

To: Professor Leon Gottfried, Head

Copies To: Professors Harris, Hughes, Weiser, Berns,  
Halpern, Yancey, and Dan Lupo

From: David Dedo and Angela Tenga, 1987 Writing Lab Summer  
Co-Directors

Date: September 22, 1987

Subject: Summer 1987 Writing Lab Report

The Writing Lab's 1987 summer session was much like those of past years, productive. New trends may be seen in this summer's statistics, as will be documented. Also, a most effective combination of skilled tutors practiced their trade this summer, a combination that perhaps should be sought next summer.

This report will document the Lab's duties and accomplishments under the usual headings: 1) staffing and scheduling, 2) use of the Lab, 3) evaluation of staff performance, and 4) recommendations for next summer.

#### STAFFING AND SCHEDULING

This summer we had two half-time positions (the two co-directors), and Dan Lupo served as our English 420/421 specialist for five hours per week. This combination worked well because Angela contributed with her expertise gained in the DWR, and Dave chipped in with his experience in ESL. Although some days (especially the days before papers were due in Composition classes!) were very busy, everyone was served within a reasonable waiting period.

Again this year, tutorials were not conducted on Fridays, but self-instruction materials and the computers were available. Because of class requirements, Dan and Dave had to shuffle their schedules after the first four weeks of the semester, but the Lab hours remained consistent. Angela worked from 9-11 Monday through Thursday, Dave from 11-1 and 3-4, and Dan worked from 2-3 (Dave's and Dan's afternoon hours reversed in the second four weeks).

A new feature this summer was the addition of Thursday evening hours, intended primarily to aid those students involved with testing in the DWR (109, GTP, etc.) and Adult Students enrolled in evening classes. Angela worked three hours, and Dan one, on Thursday evenings. (Actually, because of the demand on his skills, Dan almost always worked "overtime" on Thursday evenings.) The Thursday evening hours were praised by many patrons. Quite a few graduate students involved with the GTP procedure, for various reasons, could not make it to the Lab during regular hours; the evening hours represented their only

opportunity to talk to a tutor about their writing, test taking strategies, etc. In addition, adult students who work during the day and attend evening classes also made use of the Lab on Thursday evenings. They too were most appreciative of the services made available to them.

Formally, appointments were not a part of tutorial services this summer, but, as the summary of the statistics illustrates, a number of them were nonetheless arranged. Most of these were students specifically requesting to see either Dan for 420/421 advice or Angela for help related to DWR affairs. Dave did arrange a few appointments with particularly needy ESL students.

### USE OF THE LAB

As always, the Lab served a wide array of student, staff, and "outsider" needs. The following groups made use of the Lab this summer:

1. students in English 002, 101, 102, 420, 421, 589, and Upward Bound
2. students writing for courses in communications, education, various engineering courses, psychology, sociology, and others
3. graduate students writing the Graduate Test Paper for the DWR
4. graduate students revising their articles and dissertations
5. faculty members (non-native speakers) working on articles and business letters
6. students seeking help with resumes and application letters
7. secretarial staff phoning in questions on the Grammar Hot Line
8. off-campus (from as far as California) questions for the Grammar Hot Line

These groups took advantage of the following services. (A more complete tabulation of these figures is presented in Attachment A.) In order to assess this year's numbers, the totals from the summer of 1986 are also given.

	1987	1986
1. number of students & staff using the Lab:	314	355
2. number of appointments for tutorial sessions:	35	74
3. number of drop-in sessions attended by students:	117	210
4. number of self-instruction modules used:	12	310
5. number of student requests for handouts:	81	65
6. number of instructor requests for handouts:	3	3
7. number of uses of the Lab as a writing room:	45	77
8. number of student uses of the computers:	21	98
9. number of Grammar Hot Line calls:	78	38

We cannot make definitive statements accounting for the obvious differences between the past two summers, but only suggestions of possibilities. First, there are significant differences in the numbers of appointments, drop-ins, and self-instructional modules between the past two summers, and they all seem to be related. One important possible cause for this development is the large decrease in the number of ESL students making use of the Lab (see Table 9). This was probably due to the expanded utilization of the lab component of graduate level ESL courses (001 and 002). In other words, these students spent more time in class and less time in the Lab. Based on the statistics from last summer, we suspect that many ESL students then were making use of self-instruction modules (typically they account for almost all the use of self-instructional materials) in conjunction with tutorial services; that did not happen this summer.

It's probable that a number of factors are related to this drop in Lab attendance. Perhaps the Lab did not target enough information to the ESL population, including the instructors. The ESL instruction staff has changed rather dramatically over the past year or so, and those teaching this summer may not have been fully aware of the wide range of services that the Lab can offer to them and their students.

Possibly related to this is the ESL program's further development of the lab component of its four credit 001 and 002 classes. Of course the Writing Lab applauds this move to better serve student needs, but we hope that our extensive resources related to non-native speakers and writers will continue to be utilized. Perhaps more extensive communication between the Lab and the ESL program is called for, to further explore ways that the Lab can support and enhance the goals that have been established for the ESL program, its students, and the Writing

Lab. We feel that whatever changes occur in the Department concerning classroom instruction, the Writing Lab can adapt itself in order to continue in its role of helping instructors and students achieve their goals.

A very encouraging trend was the marked increase of 420 and 412 students making use of the Lab's services. Tutorials (appointments and drop-ins) this summer totaled 34 (see Table 9) compared to last year's 20. It seems probable that having a specialist (Dan) in these areas was responsible for the increase. It is recommended that this practice continue if possible (see Recommendations for Next Summer).

The other two prominent differences are seen in the use of the computers and the Grammar Hot Line. There are a few possible causes for the drop in computer use. Use may have been lowered because the Lab lacked a computer consultant to assist students in learning word processing, or perhaps use dropped because of the smaller number of ESL students in the Lab. Of course, other possibilities may be that more students have their own computers or access to computers elsewhere, or the drop was caused by a combination of the factors given. It would seem that the increase in Hot Line calls may simply be the result of more and more people becoming aware of this service. Our service has become known nationally, and it's now quite routine to receive calls from all parts of the country.

In summary, we have seen large fluctuations in the statistics over past summers, and it seems that often, because of the relatively small number of classes that are held, small changes in classroom procedures and policies can have significant effects. Furthermore, these changes are not really predictable, and the decreases in certain statistics this summer could easily be reversed next year.

#### EVALUATION OF STAFF PERFORMANCE

Again this year, no teacher or student evaluations were sent out for the summer session, and so we are forced to be rather subjective in our assessment of staff performance.

The combination of skills and areas of expertise that the tutors possessed individually and collectively seemed ideal. Angela represented our knowledgeable voice from the DWR, Dave helped out with his ESL background, and Dan was new to the Lab this summer but stepped right in and handled his duties exceptionally well. It seemed that each of the tutors settled into a comfortable niche. For example, Dave spent most of his time working with ESL students, and much of his remaining time was spent with others concerned with DWR writing tests. It must be stressed, though, that each tutor's general experience also allowed this summer session in the Lab to be a successful one. All of the tutors, in addition to specialized skills, have experience teaching Freshman Composition, and this type of

background seems necessary when the staff is small in number.

Because of the excellent reorganization of materials last summer, and Margaret Clark's work this summer preparing an inventory and reference list of Lab materials, some of our activities were directed outward. Two activities worth mentioning are the Lab's involvement with the 4-H, and HSSE's "Edge on Success" program for minority students. The 4-H has an annual event on campus related to career decisions, and a group of fifteen students (ninth grade level) toured the Lab and heard a presentation on "Becoming a Good Writer." The "Edge on Success" program is designed to better orient incoming minority students enrolled in the school of HSSE to the educational and cultural aspects of life at Purdue. These students (about twenty) were given an informal tour of the Lab and a presentation on how we can help make success in Freshman Composition a reality. A representative from the Lab also participated in a "College Survival Tips" panel discussion that included the Dean of Students and representatives from Counseling and Student Services. The Lab was informed that, in part because of its participation and support, plans are under way to expand this program next summer.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT SUMMER

Based on the observations of this, and past, reports, we offer the following recommendations:

1. At least one of the tutors on duty for the summer must have some experience with ESL students, and it is recommended that a 420/421 specialist be obtained if at all possible.
2. The present number and distribution of teaching slots (two 1/2 time, one five hours per week) would seem to be an acceptable level if the situation remains fairly consistent from one summer to the next.
3. The hour coverage from 9-12 and 1-4, Monday through Thursday, and hours on Thursday evening to handle OWR and Adult students (primarily), should be retained. Tutors should feel free to adjust drop-in and appointment hours as they see fit.
4. It seems vital that the director(s) publicize the Lab earlier, beginning well before the spring semester ends. Some possibilities include arranging for posters to be up when summer sessions begin, and having the Exponent write an article on the Lab for its first summer issue.
5. We recommend that a greater effort be made to communicate with the ESL program in order to determine new and better ways for the Writing Lab to assist the instructors and students in achieving their group and

individual goals, and also to better utilize the Lab resources that are available to ESL staff and students.

6. The involvement with 4-H and "Edge on Success" seemed to be an excellent way of contacting future students and creating good relationships on and off campus. These types of activities should be continued if at all possible.

In closing, we, the summer Lab staff, would like to thank the department for the opportunity to work and further advance our Lab related skills, and also to gain a greater appreciation of how complex the administration of the Lab can be, even in the slowed down pace of the summer.

ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY OF LAB USE

The following tables present a statistical summary of Writing Lab use during the summer 1987 semester:

Table 1. Total number of students and instructors using the Lab

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Number of Students/Instructors</u>	
1. Tutorial Appointments	35	2.1
2. Drop-in Service	117	14.1
3. Self-Instructional Modules	12	2.6
4. Lab Resources (handouts, etc.)	81	9.1
5. Lab Reference Materials and Use of Lab for Writing	45	2.9
6. Use of Lab Computers	21	3.2
7. Instructors Use	3	.8
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TOTAL:	314	37.8

Table 2. Number of appointments for scheduled tutorial sessions

<u>No. of appts. per students</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>Total no. of sessions</u>
1	30	30
2	2	4
4	2	8
		<hr/>
	TOTAL:	42

Table 3. Number of drop-in sessions

<u>No. of sessions per student</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>Total no. of sessions</u>
1	87	87
2	16	32
3	6	18
4	2	8
5	3	15
6	5	30
7-8	1	7
	<u>141</u>	<u>197</u>
		TOTAL: 197

Table 4. Number of self-instruction modules used

<u>No. of modules</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>No. of uses of modules</u>
1	7	7
2	1	2
3	2	4
4	1	1
5	1	1
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	2	2
9	1	1
10	1	1
11	1	1
	<u>36</u>	<u>59</u>
		TOTAL: 59

Table 5. Number of student requests for handouts, etc.

<u>No. of requests</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1	44	44
2	12	24
3	10	30
4	5	20
5	4	20
6	2	12
7	1	7
8	1	8
9	1	9
10	1	20
	<u>91</u>	<u>186</u>
		TOTAL: 186



Table 6. Number of composition teachers requests for materials

<u>No. of requests</u>	<u>No. of instructors</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1	2	2
2	4	2
		<hr/>
		TOTAL: 4

Table 7. Number of student uses of lab as writing room

<u>No. of uses</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1	15	15
2	8	16
3	2	18
4	1	19
5	1	20
6	1	21
7	1	22
8	1	23
9	1	24
10	1	25
11	1	26
12	1	27
13	1	28
14	1	29
15	1	30
16	1	31
17	1	32
18	1	33
19	1	34
20	1	35
21	1	36
22	1	37
23	1	38
24	1	39
25	1	40
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TOTALS:	45	441

Table 8. Number of student uses of computers

<u>No. of uses</u>	<u>No. of students</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1	16	16
2	4	20
3	3	23
4	3	26
5	1	27
6	2	29
7	2	31
8	1	32
9	1	33
10	1	34
11	1	35
18	1	36
23	1	37
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TOTAL:	51	117

TABLE 9  
DESCRIPTION OF COURSES AND SERVICES OF  
STUDENTS USING THE WRITING LAB

A. COMPOSITION COURSES	20 A	25 B	30 C	35 D	40 E	45 F	50 G	55 H	TOTALS
13 002	5	19	2	4		2	4		30
101	2	19	1	7		7	4		40
102	1	7		6		2			16
420	7	22		11		2	4		46
421		5		2		3	1		11
589					3				3
Upward Bound				18		25			43
B. OTHERS									
1. undergrads									
a. self-help	3		3	3			1		10
b. for other courses	2	14		18		2	2		38
c. resumes, etc	3	12		4			2		21
2. graduate students									
a. self-help		9	6			1	3		19
b. GTP	12	16		8		1			37
3. other								78	78
TOTALS	35	117	12	81	3	45	21	78	392

KEY:

A--Tutorials	E--Handouts/Instructors
B--Drop-ins	F--Writing/Studying
C--Self-instruction	G--Computer Use
D--Handouts/Students	H--Grammar Hot Line