DIRECTOR'S LETTER MARTHA VICINUS

This year's *Newsletter* celebrates our successful hosting of the 23rd National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing. This annual conference brings together undergraduate peer tutors and their instructors to discuss and debate a range of issues related to tutoring students in writing. Special kudos go to George Cooper, head of local arrangements, and Laura Schuyler, who served as the conference coordinator. One of the concerns every novice tutor expresses is, "How is someone my own age going to accept my advice?"

A more experienced tutor asks, "How am I going to empower the author, when s/he expects me, as an expert, to fix the paper?" Over 300 participants talked about these questions and many others under our theme of "Negotiating Authority in the Writing Center." We present here an overview of the conference, including a summary of our keynote speaker's presentation and excerpts from our own student panel. We were especially proud to sponsor this conference which gave so many undergraduates the opportunity to participate in an academic conference and to meet their peers across the country. They learned important skills that transfer readily into the many different jobs they will take up in the near future.

This year's insert features different courses that meet the Upper-Level Writing Requirement for LSA. These brief descriptions demonstrate the power of writing to facilitate a thoughtful engagement with the principles of a particular field or major. They also suggest the range of options available for using writing assignments to encourage, even stretch, students to become more involved in their own education. Too often we teachers design assignments and syllabi in isolation or in imitation of courses we enjoyed. Here, we highlight teachers who have integrated writing assignments into their subject-intensive courses; they balance the need of students to acquire new information

and the importance of explaining and analyzing it in clear expository prose. Each provides an integrated sequence of assignments, in many cases leading to a substantial research paper.

Sweetland, like all teaching units, faces important questions about the usefulness of new technological opportunities. Teachers of writing face a mountain of homework—grading papers is extremely time-consuming, and we are never sure if students learn from, much less appreciate, our labors. Two former Sweetland junior fellows, Sayan Bhattacharyya (Comparative Literature) and Debbie Melican (Communication Studies), discuss how they have used Web links and online grading. Both admit that they don't save time, but they agree that students learn more—and appreciate—their Internet feedback. We will continue this series in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

On a final note, I want to thank Professor Terri Tinkle, who so generously served as Interim Director of the Sweetland Writing Center during the fall 2006 term while I was on sabbatical. Terri was the ideal replacement, bringing experience and good humor to the job. She kept me informed only about new opportunities and good news, and quietly resolved any difficulties, so my return has been smooth and easy.

Sweetland Writing Center Fellows Seminar

Sayan Bhattacharyya
Sweetland Junior Fellow, 2005-2006

Technology in the Writing Classroom

I DISCOVERED WHILE TEACHING WRITING that technology can be helpful in two quite different ways: for "automating" mindless and repetitive tasks, freeing up time and energy; and by creating the means of looking at tasks in new ways, thus making serendipitous discoveries of new opportunities more likely.

For example, many students seem to make the same small grammatical or mechanical mistakes. (My favorite example is the "dangling modifier," which seems to crop up in almost every third student paper I grade). Correcting such mistakes and explaining the error in each paper gets repetitive. This is where technology can be useful, by relieving the tedium (as well as inconvenience) of trying to fit a detailed explanation in written margin comments every time you come across the offending error. If students submit their work online and you grade online too, you can simply slip in an online note to the student pointing him or her to a link (about the "dangling modifier," say) in one of the excellent online resources that various entities (many of them writing centers at universities) have helpfully put up on the Web. (My favorites are Purdue University's Online Writing Laboratory, http://owl.english. purdue.edu/owl/, and the BBC's "Learning English" website, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish.) Over time, while teaching the class, I built a library of links pointing to the most common mistakes and their explications, explained in greater and better detail than I would have been able to explain to the students in margin notes.

Sometimes technology "shifts the paradigm" of how to interact with student writing, with interesting results. In his book *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization* (2006), George Landow mentions how any "text is a part of a network of navigable relations," and how, since the essence of hypertext lies in its making connections, it can accustom students to "making connections among materials they encounter." It is easier to point out these connections when work is online and thus available and visible: a matter of setting up a hypertext link from the relevant part of the student's paper to a part of one of his/her previous papers and annotating the link. I had a student who mentioned in her first paper that college represented a time to "overreach" by taking on new challenges. In her second paper, about Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, she had at one point speculated on whether there should be limits to trying to find things out. I slipped in a link between a sentence in each of these papers where the idea of "bounds" had arisen in these two different contexts. Students find it gratifying to become aware of such (often serendipitous) "connections among materials" they have written.

Sayan Bhattacharyya is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature.

WINTER 2007 SWEETLAND FELLOWS

SENIOR FELLOWS

Netta Berlin
Classical Studies

Keith Taylor
English Language and Literature

Patricia Simons
History of Art

Louis Cicciarelli
Sweetland

Martha Vicinus
Sweetland/English

JUNIOR FELLOWS

Tyler Cornelius
American Culture

Seth Button
Classical Art and Archaeology

C. Michael Sampson
Classical Studies

Donna Scheidt
English and Education

Matthew Ides
History

Kirsten Olds
History of Art

Vanessa Carbonell
Philosophy

Elizabeth Ben-Ishai
Political Science

Debra Burns Melican
Sweetland Junior Fellow, 2005-2006

Unexpected Pleasures: Online Grading in English 125

DURING THE 2005-06 ACADEMIC YEAR, I had the good fortune to participate in the Sweetland Writing Center Fellows Seminar. As anticipated, I enjoyed the intellectual and practical conversations that occurred during our meetings, but unexpectedly I was drawn into changing the way I grade papers.

As a fifth year Ph.D. candidate in mass communications, I had GSI-ed many courses; graded many papers; and developed what I thought was a practical, fair technique for evaluating papers. First, I felt strongly about reading the papers blind so as not to inadvertently factor in student personalities, either positively or negatively. Second, I read every paper twice, once as a preliminary assessment in relation to other papers and then to give a more considered reaction with comments. I forced myself to use a timer so as not to spend too much time on one paper and then rush through another. (Of course, I frequently reset the timer!) Finally, I inked in the letter grade and recorded it. If I wanted to save the paper or comments, I would make a copy. I liked this scenario. Most of it fit my image of an academic: sitting in my favorite chair, reading papers with a pencil in hand while a fire burned in the fireplace.

However, during one of our seminar meetings several fellows began discussing using CTools to grade online. I could not see completing my grading differently, but my colleagues were extremely enthused, citing benefits for instructors and students.

> By the term's conclusion, I had a complete record of my comments and an electronic record of each student's progress.

On the next paper assignment, I told students that I would accept either electronic copies submitted through our CTools site or hard copies brought to class. Much to my surprise, I loved the online grading and by the end of the term required electronic submissions. Yes, it took me a few phone calls to tech support to make everything work smoothly, but the experience was rewarding and efficient. For instance, I felt that I could give more meaningful comments on the students' work. When I wanted to exemplify a point, I copied the relevant part of the paper into my concluding letter. I made margin comments and then omitted or revised them as I finished reading and thinking about the paper. By the term's conclusion, I had a complete record of my comments and an electronic record of each student's progress.

The benefits of online submission and grading worked similarly for the students. They ended up with an organized record of their work, which meant that they could easily find comments from a prior paper when working on the next. The downside was that I found myself wanting to make more comments, and thus I did not eliminate the timer. On the positive side, I found my laptop works sitting in front of the fireplace, and using it to grade became equally as pleasurable as grading a stack of papers.

Debra Burns Melican is a doctoral candidate in Communication Studies.

23rd **NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEER TUTORING IN WRITING:**

Negotiating Authority in the Writing Center

We wish to thank John Sweetland and Bedford/St. Martin's, who generously offered scholarship and travel funds for students attending the conference. For students who face high tuition costs, this extra funding made all the difference between coming and declining this opportunity. We honored them and our donors at the banquet on Saturday, November 11th, with a round of applause; we do so again here in writing.

PEER TUTORS DESCEND ON ANN ARBOR

George Cooper

"DESPITE THE POSITIVELY VILE WEATHER, it seemed that everyone was energized by everything that went so well during the weekend," wrote Kathleen Cain, a conference attendee: "Stimulating concurrent sessions; a challenging and inspiring keynote by Nancy Grimm; and wonderful conversation in the hallways, at the receptions and meals, and in the pubs and restaurants of A2." Cain was referring to the 23rd National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, hosted by the Sweetland Writing Center over November 10, 11, and 12, 2006. The conference attracted 350 people, including nearly 200 peer tutors from across the country, as well as from international locations, such as Ireland and Puerto Rico.

The Michigan Union unfurled its welcome mat on Friday evening for a reception with light food and jazz music—culminating in a theater performance by students and faculty from Muhlenberg College. The performance consisted of thoughtful and entertaining monologues informed by interviews with students and faculty, and revealed the sometimes conflicted, sometimes promising, sometimes absurd ways in which writing is understood in academic settings.

George Cooper, Sweetland

Sessions ran concurrently through the weekend, covering topics such as plagiarism; uses of technology in writing; and issues in ESL, collaboration, tutor training, and tutor identity. Presenters included Sweetland peer tutors Lindsey Belzyt, Sarah Stedman, and Lee Wachocki. Sweetland peer tutors also drew upon their tutoring experiences to generate the conference theme: "Negotiating Authority in the Writing Center." As trainees in the writing center, peer tutors are initiated into a specialized practice designed to identify and, in some cases, resist exercises of power and authority in the academy. Many have been selected as tutors because of excellent writing skills and have long played the role of editor and expert in their classrooms and with their friends. But in the course of training, these same students are advised to subordinate such skills to the authority of the writer and to learn to think of themselves as collaborators, facilitators, coaches, and guides rather than as authoritative instructors. A tension can arise when writers come to the writing center seeking the authority that the title and training of tutor implies but are met with tutors learning to share their authority or deflect efforts of writers to put them in that seat.

Nancy Grimm explored the many variegations of writing center and institutional authority in her keynote address, "Locating Authority in New Century Writing Centers," examining them through language competencies valued in global workplaces; in the experience of learning to read, critique, and engage with systems of power; and in a daily practice of earning trust.

Poetry Slam Master, Jeff Kass, brought his college, high school, and middle school poets to perform their poems. Kass himself performed a poem documenting his relationship with a troubled student, juxtaposing the trouble with hope and the potential his young slam poets show.

Early Sunday morning the Union again came to life with new sessions, among them "Writing Center Tutorials as Educational Experiences for Peer Tutors," "The Scarlet P: Plagiarism," and "Authority and Autonomy in Collaborative Learning."

After, people hurried to catch planes. Some lingered, talking in the halls with a new acquaintance before separating and returning to their own writing centers. One last stop at the registration table to fill out an evaluation form: "My tutors had a great time and will come home brimming with ideas" and "A great opportunity to think about the importance of being writing consultants and thinking about ways to improve as consultants and writers ourselves."

Matt Kelley's Introduction for Keynote Speaker, Nancy Grimm

IN A SEMINAL CHAPTER from her 1999 book *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times,* Nancy Grimm entreats us to articulate the gaps between the community of students and the community of the institution by giving less emphasis to tutorial service and much more theoretical awareness to the tacit work of literacy. Professor Grimm reminds us in this chapter to seek what she calls "nodal points" of contact and to adopt a practice of articulation as opposed to confrontation in our tutoring practice. By opening up and revealing our own tutoring processes to students, tutoring becomes more recursive and more akin to the processes of writing that student writers will learn to negotiate.

Nancy Grimm, Michigan Technological Institute Writing Center

In my peer tutor training seminars here, many of the prospective tutors come to the course ready to marshal a range of editorial skills, eager to confront deficient student writers—these patients in the writing center—which they themselves, as "good writers," never were. In this way Nancy Grimm's work has been invaluable as both a theoretical and pedagogical tool; my students learn through their work to focus less on mastering mysterious and fluid community conventions and more on engaging a range of perspectives and making overt the contradictions about literacy work within the institution. Indeed, the first semester I taught the book the shorthand phrase WWGD (What Would Grimm Do?) became a caveat and reminder to not be so mysteriously authoritative to our tutees. And, ultimately, my students came to understand that their own roles as peer tutors allowed them to be uniquely situated to negotiate these issues.

Good Intentions concludes with a chapter entitled, "Cultural Habits That Deny Membership," which interestingly predicts some of Grimm's more recent interests: articles such as "Racial Diversity in the Writing Center," and an edited volume called *Social Change in Diverse Teaching Contexts: Touchy Subjects and Routine Practices* (2006). Nancy Grimm does all of this from her position as an Associate Professor at Michigan Technological University, where she has directed the Writing Center since 1990. She also has served as the coeditor of *The Writing Center Journal* and as the executive secretary of the National Writing Centers Association. It is my distinct pleasure to surrender the authority of this podium to welcome Professor Nancy Grimm.

LOCATING AUTHORITY IN NEW CENTURY WRITING CENTERS

George Cooper

IN HER KEYNOTE ADDRESS, Nancy Grimm indicated that she found written and spoken references to the word "authority" mystifying, indeed, missing. She said that the "absence of reference to authority reflects the dramatic cultural, social, economic, and political changes underway in this century, changes generally understood by the term globalization." Literacy is changing, and survival is increasingly reliant on an ability to deal with the unfamiliar, to understand different perspectives, and, Grimm said, to negotiate trust. These are the new-century replacements for what used to be known as "authority."

This claim rests on features of the new workplace as international, unprecedented in its diversity, fast paced, stratified but unrealistically positive, and deceptive in its control over the worker. These social and structural inculcations apply to writing centers as well. Writing centers are places where seemingly benign social practices "make it difficult to adequately respond to the requests of students who are true beginners," Grimm said, in that, perhaps no practice is known more so than minimalist tutoring. Minimalist tutoring is based on assumptions about students who are "out of sync with current social realities," Grimm said.

Jeff Brooks, an advocate of minimalist tutoring, has argued that "the student should be the only active agent in improving the paper." Grimm argued that such a statement "doesn't take into account differences in cultural and linguistic knowledge." Moreover, Brooks' position brings with it associated proscriptions intended to "protect" the tutor rather than to enhance a tutoring interaction. Grimm asked whether the limits we set on tutor authority "take into account a concern for social justice in a global world order." We need to lighten the deep "sense of responsibility provoked by what we may perceive as language 'error'," Grimm said.

Before imposing limits, tutors need to better understand their experiences of "language competencies valued in global workplaces; to better understand their experience of learning to read, critique, and engage with systems of power; and to locate authority in the daily practice of earning trust."

"Trust is fragile, it calls for patience and humility, for interpersonal connection and cooperative values, for deep reserves of imagination," Grimm said.
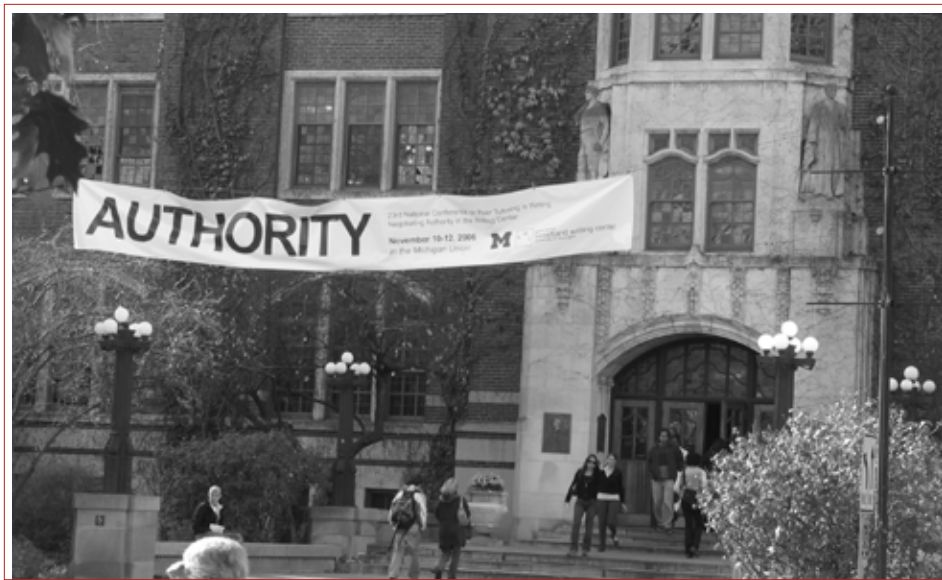
23rd NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEER TUTORING IN WRITING:

Negotiating Authority in the Writing Center

Excerpted from "Negotiating the Culture of Power with African-American Vernacular English Writers"

Lindsey Belzyt, School of Education 2007

IN A WORLD THAT IS STEADILY GROWING more diverse and that values racial and cultural equality, prejudice has become a major concern. Anne Lobeck (2005) argues that society focuses on the physical value of individuals and not the linguistic validity of differing dialects. Similarly, Geneva Smitherman (2000) and Lisa Delpit (1988) argue that pointing out language variation has become a form of prejudice and is used as a key to the "culture of power." In the United States, this linguistic prejudice is often geared toward speakers of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Perhaps unintentionally, those with academic authority often have a bias against the writing of AAVE speaking students. An understanding of how the assumptions made about AAVE affect the reading of AAVE speakers' writing and the use of non-prescriptive instructional methods, however, can help writing tutors teach AAVE speakers to write according to academic standards without losing their voice.

With the visual nature of the written word, many tutors focus on what is visibly available to them, namely lower-level concerns that are easily discernable. When working with AAVE speakers, tutors, under time constraints, often make judgments based on recognizable AAVE characteristics—written grammatical cues rather than content or discourse styles. In their authoritative role, tutors' "corrections" silence students' voices through prescriptive rules that hinder AAVE speakers from developing into competent writers. As Smitherman explains, prescriptive Standard English instruction discourages linguistic variation and causes students to view themselves as deficient.

Writing instruction for AAVE speakers, therefore, cannot be a prescriptive, authoritative activity. Tutors should change their style to help AAVE speakers identify their strengths and apply them to their writing. Many oral characteristics of the dialect, certain rhetorical strategies or performative aspects, for example, can strengthen academic writing. In this way, students can capitalize on African-American discourse style while writing in an academic tone.

As peer tutors, we want AAVE speakers to recognize that Standard English is the accepted political variety that they may need to use to succeed in the economic world. When prescriptive Standard English instructional methods are used, however, AAVE speakers often increase their usage of AAVE to resist a dialect they find oppressive and to maintain their African-American identity. Alternatively, tutors can use contrastive analysis to teach students the difference in patterns between varieties of English writing. This instructional method helps students recognize the forms and rules appropriate to the register in which they are writing. When recognizing AAVE as a variety of English governed by its own grammatical rules, students can maintain their identity while adjusting their writing to meet academic standards.

By taking a sociolinguistic approach to teaching composition, writing tutors can help AAVE speakers become bi-dialectal and recognize how and when to code switch. Writing tutors can build on the rhetorical strengths of AAVE discourse and use contrastive analysis to teach AAVE speakers the standard academic style expected of them while still validating the merit of their language and encouraging them to maintain their voice.

Excerpted from "Judge or Be Judged: The Dynamic of Evaluation in the Writing Center"

Sarah Stedman, LSA 2007

ENTERING THE WRITING CENTER, a writer-in-need may be motivated by one or more of a variety of forces, more often falling into the category of "fix my paper" rather than "make me a better writer." Many are of the mindset Stephen North protests in "The Idea of a Writing Center," in which he hopes that writing center outsiders will abandon the concept of "the writing center as a 'skills center' or 'fix-it shop' for grammar correction'" (North 31). The writer considers the paper-at-hand to be the product of the session, with general improvement of comprehensive writing ability an abstract concept to be physically approached paper-by-paper rather than thought-by-thought. The goals of the tutor include identifying patterns of error, encouraging the writer to self-locate narrative weakness, and establishing procedures for answering assignments and constructing sustained arguments.

The writer—the client of the session—moves ideologically along a continuum of authority. Throughout the session, the writer, bringing forth a piece of himself in prose form, operates apprehensively at the prospect of being judged by the tutor who is interpreted as much as an authority-figure as a service-provider. The writer longs for his anxieties to be appeased and his concerns addressed, but largely allows the tutor to determine the course of the session. Throughout the session, the writer places his person and paper at the command of the dominant force of the tutor, but this dynamic is reversed in the presentation of the evaluation form, as is the case at Sweetland's Peer Tutoring Center.

This receipt of power comes as a surprise to the first-time visitor to the center, but the tutor is aware throughout the session that the writer will have the final agency to assess the session. The experienced tutor knows of his responsibility to negotiate the motives and agendas of writer and tutor and that the two points of view are not always in direct agreement, although they may progress towards a shared goal of improvement. Knowing that he will be held accountable for the success of the session, the tutor walks a thin line between pleasing the client and satisfying the pedagogical goals for the session.

With differing expectations, understandings, and interpretations among writers, tutors, and instructors, how is one to conclude if a session is productive? Mary Anne Bunda, in "Accountability and Evaluation," presents three models for evaluation: (1) decision-oriented, focusing on the project as a whole, with the client as the primary audience; (2) consumer-advocate, in which the consumer of the product is kept in mind and the goals pertain to both the quality of the product and the efficiency of the process; and (3) client-oriented, in which relative objectives and merits are considered through observation and interviews (Bunda 360). In thinking of my work at Sweetland, the decision-oriented model emerges as most appropriate and practical. Important in this model is the clear role of assignments. For when the tutor assumes the role of the evaluator, the instructor becomes the client and the writer is the project. The tutor is then accountable both to and for the project.

Excerpted from "Tripwire Watch: Reevaluating the Line between Tutoring Sessions and Plagiarism"

Lee Wachocki, LSA 2007

THE WORD "PLAGIARISM" TYPICALLY APPEARS in writing center pedagogy with regard to strategies for identifying and addressing students who bring plagiarized texts to a tutoring session, making few appearances with regard to strategies that lessen the opportunity for a plagiarized text to be produced within a session. Jeff Brooks's minimalist tutoring methodology and Stephen North's process-oriented, student-centered, better-writers-not-better-texts model propose limitations for tutor input, distancing the tutor from the student's work and, thus, from the act of plagiarism. Locating tutoring practice in relation to plagiarism is a difficult and dangerous task because it potentially implicates tutors in the academic equivalent of a crime. But as writing centers are affirmed as vital components of colleges and universities, and the increasingly problematic limitations imposed by nondirective pedagogy begin to outweigh the waning benefits of its theoretical insulation, tutoring practices that more fully address students' needs close the distance between today's writing center and plagiarism.

In "The Idea of a Writing Center," North mentions plagiarism once, writing, "[O]ur work with writers-in-progress on academic assignments is not plagiarism . . . . [T]o put it the way I most often hear it, we will not write students' papers for them" (North 41). Writing center pedagogies offer little information regarding what tutors absolutely cannot say or do in a session, but the physical act of the tutor writing the language of a student's assignment is forbidden. This material understanding of plagiarism as rooted in the physicality of a text exonerates practicing tutors in the case of the instructor who questions whether the finished work she holds in her hands is indeed completely the student's own. When such a question does arise, the instructor's likely first course of action is to electronically cross-reference the student's text with article databases and website material. Here, the ability to substantiate a suspicion or charge of plagiarism is limited by the parameters of the searchable, published world, and nothing short of planting a recording device in the writing center could provide the plagiarism police with the material evidence necessary for a plagiarism case.

Writing centers have theorized an escape from the threat of plagiarism, not by publishing essays that justify tutor noninvolvement or the restrained input of nondirective pedagogy, but by calling the very idea of writing center plagiarism into question. Not everyone's understanding of writing center work acknowl-edges plagiarism in the tutoring session as a possibility. In "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center," Andrea Lunsford calls for a "move from viewing knowledge and reality as things exterior to or outside of us . . . to viewing knowledge and reality as . . . the product of collaboration" (Lunsford 47). If the plagiarism police demanded to know if a tutor's ideas made it into the student's writing, the social-constructionist tutor could ask, "Is subject-verb agreement my idea? Is a thesis statement that's been adjusted in the interest of clarity really my expression?" That might sound playful, but the work of the social-constructionists offers the most compelling narrative for doing away with the notions of intellectual ownership and plagiarism, and the theoretical conception of the writing center as a place of collaboration might maintain the credibility of writing center work if the skepticism that provoked North's defensive "Idea of a Writing Center" ever resurfaces.

Such a resurfacing might not come as a surprise for tutors who have, in light of recent research, pedagogy, and experience, discarded nondirective tutoring techniques in favor of an open sharing of information that may leave them vulnerable to accusations of plagiarism if only someone were looking for plagiarism in the writing center. Since no one seems to be looking, tutors are in a position to ignore the idea of in-session plagiarism, a "crime" that could prohibit effective tutoring if it were ever investigated.

Tien-Huei Hsu, LSA 2007

## TUTORING ONLINE: ADAPTING PEER TUTORING THEORY TO ONLINE PRACTICE

AFTER WORKING FOR SWEETLAND'S ONLINE WRITING AND LEARNING (OWL) service for almost two years, I recognize the unique dilemma OWL tutors face: on one hand they are required to conform to conventional peer tutoring pedagogy and, on the other, they are faced with practical concerns which pertain to effectiveness and clarity.

Within writing centers it is often assumed that OWL tutoring should seek to emulate face-to-face tutoring. However, I find the attempt to imitate face-to-face sessions is misguided. In the absence of face-to-face interaction with the writers, OWL tutors are instructed to read their minds, predict reactions, and clarify beyond doubt the comments written, all while phrasing responses to reproduce the form of a conversation. As a result, OWL conferences rarely read anything like what face-to-face sessions sound like. Minimalist approaches are frequently abandoned in favor of clarity.

Without a doubt, tutors are required, first and foremost, to provide individualized learning sessions and not an editing service. OWL responses should conform to this fundamental rule by balancing directive responses with other more subtle ways of drawing the writers' attention to the problems at hand. While OWL tutors are adept at carefully phrasing comments to engage the writer in her own work, they often shy away from directive comments because of the stigma associated with their use during face-to-face sessions. Although this seems an alarming setback for the current trend in adopting a hands-off approach to tutoring, it is a far more functional alternative for OWL tutoring. For the most part, I subscribe to the minimalist approach to peer tutoring, but I believe it is important to drop sentimentalities and adopt the strategies that best benefit the writers.

As OWL tutoring is conducted in a different setting and medium than face-to-face tutoring, the strategies that are most effective will necessarily be different. For OWL tutors to convey their thoughts effectively, they need to write concisely and clearly. Clarity is a virtue we preach in tutoring; our tutor responses to writers must reflect this also. This is best achieved by getting at the crux of the problem rather than hinting at a problem the writer may not be able to pick out.

Due to these unique challenges, I have grown partial to this form of tutoring. However, I am sure many others have found tiresome the need for precise word-ing in OWL responses. For better or worse, with the increase in accessibility to technology, OWL tutoring will become more common in writing centers nationwide. Unfortunately, there is a lack of literature on online tutoring, perhaps due to the recent adoption of technology in writing centers. Perhaps it would be prudent to shift our attention to exploring and developing this relatively new mode of tutoring, rather than attempting to make it conform to the existing form.
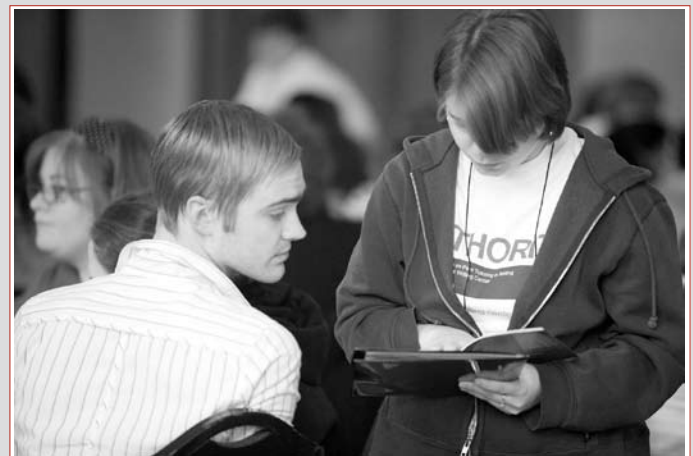
Lee Wachocki and Carrie Luke, Sweetland Peer Tutors

George Cooper

2006 CALLAWAY WRITING PRIZE WINNER **EMILY SQUIRES, LSA 2006**

UPON WINNING THE $1000 CALLAWAY WRITING PRIZE, Emily Squires expressed her deepest thanks. She said the winning essay had emerged as an early version of her senior honors thesis—documenting her time working at Twanano Papermaking in a squatter camp north of Johannesburg, South Africa. With the Callaway award, Squires was able to return to South Africa for five weeks last summer to continue and expand the project.

Hailing from St. Louis, Missouri, Squires graduated in May from UM with a combined degree from the School of Art and Design in printmaking and the LSA Honors Individual Concentration Program in Community and the Arts.

Her Callaway essay begins with a reflection on Professor Julie Ellison's fall 2005 project-based seminar, "Art and American Communities: Sekou Sundiata's 'The America Project'," an experience which helped her write her "memories and dreams and to claim the space in which to connect them."

Squires said that she came to Michigan because it was among the few places that had both a good art school and good academic offerings. Upon visiting Ann Arbor for orientation, she fell in love with the place and left for home with the passionate hope she might be awarded the Shipman Scholarship that would allow her to attend this out-of-state school.

"I became interested in South Africa because of the role the arts played in the Anti-Apartheid movement," Squires said. Having worked with the National Conference for Community and Justice in high school, Squires had an early activist sensibility. But she admitted that when she came to Michigan she was still naïve. "I wanted to find 'the feminist club' and, though there were some splinter groups, there was not much organized along those lines," she said. So she joined Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality (SOLE). "I stumbled onto a labor group before I ever knew what a union was, or, for that matter, a sweatshop."

Squires's political involvement led her to the Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates Program in which she did fieldwork with Phumani Paper, an economic development project that has 21 sites and employs over 250 South Africans, most of whom are women. The goals were to improve the organizational skills, the earnings, and the autonomy of participants at Phumani Paper.

In describing her South Africa experience, Squires found an important metaphor in food, especially because it was integrated into the rhythm of the day. "Tea time was a serious break," she wrote, "lunch an even bigger deal, and kitchen clean up at the end of the day was done with seriousness."

Moreover, the sharing of food diminished the differences that marked Squires as an outsider and became the touchstone that led to discussions of family and parents, art, class, identity, and, Squires wrote, "whatever else food happened to inspire."

In her current life, food remains an integral feature. Squires waits tables in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "It pays the rent," she said. But her life entails more than the food she serves or the tips she collects from her customers. Squires teaches in the Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia, helping to provide opportunities for young people to participate in a process that enhances their community. Working in an afternoon program facilitated by Girls, Inc., she teaches "basic art skills through projects that deal with heritage, community, gender, and empowerment."

Projects that are community/activist oriented continue to interest her, and Squires expects that she will return to South Africa to study for a MFA in Johannesburg. She said, "I like to do art with young people. So I'm not sure where exactly I'll end up, but I'd bet money on it involving some very grassroots organizing and social change work, teaching, art, and young people."

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dargie Anderson reviewed *In the Middle Distance* by Linda Gregg for the July/August *Boston Review*.

Ann Berggren currently serves as the Treasurer of the Michigan College English Association. Her essay, "Do Thesis Statements Shortcircuit Originality in Students' Writing?," will appear in the forthcoming anthology of papers presented at Sweetland's Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism conference.

Charlotte Boulay contributed two poems, "Boys of My Youth" and "Aubade with Pericardium and Visitor," to the winter 2007 *Michigan Quarterly Review*.

Jeremiah Chamberlin was a presenter at the Interlochen Arts Academy's Between the Lakes Writing Symposium this past spring, where he gave a lecture entitled "House Fires and Orchard Fires: The Responsibility of Writing Fiction about History and Place." He and his wife, Natalie Bakopoulos, received a joint artist-in-residence fellowship from the Glen Arbor Arts Association during the month of June. He also received a grant from the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching to conduct work on his novel-in-progress. Last year he was awarded the Lloyd Hall Instructor of the Year Award from the students of the Lloyd Hall Scholars Program.

His short story, "Missionaries," appears in the winter 2007 *Michigan Quarterly Review*.

Margaret Dean taught a fiction workshop for the Knight-Wallace fellows in Journalism during the 2006-2007 academic year. Her essay, "The Imaginary Athlete," appears in the winter 2007 *Michigan Quarterly Review*. In February, she presented "Grown-Up Girls: Adolescent Female Characters in Fiction" at the Associated Writing Programs annual conference. Also in February, her novel, *The Time It Takes to Fall*, was published by Simon & Schuster.

Helen Fox joined a nine-member experts group assembled by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, Poland, to offer recommendations on tolerance and diversity education to the 56 member countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Matthew Kelley reviewed Jack Kerouac's *The Beat Generation: A Play* for the summer 2006 *Rain Taxi Review of Books*. In September 2006, Matt presented "Of Phoenecian Sails and Zeusian Toys: W.C. Williams, Gregory Corso, and the Chthonic Tradition" at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell. Also in 2006, the third edition of his study guide, *Analysis of Literature: A Sourcebook for*

the Norton Introduction to Literature, was published by College Network Press. The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching awarded him a Teaching with Technology Institute Grant. Matt contributed "'Le Gusta Este Jardin Que Es Suyo?': Jack Kerouac, Frida Kahlo, and Abel and the Map of Mexico City" to the summer 2007 *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*.

Patrick O'Keeffe received a Whiting Writers' Award for his collection of novellas, *The Hill Road*. This prize is given to 10 emerging writers of exceptional talent each year; recipients are chosen from among more than 100 nominations by a selection committee of prominent writers appointed by the foundation. In 2005, *The Hill Road* was a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection.

Naomi Silver presented a paper, "'Mon pays et Paris': Josephine Baker, Paul Colin, and Le Tumulte Noir," and moderated a seminar, "Human Communities and Their Others," at the American Comparative Literature Association Conference in March 2006. At the American Studies Association Conference in October 2006, she presented "'The Great Commerce of All the Continents': Labor and the Cosmopolitan Body in Banjo and Le Tulmulte Noir."

gayle morris
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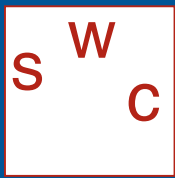
THE UPPER-LEVEL WRITING REQUIREMENT

MANY OF THIS WINTER'S UPPER-LEVEL WRITING COURSES included fresh, exciting proposals for writing in the disciplines that can easily be adapted to other fields. Some instructors focus on new techniques for peer review; others offer real-life scenarios demanding accurate and precise reasoning; while yet others insist on group projects with a series of different activities throughout the semester. We offer here a cross-section of ULWR courses and assignments that we hope will spark further ideas. We welcome suggestions for future issues of the *Newsletter*.

WINTER 2007

French 461: Introduction to Medieval Literature

Peggy McCracken [peggymcc@umich.edu]

Crusades and courtly love, King Arthur and the grail—these are some of the subjects of 12th- and 13th- century literature and of this class. We will read medieval epics, romances, poetry, and short narratives. Some of these are quite beautiful, some are quite weird. Readings and discussion will be in modern French, although a few secondary reading assignments may be in English, and we'll study some Old French just for fun. We will also look at the ways in which some modern films understand and represent the French Middle Ages. Participation in class discussion is essential, and there will be a series of writing assignments. In class we will address the common grammatical errors and stylistic quirks of writing in French, as well as constructing an argument for papers of varying lengths.

Writing Assignments:
1. 3-5 page paper focusing on some issue in *La Chanson de Roland*. This paper will be emailed to peers, and one class period will be devoted to peer feedback. Students will then revise their papers before submitting both versions of the paper for a grade. Students will also submit a self-assessment along with their first paper, identifying their own goals for their writing and ways they think that writing in this class can help them to achieve those goals.
2. 5-7 pages on lyric poetry or on one of Marie de France's *Lais*. I will offer detailed written feedback on this assignment, and students will revise based on my feedback.
3. 7-10 pages on *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*. I will meet with students individually to discuss this paper. This will be an opportunity to reference the students' earlier papers and address strengths and weaknesses in the students' writing in general. We'll also review the self-assessments the students wrote early in the course and discuss them in relation to the writing the students have done over the course of the semester.
4. Collaborative paper. Students will think and write collaboratively with another student on a specific problem of interest. Paper will not be graded.

Psychology 361: Advanced Laboratory in Organizational Psychology

Elizabeth Wierba [wierba@umich.edu]

This course is aimed at enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of research in organizational psychology. Students will learn how to conduct research through a series of structured assignments and a group research project on a topic they select. Together we will analyze and interpret our findings, with team members supporting and learning from each other. Readings will focus on theories, research issues, and methods, and are designed to give students first-hand experience reading and processing organizational psychology research.

Writing Assignments:
Students will write an individual paper based on their research interests and conduct research during the class, resulting in a 15-20 page final paper. The build-up assignments include four brief (1 page) responses to help students find their research topic. These include a reference list, a paragraph on the topic, a hypothesis statement, and an outline of data collection and research methods. The lab papers will focus on different features of the research process. These will include a write-up of an interview and reflection question (4 pages), a methods section of a study conducted in class (2 pages), and a methods and results section of a second study conducted in class (4 pages). These assignments help students understand the level of detail involved in writing a research paper. Students will have a chance to rewrite the methods section three times, including for the final paper, and the results section twice. Feedback will be given each time.

Russian 348/Residential College-Humanities 348: Survey of Russian Literature, 1870-1900

Olga Maiorova [maiorova@umich.edu]

This course introduces students to the major masterpieces of Russian fiction at the end of the 19th century. We will trace how writers positioned themselves with regard to the social, intellectual, and religious issues dividing their contemporaries. The course is designed (1) to help students develop their analytical skills by having them analyze assigned topics, (2) to provide them with an opportunity to develop their expository writing skills by laying out their arguments in a logical and persuasive fashion, (3) to provide them with detailed on-going feedback about their writing, (4) to acquaint them with effective revision strategies, and (5) to offer them the opportunity to engage in peer review and thus become sensitized to problems other writers face.

Economics 495: Applied Microeconomic Modeling

Stephen Salant [ssalant@umich.edu]

The aim of this seminar is to encourage the use of micro-economic tools to investigate real-world phenomena and to evaluate alternative policy interventions. During January, each student will write two short assignments using basic economics to illuminate an issue of public concern currently discussed on the front page of *The New York Times*. Students must designate an intended recipient of their letters (the author of the series, *The Times* ombudsman, Paul Krugman, a letter to the editor, etc), and write a letter appropriate to the intended audience. During the remainder of the term, students in groups of three will conduct research on a selected set of topics. They must meet regularly with me during this time to discuss their research findings; we will examine together their summaries for clarity, logic, and evidence. Revised versions of these drafts can be incorporated into the final paper. In April, each team will present its findings in an oral presentation; the paper should then undergo a final revision before submission at the end of the term.

Center for Afroamerican and African Studies 495: Building Black Communities

Kelly Quinn [kaquinn@umich.edu]

In this course, our conversations will focus on the period of U. S. history since Reconstruction. We will examine how African American women, men, and children created, maintained, negotiated, and performed community life. We will consider how they contended with internal and external tensions and challenges. And we will explore various strategies of self-determination, as we engage such subjects as migration, modernity, protest, and urbanization. Through our class discussions, small group activities, and other assignments, we will investigate primary sources including maps, music, letters, photographs, architectural plans, and the built environment. Sequenced writing assignments will hone competencies in visual and cultural analysis.

Writing Assignments:
1. Description of one image from Jacob Lawrence's *Migration* series. In class we will exchange drafts. Each student will draw the described image using only colors and shapes described in the draft. Students will then revise their draft so as to more accurately describe the chosen image, with the goal to improve descriptive skills and allow me to assess strengths and needs early in the term.
2. Essay on application letters filed by hopeful residents to Langston Terrace Dwellings to examine how working-class African Americans composed letters to secure public housing in the mid-1930s. Students also will analyze the application strategies in terms of logos, pathos, and ethos and place these letters in the larger context of the application process.
3. A map, to be incorporated into the final paper, of a Black community, and a reflective essay on the process of creating the map. Students will have the opportunity to examine visual primary sources carefully. The companion essay documents how they worked with the words and the images. This assignment will assess how effectively each student is working with his or her materials, written and visual, in preparation for the final essay.
4. Research paper. In this paper, students will describe, analyze, and "map" an African American community based, in part, on their assessment of primary sources housed at the Bentley Historical Library. This task is broken into multiple due dates throughout the course of the semester. Students will produce a longer piece of writing in which they summarize, describe, document, and analyze one aspect of Black community life. I will meet individually with students and comment on various drafts of this project at regular intervals.

Physics 442: Experiments in Modern Physics

Dan Amidei [amidei@umich.edu]

This course requires each student to complete five multi-week experiments selected from a list of 20 representing the foundations of modern physics. Students should understand and appreciate the role of these experiments in the development of quantum mechanics, the physics of the atom and its nucleus, the physics of many body systems and condensed matter, and the techniques of high energy and astrophysics. Students will develop laboratory skills and learn to approach open-ended problems encountered in physics research. As clear communication is essential to science and scientific careers, students will learn to produce well-written reports, representing context, motivation, methodology, and implications.

Writing Assignments:
Five scholarly reports, one for each experiment. Each should include a title, abstract, introduction, motivation, description of techniques, results, and discussion. In addition, one report must be developed into a 10-12 page paper, providing an expanded draft of the motivation, techniques, analysis, and results. A bibliography of cited and referenced literature is required for all papers. Students have the option of submitting the longer report to the instructor for early feedback. Sample short (2 page) and full (10-12 page) reports will be provided. Students will work closely with the instructor to receive regular feedback.

Communication Studies 361: Processes of Mediated Communication

Scott Campbell [swcamp@umich.edu]

This course is designed to offer a framework for thoughtful understanding of processes involved in the production, dissemination, and reception of mediated news content. First, we will examine various elements that may influence the production of news content, including individual, organizational, political, economic, and cultural factors. Second, we will read and discuss studies on public journalism, which have been proposed and carried out as an alternative to current journalism practices. After familiarizing ourselves with the production side of the news, we will turn to the reception side by analyzing several perspectives on media effects. Finally, with an assumption that the Internet is a relatively new medium of public affairs, we will examine various views on the Internet regarding its role in promoting civic life.

Writing Assignments:
1. Students are expected to write four position papers during the term, ranging from 4-12 pages in length. The papers will discuss major perspectives to explain factors affecting mediated news content and compare arguments made by advocates and critics of public journalism. Students are encouraged to advance their views on this debate. Students will submit two copies of #1; this paper will be blind-reviewed by a peer. Each student will write a formal review letter to the author. After receiving the review, students will revise the paper and re-submit it. Each student must include a note explaining why suggestions were or were not accepted.
2. A variety of short response papers will be assigned by the GSIs, including summarizing a scholarly article or writing a critical review of an article.
3. A group research paper of 15-20 pages due in week 15. Each group of 3-4 students must develop a research question, submit a proposal (3 pages) in week 8, and present their findings to the class.