of Medicine. First published in 1991, the *National Library of Medicine Recommended Formats for Bibliographic Citation* is used by governmental and academic researchers to exchange research information and data. Its principal audience is composed of authors, editors, and librarians. (Like APA, students are an incidental audience for NLM. Students are sometimes required to use NLM style, but it is primarily used by medical researchers and practitioners.) In 2001, a 106-page "supplement" for Internet formats was published. This is described as a supplement rather than a revision because it deals only with online forms, but the supplement includes most of the general and introductory material from the original guide, making that guide unnecessary except for citing hard copy documents

and electronic sources that are not online (e.g., CD-ROMs). (Patrias, *Supplement* i). NLM sees itself as the documentation style of cutting edge medical research, of the movers and shakers of the scientific medical community. As such, it is also the style that documents science of record. It is concerned with being precise, with being flexible enough to adapt to changing technology, but also being consistent enough to maintain the record for posterity. This is a radically different perspective than that of either MLA or APA, who envision themselves as egalitarian and far-reaching.

As a scientific style, NLM shares much the same perspective as APA. Like some past versions of APA, NLM style mandates the use of the passive voice to emphasize the scientific tasks or findings rather than the researcher. Also like APA, NLM demands a rigid format for reports, including specific sections in a set order. Unlike APA which merely discourages the use of direct quotations, NLM overtly prohibits direct quotations in the interest of emphasizing content and findings over the researcher's experience. (Needless to say, this is quite different from MLA's approach. MLA encourages the judicious use of quotations for emphasis and to lend authority to a paper.) Plagiarism isn't addressed in this manual, and frankly isn't much of a concern. NLM is focused on the content of the experiment, not on the words.

The writing tutor's quandary

That's interesting, you say, but what does it have to do with my writing center and me? As writing center professionals, part of our job is making documentation clear and understandable to students. Typically, we focus on the format (e.g., where to put documentation notes), not on the reason the format exists. Partly we do this because we feel that it is obvious, having studied texts and their interpretations, what the value is. We don't think about why other disciplines do other things; we

assume they just do, just as other languages use different words for the same object. However, these underlying values represent the big picture for students, a big picture that is often neglected in classrooms concerned with facts and specific information. For example, we continue to quote Stephen M. North's famous 1986 essay reverentially. However, if you ask social scientists about using an article from 1986, they look at you agape and explain that information that old is outdated, having been superceded by newer, better research and technological findings. It is obvious to them, but it isn't to us and it certainly isn't to students. By ignoring basic philosophical differences between documentation styles, those who encourage students to ignore the predominate style in a discipline in favor of an easier, more familiar style can muddle students' basic understanding of the discipline. Better to take the harder path, and work them through an APA or NLM, if that is the subject at hand. By explaining to students why these differences exist among disciplines and documentation styles, we are going a long way toward helping them to understand the underpinnings of the discipline itself.

What are the values reflected by the documentation style? To determine that, ask two questions: what does the style include? what does it exclude? Specifically, look at the sensitive areas mentioned earlier.

- Is *time* important to this discipline? (Does it mandate the inclusion of dates in citations, for example?) If so, what might it reflect about that discipline?
- How does it treat *authors*? (For example, how many authors are mentioned before using *et al.*? Does it use first names, first and middle initials, or first initials only?)
- Who is the intended *user*? Is it easy to use? Is the manual easy to navigate? Are there clear examples?

In conclusion, each documentation style arises out of a set of values and concerns that is pivotal to the discipline in question. These are valid concerns and valid characteristics; they aren't arbitrary or idiosyncratic. If students, particularly students majoring in a given discipline, understand the relationship between the values of that discipline and the intricacies of the documentation style, the documentation style will make sense and it will reinforce the values of the discipline that it represents. Understanding is the metaphoric Rosetta stone to cracking the hieroglyphic code of documentation. These values should also color the material being presented. In other words, MLA's focus on the importance of the text and its author, on recognizing each individual's creative input are reinforced by the components of MLA style. APA style, as a product of a social science, values current information and focuses on the experimental/content of what it documents; that too

is reflected in the documentation. Last, NLM, as the documentation style of record for many medical experiments and discoveries, stresses the content and collaboration among researchers. This too is reflected in the style. To the extent that deeper understanding of a discipline's intellectual culture makes students' learning deeper, documentation styles are one more tool in our arsenal for teaching students to write better, more meaningful papers.

Susan Mueller
St. Louis College of Pharmacy
St. Louis, MO

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TUTORS' COLUMN

Talking back to tutoring manuals

At a recent IWCA conference, we led a session titled "Talking back to Training Manuals: Real Tutoring in a Post-Process Writing Center." This interactive session included presentations on our tutoring experiences, then free-writing opportunities, and finally, small group discussions.

Post-process refers to the body of theory which argues that writing does not always occur in the orderly stages presented by writing process theory. A number of post-process theories attribute these variant composition paths to the subject positions of student writers. These positions are determined by issues such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and culture. In conjunction with this understanding, we as tutors have been encouraged not to adhere too strictly to a formula for non-directive tutoring.

One of the free-write prompts was: "How do you determine the line between directiveness and non-directiveness? When do you cross it?" Admittedly, these questions do not have easy answers. Consequently, a number of larger, more theoretical, concerns emerged during the small group discussions. We offer here our summaries of these concerns and follow that with excerpts from free-writes that were given to us at the end of the session.

Directiveness as a methodology vs. directiveness as a set of strategies/tactics

In the writing center, we need to assess students individually, measure their responses, their silences when they are asked to reflect on their writing, their body language, and then choose the appropriate strategies and tactics to communicate and facilitate writing tasks. A general methodology should allow directive tools to be used judiciously by the tutor. The tutee, in return, is asked to reflect and make choices about the strategies and tactics being offered.

"I think we fool ourselves to think that we can't teach—that tutoring is rarefied. What we practice . . . is the collaborative nature of tutoring —the Vygoskian/Piagetian perspective to move from the point of the student's knowing and build access to the new known."

Non-directiveness is based on assumed levels and types of literacy

Non-directiveness can appear a "guessing-game," especially to students who come to the center specifically seeking to advance their levels of academic literacy. In these situations, tutors are constructed by tutees as possessors of knowledge, and tutees expect the tutors to share that knowledge with them. How the tutor communicates boundaries created by non-directive principles can determine whether students decide to return to the writing center.

"It's often difficult to make directed comments, because it may appear unethical, but often difficult to avoid because many students cannot reflect on knowledge and experiences that they do not have."

"It seems like the rule is don't do something for others that they can do for themselves. . . . This has to be determined by the tutor's judgment."

"Student's don't have the knowledge to put their struggles into words. . . . We can't assume literacy levels that allow non-directive approaches."

Direct vs. directive

Here "direct" suggests honest communication with the student writer. Sometimes these direct tutor responses are directive; participants also offered ways to be direct, honest, and non-directive in giving reader response to their tutees. Students may need us to model, and this need not be considered directive if the modeling is simply offered as an option. Furthermore, when faced with time constraints, a tutor should directly offer choices to the tutee about what should be addressed in the session.

"Directive tutoring allows me to teach them correct uses in the context of their own writing. Often this leads to students finding and connecting similar problems in other places."

"If you don't write on the paper, they go home and it's lost."

We thank the participants for allowing us to share their thoughts from what was a lively discussion. May it spark as lively an exploration in your setting.

Paula Braun, Courtney Patterson,
and Sarah Abst
University of Toledo
Toledo, Ohio

New frontiers: Class projects, collaboration, and taking the writing center to the classroom

As a longtime tutor in the Center for Writing and Thinking (CWT) at College of the Ozarks, once or twice a semester, I brace myself for the annual onslaught of what we call "corn" and "water penny" papers. Several professors, mostly in the agriculture and science departments, assign their classes research projects, which culminate in a paper on corn commodities or water penny experiments. They also require their students to obtain a reader's response from the CWT as part of the assignment. While these types of assignments help to raise students' awareness about writing in their disciplines and the help the CWT can provide, the writing assistants groan when we know a "water penny" paper due date is approaching, because it means we'll be inundated with dozens of biology students hoping to get their papers read at the last minute.

This semester, the Director of the CWT, Elise Bishop, and I experimented with a program called Tutors in the Classroom. A seminar presented by Robert Barnett provided an introduction to the program, and I followed up by contacting his writing center to learn the specifics of how its tutors conducted their Tutors in the Classroom program. We shorted the program's name to TIC and tailored it to our needs.

We hoped that TIC would allow the CWT to handle large groups of student papers without requiring each student to come to the CWT for an individual reader response. Having students work in small groups with tutors as group leaders would provide structured assistance when students needed it, but would encourage students to exchange ideas about their projects, making the exercise collaborative and self-sponsored. I began communicating with a

professor from the science department to lay the groundwork for such a program. I met personally with the professor to clarify my understanding of his expectations for the assignment and to set up a game plan. He was teaching two classes of about forty students each and was requiring them to conduct group experiments and produce individual papers. He wanted the students to carefully organize their papers and to include a clear introduction, hypothesis, discussion of methods and materials, and a concluding discussion of the experiment. The professor especially wanted our tutors to focus on the introduction and discussion aspects of the papers.

Equipped with these expectations, I returned to the CWT and prepared a fact sheet for each of the tutors participating in TIC. This sheet included a summary of the professor's expectations of the papers, as well as suggestions for how to conduct a group discussion of a good hypothesis, support, and conclusion. A day or so before we were to make our class visit, the tutors gathered over lunch time for an hour of food and orientation. I used this time to pass out copies of the project assignment and the fact sheets and to tell the tutors what to expect when conducting their group tutorials. We reviewed the components of good hypotheses and conclusions so that the tutors would feel comfortable discussing them.

Once our tutors (about eight) had assembled in the classroom, the professor divided his students into groups of about five to eight students, sending them each with a tutor to separate parts of the classroom. Tutors then took several different approaches to the session. Some of them instructed the students to exchange papers and work through peer reviews while he or she

moved from student to student, helping with specific concerns and questions. Others, like me, began by asking the students to read their hypotheses aloud. I found the students eager to ask questions and quick to participate. Many of them found that they had neglected to form a hypothesis at all, but by talking to other students, they were able to understand the professor's expectations.

As we anticipated, students came to class with papers of varying qualities, but most were eager to write a good paper and to put forth the effort necessary to succeed. Students who approached the class with a negative attitude soon realized their papers would not make the grade if they did not understand or work toward meeting the assignment. Our tutors facilitated discussion between students who ordinarily would not have troubled to compare ideas or approaches. As a result, those students who had not invested much effort in their projects were spurred into action by realizing that others' papers were much better; students who had good papers could refine their points and elicit specific help from tutors.

The students responded positively to the in-class tutorials, saying that they felt more prepared to turn in a good project after working with the tutors. Many students had been confused about the professor's expectations for the project but were relieved to be able to work with a tutor to alleviate some of their confusion. The professor felt his students would turn in a better project because they had put more work, revisions, and thought into them with the help of TIC.

A program such as TIC allows the CWT to expand its borders beyond its physical location. A mobile unit such

as TIC, besides being more convenient and time-efficient for projects in large classes, allows students to discuss their papers among themselves and receive more feedback than if they were simply required to make a trip to the writing center. An open discussion of students' papers facilitates a comfortable yet critical environment in which students can compare papers, discuss expectations, and get feedback from peer tutors. TIC seeks to allow such an environment to exist and to create a situation in which students are free to ask questions and respond to each other and the tutors. TIC allows peer tutors to come to students on their own terms, in a space and atmosphere they are comfortable with.

Obviously, TIC does not allow the kind of specialized attention to a paper or student that an individualized reader's response does, and it is not intended to do so. Taking tutors into the classroom does allow large groups of students producing similar papers to address their problems with a tutor, compare their papers with others, and increase their awareness of how to write a good paper. The group workshops that occur create active learning and collaboration, better revisions, and, ultimately, better writers.

Kelly Wisecup
College of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, MO

Assistant Director of the Center for Writing Instruction
Yale University

The Center for Writing Instruction coordinates a new program for writing across the curriculum and also provides tutoring for undergraduate writers. We seek an Assistant Director who can contribute to both aspects of the Center's mission, preferably one who can also enhance our support of writers for whom English is a second language through tutoring, supervising other tutors, and designing workshops for ESL students. Responsibilities include helping faculty shape discipline-based writing courses, leading workshops for writing teachers, teaching a discipline-based writing course, and developing materials for ESL teaching and tutoring.

Ph.D. and teaching experience required; experience coaching writing teachers or tutors desirable. Salary commensurate with qualifications. Application deadline is February 14, 2005.

Apply online at <www.yale.edu/jobs> with cv, up to 5 pages of relevant teaching or administrative materials, and cover letter to Corey Rossman. Please reference Source Code EAWCD21348 when applying. Alternately, you may send your materials to: Corey Rossman, Staffing and Career Development Department, Yale University, P.O. Box 208256, New Haven, CT 06520-8256. Yale University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer, and women and members of minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

Director, Tutoring Center
Bucks County Community College
(#090104-51205)

Required: Masters Degree in English or Mathematics, two to four years tutoring center experience, some administrative experience, and formal training in tutoring center theory and practice.

Preferred: Experience in higher education; knowledge of the applications of instructional technology; experience with community college students; demonstrated participation in college activities; and commitment to the institution expected.

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and the names of at least three references with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to the Director of Human Resources, Bucks County Community College, 275 Swamp Rd., Newtown, PA 18901 or via email to jobs@bucks.edu. Applicant review will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The link for further information is <http://www.bucks.edu/about/employ/current.html>.

A (re)cognition of peerness as friendship

One Friday afternoon last semester, I had an awkward encounter in the writing center. A male graduate student came to the center shortly after twelve o'clock. We had just closed for the weekend, and the other graduate laboratory assistants I work with had left, but I stayed to pack up my books for an afternoon class. At first, he popped his head through the doorway and asked if we were still open. Referring him to our posted hours and explaining that I was on my way to a graduate seminar, I apologized, but firmly said, "We're closed." Instead of leaving or asking to make an appointment for Monday morning, he began a lengthy explanation of why he needed immediate help—his paper was already a week late, he had been out of town, and his professor had unrealistically high expectations. Like many frantic writers, he argued that he would only need a few minutes of my time because he only needed grammar help. After five minutes or so, in his last plea for me to read his paper, he said, "Come on, baby, you could have read my paper by now."

This statement, taken with his aggressive postures and behavior, could hardly be evidence of "peerness." This male student never asked my name nor indicated his; neither did he listen when I proposed alternate solutions, such as talking with his professor, asking a friend to read his paper, or making an appointment for Monday morning. To him, I was merely a service provider. And he was annoyed that I was unwilling to be at his service. Finally, the writing center director (and the professor of my afternoon class) used her authority as faculty to say she was locking the door and both of us were leaving for class. Only then did

he leave, too. I left that afternoon with a general sense of unease about my position as a writing tutor.

Earlier on that same Friday, I had two relatively successful conferences in the writing center. First, I worked with a sophomore political science major from an introductory government course. She wanted to brainstorm ideas of how a classical liberal theorist would critique the American model of representation. Then, a student from Thailand, who was enrolled in first-year English for ESL students, brought a three-paragraph, summary-connection-analysis paper to revise. I had previously worked with both students. This was my third conference with the sophomore (I'll call her Faith) and perhaps my tenth with the first-year student (Cindy). Both writers and I were constructing positive working relationships built on trust, mutual interests, and developing friendship. Considering our relationships, I suspect that collaboration and co-learning are influenced less by peerness or "status equality" (Gillam 50) than by the fact that we enjoy one another's company. While theorists often characterize writing center work as peer tutoring, inequalities exist according to academic standing, writing experience, confidence, and familiarity in the tutorial. Additionally, identity groupings such as race, class, and gender interfere with peerness. Drawing on experiences from my own tutoring, I am suggesting an alternate model for characterizing relationships: rather than considering tutors and writers to be peers, we should promote interactions based on friendship.

Writing center scholars Kenneth Bruffee, Alice Gillam, Diane Morrow,

Linda Shamoon, Deborah Burns, John Trimbur, and others identify varied "problems with peerness." Still, many of their essays assume collaboration can be achieved among writers and tutors because we are "peers." Shamoon and Burns, for instance, argue that "[t]rue collaboration occurs when the participants are 'part of the same discourse community and meet as equals'" (175). Equality can be achieved in a number of ways, but the term implies that participants share responsibility, knowledge, or activity in the writing conference. Most often, equality presumes peerness, that writers and tutors are basically the same (both are students who do academic writing). Although faculty and professional adjuncts may tutor, students more generally staff writing centers. What I am questioning is whether the simple categorization of "student" implies peerness.

Peer status may be broken down by a number of differences between writer and tutor. Of primary importance is the matter of academic standing. First-year undergraduates and doctoral candidates are both "students," but there are a number of years, courses, and completed assignments separating them. Trimbur's "Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?" accurately describes the conflicting loyalties tutors experience when invested with institutional authority. Still, Trimbur only presents undergraduate tutoring scenarios. In Georgia State's Writing Studio, our tutors are graduate students, but the majority of writers who visit us are undergraduates. This difference in academic standing exacerbates an already-recognized power imbalance.

Compounding this inequality, tutors generally have extensive writing experiences and read and write regularly (and enjoy doing so). Moreover, students sometimes ask if I am studying English, as though this disciplinary knowledge marks a person's greatness in composition. Additionally, while tutors certainly have doubts and uncertainties, as do all students at times, they have greater confidence and familiarity in the tutorial. Writing tutors know the task at hand: they are better aware of strategies and approaches to writing as well as the university's and professor's expectations for academic writing. Tutors also spend significant time in the writing center, so the space is comfortable and familiar to them. Situated in a recognizable room with work they know and perhaps enjoy, tutors are in a position of power. Writers, on the other hand, enter a new and often strange setting with difficult work ahead. In addition to differences in academic standing and writing experience, confidence and familiarity set tutors and writers apart.

My undergraduate writing center at Agnes Scott College came closer to achieving peerness, although many of the same inequalities were present. Academic standing was more equal in the sense that all tutors and writers were undergraduate students. Additionally, many tutors, myself included, represented disciplines other than English. Our multi-disciplinary writing center showed that everyone has access to writing knowledge; English majors were not somehow separated as the "good writers" on campus. While we enjoyed writing and were constantly engaged in the composition process for our own coursework, we had similar writing experiences as the students who visited the writing center. Perhaps most importantly, confidence and familiarity were more evenly distributed. The center's space allowed for students

to "hang out" in the writing center and become accustomed to the setting. Many writers used the computers and free printing to work on papers. Tutors were required to see each other for tutoring. This meant that we never felt too removed from the side of the writer/tutee. We knew what it felt like to be criticized or told to scrap whole sections of text. Despite these steps toward achieving peerness among writers and tutors, inequalities remained in the writing center. The writer, for instance, was seeking help (whether it be simply a second reader or a language instructor), and the tutor was paid to help. Moreover, the tutor chose to work in the center and to spend her time there; writers, oftentimes, would prefer just to have the paper done. These differences presented serious challenges to status equality.

The limitations of peerness are illustrated in my two Friday tutoring conferences—and in the third awkward situation. In the conferences with Faith and Cindy, I was older, further along in my studies, more experienced with writing, and more certain of the space around me as well as my approach to the assignments. In the third encounter, a very different limitation to peerness arose. The male graduate student's insistent, even bullying, behavior leads me to believe that he never saw me as an equal. Instead, I was the lowly woman, reduced to "baby," who should help elevate the male to his prominent position, reinforcing the gender hierarchy. As Eileen Schell observes, women teachers have often been expected to bring feminine domestic qualities into their work—to be generous, sensitive to the needs of others, and willing to self-sacrifice (22). This particular male student expected me not only to bend the rules for him, but also to give of my own time. In this context, it was not a matter of academic standing or experience with writing that created inequality; rather, gender expectations destroyed any possibility of collaboration.

I believe, therefore, that peerness should be conceived less as a matter of status equality and more in terms of opportunities for co-learning or shared activity in the writing conference. Bruffee conceives of peer tutoring as "a two-way street, since students' work tended to improve when they got help from peer tutors and tutors learned from the students they helped and from the activity of tutoring itself" (207). In conferences with Faith and Cindy, I learn as much from them as I believe they learn from me. Still, I would not characterize our interactions as "peer tutoring" because our motivations for and types of learning are different. Faith has said she enjoys working with me because I understand her discipline (political science) and talk out complicated arguments with her. Perhaps we gain equal satisfaction and learning from our brainstorming sessions, but Faith looks to me for disciplinary and writing knowledge, while I learn from her more about tutoring, the teaching of government at Georgia State, and the way she constructs arguments (her method is very different from mine, so I am learning a new strategy in the process of tutoring).

From Cindy, I learn about her home and culture in Thailand, her experiences in America, her understandings and methods of learning English, and her unique interests in technology (from cloning to uses of the Internet). Cindy says I help her understand the structure of American writing (from thesis statements to sentence variation). We often use the dictionary, and in the process, I learn more about English—word origins, uses, and parts of speech. By the third or fourth tutoring session, I learned that Cindy has a wonderful sense of humor, and I had missed it in her first papers. She helped me reconsider my focus when tutoring and explore why it took me some time to recognize this very important part of her personality. In both tutoring relationships, I serve as a co-learner. The sessions are quasi-

collaborative, and I enjoy working with the writers. Nonetheless, I believe our relative success in tutoring is rooted in our enjoyment of each other's company and our subsequent open conversations about writing. Perhaps co-learning grows out of friendship more than from peerness.

Friendship (or similar interests, as Pythagoras indicates that "friends share all things," and Plato argues that "friends have all things in common") may also lead to shared active roles that counter writers' passivity and instead promote collaboration. Morrow describes writers' passivity in conferences as a limitation to her collaboration: "most students begin by assuming the tutor is in charge; most students come into the session taking a passive role" (221). In addition to waiting for the tutor to set the agenda, or "take charge," students often view tutors as authority figures (Morrow 222). When Cindy first came to the writing center, I did feel she wanted an authority, someone to teach her more about the English language and American writing. After a few sessions, however, we had developed a relationship where I served more as a second reader and occasional critic. This shift was largely achieved by asking questions so that Cindy can explain and clarify her ideas and arguments. I write while she talks, and this helps develop her language skills, while working on the assignment at hand. Now when Cindy comes to a session, she has a clear agenda and tells me what she wants to achieve.

A similar process has occurred with Faith. After a particularly rough session with her paper due later that day, she came for her next conference well in advance of the due date and with a clear agenda of what she wanted to accomplish. During our sessions, Faith uses me more as a friend when we casually talk out ideas and take rough notes from each other's suggestions. We share active roles and participation. Just as Madeline Grumet argues that "knowledge evolves in human re-

lationships" (qtd. in Cambridge 75), our social interaction strengthens and even creates our understandings of composition and content. But is this related to "peerness"?

Alice Gillam similarly critiques peerness when she suggests that factors other than status equality account for collaborative relationships. She poses the question: "is . . . 'intimacy' and rapport a result of . . . 'status equality' or a product of chance factors—shared gender, ethnicity, class background, and investment in academic success?" (50). Faith, Cindy, and I come from different ethnic and class backgrounds, but we do care about school and share commitments of doing well in classes. Gender undoubtedly influences our work together. Neither Faith nor Cindy would ever call me "baby" or ask me to change the rules and sacrifice my personal time. Just as they trust me to be sincere and to help in the best way I can, I trust them to respect that I am a fully feeling and thinking person, not just "a tutor" in the writing center. Our working relationships have developed through learning about and respecting each other. We will never be "peers" in the sense that many writing center theorists might describe us because our school and writing experiences create divisions. It is in life experience and our basic humanity that we find equality. Rather than striving for peerness (sameness), we should get to know writers as people and work toward friendship.

Beth Godbee
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA

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Assistant Director—University Writing Center
Middle Tennessee State University

POS. # 155010   REQ. # P2841=20

Responsibilities: Reporting to the Director, the Assistant Director oversees the daily operations of the University Writing Center. The Assistant Director creates and maintains statistical databases and reports, reconciles and maintains the department budget, assists to hire, train, evaluate and counsel tutors and support staff. Develops study aids, forms, databases and discipline-specific handouts, maintains accurate reports, databases and files and will teach in the University Writing Center and the English department as assigned. Performs related special projects as assigned.

Qualifications: Masters degree in Composition/ Rhetoric, English, or a related field and two years writing center or teaching composition experience required. Requires the ability to supervise and train staff, establish effective working relationships with diverse populations, and multi-task in a fast paced environment. Able to express ideas concisely and convincingly with a broad knowledge of computer applications, database management, statistical analysis, and reporting methods required.

 Salary range: $31,658—$37,989 Commensurate with experience.

Filing procedure: Interested applicants should submit the following required materials: (1) a cover letter indicating interest in the position (SPECIFY ABOVE JOB TITLE AND POSITION NUMBER IN YOUR LETTER); (2) a complete resume and (3) an MTSU Application for Employment Form (available by printing off the Internet at: <http://hrs.web.mtsu.edu/empl/ profes.html> or by calling (615-898-2928). Official school transcripts will be required of candidates selected for an interview.

Filing deadline: February 14, 2005

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Department of English
Purdue University
500 Oval Drive
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2038

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