

Southern Discourse

Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association



Spring 2008 • Volume 11, Issue 2



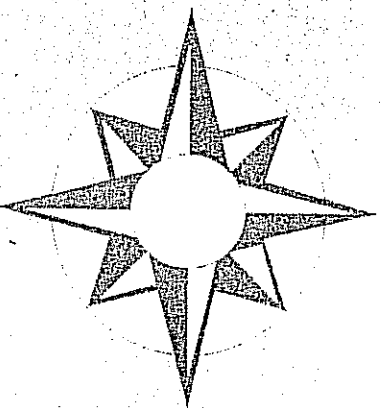
Back to the Center with
Columbus State University
(see page 8)

Shireen Campbell explores
conversations in writing
and speaking centers
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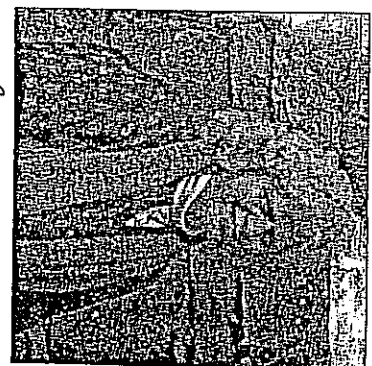
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AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE
THE WORLD FOR WOMEN



Christine

A Note from the Editor: Your SD Manuscript in the Making

By Christine S. Cozzens,
Agnes Scott College

When the SWCA first revived *Southern Discourse* ten years ago, we had a little trouble

getting copy. After all, it was an unknown and rather primitively produced newsletter, and given the busy lives of many people in our profession, any writing energies were probably going to go towards more widely recognized periodicals. I'm happy to say that that's no longer the case. I don't have to cajole or browbeat people at conferences anymore, though I am always suggesting and encouraging—a far more comfortable demeanor for me! Today, SD's more professional design and growing national reputation give it more credibility.

Still, I never have enough articles or enough variety of perspectives to my satisfaction, and worst of all, I never hear from over ninety-nine percent of you—directors, tutors, fellows, and others in the region and beyond who have important ideas, questions, opinions, research, and creative work to share with our readership.

I am asking each of you to consider becoming an SD contributor in the next year or two. If you work in or have anything to do with writing centers, you have a large array of topics to choose from: the tutoring session that went particularly well—or not—and your analysis of it; the conference presentation you worked so hard on that was well-received but evanescent because you didn't publish the results; the poem you wrote one night after a long day in the center; the story of how your center was renovated to accommodate writers with disabilities; what you learned about writing from tutoring, observing tutoring, or being tutored. The possibilities are endless. The SD format encourages short pieces (most are under 1000 words), so writing up your ideas need not be very time-consuming.

Talk to me at conferences, email me with ideas, or simply send me what you've got. SD wants to hear from more of you so that we will truly fulfill our mission of being the Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association.

Noisy Writing, Quiet Speaking? Exploring Conversations in Writing and Speaking Centers

By Shireen Campbell, Davidson College

Recently, my institution bolstered its emphasis on oral communication, which had been previously limited to two speech courses a year, taught by an adjunct. The first step involved hiring a full professor in communications, who would provide faculty development and offer support for oral communication through developing a speaking center in addition to teaching two courses and hiring other instructors for communications courses. After this professor was hired, she and I and another colleague in rhetoric and composition began discussing how our writing center and proposed speaking center could coexist and be mutually supportive.

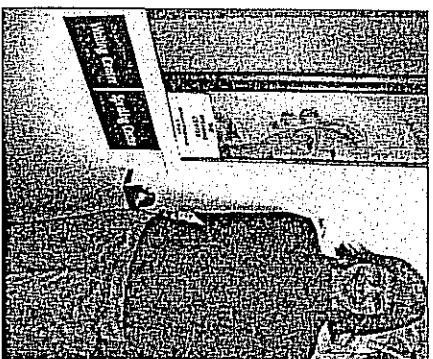
By spring 2005, the college decided to house both the existing writing center and the new speaking center in one space, each directed by the faculty member with relevant experience. This expansion coincided with a facilities redesign. As the directors discussed the new space, some conceptual differences emerged. Whereas writing centers are often open spaces, featuring semiprivate conversational areas, the speaking center director requested private spaces with opaque glass and sound-proofing.

The speaking center joined the writing center in August 2005. In fall 2006, three semesters later, I decided to investigate the conversations taking place both within our separate tutorial areas and between them. This research had two main components: I analyzed tutorial tapes of sessions from both centers; I surveyed both tutorial staffs to see how and if writing and speaking center practices parallel and/or diverge from each other.

The results surprised and heartened me and have intriguing implications for tutor training and development in our writing and speaking centers.

Methods

After I got project approval from our human subjects institutional review board, recordings began in mid-November and finished in early December, with the



Shireen Campbell

being recorded. In the end, I received useable tapes of three speaking center sessions total, two with one tutor, one with another.

Results

I listened to each session twice, recording the kinds of exchanges and amounts of time per exchanges. Overall, I found that tutorial sessions divide consistently into four phases:

Preamble—consisting of questions and answers about assignment and concerns. The tutor initiates this conversation, and the client answers questions, sometimes adding additional information without prompting. Then, the tutor explains the process for new clients, while for returning clients, the pair agree on methods. Performance—at this point, the client reads the paper or gives the speech.

Q and A and discussion—once the paper or speech has been delivered, the tutor and client talk. This discussion may be tutor-driven, sometimes directive, even prescriptive, at other times, more Socratic and generative.

Wrap—most sessions end with a brief question and answer about final concerns, followed by tutor summary of the main points covered.

Other notable features—silence, laughter, and casual conversation—occurred in almost all sessions.

My major findings showed that my initial fears concerning divergent tutorials weren't accurate. Most sessions spent a few minutes initially on collecting information about the assignment and client concerns, then the tutor explained the general session format. The writing center sessions all adhered to the four phases—preamble, reading, Q and A and discussion, wrap. The only variant is that some

students read their whole essay, then talked with the tutor, while more read it in pieces, interspersed with conversation.

The speaking center sessions followed this overall structure, although no speeches were recorded. One was performed off-tape after the preamble. One rough version was rehearsed, with pauses devoted to developing power point slides, while another client elaborated on her topic during discussion of development and focus strategies, then practiced last off-tape.

Despite general structural similarities, sessions varied considerably in terms of the percentages of the total time spent on different tutorial phases. Specifically, the leadership during discussions and amounts of time on kinds of discussions were quite variable. Some discussions were primarily tutor-driven directive question and answer while others included a higher degree of Socratic questioning. The three speaking center tutorials seemed to elicit much more client engagement—given the much higher percent of client talk during the discussion phase—in comparison to writing center tutorials.

Yet consider this difference in relation to the initial difficulty in getting speaking center clients to participate. Although five clients agreed to participate, resulting in three successful and two botched recordings, three other clients refused to participate. (In comparison, no writing center clients refused.) To explore the possible significance of these refusals, I exchanged email with the senior speaking center tutor who had reported them. As

I explained in my email, I theorized that the less confident clients weren't interested; the sessions I've heard on tape (three) involved pretty confident, chatty clients who did most of the talking. There is a higher degree of variability in the writing sessions; some less confident and more resistant clients just think they'll get commas fixed and shut down, while the best sessions (and most motivated writers) feature more client chat (Campbell n.p.).

The tutor replied: Yes, I definitely feel that your theory sums up the clients that I had. Two seemed unprepared (like the speaking center was a last

ditch effort before the presentation) and I did probably talk and give suggestions over half of the time. Normally, more confident clients do most of the talking, so I definitely agree! (Washington n.p.)

In view of her comment, the discrepancy between writing and speaking center sessions seems less meaningful.

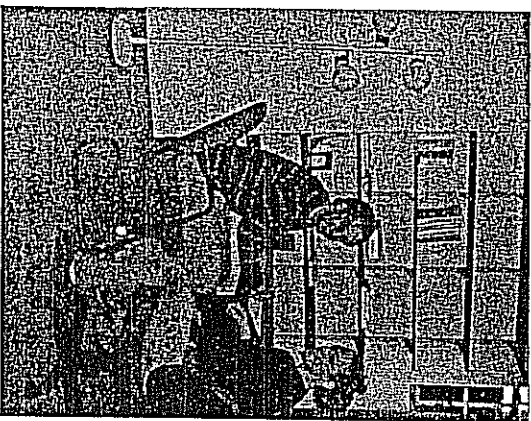
Overall, both centers have resistant as well as engaged clients. While the writing center encounters more resistance from clients who believe that they need only fine-tuning and surface-level help, the speaking center has more clients with a high degree of anxiety about their public speaking abilities.

Survey

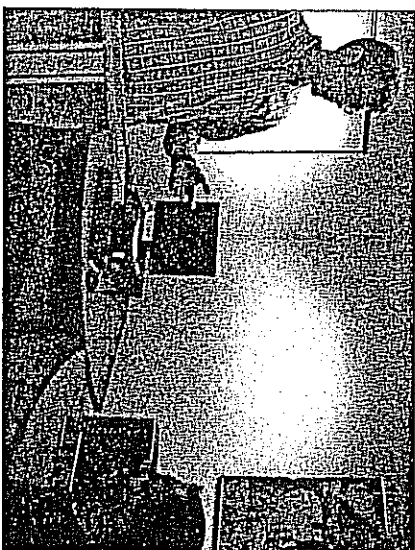
Further information came from staff survey responses. I made a survey available to all tutors in the fall using the Surveyor tool, which allows on-line, asynchronous, anonymous responses. The survey included ten multiple choice questions with single answers and one discursive question. Nine of ten tutors responded, with one botched partial response from a writing center tutor. Their responses reveal that writing tutors chat occasionally about upcoming papers; speaking center tutors and one writing center tutor have chatted about presentations (see Appendix One). Our students seem to have greater initial familiarity with the writing center, probably because more classes require writing; yet the writing center tutors have used speaking center since they started tutoring and became aware of its existence. And yet tutors report little cross-over to draw on the expertise of the "other side." The tutors discuss general campus life and work when they are not busy, but they converse about specific tutorial strategies or work infrequently, if at all.

Implications

Begun more than a decade apart, directed by faculty from different disciplines, our writing and speaking centers use separate spaces in our shared facility and select and train tutors separately. Because learning to intervene effectively in one's own




Davidson College Writing Center Tutors



Davidson College Speaking Center Tutors

writing process and developing mnemonic devices for recalling material during presentation are different goals, our tutors do need some specialized training. At the same time, this study convinces me that our tutorial practices and challenges overlap considerably: the college writing and speaking centers should alter initial and on-going training in light of such overlaps. Through combined training, we could cover a host of similar concerns, ranging from time management of sessions to structuring of sessions and the importance of a final wrap to emphasize the most important points covered in a tutorial. We could also incorporate cross training that requires new tutors to work with a tutor on the "other side" of the center as well as on their own, which would further enhance tutor sympathy for the anxious client. The writing center tutors, for example, routinely give presentations on the center to first-year writing classes, and they could rehearse these presentations with speaking center tutors.

Building on overlaps could also enliven on-going professional development. For example, we should draw on tutor expertise in managing "challenging" clients. The writing center tutors are accustomed to resistant clients, while the speaking center tutors encounter more overtly anxious clients. Tutors with particularly effective strategies could share them with the other writing and speaking center tutors.

Studying our centers' tutorial conversations reminds me that good conversation, like an effective tutorial, requires attentive listening. In an academic context, where disciplinary divisions magnify the differences in our subject matters and practices, this research has reaffirmed for me just how valuable—how mutually supportive and energizing—cross-disciplinary conversation can be. 

Works Cited

- Campbell, Shireen. "Re: Speaking/Writing Center research." Email to Tia Washington. 5 February 2007.
 Washington, Tia. "Re: Speaking/Writing Center research." Email to author. 6 February 2007.

Tutoring

Before you became a tutor, did you use the writing center for assistance with papers?

Speaking	2N	1Y	Writing	3N	3Y
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Since you have become a tutor, have you used the writing center for assistance with papers?

Speaking	2N	1Y	Writing	4N	2Y
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Before you became a tutor, did you use the speaking center for assistance with speeches or presentations?

Speaking	2Y	IN*	Writing	3N	0Y
----------	----	-----	---------	----	----

*The speaking center tutor who was hired in Spring 2005 started at the same time as the center began, so she would have been unable to participate. Only responses from writing center tutors who began after the speaking center began are included.

Since you have become a tutor, have you used the speaking center for assistance with speeches or presentations?

Speaking	2N	1Y	Writing	4N	2Y
----------	----	----	---------	----	----

Chatting

Since becoming a tutor, have you chatted with other tutors about papers in progress?

Speaking	3N	0Y	Writing	0N	6Y
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If yes, how often?

Once or twice	2	a few times	4	often	0
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Since becoming a tutor, have you chatted with other tutors about upcoming presentations?

Speaking	3Y	0Y	Writing	5N	1Y
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If yes, how often?

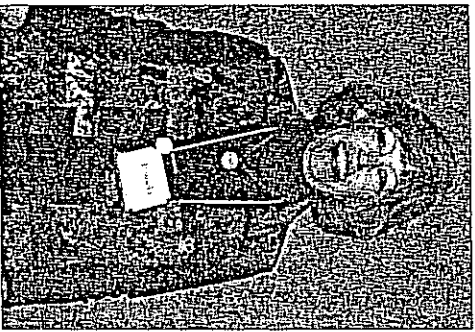
Once or twice	2	a few times	2	often	0
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Overall, how much interaction about writing or speaking do you have with tutors who work in the "other" area? (i.e. if you are a writing tutor, this refers to the speaking center tutors, and vice versa)

None	1	Infrequent	2	Casual conversation	6
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Compass Points Beyond Our Borders: International Collaborations

By Pamela B. Childers, The McCallie School



Pam Childers

During this primary campaign season when candidates are talking about immigration as an issue, I want to change the focus from whether or not we should be educating non-US citizens or whether we should "secure" our borders.

Instead, I would like to focus on how, through the Internet, publications, and professional organizations, we are able to collaborate on an international level. These collaborations continue to enrich our perspective on writing center and writing across the curriculum (WAC) research and practice. For instance, our own Bonnie Deyet, College of Charleston, wrote the IWCA Scholarship award-winning chapter "Peering Across the Pond: The Role of Students in Developing Other Students' Writing in the US and UK" with writing center colleagues Susan Orr from York St. John's University and Margo Blythman and Cecilia Bishop of London College of Communication. Her coauthors have been active in IWCA/NWCA, WAC, and CCCC conferences for years, frequently coming to the US to share their knowledge and experience. I met Susan and Margo in London many years ago before they had become involved internationally, and we shared our common concerns about working with students in our respective writing centers at a pub. That meeting led to other collaborations at US conferences and even a workshop presentation in Athens, Greece a few years ago with Cecilia and Jane Milton of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Other writing center directors such as Leigh Ryan of University of Maryland and Joan Mullin of University of Texas have been actively involved for years with writing centers in other regions of the world. Leigh established a strong collaboration with directors in various institutions in South Africa, while Joan has been involved throughout the UK,

Greece and many other European countries. In fact, they have encouraged US and international presentations and publications involving a variety of global perspectives on writing center theory and practice.

Another collaborator many of you may have met through his WCenter responses over the years is Gerd Bräuer, who used to teach at Emory University before returning to Freiburg, Germany. He has been actively involved in writing centers and WAC for years, presenting at conferences throughout the world and sharing his experience collaborating with elementary and secondary school writing centers to expand our knowledge of reading-writing centers, for instance. This summer he will be hosting the European Writing Centers Association (EWCA) conference in Freiburg, which several of us will be attending. What an opportunity to interact with writing center directors from many other countries in one setting. Registration information may be found at <http://www.ph-freiburg.de/en/schreibzentrum/ewca-conference-2008.html>.

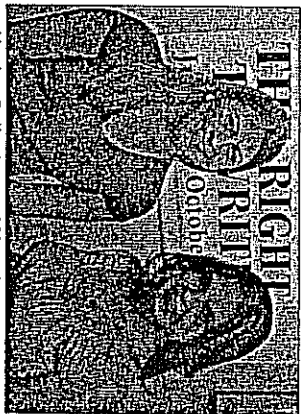
In 2006, I edited a collection of writing center articles for *The Clearing House*, which included excellent articles by Michael Mitchell, who described his writing center in South America before he moved to a school in Istanbul, and by Gerd. These publications as well as Bonnie's collaborative one give us a better perspective on how we do what we do. But we must also remember that without traveling from our desks, we can exchange ideas with writing center directors everywhere in the world through the Internet. A few years ago Gerd introduced me to Dilek Tokay of Sabanci University, who hosted the 2006 EWCA conference in Turkey. Gerd invited Dilek to work with us in planning a workshop on secondary schools writing centers for the 2006 WAC conference at Clemson. After months of "talking" online and discovering what a rich resource Dilek was for writing center and WAC work, I was delighted to actually meet and work with her at the conference. Since then, we have continued to work together on several projects online, planning workshops for future conferences and sharing a keynote address at the 2008 EWCA conference. Not only have we both gained considerable knowledge of how we can change what we do at our own institutions and revise our thinking, but also we have discovered how our styles can complement each other. Dilek is so well organized and presents her work from a business perspective using technology more effectively than I do, and I can push her to share her knowledge through international publication and presentation.

"Compass Points" continued on page 11

Publishing Tutor Research

By Hayley Gallagher and Maggie Greaves,
Agnes Scott College

In her article "Beyond Lore: A Call for Tutor Research," Beth Godbee writes, "Too often tutors are cast as the subjects, rather than the agents of research" (3). We agree on the importance of tutors as agents of research, as our direct relationship with the tutee gives us an apposite perspective to add to writing center discourse. Our writing center at Agnes Scott College is staffed by undergraduate tutors, and we enjoy taking initiative in conducting research projects for writing center conferences. Yet after the adrenaline of presenting our findings subsides, we don't follow through with publication. Publication is, however, a crucial step in the final stages of a research project because it gives permanence to and grounds discussion about the neglected areas of writing center theory we investigate.



Hayley Gallagher and Maggie Greaves

During the 2008 SWCA Conference, keynote speakers and board members placed great emphasis on undergraduate research and publication. We should claim our place in the scholarly community by submitting our work for publication.

As writing tutors at Agnes Scott College, we already conceive of, execute, and present original undergraduate research projects, but the 2008 conference pressed us to consider the potential of our research had we taken the next step: publication. With each research project, we had the exciting opportunity to examine our current writing center practice in the context of existing theory and to explore how our practice supplements that greater body of theory. Our most rewarding projects have revealed neglected areas of writing center research and have helped us take steps towards filling the gap. But publication of our findings would have founded productive, continuing conversations on the issues most relevant to writing centers today.

In recent years, our writing center research has focused on students' perceptions about writing and tutoring, which available theory has neglected. For example, at this year's conference in Savannah, we presented on tutees' relationships with

Good Places for Tutor Publication

Agora
(undergraduate academic writing)
<http://www.lyndhurst.edu/~1526.xml>

The Dangling Modifier
("an international newsletter by and for peer tutors in writing")
http://www.unc.psu.edu/Dangling_Modifier/index.php

Excavato
("a biannual online national reviewed journal... dedicated to the publication of undergraduate student research")
<http://www.temple.edu/ccc/mccair/mccairjournal/index.html>

Neo-Vox
("venue for multidisciplinary, polyphonic approaches to a common topic")
www.neo-vox.org
Praxis
(writing centers)
<http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/praxis/>

Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric
<http://www.wbk.psu.edu/academics/degrees/pwrit/youngscholars/>

revision. We noted a paucity of theory related to revision, a process intrinsic to the writing tutorial. This project and much of the other research presented at the SWCA conferences contribute to our constantly evolving understanding of tutoring, and publication of tutor perspectives would provide a more comprehensive body of theory.

Fortunately, tutors are publishing; recent issues of *Southern Discourse* included articles written from a tutor's perspective. In Spring 2006, Lisha Daniels Storey wrote an article about her experience transitioning from tutor to coordinator to director. Echoing a ubiquitous concern of writing center theory, Lisha reported "an awkward state of being in between, not quite peer, yet not quite professor" (12). She goes on to discuss how she handled this tenuous position. This sort of story, which can only be told from a tutor's perspective, can help to ground theoretical claims about the role of tutor as both student and teacher.

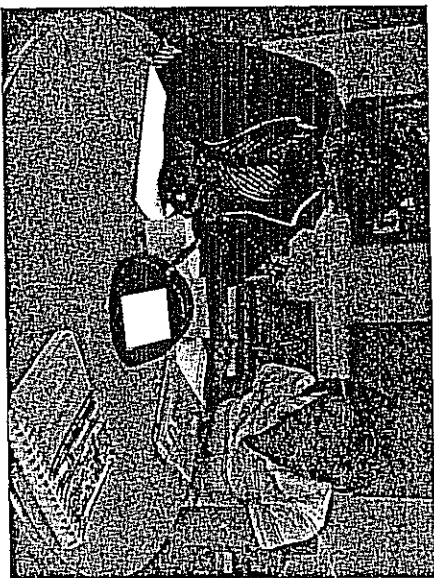
Back to the Center Trickster at Our Table: The Columbus State University Writing Center

By Noreen Groover Lape

I write this article having just finished reading *The Everyday Writing Center*—a book that imagines writing centers as dynamic, relational learning communities that privilege a pedagogy of reflection, maturing, and becoming. *The Everyday Writing Center* presents an ideal which appeals strongly to me—a blueprint for growth. Most of the book tugs at my creativity and infuses my strategic planning. One chapter in particular, “Trickster at Your Table,” makes me wax nostalgic and reminds me just how far the CSU Writing Center has come. Trickster—that character from multiple mythologies who plays pranks and creates chaos—all in an effort to change the world and to shape culture. The five co-writers of *The Everyday Writing Center* urge directors to “teach a mindfulness to Trickster and possibly a Trickster mind.” Trickster tutors here, and occasionally Trickster directs.

Trickster Tutors

A tastefully decorated house of mirth, the CSU Writing Center is a wellspring of word play in soothing blues and greens. My undergraduate consultants constantly use language to turn tricks on each other, on me—even on language itself. At work in my office with the door open, I hear laughter bubbling up from the writing center next door. Somebody starts uttering, several voices rise to riff on the joke, and suddenly there’s a burst of hysterical energy punctuated with the satisfaction of finding just the right phrase—the one that unleashes the peel of glee. My Catholic school upbringing kicks in and I think, “I must tell them to hold it down.” But I stop myself and chastise the inner nun: “Must language play always be so serious?”



Columbus State University tutors

Consultants congregate in the writing center, even during the off hours, to play with language. On any given day, an orphaned poem sits unclaimed in a printer and little pieces of paper conveying doodles and notes are scattered among the computers. One favorite word game I call “Burn” interrupts the conversation. The rules are simple: someone issues an insult and then the others cry, “Burn!” Over the semester however, the game has become complicated, drawing on the linguistic powers of the group. In its new version, “Nomenclature Burn,” the “burner” must label the type of burn hurled at the “burnee.” (Burnerloras consultant’s sister: “Wow, you’re a chemistry major. What are you doing in the writing center?” Group: “Burn!” Burner: “Chemical burn.”)

My inner nun reproaches me: “Your consultants do not take their jobs seriously. What is anyone learning with all that fooling around?” The coauthors of *The Everyday Writing Center* explain the value of such spontaneity and play: Trickster enables “us to reflect on and perform in situations not accounted for in any training manual, employing a strength and intelligence capable of meeting the unexpected.” In building and directing the writing center, I have learned from my consultants to embrace Trickster’s creative potential.

Trickster in the Closet

Perhaps the most famous trickster in modern-day America is the indomitable Wile E. Coyote, who reminds us that while Trickster seeks to be an agent, he sometimes ends up the dupe. When I joined the faculty in 1997, Columbus College (est. 1958) was on the verge of its 40th anniversary and was celebrating its first year as a bona fide university. Who would have known that in ten years the enrollment would increase by fifty percent? The department of language and literature, like the rest of the university, had its own growing pains. When I started teaching at CSU, there was no writing center, no composition program—yet. English faculty were responsible for teaching a mandatory two-course composition sequence to all incoming freshmen. I was down from the big city, Philadelphia, where I had spent almost ten years teaching a menu of composition classes—from basic writing to advanced research writing and everything in between. I remember the ethical qualms that seized me when I realized my student Sherman, a quintessential basic writer with little hope of passing freshman composition on his own, had no recourse to a writing center,

for there was no writing center. I taught Sherman, even offered him individualized writing conferences. Nevertheless, over the semester I watched him (and several others in my two classes) flounder, grow frustrated, and ultimately fail.

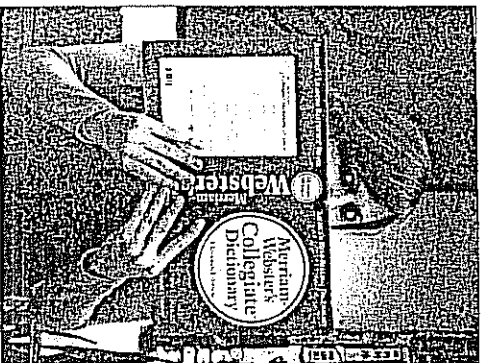
That spring semester my department grew concerned about the nonproductive enrollment problem in freshman composition. I readily volunteered to join a subcommittee working on a proposal for a new university writing center. The administration temporarily balked when they informed us that students could already receive tutoring in writing through the Academic Support Center (ASC)—a generic tutoring clearinghouse. This was news to us: a veritable Rubie Goldberg device from the Acme Corporation. We persisted with our mission, seeking to wrest the responsibility for writing tutors from the ASC and place it in the hands of English faculty who had some experience, practice, and training in writing.

After much politicking and cajoling, the administration granted cautious approval; after all, not even a year before, they had generously funded a state-of-the-art computer lab for use by composition students and faculty in order to fulfill a board of regents mandated technology requirement. The lab consisted of two spacious rooms housing fifty-some new computers. The lab would also be the site of the new "writing center." Immediately, we hired a staff of two tutors; cleared out the buckets, brooms, and cleaning solutions; and moved into a rather large-sized maintenance closet. From that point on, our mission has been to find a way out of the closet.

Trickster out of the Closet

Happy, our sojourn in the closet was short-lived. The administration in 1998 approved the department's request to hire a full-time, tenure-track writing center director. As we conducted a search that year, I created and taught a three-credit tutor training course, which has since become part of the English curriculum.

The new director we hired was soon able to move out of the closet and into a comfortable room near the English lab—one more suited for a growing staff. With a very limited budget, she gave composition students in the same position as my Sherman the help



Columbus State University tutor

By the Numbers

Columbus State University, located in Columbus, Georgia, is a member of the University System of Georgia. In 2007 the university served 7590 students—6548 undergraduates and 1042 graduates.

Writing Center Director: Dr. Noreen Groover Lape, associate professor, department of English
Number of Tutors: 10-15 peer writing consultants/writing fellows, all of whom have taken the three-credit ENGL 3256: Peer Writing Consultation
Student Visits: 1627 appointments made by 710 different students in 2007
Hours of Operation: Monday through Thursday from 10:00-6:00, Friday from 10:00-2:00, online consultations available
Website: <http://english.colstate.edu/writingcenter/>

they needed and started offering writing consultations via the internet. The writing center became an essential support for freshman composition as the number of adjunct faculty skyrocketed. Then in 2004 when that director resigned, I accepted the position, instigating the second phase of the center's development: to assist writers from all disciplines.

True, it helped that I was tenured when I accepted the role of director. Nonetheless, Trickster wit has proven invaluable.

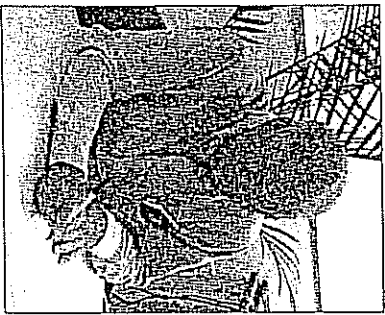
My first goal was to move the writing center from the College of Arts and Letters and market it to the larger university community. One of my "pranks" was to throw open the doors to students of all levels and disciplines. At the same time, I instructed my poorly paid but highly conscientious staff to turn people away when we became flooded. I then hung a paper on the wall and asked consultants to record the number of people they had to refuse. That semester I worked feverishly on a proposal for funding to support the growth of the writing center, including the retention-destroying statistic indicating the number of students seeking help but not getting it. After a shockingly brief chat with the vice president of academic affairs in 2005 in which she called the proposal a "no brainer," my budget was quadrupled and the writing center was moved from the College of Arts and Letter

"Back to the Center" continued on page 11

What's the Point? The

Long of Members: The

By Peter M. Carriere, Georgia College and State University



Peter Carriere

A couple of years ago, a student graduating with an MA in Teaching at Georgia College & State University, announced that in order to avoid having points deducted from her writing in high school because of misplaced commas she simply started writing only simple sentences. Immediately, a young man raised his hand and enthusiastically announced, "I did the same thing!" Their problem, of course, originated in the use of dependent clauses, adverbial phrases, and the like, and their way of dealing with it was to withdraw—not an especially sound educational result of punishment for infractions.

It's a good thing they didn't know the long and short of it. Definition 1 in the OED states that a clause is "a short sentence. Makes sense. But the definition continues with this rather nebulous declaration: 'a single passage or member of a discourse or writing; a distinct part or member of a sentence. I don't think I've ever considered punctuating a member of a discourse. Have you? I would be afraid that the member would punctuate me back. Besides, how would you \define "member of a discourse or writing"? Of course, the OED did add that this definition pertained especially to the grammatical analysis of an utterance "containing a subject and predicate." But the word "especially" does not mean "absolutely" or "always," so the door is open for interpretation.

That was definition a. Definition b simply states that a clause is "the closer or end of a period," from the Latin "clausula" (like to know, the origin of these things—we need someone to blame). Some ancient grammars defined grammatical terms like "period" in terms of length or status as a major component in a sentence, and definition B simply reflects that concept, which is stated more clearly in the discussion prior to the first definition: "close of a period or formula, conclusion, clause," related to "clausula" and "clausula." The word "CLOSE" is in blue

and underlined, inviting us to click on it and suggesting that "close" and "clause" are related, though the OED does not make any direct connection.

But don't get too comfortable. "Clause" is also a verb, with standard derivatives like "to clause," "clausify," "claused," "clausing," and even "clausuration," "clausrophobia," and "clausrophobia." The OED relates that an 1895 work on instructing the deaf declares, "I have endeavored to make my pupils read and speak like hearing people, teaching them to phrase and to clause." Hmmmm. . . And I thought "to parent" was a misguided transformation from noun to verb! Being the students I mentioned earlier could have used instruction in how to parent how to clause, perhaps even how to parent!

Another obscure word "cloister"? Would you believe it used to be "Clausier," but a place that had been enclosed? "Clausier" comes from "Clausure," which means simply "closure," the action of closing or enclosing. The definition of "Clausure" includes that blue, underlined word "CLOSE" to click on, so there definitely seems to be a connection between "close" and "clause." Here's an entry from 1774 that illustrates "Clausure" with the idea of enclosing: "In some monasteries the severity of the Clausure is hard to be born." I think this pertains to student writing, too, because of the abject lack of attention students pay to punctuating clauses, independent or otherwise, in writing that for them punctuating clauses is "hard to be born." There's even a medical reference meaning a "clogged" or obstructed condition of any canal or cavity in the body," as in this passage from 1685: "Gunn of a Peache. openeth the inward clawesures of the peache." More than I really wanted to know about the gunne of a peach, whatever that is. But I think we need to keep the seamy underbelly of grammar in the close. Publicizing such things would only lead to the wrong kind of student enthusiasm, which is precisely why I'm not going to discuss "Clausuration." "Clausrophobia" is simply the fear of being enclosed, and we all know that "clausrophobia" means the student fear of being locked up in a room and forced to write.

Another use of "clause" is in government publications to indicate a subsection of a document. The OED quotes several passages about resistance to "Clause 28" in Britain during the 1980s and 90s. In fact, a lobby against Clause 28 sprang into existence, but we do not want to ever let our students know about it because it might inspire a grammar revolt, probably led by the two students I began with. The name of the lobby was "Stop the Clause." Under no circumstances should our students be made aware of this campaign.

Speaking of the two students mentioned in the first paragraph, I think their reaction to their teachers' reactions to their crimes against comma usage must have been similar to that of a scribbler named Young in 1742. According to the OED, Young, miffed about some clause or other, exclaimed, "Why thunder'd this peculiar clause against us, All-mortal, and All-wretched." But I think Young, instead of ranting, should have started writing simple sentences. It has worked before. Besides, who could possibly be angry at a member of the clause club? And anyway, what's the point? *

"Compass Points" continued from page 6

Since many of our international colleagues teach in countries where English is the second language, this is one area that has helped me in interacting with students in my own writing center. I have discovered new ways to approach the teaching of English to students who are non-native speakers. Our exchanges, questions, and collaborations have enabled me to have a better understanding of what I do and how I do it. We all need to take advantage of such opportunities. Although our institutions and countries may differ in language and national standards, we share common goals and can all learn from one another by crossing borders academically and personally through the Internet, publication, and presentation at professional conferences. *

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"Back to the Center" continued from page 9

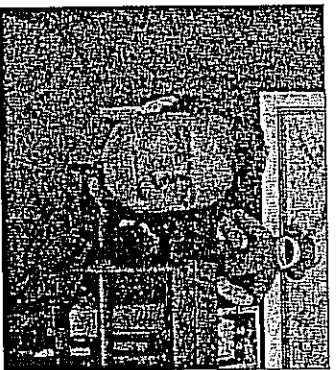
to University College, the unit housing programs dedicated to student success. Since then, I am proud to say the CSU Writing Center has extended its hours and staff, attracted writers from across the disciplines, earned College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) certification, and rewarded its consultants with much deserved raises.

As part of University College, the writing center exists on the boundaries of the academic disciplines, like Trickster who lives betwixt and between. What's more, Trickster teaches: transgressing traditional boundaries is the means to creative transformation. While writing centers with their emphasis on collaborative learning already challenges the authority of the classroom teacher from the margins, what happens when undergraduate writing consultants step over the boundary and into the classroom to assist instructors? The CSU Writing Center looks forward to continued Trickster growth through the development of a writing fellows or classroom-based tutoring program. Capitalizing on CSU's expressed commitment to writing-across-the-curriculum as embodied in the Quality Enhancement Plan required for SACS accreditation, this fall the writing center secured in-house funding that doubled the budget, enabling me to develop significantly the writing fellows program I had started in 2005. At the very least, the CSU Writing Center challenges the university's traditional academic conventions.

In the end, I am still not sure if Trickster has come out of the closet or if she has continued through the wardrobe. I do know that I have been very lucky. In some cases, I have successfully wrangled with administrators who proved to be generous and well-intentioned; in other cases, I have simply benefited from being in the right place at the right time. As the CSU Writing Center fast approaches its tenth anniversary, the growing number of undergraduate writing consultants and I have arisen from the table having learned from one another and from Trickster. While I worry a little every year that the seniors will take Trickster with them when they graduate, I realize that I, as director, must also be mindful of Trickster. As I look to the future, create those strategic plans, and get ready to train a new staff, I hope my writing center continues to be a place in which play, spontaneity, and surprise accompany learning—a welcome haven for linguistic acrobats, orphaned poems, and Trickster writers. *

Popcorn and Newsreels: Come and Get It! When Computers Grade Essays, They May As Well Write Them

By Karl Fornes, University of South Carolina, Aiken



Karl Fornes

Hey, kids! Wanna practice for the writing portion of the SAT?!

Hey, teachers! Wanna "see how QUICK and EASY it is to score an essay" (Pearson/Premice Hall)?!

We here at Pearson Knowledge Technologies have just the tool for you—the "Intelligent Essay Assessor" a.k.a. the "Online Essay Scorer." Whaddayasya we give it a try, kids?!

First, go to our web site <http://www.phschool.com/successnet/oesdemo/index.html>. Click on "Try the Demo," enter your state, and go for it. I suggest that you choose the high school prompt that asks for an essay about a learning experience outside of the classroom. That sounds like fun, eh? Of course, you can write your own essay if you want, but, let's face it, writing is soooooo booooooring. Ya know what? You can skip that step?! Let's take a quick trip to the "Random Essay Generator" <http://radioworldwide.gospelcom.net/essaygenerator/> and see about skipping that whole writing step.

Hmmmm. Now we need a topic. Let's try some sort of extracurricular adventure, such as a "field trip to the cultural museum." Click on "go," and voila, you have your essay. Now, just copy and paste your masterpiece into the box provided by the "Online Essay Scorer" and submit that puppy for grading.

Check out these results!

(NOTE: The following essay and report were generated on September 8, 2007 through the web sites previously indicated. Other than some slight format changes, both the essay and the report are exactly as they appeared on that date.)

Your Essay

'Brilliant', 'Quite Good', 'What?', these are just some of the comments made recently in the press regarding field trip to the cultural museum. At one stage or another, every man woman or child will be faced with the issue of field trip to the cultural museum. Remarkably field trip to the cultural museum is heralded by shopkeepers and investment bankers alike, leading many to state that its influence on western cinema has not been given proper recognition. Since it was first compared to antidisestablishmentarianism much has been said concerning field trip to the cultural museum by the aristocracy, trapped by their infamous history. With the primary aim of demonstrating my considerable intellect I will now demonstrate the complexity of the many faceted issue that is field trip to the cultural museum.

Social Factors

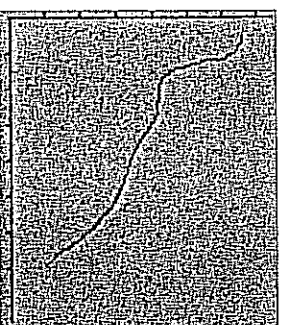
Society is our own everyday reality. When J H Darcy said 'fewCur will spread' [!] she must have been referring to field trip to the cultural museum. A child's approach to field trip to the cultural museum helps to provide some sort of equilibrium in this world of ever changing, always yearning chaos. Our post-literate society, more than ever before, relies upon field trip to the cultural museum. Clearly it promotes higher individualism and obedience of instinct. As soon as a child meets field trip to the cultural museum they are changed.

Economic Factors

Economics has been defined as 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.' To my learned ear that sounds like two people with itchy backs. We will begin by looking at the Cusnard-Not-Mustard model of economics.

Clearly the graphs demonstrates a strong correlation. Why is this? Obviously the average wage looms over field trip to the cultural museum this cannot be a coincidence. Assumptions made by traders have caused uncertainty amongst the private sector.

Average Wage



Field trip to the cultural museum

Political Factors

Politics - smolices! Comparing current political thought with that held just ten years ago is like comparing field trip to the cultural museum and political feeling. It is always enlightening to consider the words of award winning journalist Bonaventure Bootlegger 'A man must have his cake and eat it in order to justify his actions.' [2] This clearly illustrates the primary concern of those involved with field trip to the cultural museum. History tells us that field trip to the cultural museum will always be a vote winner, whether we like it, or not. One of the great ironies of this age is field trip to the cultural museum. Isn't it ironic, don't you think?

Conclusion

How much responsibility lies with field trip to the cultural museum? We can say that field trip to the cultural museum has a special place in the heart of mankind. It fills a hole, brings glamour to an unglamorous time, though field trip to the cultural museum brings with it obvious difficulties, it is truly field trip to the cultural museum. One final thought from the talented Denzel Morrisette: 'I love field trip to the cultural museum? Yes! Hurray for field trip to the cultural museum!' [3]

- [1] J H Darcy - The Spaniard - 1988 - PPT
- [2] Bootlegger - Take It! - 1961 Viva Books
- [3] Weekly field trip to the cultural museum - Issue 54 - Rhino Media

Online Essay Assessment

Overall Score: 4 (out of 4)

Advisory: Your writing style differs from other essays written on this prompt. Please consider this when viewing your score and feedback

Essay Diagnostics Information

Audience & Purpose: Demonstrates highly effective word choice; clearly states focus on persuasive task

Organization: Uses clear, consistent organizational strategy

Elaboration: Provides convincing, well-elaborated reasons to support the position

Use of Language: Incorporates many transitions to create clarity of expression; includes very few mechanical errors

Spelling

The following words may be misspelled:

Morissette	'feavour	Denzel	PPT
smolitics	obeyence	referring	

Redundant Sentences

The following sentence pairs may be redundant:

it fills a hole brings glamour to an unglamorous time though field trip to the cultural museum brings with it obvious difficulties it is truly field trip to the cultural museum.
hurrray for field trip to the cultural museum!

Grammar Errors

Your essay may contain the following grammatical errors:

Our post-literate society, more than ever before, relies upon field trip to the cultural museum. (Archaic)
Economic Factors Economics has been defined as 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.' To my learned ear that sounds like two people with itchy backs. (Wordy)
One of the great ironies of this age is field trip to the cultural museuam. (Wordy)

Wow! Four out of a possible four! Good for you! You'll wanna work on some of those archaic structures, though, and don't forget about the spelling, redundancy, and wordiness.

How 'bout that teachers? Ya gotta admit that the Intelligent Essay Assessor scored the essay "as competently as a professional educator" (Pearson Knowledge).

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SWCA Fall Election Results for Officers of the Executive Board: A Report from the Vice President

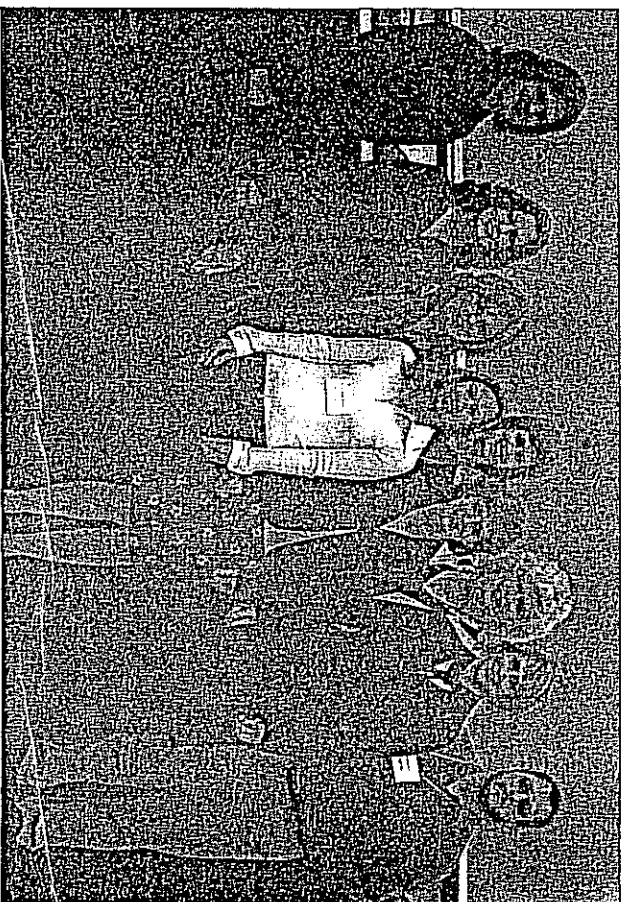
By Beth Burmester, Georgia State University

The results are in from our membership vote on new officers. A total of 120 ballots were mailed, and 50 ballots were cast, unanimously electing each candidate. The officers of SWCA, serving terms from February 2008 through February 2010 are:

President: Beth Burmester, Georgia State University, Atlanta
Vice president: Kerri Jordan, Mississippi College, Clinton
Secretary: Karen Keaton-Jackson, North Carolina Central University, Durham.
At-large representatives: Kathi Griffin, Millsaps College, Jackson MS, and Noreen Groover Lape, Columbus State University, Columbus, GA

Board members continuing in their positions include Treasurer Sandee McGlaun, Roanoke College, Salem, VA (through 2012), and At-Large Representatives Kevin Dvorak, St. Thomas University, Miami Gardens, FL (2009) and Jill Frey, Presbyterian College, Clinton, SC (through 2009), *Southern Discourse* Editor Christine Cozzens, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA (2009), and 2008 Conference Director Deborah Reese, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah GA (2009). President Glenda Conway, University of Montevallo, AL will remain on the board as immediate past president through 2009.

The new board will be considering the creation of a nominations committee, to facilitate streamlining our election process and to ensure broad representation of our membership in elected positions. Members who have suggestions regarding nominations or elections are invited to contact Kerri Jordan, our incoming vice-president, who will be overseeing voting, elections, and policy changes. Many thanks to all members who voted in the election and who keep our organization grounded through their active participation. The new board is looking forward to serving you!



Kevin Dvorak, Kerri Jordan, Kathi Griffin, Beth Burmester, Jill Frey, Karen Keaton-Jackson, Christine Cozzens, Sandee McGlaun, Robert Koch

SWCA Mission Statement

The Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) was founded in 1981 to advance literacy; to further the theoretical, practical, and political concerns of writing center professionals; and to serve as a forum for the writing concerns of students, faculty, staff, and writing professionals from both academic and nonacademic communities in the Southeastern region of the United States. A member of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA), an NCTE Assembly, the SWCA includes in its designated region North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Puerto Rico, and the American Virgin Islands. Membership in the SWCA is open to directors and staff of writing centers and others interested in writing centers from public and private secondary schools, community colleges, colleges and universities, and to individuals and institutions from beyond the Southeastern region. Adopted by the SWCA Executive Board 31 May 2003.

President's Letter

By Glenda Conway,
University of Montevallo

This is my last letter as SWCA President. By the time this issue of *Southern Discourse* comes out, I will have assumed the rank of immediate past president of the organization. As such, I will have the honor of continuing to serve on SWCA's executive board for another year.

The honor and, I should add, the pleasure of serving.

For it is a true pleasure to serve an organization whose main bonding factor is a belief in writing as a valuable, perhaps essential, part of a fulfilling life.

The truth is that, in spite of our faith in the value of our work, most of us have found that being writing center practitioners is not uncomplicated. On our home campuses, we often find ourselves caught up in big and little misunderstandings, mounds of paperwork and administrative details, sudden personnel crises, and constant and conflicting demands upon our time. We may feel alone, overwhelmed, even taken for granted. We may forget what it was that brought us to our writing centers in the first place.

SWCA has been my constant refuge. I joined SWCA during 1995, after taking my first full-time permanent academic position. Through the organization, I have increased not only my professional collegial contacts, but also my personal friendships. I know I am not alone in my profession or my principles; I know I have others to call on for advice and empathy. As well, I have gained a forum through SWCA conferences for testing new theories that later were developed into published articles. I have gained, through attending others' SWCA presentations and through reading articles in *Southern Discourse*, dozens of ideas for improving my administrative practices, for training tutors, for working with student writers, and for increasing the visibility of the writing center on my campus.

I am grateful that this organization exists. I am even more grateful that I have been able to serve as one of its leaders. And I will be immensely grateful to the other leaders who will follow me and do their parts to continue to keep our organization vibrant and essential.



Glenda Conway

"Publishing Tutor Research" continued from page 7

Pam Childers has recently collaborated with students from her writing center in two editions of her column, "Compass Points." In Summer 2006, she and high school student Martin Davis wrote about a co-taught website course designed for faculty that cast Davis in the role of teacher.

In the Summer 2007 issue, four students from UTT Martin submitted an article called "Bringing it Home: Discussions from SWCA Continue at UTT Martin." They discussed the 2007 Nashville SWCA Conference in terms of what research they found most useful and could incorporate into their own writing center. All of these published accounts of student experiences establish a productive forum for inter-center discourse.

During the poster session at this year's conference, we were struck by how many tutors approached us at the *Southern Discourse* table to express their interest in publication. We hope to get more student submissions reporting on personal experiences with tutoring or results of tutor research, the sort that Beth Godbee calls for in her article. We want to revitalize her call for the tutor's perspective and challenge us all to pursue and publish research that can best, or sometimes only, come from our unique perspectives as tutors.

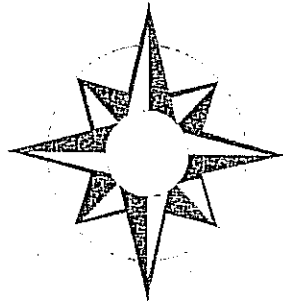
Many publications, including *Southern Discourse*, recognize the value of student perspectives. We have included a working list of journals that publish student work. Write about your endeavors and the conversations they inspire and submit them for publication. Engage with your intellectual community and let your voice be heard!

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(tutor research and creative writing related to writing centers)
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Writing Lab Newsletter
(Tutor's Column)
<http://writinglabnewsletter.org/>

For more ideas about where and why to publish, see page 7.

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