THE WRITING LAB

NEWSLETTER

– FROM THE EDITOR –

Most of us are now experiencing a seasonal change from an impossibly long, snowy, cold winter to a warm, balmy spring. Similarly, the articles in this issue of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* suggest we take a fresh look at the ways we've viewed some of our work. Rebecca Taylor Fremo shares her account of how she and her tutors stopped assuming that all students come to their writing center and started going out to where some students are more comfortable.

In reviewing Neal Lerner's new book, Nathalie Singh-Corcoran emphasizes Lerner's call for a change that returns us to the notion of a "lab." While in their article, Jeanne Marie Rose and Laurie Grobman take a fresh look at the work tutors do in addition to tutoring. Rose and Grobman place these other projects within the research categories Ernst Boyer advocated in his paradigm for what constitutes academic research.

And Claudine Griggs brings a new question to the tutoring table. How should a tutor react when finding that the student has made up false material in order to fulfill an assignment? Should anyone balk at reading a term Griggs uses for lying, one that's normally bleeped out, please note that her source for this term is the title of a book published by Princeton University Press. (I suspect you are now immediately turning to her Works Cited to see the book title being referred to.)

To everyone out on the road in this season of conferences, travel safely!

✦ *Muriel Harris, editor*

INSIDE

UNLEARNING "HABITS, CUSTOMS, AND CHARACTER": CHANGING THE ETHOS OF OUR WRITING CENTER

✦ *Rebecca Taylor Fremo*
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I have directed the Writing Center at our small private Lutheran college for the last nine years. When I arrived in 2000, our population of students of color, including both international and domestic students, was just under 8% of our 2,400 students. It is now nearly 13%. We are encouraged by institutional efforts to recruit more international and domestic students of color and to provide a more welcoming environment for them on campus. But anecdotal and survey-based data suggest that some writers are falling through the cracks. There are African American students who are frustrated by the Writing Center's "refusal" to work primarily with sentence-level issues. Some Hmong and Somali students avoid seeking help on their papers altogether. And puzzled international students continue to worry about plagiarism.

The dilemmas we face are not new. How do writing centers like mine serve students of color who may need additional help with their academic work without assuming that "all" will need it? How do we meet the needs of such different writers, including English language learners, without assuming a one-size-fits-all approach? How might we recruit more students of color to tutor in our centers? In this essay, I reflect upon the stages that my own writing

center has undergone during the last decade as we've tried to answer these questions with the help of our college's Diversity Center.

Developing a partnership between the two Centers has required my tutors and me to acknowledge the interlocking social, cultural, and economic factors that have kept many of our students of color at risk, without assuming that "all" struggle with their writing. It has meant recruiting tutors directly from the groups who meet at the Diversity Center. It has meant reviewing writing center scholarship, focusing on identity issues. Most importantly, it has meant letting go of my desire to bring students of color to us, and embracing opportunities instead to bring tutors, an increasingly diverse group, to other locations on campus.

UNLEARNING OLD HABITS

Two examples demonstrate where we began. First, when I arrived at our college with its predominantly white, Scandinavian student body nearly ten years ago, I quickly learned our center's reputation among some students of color: it was an unwelcoming place. The undergraduate tutors were not terribly diverse. I inherited mostly white, female English majors and one young woman of color, an English Education major from Kenya.

Our former Director of Multicultural Affairs was noticeably chilly when I visited her. I was fresh out of graduate school, having specialized in Basic Writing and studied identity issues in composition studies. I was eager to make alliances with her office. She listened politely. She then stated that most students of color who had visited the Writing Center found the tutors disdainful of them and their work.   "I am eager to bring more students of color to the Writing Center, where tutors can provide the help they need," I assured her.   It's no wonder she never warmed up to me. Despite what I'd learned about identity issues as a scholar, I had signaled to her that "we" (white) tutors should help "those" (non-white) students. And I had assumed all contact should take place on our turf: the Writing Center. I expected all movement to be in one direction, as those who needed "help" sought out those positioned to be the "helpers."

Secondly, I was troubled that first year by how few international students used the Writing Center.[1] My experiences as a Writing Center tutor in graduate school taught me to expect them in droves. Those experiences also reminded me that some ELL students—most of whom were international students at large, R-1 institutions—felt they "lost face" by coming to the Writing Center.   As a new director, I planned a series of workshops for international students in places I assumed would be comfortable for them. The tutors and I blanketed the dorm where many international students were housed (it featured cross-cultural programming and catered to students who had studied abroad) and our International Education Office with posters. I asked the young woman from Kenya, the only student of color who tutored at my center, how to get international students to come to a workshop. I expected her have all the answers.

She simply said, "Try to reach the network." I thought I had. Yet my tutors and I offered advice to a nearly empty workshop at the International Education office. The following year, we tried again. Same strategy, same result: two students attended the workshop, as six tutors and I looked at one another in awkward silence. While our impulse to extend the Writing Center's reach had been a good one, we had demonstrated our ignorance about the relationships and locations that mattered most to these students. Assuming that our international students would naturally gravitate toward the International Education office was like looking up "foreign students" in the yellow pages. I didn't understand their haunts and hangouts; we misjudged their locations and where we were located in relation. In short, we had an ethos problem.

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

Most rhetoricians associate ethos with issues of character, credibility, and authority. In "Ethos as Location," Nedra Reynolds points to the Greek roots for ethos, "habit, custom, and character" (327), and she expands the term to include "the individual agent as well as the location or position from which that person speaks or writes" (326). When I talk about my Writing Center's ethos problem, this is what I mean. We needed to literally shift our ethos by changing our habits, customs, and character. Likewise, we needed to understand the habits, customs, and character of all our tutees. But this would mean revising one of our field's assumptions: that writing centers should encourage diverse students—nearly always imagined in our literature as linguistically and culturally different from tutors, and often ELL—to come to us (implication: white, native English speaking tutors) for help.

(UN)LEARNING WHAT'S CUSTOMARY

The assumption that writers who need help will seek that help at a writing center is fundamental to our work. This assumption gets complicated when we consider the needs of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse writers at predominantly white (and, in my case, private) institutions. Some African American students at my College, for instance, do not want white students to see them in the Writing Center, fearing this will promote "accusations" about affirmative action, fueling the fires of a small but vocal minority of students who believe their African American counterparts don't belong. Some of our "Generation 1.5" Hmong students have spent their public school years avoiding the "ESL" label and worry that if they go to the Writing Center, that's how they'll be named. And many of our international students have more formal training in English than those raised here in the United States. Indeed, the needs of diverse students at our College are as varied as the labels used to identify them.

Our population of students of color may have been small, but their relationships with the Writing Center were complex. I turned to writing center scholarship for information. Most of the material I consulted dealt with diversity in terms of linguistic and cultural difference, often focusing on the needs of English language learners. In the chapter titled "Tutoring Different People" from *Tutoring Writing*, which I assign to all of my tutors each year, Donald McAndrew and Thomas Reigstad address diversity in terms of gender, ability, and multicultural difference. They write:

> We believe that writers and tutors from different cultures and with different home languages can work together. . . . Tutoring can allow students who feel marginalized by their culture or language, or who feel disconnected from American academic culture, to develop their own academic voices and establish their place in current campus life. (96)

Here visitors and tutors are distinguished and distinguishable by their cultural differences. The tutors are assumed to have different "home languages" than the visitors, who feel "marginalized" or "disconnected from American academic culture." The "multicultural" students who visit the writing center belong to either a linguistic or cultural minority, and the chapter does not mention race in any substantive way, nor does it distinguish among the needs of immigrant English learners and those of international students.

More recent scholarship, of course, does address race, as well as the needs of "Generation 1.5." learners. Certainly Nancy Barron and Nancy Grimm remind us to question a writing center's com-

> **"** *The process of relocating [our Writing Center] to the Diversity Center taught us to make initial contact with all of our students in non-threatening ways.* **"**

plicity in potentially racist educational systems (2002). Recognizing the importance of race as a topic for all tutors and directors, Bethany Davila cautions that "without the proper training, tutors will not be qualified to discuss the role of race in writing and risk offending students or representing a negative image of the writing center if they approach the topic unprepared—especially in the potentially charged dynamic of white tutor and a student of color" (3). It's precisely that "proper training" that I wanted to provide for my own tutors, and I wanted that training to address issues of racial, cultural, and linguistic difference. But I wasn't sure where to begin, and I suspected that such training shouldn't take place solely in the Writing Center.

RELOCATING OURSELVES

By the end of my second year as director, I decided that shifting locations might help me to understand the needs of diverse students. I needed to leave the English department's building, where our Center was located, more often. As I began my third year, I pledged to spend more time in the Diversity Center, where I assumed I'd meet students of color. I asked our Director of Multicultural Affairs if I might schedule regular office hours there.[2] While my initial goal was to meet as many students of color as possible, I realized quickly that by having all of my students and advisees meet with me at the Diversity Center, I would also bring more white students into a space they assumed was closed to them. Most importantly, this relocation complicated my understanding of diversity at our institution.

Here I observed coalitions of international students, African American students, gay and lesbian students, Latino/a students, and other underrepresented students on campus, including adoptees and College Republicans. The Diversity Center is an institutionally designated "home base" for a number of organizations and a socially sanctioned "safe space" for the students who participate in them. That first semester in the Diversity Center, I tried to listen to students without butting in. Once I got comfortable and students recognized me, I began to ask, "How's the writing going?" By spring semester of my third year, students showed "the writing lady" their work, and I began to bring tutors with me. In the six years that followed, we created a satellite location in the Diversity Center.

A similar approach can be found at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where the Writing Center is linked directly to the Rural Student Services program. As Richard Carr describes in "Bridging the Rural-Urban Gap: The University of Alaska Writing Tutor in Rural Student Services," when underrepresented students—in this case, rural Native Alaskans—experience "intercultural communication problems" (2), and then have silent, unproductive tutorial sessions or avoid the Writing Lab altogether, then the Writing Lab has failed. The tutors have "provided assistance but only on our terms" (Carr 2). Carr's tutors relocated to the Rural Student Services Program office, which put them on somebody else's turf and required them to listen carefully, observe new communication strategies, and then revise their tutoring strategies accordingly.

Listening, we learned, helped us to revise our ethos. My tutors and I listened to students of color as they shared their experiences at our campus on their own home turf. White tutors in particular were surprised by the stories: racist messages left on bulletin boards; probing, culturally inappropriate questions posed in class. As we listened, our positions shifted. Tutors were no longer setting parameters for all the conversations. We weren't the experts. We also held at least one Writing Center staff meeting in the Diversity Center each term where we were the guests, not the hosts.

By the start of my fourth year, a regular group of tutors worked weekly in the Diversity Center, and they became our current Outreach Team. We mimicked the organizational structures used by the student groups at the Diversity Center. Our Outreach Team leader is the liaison between our two Centers. He or she also recruits and mentors other team members. Tutors work several evenings

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

each week in the Diversity Center, where they establish trust, build friendships, and witness about their experiences to the rest of the tutoring staff. Likewise, the Outreach tutors encourage students at the "D-Center" to visit our main location, enabling more fluid movement between the Centers.[3] Finally, the Outreach Team plans workshops, which we take on the road: "Moving from High School to College Level Writing" is offered in the freshman dorms, for instance. The process of relocating to the Diversity Center taught us to make initial contact with all of our students in non-threatening ways. This helps them see us as a more accessible resource.

We have made less headway, however, on one of our biggest challenges: recruitment. I agree with McAndrew and Reigstad, who recognize the importance of a diverse staff of tutors and argue that a staff should reflect the diversity of the university's student body. They nod to the work of Gail Okawa et al., who suggest "finding [diverse] tutors by establishing close ties with administrative divisions and programs that support international students or special-admission native-English speakers, or by considering regular visitors to the writing center as potential tutors" (98).[4] Thus, I invite students whom I meet at the D-Center to apply to work as tutors each year. We hang posters there weeks ahead of recruiting season. By fall of 2006, 25% of Writing Center tutors did not identify themselves as white. This may have been an anomaly, however, as more recent staffs have not been as racially or culturally diverse. But I don't stop trying.

(RE)LOCATION BUILDS CHARACTER: MOVING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The Diversity Center and the Writing Center are now partners. Our present Director of Multicultural Affairs is a gifted administrator who urges us to strive for new levels of awareness and commitment, leading to change. The most important change is not visible. A regular part of our Writing Center training now involves reflecting upon our own identities, not just discussing the identities and literacy practices of others. We've tackled this task in several ways, reading and responding to scholarship about identity issues, using our weekly staff meetings as an opportunity to reflect more candidly about our experiences as tutors in the Diversity Center, and holding retreats that focus on the connections between identity and literacy practices.

In the fall of 2008, my colleague invited us to take the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), "a statistically reliable, cross-culturally valid measure of intercultural competence adapted from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" (<http://www.idiinventory.com/about.php>). This test, which my tutors and I took online at the Diversity Center's expense, helped us identify our attitudes toward cultural difference and assess movement toward intercultural competence. Essentially, the test uses multiple choice questions in order to place our responses into a particular "profile," tracking movement from "denial" of cultural difference altogether to a kind of intercultural "integration." [5]

My colleague at the Diversity Center analyzed our individual results before compiling a summative report featuring an anonymous, collective portrait of the staff. He also created confidential individual profiles; several of us met with him to discuss our own intercultural competence as a result. The Writing Center then held a half-day retreat focused upon identity issues. My colleague led discussion of the staff's collective IDI results, which suggested that many tutors were in the earliest stages of developing intercultural competence. For instance, several white tutors who had studied abroad were surprised to know that the test placed them in "minimization" phase, where they believe that people are different, but those differences aren't important. Still others learned that they turn admiration for another culture into disdain for their own. Most of the staff members expected themselves to have already "adapted" and "integrated" and were stunned to see that their profiles suggested otherwise.

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A week later, one tutor, a bright biology major who was a leader within the campus gay and lesbian community came to my office to discuss his results. He was upset, having been sure that he'd already thought about his own identity in critical ways. But race and ethnicity were areas that he hadn't yet fully addressed in his own life. I assured him, as my Diversity Center colleague had, that the results didn't brand us forever. Rather, they invited us to reflect on where we were and where we wanted to go as tutors and as human beings.

This decade of unlearning, relearning, and relocating has confirmed the importance of interrogating our own identities and expanding our understanding of diversity. As a result, we work more closely with students with disabilities, creating long-term pairings between tutors and students with special needs. We're also working to address the needs of multilingual students. While we do not have a full-time position devoted to ELL, the College has partnered with a local state university that offers graduate degrees in TESOL. Since 2007, the Writing Center has supported one such graduate student's teaching assistantship annually. The graduate student tutors our students, teaches my staff about current research in TESOL, and serves as a resource for both multilingual and ELL students and the faculty who teach them.

Our Center's changing ethos has also brought new responsibilities. More students of color, for instance, seek my help with personal statements as they apply for graduate school. More faculty members ask me to look at their ELL students' writing. I've written an article for the Diversity Center's newsletter responding directly to students who question why tutors seem to focus on sentence-level issues last. And I will continue to prioritize our need to hire a more racially and culturally diverse group of tutors each year. As I move into my next decade of work, I hope to clarify and commit to these new responsibilities, paying careful attention to my own habits, customs, and character. ✦

Endnotes

[1] Given the huge numbers of ELL students who visited the Writing Centers at both Virginia Tech and Ohio State, where I'd tutored during graduate school, I was stunned by how few students identified themselves as non-native speakers of English at the College's Writing Center.

[2] I was neither the first nor the last faculty member to hold office hours in the Diversity Center.

[3] Several other departments now offer tutoring at the Diversity Center. I've also met with a Chemistry professor who is administering a grant for underrepresented students in the sciences. She seeks to create a tutoring program where students of color mentor one another.

[4] I agree that it is crucial for a Writing Center's staff to be at least as diverse as the student body itself, but I am puzzled by the use of "special admission" in the statement above. What does "special admission" mean in this instance?

[5] Note that the IDI can also be taken in pen or pencil format and that anyone who wishes to administer the test must first attend a three-day training workshop to learn how to use the instrument. My colleague, the Diversity Center director, had attended this workshop.

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BOOK REVIEW

LERNER, NEAL. *THE IDEA OF A WRITING LABORATORY*. CARBONDALE: SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UP, 2009. (272 PP., PAPERBACK, $35)

✦ *Reviewed by Nathalie Singh-Corcoran*
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Neal Lerner's new book, *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory*, surprised me. As a long-time reader of Lerner's writing center scholarship, I had expected something more akin to his other historical pieces such as "Searching for Robert Moore" (*Writing Center Journal*) or "Time Warp: Historical Representations of Writing Centers" (*Writing Center Director's Resource Book*). In these articles, Lerner identifies the political, economic, and educational forces that affect writing centers and the teaching of writing, and he shows us that our writing center past is much more complex, layered, and nuanced than we might assume.

The Idea of a Writing Laboratory is also a history, and it touches on the same themes and issues as his previous work, but it does and is something more. Lerner's *Idea* is a book about teaching writing within writing centers, within the composition classroom, and within the sciences. It's a book about identifying common ground, crossing disciplinary boundaries, and realizing the value of experiential learning.

The title for his new book is a deliberate nod to Stephen North's highly influential *College English* article, "The Idea of a Writing Center." In his piece, North rejects the concept of a writing lab or clinic because of its association with skills, drills, and remediation. He asks that we instead embrace another idea: a student centered, better-writer-creating, *writing center*. Lerner, however, reclaims the laboratory and asserts that when we moved towards a writing center and away from a writing laboratory, we lost the pedagogical ideals that laboratories represent: experimentation and experiential, situated learning. This however, is not Lerner's only assertion. He believes, and compellingly argues, that laboratory methods for writing instruction have an appeal beyond the walls of the writing center.

In the first six chapters of Lerner's *Idea*, he knits together several histories, moving back and forth between writing labs, science labs, and science and composition curricular reform movements. Chapter 1—"The Secret Origin of Writing Centers"—is an attempt to trace the first writing center. Lerner identifies several contenders, including the 1922 Dalton Laboratory Plan, a design for a student-centered, self-paced pedagogy that "appealed to students' interests and supported students' autonomy" (18); he finds even earlier evidence of lab methods in educational literature from the late 1800s. While he does not identify the locus, he does discover that centers, labs, and lab methods followed boom and bust periods that coincided with the push and pull of *equity* (e.g. open admission) and *excellence* (e.g. admission standards) and that writing labs were difficult to sustain because they put a drain on human resources.

In Chapter 2—"Writing in the Science Laboratory: Opportunities Lost"—he draws interesting parallels between histories of teaching writing in a science lab and teaching in a writing lab. He explains that while writing to learn, in the form of a lab report or a scientific article, was an impetus in the science classroom, it did not have wide appeal. Science instructors, like their composition instructor

cohorts, were overworked and underpaid. Even as writing assignments like the lab report became more common, students were not being asked to demonstrate their discovery of knowledge, only to write out their experiments and record their observations.

Subsequent chapters, namely Chapter 4, "The Two Poles of Writing Lab History: Minnesota and Dartmouth" and Chapter 6, "Drawing to Learn Science: Lessons from Agassiz," serve as illustrations of points he raises earlier: writing or drawing in the sciences and lab methods of instruction have the potential to be generative and transformative for learners, but learning is often reduced to skills-and- drills instruction, and writing is only used to show a mastery of content.

Of all the chapters that provide a historical overview, I found Chapter 5—"Project English and the Quest for Federal Funding"—the most problematic. It describes a little known and defunct federal funding program in the humanities—Project English—that was designed to improve curriculum and teaching methods. The funding was not designated for other pertinent issues such as improving the working conditions of composition instructors. Several institutions received funding and produced tests, audio-visual materials that emphasized grammar, and curricula that stressed World, American, and British literature. But Project English did not lead to substantive reform, and the program eventually died.

My assessment of Chapter 5 as problematic has nothing to do with its content but rather with its placement. Prior to "Project English," I had gotten used to the rhythm of Lerner's *Idea* and had come to anticipate the explicit parallels he draws between themes in each chapter. Chapter 5 does illustrate an idea that is pertinent to Lerner's larger discussion: major curricular change requires resources, but funding alone does not lead to significant change. However, the chapter isn't as neatly connected as the content that comes before and after it.

Some of the most exciting and inspiring material comes in the latter parts of *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory*. Here the lab ideal is brought to light through an examination of the present and a look toward future possibilities. Lerner shows readers that laboratory methods of instruction within and outside of the writing center can foster deep learning. In Chapter 7—"The Lab in Theory: From Mental Discipline to Situated Learning"—he identifies two theories that have affected the teaching of writing and the teaching of science. *Mental discipline* emphasizes exercising the mind; through memorization, recitation and repetition, one can acquire knowledge. *Situated learning* emphasizes the knowledge gained through an active, hands-on, experiential, real-world curriculum, one that encourages students to observe, to play, to experiment, to ask questions, and to test and extend the limits of their knowledge.

Lerner makes it clear that within the writing center, within the writing classroom, and within the sciences, the push and pull between mental discipline and situated learning has deep roots. In previous chapters, he offers readers a glimpse of both theories in practice but suggests that mental discipline often takes precedence—even within our Post-Process composition classrooms (e.g. teaching the modes of writing). In Chapter 8—"The Laboratory in Practice: A Study of a Biological Engineering Class"—he shows us a version of a lab that emphasizes situated learning. He follows two students in "Laboratory Fundamentals of Biological Engineering," a class at MIT that introduces students to the "techniques and intellectual framework of biological engineering" (166). The course is also an "introduction to the discursive practices (writing, speaking, visualizing) of professionals in that field" (166). The two students he follows, Maxine and Noel, share their writing and describe their experiences with various assignments that ask them to think, write, and talk like a biological engineer. During the course, the students are not passive recipients of a prescribed curriculum but rather active knowledge makers who engage "in research and discursive tasks common to profes-

sionals in the field" (115), practice real disciplinary problem solving, and consult and collaborate with professional members of the biological engineering community.

In theory, if not in practice, writing centers aim to be writing laboratories as Neal Lerner conceives them. If we look at defining documents like Muriel Harris' "SLATE Statement on the Concept of a Writing Center," we see lab methods endorsed in sections such as "Tutors are Coaches and Collaborators not Teachers," "Each Students' Individual Needs are the Focus of the Tutorial," and "Experimentation and Practice are Endorsed." *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory* is not about changing our practice. Nor is it just about exposing the false binary between the writing center as concept and the writing lab as concept; rather, it is a book about teaching writing more broadly. As Lerner states at the beginning of his ambitious work, it's about how "the teaching of writing and the teaching of science can find common ground in the idea of a writing laboratory" (6).

Lerner does something that few writing center scholars have thus far accomplished: The book responds to the charge regarding the wider appeal of writing center scholarship. Many of us believe writing center praxis is relevant to composition studies as a whole, but few of our publications have reached beyond our community. And truthfully, when we write, we most often write for each other. *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory* has broad appeal and belongs in the hands of many: WPAs, writing center directors, WAC coordinators, composition instructors, teachers in the sciences, and really *anyone* who is involved in the teaching of writing across college and university campuses. ✦

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Director, Hume Writing Center Stanford University

Stanford University seeks a senior staff member to manage and direct the Hume Writing Center and serve as Associate Director of Stanford Introductory Studies (SIS) within the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE).

Primary responsibilities include providing leadership in developing and sustaining the varied mission of the Center, managing day-to-day operations, overseeing an undergraduate peer tutor preparation course, supervising a large corps of undergraduate and graduate writing consultants, and working collaboratively with Program in Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) lecturers who tutor in the Center.

Qualifications include: Ph.D. in rhetoric and writing or a closely-related field, extensive experience teaching and tutoring writing, experience in writing program and/or writing center administration, experience with supporting Writing in the Disciplines programs, and a research agenda related to rhetoric and writing studies. The Center Director must also have experience with computer-enhanced writing instruction. As the writing and rhetoric requirement places increased emphasis on oral and multimedia elements, the Center Director should have experience and interest in these areas.

To view the complete job description and to assure your application information is captured in our official files, you must apply to <http://jobs.stanford.edu>, and in the keyword search box, indicate 37485. Additionally, please send your letter of application, curriculum vitae, at least three letters of recommendation, an example of writing related to scholarship or writing program administration, and a statement of philosophy regarding writing center pedagogy to: Andrea A. Lunsford, Director, Program in Writing and Rhetoric, Sweet Hall, Room 314, 590 Escondido Mall, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-3069. Deadline: April 15, 2010.

SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED: TUTOR-SCHOLARS AS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

✦ *Jeanne Marie Rose and Laurie Grobman*
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In *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Ernest Boyer proposes a model of faculty scholarship that includes discovery, integration, application, and teaching such that the elements "dynamically interact, forming an interdependent whole" (25). By making the case that "theory surely leads to practice. But practice also leads to theory" (16), Boyer's report addresses the value and significance of multiple intellectual activities. In this way, it challenges the research/teaching hierarchy, advocates for a rethinking of academic roles and responsibilities, and calls for greater recognition of professional accomplishments. In the two decades since Boyer's proposal, scholars, professors, and administrators have discussed the implications of this broader model for faculty. We believe, however, that Boyer's expanded conception of scholarship can also be applied to peer tutoring in writing and the curricular movement known as undergraduate research.

Certainly, as the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, which published the first "Tutors' Corner" article in 1984, and other professional organizations would be quick to point out, peer tutors are already engaged in undergraduate research. Yet, just as Boyer believes "we urgently need a more creative view of the work of the professoriate" (xii), we argue that an expanded undergraduate research pedagogy enables a parallel orientation for writing tutors. Peer tutors' work entails a synthesis of activities analogous to Boyer's four interrelated kinds of scholarship—discovery, integration, application, and teaching (or, for our purposes, tutoring). Peer tutors' practical tutoring and theoretical knowledge continually shape one another, the tutors are often called upon to do institutional outreach and service, and they frequently share their work with audiences beyond their home institutions. By making these connections—interpersonally and across fields of knowledge—peer tutors are poised to achieve what Boyer characterizes as "the work of the scholar" (16).

We therefore encourage peer tutoring programs to promote undergraduate research as a means of cultivating engaged tutor-scholars. With reference to the writing fellows program at Penn State Berks, we suggest that Boyer's multifaceted approach can be used to foster a vision of tutor-scholars whose work enriches local programs while simultaneously contributing to the larger discipline of peer tutoring. As Boyer readily acknowledges, his categories are inherently overlapping. Our subsequent discussion is based on his taxonomy, offering examples of undergraduate research that illustrate the scholarship of integration, application, tutoring, and discovery. We conclude by examining how these activities collectively constitute new forms of knowledge-making with exciting potential for the scholarship of peer tutoring.

TUTOR TRAINING AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF INTEGRATION

In Boyer's view, the scholarship of integration involves "serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research" (19). As he explains, this intellectual activity is helpful for "educating nonspecialists" (18). We have found Boyer' scholarship of integration particularly useful in training writing fellows to work in classrooms, and we imagine writing center directors could also think of tutor preparation in these terms. In our three-credit training practicum, writing fellows read widely in the field of peer tutoring while simultaneously facilitating peer groups in developmental writing classes. Practicum discussions routinely connect assigned readings to group tutoring sessions. Boyer's notion of integration, however, demands a deeper synthesis of knowledge that allows tutors to view their semester's work holistically and apply this understanding as they move from novice to experienced tutors.

We therefore assign a capstone project designed to synthesize the semester's coursework. We give the group few guidelines or restrictions, other than to create a resource that allows for dialogue with future writing fellows. Recent examples have included a tutor training video produced by the 2005 class and a collection of tutoring scrapbooks created in 2007. A particularly compelling illustration of how the scholarship of integration can elicit undergraduate research comes from our Fall 2006 tutoring class, who produced "The Continuing Adventures of King WF," a comic book that features our program's very own mascot and alter ego, King Writing Fellow (or King WF). Along with his sidekicks Scribbles, a pencil armed with an eraser, and Inky, an ink blob, King WF helps peer groups in trouble, defending them against his arch-nemesis—The Editor. Sketches entitled "Lost Voices," "Procrastination," "HOCs vs. LOCs," and "Writer's Block" feature common tutoring problems. In keeping with Boyer's assertion that the scholarship of integration entails "making connections" and "illuminating data in a revealing way" (18), these vignettes draw from existing peer tutoring scholarship, yet convey it through comic book conventions. For example, readers meet the occasionally thwarted superhero, seen when King WF accidentally crashes into a classroom window in an attempt to rescue a peer group fixated on LOCs, lower- or later-order concerns, as opposed to HOCs, or higher-order concerns. "The Continuing Adventures" also adopts "HOCed" and "LOCed" as new verbs, imbued with the incantatory magic of superpowers and the terse "BAM" and "POW" of the genre.

Produced in-house using Adobe InDesign, the comic was available to tutors in a password-protected electronic format for on-demand printing and distribution to peer groups; tutors also created a tri-fold poster exhibit, displayed at program events and activities, that allowed for simultaneous viewing of all four sketches. Through these multiple media, the comic served as a conversation starter in peer tutoring groups, a tutor recruitment tool, and an archive representing the 2006 class's collective insights. Notably, this work of creative undergraduate research helped our writing fellows to think of the field's existing best practices in light of their unique experiences. Increasingly confident about their own expertise, the group felt authorized to move beyond the local, presenting their work in a poster session at the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association.

BRIDGE-BUILDING AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF APPLICATION

Although meaningful, archival documents like "The Continuing Adventures" cannot replace face-to-face interactions among tutors in training, accomplished writing fellows, and faculty stakeholders. This exchange enacts Boyer's scholarship of application, which he characterizes as engaged problem-solving. Scholars conducting this type of research ask, "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions?" (Boyer 21). Faculty members in writing studies—whether writing program administrators, writing center directors, or advocates for writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs—routinely ask these questions, relying upon their expertise to promote faculty development and lobby for institutional change. As our writing fellows' experiences illustrate, peer tutors are also poised to apply their tutoring knowledge to address real-world institutional needs.

The work of writing fellow Misty Doane, who trained with our program's founder Candace Spigelman in 2004, illustrates how "new intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application" (Boyer 23). Concerned that valuable knowledge would be lost with Spigelman's unexpected death in December 2004, Doane developed a proposal to serve as a peer mentor for the following year's tutors in training. To ensure program continuity, Doane attended the 2005 tutoring practicum, accompanied new tutors to their developmental writing courses, responded to their journals, and was available for consultation throughout the semester. When appropriate, she conveyed tutors' concerns to Jeanne, who was teaching the training course for the first time and needed perspective on tutors' experiences. By applying her knowledge of both peer tutoring and the local institutional culture, Doane helped the writing fellows program to transition through an uncertain time. Her original proposal has since led

to an institutionalized peer mentorship, suitable for other peer tutoring programs, which allows a skilled writing fellow to apply accumulated knowledge to the mentoring of novice writing fellows and—thanks to Doane's initiative—the course instructor.

Applied undergraduate research also has the potential to connect peer tutoring programs with the broader campus community. In 2007, our program began offering an undergraduate internship experience. Initially, this internship was conceived as a site for document development: interns, typically professional writing majors, needed to produce various publications for inclusion in their degree portfolios, while the writing fellows program sought publicity materials through which it could promote itself within the college. Eventually, document development began to encompass bigger questions that lent themselves to institutional research: How is the writing fellows program viewed on campus? How can the program market itself to faculty clients? How might our design choices shape perceptions of the program? If a document appears too whimsical, might it alienate prospective faculty clients? If it appears too drab, might it turn off prospective tutors? Gradually, these complex rhetorical questions gave way to a working relationship. Intern Sarah Bollinger became a colleague, actively researching the local culture and applying that knowledge through the production of brochures, newsletters, and other publicity materials informed by her bridge-building across groups of faculty and students.

PUBLICATION AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TUTORING AND DISCOVERY

Just as Boyer's attention to integration and application validates scholarly activities that are often overlooked, his interest in the scholarship of teaching resists the notion that teaching is "a routine function" (23). He insists that "good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners" (24). The scholarship of teaching extends beyond "excellent teaching" to reflection, investigation, and action on and about *student learning* (Hutchings and Shulman 13). Following Boyer, we are committed to validating the intellectual work conducted in tutoring sessions, especially as tutors reflect on and experiment with tutoring efficacy. We see the scholarship of tutoring as a complex form of inquiry through which practice can inform theory, altering and enlarging knowledge for tutors and tutees alike. For some tutors, this kind of reflection on practice is a natural step toward publication, or the scholarship of discovery. Wrestling with what they have called the "tutoring tightrope" (Didow et al. 2004) has therefore enabled our writing fellows to identify contributions to the discipline and disseminate them through published undergraduate research.

Negotiating our program's unique structure has been both a challenge and an opportunity for our tutors, who note that their tutoring sessions differ from the writing center tutorials most textbooks assume. While texts like Margot Soven's *What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know* are increasingly addressing classroom-based tutoring, our writing fellows' search for applicable advice has motivated them to research and publish their own. Laura Lawfer, for example, published a Tutor's Column in the *Writing Lab Newsletter* that examines the differences between individual and group tutoring. As she explains, "our writing fellows work during regular class time with groups of three or four students, encouraging the students to give one another suggestions for their papers" (12). Bithyah Shaparenko, whose column also appeared in *Writing Lab Newsletter*, describes her search for solutions when her peer group did not "start off the discussion of the paper by saying something positive about the paper and then pointing out something confusing or missing" as they "were supposed to" (11). Lacking a handbook to help her, Shaparenko "adapted" a strategy from McAndrew and Reigstad's *Tutoring Writing* "to fit a writing group" (11). Modifying McAndrew and Reigstad's suggestion that tutors begin one-to-one sessions by asking the writer to sum up the argument in one sentence, Shaparenko asked each group member, ending with the writer, to summarize the paper's focus. This strategy helped the group to collectively explore "the meaning of the text as a whole" (12).

Other Penn State Berks writing fellows have published Tutor's Columns that showcase how the scholarship of tutoring can elicit awareness that challenges academic and programmatic norms. Drawing on work by Kenneth Bruffee, and also by James Reither and Douglas Vipond, Laura Hirneisen strayed from the writing fellows' agenda by encouraging students to contact her for on-line workshopping. She "created an alternative community in which they could informally seek additional assistance" (10). Although we resist on-line tutoring as a replacement for face-to-face interaction, Hirneisen's ingenuity proved a good fit and strengthened the group's in-class sessions. In a piece focusing on his experiences as an adult student/peer tutor, Jason Tremblay used his practical experiences as a basis for theorizing how non-traditional tutors can achieve peer status. Fearful that his "peers" would see him as an instructor, Tremblay "decided to tell personal anecdotes in which my writing skill has compensated for other academic deficiencies" (15). Using examples that "are frowned upon in traditional academia," such as reading only the back cover of a novel and receiving a 95% on the essay test, Tremblay attempted to "appeal to a tutee's sense of utility, and to a lesser degree, sense of impish conspiracy, while taking care not to cross the line into advocating academic dishonesty" (15). Hirneisen's and Tremblay's approaches expanded our sense of best practices, and we applaud their scholarship for bringing new intellectual insights to existing assumptions.

CELEBRATING THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF TUTOR-SCHOLARS

Just as faculty activity has been narrowly conceived in terms of the distinct cells of research, teaching, and service, the work of peer tutors is often reduced to tutoring alone. By using Boyer's terms to acknowledge the varied work tutors do, however, peer tutoring programs are poised to generate a rich learning culture that promotes multiple forms of undergraduate research. As our discussion has shown, these scholarly activities can range from the popular to the academic, from the applied to the theoretical, and from the local to the disciplinary. Together, they offer new opportunities for knowledge-making and a new frame for understanding existing practices.

Boyer's model has clear benefits for all kinds of peer tutoring programs. Undergraduate research projects that integrate learning generate lasting insights that allow tutors to move from novice to experienced. To that end, the scholarship of integration may offer a helpful vision for tutor training. By participating in applied research, tutors learn to examine local cultures and institutional structures, engaging with faculty members and students in new ways. This scholarship of application may be especially valuable for tutors who go on to pursue teaching careers or graduate study. The scholarship of tutoring and discovery illustrates just how powerful Boyer's model can be, as it encourages tutors to present and publish their findings, disseminating knowledge to the broader discipline. In many cases, this form of undergraduate research enables peer tutors to extend their sense of professionalism from their home institutions to a broader field of peer and professional practitioner-scholars.

Yet, as Boyer would caution, dividing scholarly activities into separate spheres is somewhat misleading; it is through their synthesis that these pursuits are most creative and dynamic. Thus, we are advocating that peer tutoring programs follow Boyer's lead in cultivating tutor-scholars who see all of their tutoring activities as part of a comprehensive scholarly agenda. An assignment in yesterday's tutoring practicum may generate next spring's conference presentation. Next month's tutor recruitment flier may lead to an on-campus investigation of the writing fellows program's reputation. Today's tutoring session may become the topic of a published article. And so on. Boyer gives us a vocabulary for talking about our tutors' multiple intellectual contributions and, with it, a chance to expand and renew our understanding of their work. We hope others will look to Boyer's model to do the same. ✦

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TUTOR'S COLUMN

A TUTOR'S QUANDARY

✦ *Claudine Griggs*
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I worked with a student, whom I'll call Jenn-X, at the University of Rhode Island Writing Center during spring 2008. Jenn had drafted a "literacy narrative" for freshman composition, describing her wondrous awakening to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet because of her high school English teacher. The paper was well written and well organized, with snappy narrative detail, but it gradually became clear that something was amiss.

First, Jenn claimed that everyone in the class was "totally lost" until the instructor handed out a list of terms for Old English. I outlined the chronologies of Old, Middle, and Elizabethan English, and Jenn revised her reference accordingly. Next, the paper offered an elaborate account of reading parts aloud from *Romeo and Juliet*, an activity that clarified the action and made the play more enjoyable for all the students. Jenn was selected to read "one of the three witches." Beginning to understand, I asked if she recalled any lines, suggesting that a direct quotation might expand the paper (one of her objectives) and add textual specificity. She could not remember. I recited a bit of "Double, double toil and trouble," which I probably misquoted, and asked if it helped her memory.

"No," she said.

"What about sections your classmates read?"

"Nothing comes to mind."

We moved to Jenn's closing paragraph, and it was a little too tidy. This single classroom experience not only illuminated Shakespeare for "all the students" but also helped Jenn discover a deeper meaning of literature. The lesson changed her life "forever." Jenn's apparent lack of conviction, however, hinted that she had not discovered a deeper meaning in anything, so I returned to the earlier paragraph. "Perhaps you read the nurse's part?"

"That's not it."

"The balcony scene?"

"Nope."

"Well," I said, "you might want to look at the play again because I am pretty sure the three witches appear in *Macbeth*." I was more than sure, of course, but experience has taught me that educational dividends sometimes accrue by allowing students to exit gracefully from their errors. At this point, Jenn said, "None of this really happened. I just made it up for the assignment." And barely pausing, she added, "But now I can go online and pull some of those quotes you mentioned. Thank you so much!"

I did not directly admonish Jenn for presenting fiction as fact, but I did suggest that it would be better to write about real events, which need not be revolutionary or cataclysmic to form an effective paper. Further, my progressively detailed questioning should have demonstrated that English professors (her audience) will recognize misaligned characters and quotes from famous plays. Yet I was surprised that Jenn seemed unconcerned about getting caught with red ink dripping from her keyboard, and I was discomforted that she appeared enthusiastic about our session. I had helped to eliminate incriminating evidence. With extra detail and quotes from whatever play she decided to lie about, the essay might easily receive an "A." In her words, I was a great tutor; in my mind, there stirred a disquieting sense of criminal complicity.

Experienced writing teachers and tutors understand that students often game instructors with their essays. In "Reading Classrooms as Text," Jennie Nelson describes how students may short-circuit the "learning that assignments are designed to promote" (418) and cites students from a freshman sociology course. One admits, "I started writing everything from the top of my head. I said that I had interviewed the coach and interacted with my teammates but really didn't. I used the assignment sheet to compose the paper" (418). One of my own students, a freshman, read an essay aloud wherein he attributed the success of his final high school history paper (for which he had not done the reading) to his special talent as "the best bullshitter in the state." Afterward, our class had an energetic discussion about how such skills might be productive or counterproductive. My direct question "Is bullshitting your teacher wrong?" delivered opinionated responses. "Yes." "No." "It all depends."

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

I have not done a formal study, but freshman composition seems to generate more bullshit per square foot of classroom space than any other course. Why? In *On Bullshit*, Harry Frankfurt writes that people "tend to be more tolerant of bullshit than of lies, perhaps because we are less inclined to take the former as a personal affront" (50), which may be one reason bullshit goes down easier, if it does. So when a student deliberately presents a falsehood, we presume that he/she understands the deceit, and according to Frankfurt, "It is impossible for someone to lie unless he thinks he knows the truth" (55). Thus, there might be a subtle difference when Jenn-X ignorantly asserts that the three witches appear in *Romeo and Juliet* (bullshit) or that she recited scenes in class (a lie).

The distinction between lying and bullshitting is difficult for me to grasp sympathetically, but conversations suggest that, from students' perspectives, there is nothing particularly wrong with figuring out what professors want and delivering it by the most expedient means. The proof is in the grade, not in whether or not the paper is fabricated. And as Frankfurt further comments, "Bullshit is unavoidable wherever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about" (63). Students confronted with a writing assignment that they don't understand or care about are thereby prime candidates for a fast game of literacy charades.

Despite Frankfurt's claim that people are more tolerant of bullshit than lies, I perceive both as affronts. I assume that students are making an honest effort to meet the class requirements, and when they do not, it offends my sense of right and wrong, not to mention my respect for knowledge. Perhaps students think I'm stupid. They think that I think bullshit is acceptable. They think we're pals and I'll overlook indiscretions as long as the paper halfway meets the assignment. But even though I rarely display my anger, days after my session with Jenn, I wondered whether some irritation might have been instructive. For example, one of my colleagues received a heavily plagiarized paper from a graduating senior. In a meeting with the instructor, dean, and student, the instructor agreed to give the student a "D" for the course, allowing her to graduate on schedule. The student said, "Thank you, but I hope you won't think less of me because of this incident." Maybe students should know that, yes, we do think less. In an encounter such as the one with Jenn, tutors might suggest that writing about real events can simply be more effective and satisfying. They might gently question why the student chose to write about an inauthentic experience. They might ask, "What have I done to make you treat me so disrespectfully?" or dissect a rhetorical stance that elevates lying to a legitimate persuasive option. Tutors might discuss possible long-term effects of even the most skillful bullshit on professional reputation. But I doubt they could do all of this off-the-cuff in a thirty-minute session, especially if it takes fifteen minutes to realize that they've been had in the first place. We should not expect the wisdom of hindsight at the moment of discovery.

My advice is to be prepared ahead of time as part of a pre-game strategy. In my session with Jenn, I was not. It had been so long since I encountered deliberate deceit mixed with lack of remorse that I was angry, even if I restrained its expression. But lies happen, and they present an important opportunity to instruct because the long-term consequences of dishonesty can be harsher than those from error or lack of skill. Tutors should explain that (1) bullshit is decipherable, (2) there are consequences if caught by instructors (who are less forgiving than tutors), (3) it can be a dangerous long-range tactic (employers are less forgiving than teachers), (4) Jenn's reputation with the people she bullshits may not recover (if I have her as a student, her papers will be suspect), and (5) dishonesty circumvents the learning process. Specific discussion, of course, would depend on the tutor, student, and situation.

In April 2009, I shared a draft of this paper with my two basic writing classes and asked for opinions. On student nodded and said, "Sooner or later the bullshit runs out." Another, "Students can't learn by cheating." But the most disheartening remark was, "You can tell Jenn these things, but it won't do any good. Liars never change." Half the students agreed with this statement. It might even be true. But I say that tutors can't afford the pessimism of "Liars never change." Let's give our clients the benefit of hope, use our best efforts to purge academic dishonesty wherever we find it, and treat any witchery as an errant first draft, subject to revision. ✦

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CALENDAR FOR WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATIONS

April 8-10, 2010: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Lansing, MI
Contact: E-mail: ecwca2010questions@gmail.com; conference website: <http://writing.msu.edu/ecwca>.

April 9-10, 2010: Pacific Northwest Writing Centers Association, in Monmouth, OR
Contact: Katherine Schmidt: e-mail: writingcenter@wou.edu; phone: 503-838-8234. Conference Web site: <http://www.wou.edu/las/humanities/writingctr/PNWCA.php>.

April 9-10, 2010: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Newark, DE
Contact: Melissa Ianetta and Barbara Gaal Lutz (lutz@english.udel.edu). E-mail: MAWCAconference2010@english.udel.edu.

April 10-11, 2010: New England Writing Centers Association, in Boston, MA
Contact: Kathyrn Nielsen-Dube: 978-837-3551; e-mail: Kathryn.nielsen@merrimack.edu; conference website: <www.newca-conference.com>.

May 25-28, 2010: European Writing Centers Association, in Paris, France
Contact: E-mail: Ann Mott: amott@aup.fr. EWCA website: <http://ewca.sabanciuniv.edu/eng/>.

November 3-6, 2010. International Writing Centers Association/National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, in Baltimore, MD

Contact: Barb Lutz and John Nordlof. E-mail: IWCAconference2010@english.udel.edu; conference website: <http://www.mawcaonline.org/iwca>.

Feb. 17-19, 2011: Southeastern Writing Centers Association, in Tuscaloosa, AL
Contact: Luke Niiler: e-mail: lpniiler@ua.edu; phone: 205-348-9460.