To: Dr. Leon Gottfried, English Department Head

Copies To: Drs. Harris, Hayman, and Weiser and Mrs. Grabau

From: David Ewing, Writing Lab Summer Co-Director

Date: September 15, 1983

Subject: 1983 Summer Writing Lab Report

Summer '83 turned out to be a very busy and successful semester for the Lab staff--busy, as illustrated by the increased number of students and instructors using the Lab (417 as compared to 223 during the summer of 1982) and successful as illustrated by the strong teacher and student evaluations and positive comments, including comments from Dean Channing Blickenstaff of the Graduate School. Dean Blickenstaff called the Writing Lab to thank and commend us for our work with a graduate student taking the OWR exam. During the summer semester 1983, the Writing Lab was open five days a week for self-instructional services and provided both tutorial and drop-in service during four of the five days. Tutorial services were limited to four and one half hours a week handled by two of three tutors, while drop-in help was offered during twenty-eight hours a week, staffed by three tutors. This report discusses the staffing and scheduling, describes special Lab use, summarizes students' and instructors' evaluations of summer services, and suggests considerations for future summer lab staffing and scheduling.

Staffing and Scheduling

Three staff members, John Haslem, Allen Witkowski, and myself, handled tutorial and drop-in services. John Haslem worked in the Lab through the work study program. It was primarily through this extra position that we were able to offer as many tutorial and drop-in hours as we did. Also, the success of this summer's Writing Lab program was due largely to the staff's past Writing Lab experience -- Allen and I having tutored students from all of the department's writing programs and from the OWR and John having tutored freshman composition students. Because of the variety of experience of the Lab staff, we were able to offer services to many types of students:

1. students taking English 101, 102, 420, and 421;
2. students in the Upward Bound Program;
3. graduate students taking the OWR exam;
4. an engineering student;
5. a graduate student working on a doctoral prelim paper;
6. and one working on her dissertation prospectus.

Although the staff was prepared to tutor a variety of students, we were faced with scheduling problems--not enough tutorial appointments to serve the needs of the summer students. Before the summer semester began, we decided to limit the number of tutorial appointments and increase the number of hours available for drop-in help. We found, however, that both were used extensively and that we could have used more tutorial hours. Most tutorial appointments were booked up by mid-semester, and many students mentioned that they were disappointed when they could not schedule tutorials.

Special Services

In addition to the service provided to students taking writing courses in the English Department and writing in the OWR, the Writing Lab this summer provided special drop-in and tutorial services to students neither enrolled in English department writing courses nor registered to take the OWR Graduate Proficiency exam. First, students continued to come to the Lab to get help with planning, drafting, and revising resumes and job application letters. Second, two graduate students frequently used both drop-in and tutorial services for improving their revision and editing skills in preparation for writing a doctoral prelim paper and a dissertation prospectus.

Summary of Lab Use

In Attachment A, you will find a series of tables listing the specific numbers of students and instructors using Writing Lab services. Below, however, are the totals for each type of service:

1. Number of students and instructors using the Writing Lab: 417
2. Number of appointments for tutorial sessions: 59
3. Number of drop-in sessions attended by students: 242
4. Number of self-instruction modules used: 277
5. Number of student requests for handouts and materials: 474
6. Number of composition teacher requests for materials: 26
7. Number of students using Lab as writing room: 11

Three of the totals from this list are particularly significant:

- First, as mentioned before, there was a large increase in the number of students and instructors using the Lab as compared to last summer (417 for summer '83; 223 for summer '82).
- Second, student use of our self-instructional modules (277) was quite heavy for the summer. Two groups in particular benefited from the self-instructional modules--ESL students and students enrolled in the School of Management's Business Opportunities Program section of English 101. (These students were often unable to use the regular Writing Lab tutorial and drop-in services because of their full course schedules and thus depended on the self-instructional modules.)
- Third, as in the fall and spring, both students and instructors relied heavily on the availability of Writing Lab handouts and materials (474).

In addition to the totals listed in items 1-7 above, you will find in Table 8 of Attachment A a list of services according to course. This summer the Lab continued to serve students from many writing programs including 001, 101, 101B, 101M, 102, 420, 421, and 589--the 101, 102, and 420 students using

the Lab most extensively. In addition, students requesting resume and job application letter help used the Writing Lab services forty-one times, and graduate students taking the OWR Proficiency Exam used the Lab services twenty-eight times, much of which included drop-in and tutorial help.

Student and Instructor Evaluations of Lab Services

The evaluations of Writing Lab services from both instructors and students alike were very good: Out of twenty-five instructor responses, twenty-four rated the Lab services as very helpful (a rating of 5 on the scale of 1-5; See Attachment B, Table 1), and twenty-two of twenty-six responses rated the feedback from Lab staff as excellent (a rating of 5 on a scale of 1-5; See Attachment B, Table 1). Students also rated the Lab services highly on their evaluations; on a scale of 1-5, the average rating for "Quality of Instruction" was 4.2, and for "Writing Progress," the average rating was 4.1 (See Attachment B, Table 2).

In addition to these ratings, instructor and student comments about the Writing Lab were very positive along with offering some valuable suggestions. A few sample comments are

> "I have used the Writing Lab for the last four semesters. During this time my writing skills have improved, and I am pleased to say the lab was a major reason for this improvement." (English 420 Student)

> "I can't complain about anything. Also, I cannot make many suggestions. I really enjoyed the help Dave gave me. I feel that my writing has improved a lot." (English 420 Student)

> "As you know, I've conferenced with Tammy quite a bit my self. I find her a joy to work with, but I also know I would not have enough time to answer the slew of questions she has. I believe she will, in a large part due to your help, earn an A for the semester; and, more importantly, I feel she'll be happy with the work she's done. Thanks for all the time you've given her." (English 420 Instructor)

> "I think the lab is a super service that Purdue offers students. Thanks for the help." (OWR Student)

> "Feedback from Witkowski was quite helpful; the form he sent me was precise and to the point." (English 421 Instructor)

> "If it wasn't for the Writing Lab, I would still be doing C and D work. Thanks to you it is B and C." (English 101 Student)

Our most unexpected evaluation this summer, however, was a telephone call from Dean Blickenstaff of the Graduate School. He called to thank the Writing Lab staff for the help which we had given to a graduate student working to pass the OWR exam. When after a few tutorials, the student did pass the exam, she called Dean Blickenstaff to tell him she had passed and was grateful for the Writing Lab help. Dean Blickenstaff, in turn, made the special call to commend us for our work with the student.

Typical suggestions from students in their evaluations consisted of requests for more tutorial hours and for shorter waiting times during drop-in hours (Because we often had only one tutor available during drop-in hours, students had to wait long before seeing a tutor).

Suggestions

Based upon both the number of students using the Writing Lab and the comments from students, we find the demand for services quite heavy and varied and suggest the following:

- that the Lab be prepared during the summer to offer services to the same types of students who request our services in the fall and spring semesters--i.e. 001, 101, 102, 420, 421, 589, and OWR students, plus those students not enrolled in department courses and not taking the OWR exam;

- that the Lab increase the number of tutorial appointments available beyond the number available this summer;

- that more than one tutor be available at a time for drop-in help.

ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY OF LAB USE

The following tables present a statistical summary of Writing Lab use during the summer 1983 semester:

TABLE 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS USING THE WRITING LAB

	Type of Service	Number of Students/Instructors
1.	Tutorial Appointments	23
2.	Drop-In Service	128
3.	Self-Instructional Module	52
4.	Lab Resources (handouts, etc.)	191
5.	Lab Reference Materials and Use of Lab for Writing	19
		4
	TOTAL:	417

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED TUTORIAL SESSIONS

No. of appts. per students	No. of students	Total no. of sessions
1	13	13
2	5	10
4	1	4
5	1	5
6	1	6
9	1	9
12	1	12
	TOTAL:	59

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF DROP-IN SESSIONS ATTENDED BY STUDENTS

No. of sessions per student	No. of students	Total no. of sessions
1	76	76
2	24	48
3	14	42
4	5	20
6	3	18
7	1	7
11	1	11
	TOTAL:	242

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF SELF-INSTRUCTION MODULES USED

No. of modules	No. of students	No. of uses of modules
1	20	20
2	8	16
3	4	12
4	3	12
5	4	20
6	0	0
7	1	7
8	2	16
9	1	9
11	1	11
12	1	12
13	2	26
15	1	15
17	1	17
20	1	20
23	1	23
41	1	41
	TOTAL:	277

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF STUDENT REQUESTS FOR HANDOUTS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

No. of requests	No. of students	Totals
1	100	100
2	20	40
3	21	63
4	24	96
5	4	20
6	17	102
7	4	28
25	1	25
	TOTAL:	474

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF COMPOSITION TEACHER REQUESTS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

No. of requests	No. of instructors	Totals
1	15	15
2	2	4
3	1	3
4	1	4
	TOTAL:	26

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF STUDENT USES OF LAB AS WRITING ROOM

No. of uses	No. of students	Totals
1	2	2
2	1	2
7	1	7
	TOTAL:	11

TABLE 8

DESCRIPTION BY COURSES AND SERVICES OF STUDENTS USING THE WRITING LAB

	COURSE NO. A. COMPOSITION COURSES	A*	B*	C*	D*	E*	F*	TOTALS G*
*A- Tutorials	001			3	2			5
*B- Drop-ins	101	2	15	4	11		3	35
*C- Self-Instr.	101B			9	20		3	32
*D- Handouts/ Students	101M		4		3		2	9
	102	3	6	1	12		2	24
*E- Handouts/ Instructors	420	4	46	2	68	1	4	125
*F- Writing/ Studying	421	2	5	3	2			12
	589	1						1
	Upward Bound			2	25			27
B. OTHERS								
1) Undergraduates								
a. Self-help		3	8	25	14		3	53
b. For other courses			4		12	3		19
c. Resumes, letters of application		2	24	1	12		2	41
2) Grad. Students								
a. Self-Help			2					2
b. Engl. Prof.		6	13	2	7			28
3) Staff			1		3			4
	TOTALS	23	128	52	191	4	19	417

ATTACHMENT B

SUMMER 1983 STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS OF WRITING LAB SERVICES

TABLE 1

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS OF TUTORIAL/DROP-IN HELP

EVALUATION OF STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

1. Writing Improvement: Having worked in the lab on the writing skills listed above, this student now shows

1	2	3	$3\frac{1}{2}$	4	5
no improvement		some improvement			great improvement
(2)	(1)	(14)	(1)	(6)	(2)

2. Grade Improvement: During the semester, this student's grades

1	2	3	4	5
dropped or didn't change		rose one letter grade		rose at least two letter grades
(3)	(3)	(12)	(5)	(2)

EVALUATION OF THE WRITING LAB

1. Student Attitude: This student expressed the following attitude toward the lab

1	2	3	4	5
resentment		no feeling expressed		great deal of appreciation
		(15)	(2)	(9)

2. Feedback: While this student was using the lab communication from the lab instructor was

1	2	3	4	5
non-existent		adequate		excellent
			(3)	(22)

3. Writing Lab Services: In general, do you rate the lab's services as

1	2	3	4	5
not helpful or useful		somewhat helpful or useful		very helpful or useful
			(2)	(24)

TABLE 2

STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF THE WRITING LAB

1. TYPE OF SERVICE(S) USED

1	2	3	4	5
tutorial appt.	drop-in	handouts	tapes	reference books
(6)	(26)	(10)	(3)	(3)

2. QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION: Were the materials and instruction appropriate, clear, and helpful?

1	2	3	3½	4	5
not clear or helpful		adequate			very clear and very helpful
		(5)	(1)	(7)	(13)

3. WRITING PROGRESS: Do you feel that you made genuine progress with your writing skills as a result of your lab work?

1	2	3	3½	4	4½	5
no progress		some progress				great deal of progress
(1)		(7)	(1)	(7)	(1)	(10)

4. GRADE IMPROVEMENT: Do you feel that what you learned in the Writing Lab enabled you to write better papers and receive better grades?

1	2	2½	3	4	5
grades dropped or didn't change			rose one letter grade		rose at least two letter grades
(1)	(1)	(1)	(9)	(8)	(3)

TABLE 3

STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF SELF-INSTRUCTION TAPES

4. The tapes covered material that

1	2	3	4	5
was already familiar (2)	(2)	I needed some help with (7)		I needed a great deal of help with (1)

5. The quality of instruction was

1	2	3	4	5
poor, not effective		adequate (5)	(2)	very clear and useful (4)

6. As a result of using the tapes, my writing showed

1	2	3	4	5
no improvement		some improvement (5)	(4)	a great deal of improvement (2)