

# WRITING LAB SUMMER REPORT, 1991

Purdue University

To: Professor Margaret Moan Rowe, Head

Copies to: Professors Harris, Hughes, Weiser, Berns, and Gaston; Mr. Sirabian and Mr. Weaver

From: Patricia Jenkins and Steve Merriam,  
1991 Writing Lab Summer Co-Directors

Date: September 1, 1991

Subject: Summer 1991 Writing Lab Report

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, like last summer, the staff included two half-time employees, one adjunct employee, and one undergraduate employee (who worked only with English 420 students and students with resume questions). The adjunct employee, Susan Tenny, served as a generalist and as an ESL specialist for ten hours per week. Unlike last summer, an undergraduate 420 tutor worked in the lab for three hours per week. The two half-time employees served English 101 and 102 students and OWR series writers, for the most part, as well as international students enrolled in other graduate and undergraduate courses. This latter population increased dramatically in the 1991 summer session.

The lab was open Monday through Friday from 8:00-4:00, during which time self-instructional materials and computers were available. Tutorials were conducted during the following hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:30-12:00 (Susan's hours); Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00-12:00 (Trish's hours); Tuesday evening, 6:00-9:00 (Trish's hours); Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 1:00-4:00 (Steve's hours); and Tuesday morning, 9:00-12:00 (Steve's hours). Mike Dowler, the 420 business consultant, worked Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 9:00-10:00.

## USE OF THE LAB

As always, the Lab served a wide array of undergraduate and graduate students' needs, as well as the needs of staff and "outsiders." The following groups made use of Lab services this summer:

1. Students in English 001, 002, 009, 101, 101B, 102, 420, and 421.
2. Students writing for courses in communications, education, engineering, history philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, restaurant and hotel management, and other areas.
3. Graduate students writing the Graduate Test Paper in the OWR, and Graduate Series writers in the OWR.
4. Graduate students revising articles and dissertations.
5. Students seeking help with resumes, application letters, and graduate school application letters.
6. Instructors, secretarial staff, and students phoning in questions for the Grammar Hotline.
7. Off-campus phone-in questions for the Grammar Hotline.

These groups took advantage of the following services. (For a more complete evaluation of these figures, see Attachment A.) In order to assess this year's numbers, we have also included totals from the summers of 1990, 1989, and 1988:

	1991	1990	1989	1988
Students and staff using the Lab:	340	312	426	348
Number of appointments:	332	314	291	25
Drop-in sessions with students:	54	19	47	253
Self-instruction module use:	21	49	54	109
Handouts for students:	358	726	1364	124
Handouts for instructors:	358	101	107	10
Lab used as a writing room:	53	9	20	55
Student use of the computers:	72	98	47	119
Grammar Hotline calls:	113	81	90	71
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>1709</b>	<b>2446</b>	<b>1114</b>

As this tabulation suggests, the Writing Lab continued to serve many students and staff members this summer in diverse ways, despite a limited number of staff positions and reduced lab services. Actual tutor/student contact--both through appointments and through drop-ins--increased from 333 tutorials in 1990 to 386 in 1991. An increasing number of these tutorials were with non-native speakers of English. In contrast, the number of handouts given to students showed a dramatic decrease, probably because of budgetary concerns; however, more instructors used Writing Lab handouts than any time in the past. More people used the Lab as a resource room as well, and the number of Grammar Hotline calls continued to increase. Many more calls came from off-campus, which is not indicated in the data above; tutors received questions from such faraway places as California, Maine, and Alabama.

While most totals here reveal the ways in which the Lab was used, the total for "Students and staff using the Lab" is misleading: students turned away from booked appointments or because drop-in hours were reduced have not been documented. Their numbers would have boosted the 340 total an estimated 30 percent. In particular, students in 420 classes not able to see a tutor would be a high number in proportion to the number of students enrolled in 420. Also not totaled separately in the data is the use of the Lab by: 1) international students enrolled in non-English courses, and 2) the use of the Lab by graduate students seeking help with dissertations and theses. The former category in particular would have shown a dramatic increase had it been documented for last year and this year. The increase in non-native speakers can be attributed to the inception of English 009, while the higher number of graduate thesis/dissertation tutorials was a result of the Lab's focussed publicity in this area.

## EVALUATION OF STAFF PERFORMANCE

As is usual in the summer, no teacher or student evaluations of Lab services were distributed. Consequently, a self-evaluation will be presented, focusing on the areas of tutoring, publicity, and administration.

### Tutoring:

The four tutors collectively represented an array of expertise that met student needs. Trish, returning again this summer, acted as a generalist, and added working experience with ESL students and OWR series writers. Steve specialized in tutoring literature courses and OWR, including helping international students prepare for the recently implemented 009 course. Susan served as a needed additional ESL and OWR expert. Finally, Mike acted as the sole business writing and resume tutor. However, no one limited her or himself to these respective areas of expertise; all of the tutors worked with international students and students with resumes, while all of the tutors but Mike worked with students from courses offered by the English Department and other departments. The expertise of the three graduate students was especially in demand by

graduate students working on theses and dissertations. In some cases, because of the nature of the tutees' requests, referrals were made to private tutors. Tutoring hours allowed students to receive help during regular business hours and during one evening. Had there been more opportunities for evening help available, either by being open an additional evening or by scheduling another tutor on Tuesday evening, the Lab would have served more students this summer.

### Publicity

Posters were placed in various buildings around campus explaining the Lab's services. These posters sought to inform students about the ways the Lab could help them, and targeted a variety of courses: business/management, engineering, political science, restaurant and hotel management, and education. They were placed in the Memorial Union, the HSSE Library, and the Undergraduate Library. Memorandums were also sent to each humanities and social science instructor indicating Lab hours and services available, and encouraging Lab use.

### Administration:

Lynn Shonkwiler, Lab office manager, and Mika Dorsey, Lab secretary, performed their day-to-day duties with characteristic efficiency. Both willingly assisted Lab tutors in publicity efforts. Lynn also compiled the statistics for this report by hand.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT SUMMER**

Based on the experience of tutoring in the Lab this summer, on the observations of this report and on the knowledge of past reports, we offer the following recommendations:

1. A summer staff should continue to include individuals with generalist backgrounds who also have experience in ESL, OWR, 420, and 421.
2. The present number and distribution of Lab positions (two 1/2 time and one 1/8 time) did not allow the staff to satisfy many of the demands placed on the Lab (in particular, the highly intensive tutoring of non-native speakers). Three one-half time positions would allow the staff to meet student needs more effectively.
3. A work/study student should be hired to help with receptionist duties during evening hours and to enter data on the computer. Neither Lynn nor any other staff member should have to compile the statistics for the summer report by hand.
4. The staff should continue to offer innovative public relations campaigns early in the summer session, and should continue to target departments other than English.
5. Communication to faculty regarding services available should be more clearly articulated in memorandums. Many students this summer were sent to the Lab by

professors not familiar with Lab policies regarding proofreading or editing dissertations.

6. As a consequence of #5 above, a list of graduate students available to work for hire for other graduate students seeking proofreading services or long-term help for their theses and dissertations should be compiled and available at the start of the summer session.
7. With the approval of the Director, the staff should continue to allow appointments to outnumber drop-in sessions.
8. A policy for the Lab regarding scheduling multiple appointments for one student must be determined prior to the start of the semester and discussed with the office manager and those other employees who will handle scheduling of appointments.

In closing, we could like to thank the department for the opportunity to work and further advance our Lab-related skills, especially in the areas of Writing Lab administration. We continue to be proud of such a worthwhile and needed organization as the Writing Lab.

## ATTACHMENT A

### Summary of Lab Use

The following tables present a statistical summary of Writing Lab use for the 1991 Summer Session.

**Table 1**

Total number of students and instructors using the Lab.

Type of Service	Number of Students/Instructors
Tutorial Appointments	116
Drop-in Tutorials	50
Self-instruction Modules	15
Lab Resources (handouts, etc.)	85
Reference Material/Use of Lab for Writing	23
Use of Computers	37
Instructor use	14
<b>Total:</b>	<b>340</b>

**Table 2**

Number of Appointments for Scheduled Tutorials

Number of Appointments per Student	Number of Students	Total Number of Sessions
1	57	57
2	14	28
3	11	33
4	8	32
5	7	35
6	9	54
7	5	35
8	2	16
10	1	10
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>300</b>

**Table 3**

Number of Drop-in Sessions

Number of Sessions per Student	Number of Students	Total Number of Sessions
1	46	46
2	4	8
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>

**Table 4**

Number of Self-instruction Modules Used

Number of Modules	Number of Students	Number of of Modules
1	11	11
2	2	4
3	2	6
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>

**Table 5**

Number of Student Requests for Handouts

Number of Requests	Number of Students	Totals
1	80	80
2	5	10
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 6**

Number of Instructor Requests for Handouts

Number of Requests	Number of Instructors	Totals
1	14	14

**Table 7****Students Writing and Studying in the Lab**

<b>Number of Uses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Totals</b>
1	13	13
2	3	6
3	3	9
4	1	4
7	3	21
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>53</b>

**Table 8****Number of Students Using Computers**

<b>Number of Uses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Totals</b>
1	25	25
2	3	6
3	4	12
5	3	12
7	2	14
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>72</b>

**Table 9****Description of Courses and Services of Students/Patrons Using the Writing Lab****A. English Courses**

<b>Course</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Totals</b>
002	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
009	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
101	57	5	-	15	-	21	-	-	98
101B	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
102	16	5	-	10	-	-	-	-	31
267	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
420	30	6	-	1	1	6	14	-	58
421	22	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	28
589	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

**Key:** A: Tutorials  
 B: Drop-ins  
 C: Self-instruction

D: Handouts (Students)  
 E: Handouts (Instructors)  
 F: Writing/Studying in Lab

G: Computer Use  
 H: Grammar Hotline



**Table 9 (cont.)**

Description of Courses and Services of Students/Patrons Using the Writing Lab

**B. Other Uses****1. Undergraduate**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Self-help	28	2	21	9	-	13	25	-	98
Coursework	55	9	-	23	-	9	-	-	96
Resumes, etc.	19	13	-	15	-	-	15	-	62

**2. Graduate**

Self-help	33	-	-	-	13	-	12	-	58
Graduate Test Paper	61	11	-	16	-	4	-	-	92
Resumes, etc.	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

**3. Other Patrons**

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	113	113
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<b>Totals:</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>749</b>
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**Key:** A: Tutorials  
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