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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT WRITING CENTER:
A CASE STUDY AND A HISTORY

VOLUME I

By

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ABSTRACT

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT WRITING CENTER: A CASE STUDY AND A HISTORY

By

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This case study and history of a twenty-five-year-old writing center attempts to realize three goals: (1) to respond to the call by writing center researchers for contributions to a body of case studies, (2) to uncover and examine underlying theories and assumptions that influenced the founding and development of one writing center within specific historical and discipline-wide contexts, and (3) to analyze the resultant narrative of events and developments, theories and assumptions for their impact on this center's sense of identity. What emerges is a detailed portrait of a writing center whose similarities to, as well as differences from other centers may provide useful points of comparison and inspire other researchers to offer similarly detailed case studies of their own writing centers.

The University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center has several distinguishing characteristics. The laboratory itself was intended to replace the traditional basic writing

course. It was atypical for its time in having started not as a skills-and-drills experience, but as a student-centered, process-oriented laboratory designed to put into practice the pedagogical theories of Robert Zoellner. This center was among the earliest to use undergraduate peer tutors, portfolio-based writing instruction, and holistic evaluation. Its tutor training program was unusually rigorous and well-informed, and peer tutors were given the responsibility of grading their fellow undergraduates.

One feature of note that is uncovered in this study is the impact of marginalization on a writing center's development. Established as a response to educational problems caused by social and political upheaval, operating initially at a time when composition studies was a new field and writing center theory was practically nonexistent, UM-Flint Writing Center personnel found themselves situated on the margins of their discipline, their department, and their institution. The way the peer tutors in particular perceived themselves had necessarily to undergo a change in order for the Center to adapt to a wider mission within its institutional context.

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To every writing teacher who has ever wondered whether
today's plans and challenges, dreams and decisions make
make any difference in the grander scheme of things.

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INTRODUCTION

A case study and a history

The University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, founded in 1971, is among the oldest postsecondary writing laboratories currently in operation. Created at a time when scholars and researchers were first beginning to study the processes of writing, when the field of composition studies was beginning to coalesce, and when instructors and programs devoted to aiding "remedial" students were highly stigmatized, this Center has achieved an identity that was slowly shaped by time and change. In this study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, I wish to explore the interaction between the Center itself and the multi-layered context in which it has developed. My mode of inquiry will be that of the Composition Historian; my method will be the case study. In this Introduction I will show that, while these two features have not often been combined in Composition Studies, they are both appropriate to my subject matter and compatible with each other. I will also address the issue of researcher subjectivity, or writing from within the study, since I have considerable personal involvement with the writing center I intend to describe.

Objectives

This study has three broad purposes. The first is to add to the slowly accumulating body of case study descriptions of existing writing centers¹ in order to contribute to an understanding of what writing centers have become, or what they can become. Professionals concerned with establishing or maintaining writing centers have long struggled to identify the most salient characteristics of a successful center; yet, as Muriel Harris points out in "Theory and Reality: The Ideal Writing Center(s)," generalizations are difficult to reach because centers vary so widely from institution to institution. Reading case studies can be an effective way of "touring" a variety of writing centers and making comparisons among them. Clearly, the more detailed descriptions we have available for comparison, the likelier we are to reach conclusions that will prove useful.

Richard Leahy's article, "On Being There: Reflections on Visits to Other Writing Centers," describes the impact that his visits to twenty writing centers had on the revisualization of his own center. These impressions of other centers resulted in significant changes in the way he directed the writing center at Boise State University. After concretizing these changes, Leahy reflects on their origins:

And I was left wondering, where did the idea for all this come from? I didn't copy any of the centers I'd

visited except in a few details. I suppose that after seeing them, I saw ours in a new way and almost intuitively understood what it needed. And that, I have come to realize, is a microcosm for the overall effect of that round of visits. I did borrow some specific ideas about training, record keeping, and other procedures. But the big changes have been indirect, intuitive, hard to pin down. (2)

This type of impact is one of several purposes for writing and sharing case studies of writing centers that Joyce A. Kinkead and Jeanette G. Harris identify in the introduction to their own collection, *Writing Centers in Context: Twelve Case Studies*:

[A collection of case studies] will provide those who are developing new writing centers with knowledge of what exists--what types of programs are already established and why they evolved as they did. It will provide new ideas and information for those who are expanding in new directions or evaluating existing programs. Also, practitioners will find solutions to common problems as well as plans that have already been implemented and tested. Scholars will be interested in the histories of the various programs--how and why they evolved as they did--as well as the glimpses these case studies provide of the roles that writing centers have assumed in shaping higher education. Finally, researchers will discover common histories, shared problems that remain to be solved, and new issues that need to be investigated. (xvii)

There are, then, several potential uses for case studies of writing centers within the field of composition, ranging from the pragmatic to the scholarly. Because this case study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center is likely the longest and most detailed study of its kind to date, it may prove especially helpful to readers who wish to make point by point factual comparisons among various types of centers. However, it is also my goal to capture "the

people, the atmosphere, the ideas, the concerns"--elements that Richard Leahy remembers best from his writing centers junket (2)--because it is these human factors as much as the facts of organization and resources that make any center what it is.

My second purpose in conducting this study is to uncover and examine underlying theories and assumptions on which the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center was founded and to trace their influence on the ongoing development of the Center. My approach is a type of "archaeology" in which I link these theories and assumptions to the Center's social and political context and to developments in the field of composition. This approach, though more detailed and more historically oriented, is similar to that of a case study entitled "Writing Others, Writing Ourselves: Ethnography and the Writing Center." In this study, Janice Witherspoon Neuleib and Maurice A. Scharton of Illinois State University offer an "archaeological ethnography" in which they "excavate" the assumptions underlying the founding of their writing center and offer a triangulated description of the center as it has evolved, through the separate perspectives of tutors, teachers, and administrators. This excavation relies on Michel Foucault's archaeological orientation, which questions the assumptions that underlie any theory, system, or approach: "Where was the field born? What were the

assumptions at the time of that beginning?" (Neuleib and Scharton 57). The authors are also guided by Linda Brodkey's *Writing Critical Ethnographic Narratives* to formulate the following context-related questions, again archaeological in nature:

What political and social situations informed the design of our center at its beginning? How did that original political situation affect design choices? How does it continue to affect the operation of the center? What do our collection of data tell us about the center, and how do our own agendas affect what we see as we observe our center in operation? (57)

My own study will address similar questions as they apply to the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center.

A third purpose of this study is to examine the image of the Writing Center as it evolved over time. While this purpose may at first glance appear to be similar to my initial objective of a writing a case study, I am concerned here with one specific, subjectively experienced aspect of this particular writing center. By "image," I mean the Writing Center's collective sense of self--the way tutors, staff, and directors have come to see their identities in the Center--as well as the way the Center is perceived by the larger institution. The image that writing center personnel have of themselves affects their procedural decisions and their relationship with the larger institution in which they are situated. In examining this particular Center's image, I will focus on the tutors' self-image in particular and suggest how certain historical, political,

and institutional factors may have influenced the development of other writing centers' images as well.

Writing history in the field of composition studies

In *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*, Stephen North categorizes kinds of inquiry by methodological community. Such communities are "groups of inquirers more or less united by their allegiance to one...mode, to an agreed-upon set of rules for gathering, testing, validating, accumulating, and distributing what they regard as knowledge" (1). He describes three main communities: Practitioners, Scholars, and Researchers.² The latter two groups are subdivided, with Scholars including Historians, Philosophers, and Critics, while Researchers include Experimentalists, Clinicians, Formalists, and Ethnographers. As the writer of this case study, I see myself operating within the Composition Historian community, a group of scholars that is comparatively recent in origin and small in number. Much is needed by way of contributions to the history of composition studies, as the field continues to grow and to define its chief concerns. Although there is a clear need for histories of key figures and key ideas, even the basic groundwork for composition's history must still be laid: At this writing, scholars are as yet offering conflicting "stories" of the origin and development of composition itself. The opposing accounts of Robert J. Connors, whose

traditional position may be described as neoclassicist, and Susan Miller, who represents a postmodern viewpoint, are leading examples of this conflict. That my own approach to the present study is influenced by Miller's interpretation will become apparent after a brief review of these opposing accounts of composition history.

Robert J. Connors contends in his essay entitled "Writing the History of Our Discipline" that "Composition studies is both the oldest and the newest of the humanities" (49). Taking the long view, Connors maintains an examination of oral composition can be traced back nearly to the beginning of rhetoric itself (49-50). The field of composition studies as we recognize it in America today, however, is a comparatively recent phenomenon which Connors believes resulted from a schism between oral rhetoric and writing at the university level, which began with the influence of German educational theory on post-Civil War American colleges (50-1). As composition-related concerns focused increasingly on written as opposed to oral composition in the nineteenth century, they received less scholarly attention from oral rhetoricians. Meanwhile, a two-tier system developed in English departments, which placed an emphasis on literary theory and pedagogy while denigrating the teaching of writing by "unwilling graduate student conscripts and badly-paid non-tenured instructors" (51-2). Until the post-World War II influx into American

universities of veterans using the G.I. Bill to obtain college educations, Connors concludes, "composition existed as a practice without a coherent theory or a developed history" (52).

Connors situates the birth of composition studies in the late 1940s to early 1950s, when a new generation of composition instructors, populist in sentiment, determined to examine and give shape to composition. Their arrival coincided with the General Education movement, which strove to unite separate but related disciplines. Since reading, writing, speaking, and listening were recognized as interrelated subjects in language arts, the new composition specialists reopened a dialogue with Speech specialists. The Conference on College Composition and Communication was founded in 1949, and the 1950s saw composition studies begin to evolve into a distinct field (52-53).

In her insightful postmodern study of composition's history, *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*, Susan Miller raises noteworthy objections to what has been termed the "neoclassical" story of the origin of composition as related by historians such as Connors. Taking issue with interpretations that seek to legitimize composition by claiming its descent from a "buried ancient past" that links it seamlessly to the classical world, Miller charges that neoclassicists fail to adequately address historical discontinuities (36). Miller instead sees an originating

unity of literature and composition in nineteenth century American education (47-56), with literature serving as the "high" and composition serving as the "low" agent of a political and social agenda (51-2). Far from being a direct descendant of classical rhetoric, the new institution of composition

lifted out of their indigenous contexts a variety of disparate parts: grammar based on lessons in classical languages, graphic conventions largely standardized by printers, pedagogical practices first designed to teach translation, "model" texts, the aura of gentility around privileged ("standard") oral usage, and practice in "composing" that had once been a small part of a larger, continuing oral rhetorical curriculum. These excavations and their collective relocation in one curricular entity formed a distinct institutional appropriation of written language. (54)

In criticizing the rhetorical tradition story of composition's origin, Miller brings in the political implications of such a proposed origin, asserting that an argument in favor of the classical rhetoric origins of composition is an argument in favor of a repressive and discriminatory educational system which empowered the few and silenced the many (44).

This brief summary of conflicting narratives illustrates more than an isolated dispute between two composition historians. It is also illustrative of differing interpretive approaches, which writers of composition history today consciously identify for themselves and for their readers. Lester Faigley, for example, introduces his impressive interpretation of the

development of composition studies between 1963 and the present by clearly situating his study within the frame of poststructuralism:

Even though composition studies might seem a peculiar choice for a disciplinary case study of the impact of postmodern theory, I find that the conservatism of composition studies in the face of postmodern theory is precisely what makes it interesting to study. The intimate relationship of theory to the classroom practice in teaching of writing enacts theoretical debates by constructing subjectivities that student writers are expected to occupy. Composition studies as a discipline relies upon *disciplinary* technologies of the sort Foucault describes--technologies that are committed to the molding of docile bodies. Many of the practices in the contemporary teaching of writing follow from an ongoing debate within composition studies that restages a long debate with modernism, a debate between those who wish to preserve the rational, coherent subject of the Enlightenment and those who advocate the self-expressive subject of Romanticism. (xi-xii)

At a time when scholars in a wide variety of fields use the differently framing perspectives of cultural studies, feminist theory, Marxist philosophy, sociology, psychology, and poststructuralism to approach their subjects, composition historians must, at the least, perceive the people, the movements, the theories, and the pedagogical practices with which they are concerned as developing within and being shaped by specific political, social, and historical contexts. It is my intention to consider these larger shaping influences as I arrive at a history of the Flint Writing Center through the necessarily subjective personal perceptions of past and present staff members. My approach to this small segment of composition history, then,

is inspired by Susan Miller's view of the importance of context on historical developments in any field.

Sources of information

In this study I am composing a history of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, which was founded in fall, 1971. One primary, but limited, source on which I have to draw is documentary evidence. This includes (1) a journal article about the founding of the Writing Center by Patrick Hartwell; (2) folders of student writings dating back to the early 1980s, including log sheets with tutor and staff comments, old midsemester and final evaluation sheets, introductory material about the Laboratory, and miscellaneous Writing Center lessons; (3) two large file drawers in the Writing Center filled with lessons still being used today that were either invented by staff members over the years or photocopied from a wide variety of sources; (4) the log sheets, evaluation sheets, and introductory materials that are presently distributed to students in the Writing Center; (5) a few tutor newsletters; (6) several letters from past and present staff members to me; (7) two folders of photocopied scholarly articles covering topics in linguistics, rhetoric, composition, and pedagogy which were assigned in the past as readings for tutors; and (8) the results of a three-year study begun in 1989 by Lois Rosen and Scott Russell, showing that the Lab-

centered course has a positive impact on student performance in subsequent English composition courses. Because the available documentary evidence alone would yield only a sketchy and incomplete description of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center's development, it does not constitute the chief source of information for this study, but rather serves as a supplement.

The bulk of my information has been derived from tape recorded first person oral accounts, a richly textured type of source that has become widely used and widely respected by historians since the Second World War. As historians move into the third generation of relying upon the tape recorded personal interview as evidence, its applications have not only broadened within the discipline of history, but have been discovered by those in other fields. Oral history scholars David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum observe:

Interdisciplinary applications of oral history have increased steadily as disciplines such as folklore, anthropology, and gerontology explore their common ground with oral history. Each relies on oral testimony collected in a manner particular to its field; each uses that information in unique fashionOral history also has growing applications in administration and policy matters....Policy decisions of institutions and corporations can be made more effectively by using oral history interviews to help uncover the rationale behind earlier actions and the precedents they set for the future. (xiv-xv)

Although its usefulness as a tool for gathering detailed information and comparing varied perspectives on the same issues is readily apparent, the tape recorded interview is as yet a virtually unexplored source of material for

recounting events in the field of composition. In commenting on the paucity of interviews of contemporary composition's key figures, Robert Connors writes, "thus far few scholars have ventured out into the field with tape recorder in hand. It must be done, and soon" (70). The voices I intend to capture for my own study can hardly be described as belonging to key figures in composition history; all the better reason for recording them, perhaps, since most would otherwise have little occasion to speak.

The primary sources of information for this history are twenty-two tape recorded and transcribed interviews of people who presently are or formerly were connected with the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center as faculty, staff, or tutors. I began by drawing up a list of Writing Center personnel, past and present, which I had compiled from old Center records, conversations with Center-connected people whom I already knew, and my own recollections. After obtaining the addresses of as many potential interviewees as possible--sixty-three in all--I attempted to contact them through letters, phone calls, or face-to-face queries. The last method proved most effective. The resulting twenty-four interviews were guided by a loosely-structured set of questions, but interviewees were encouraged to follow their own agendas in describing their involvement with the UM-Flint Writing Center. (See Appendix A for interview questions and release forms approved by the University

Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.) In the end, I used twenty-two of the twenty-four interviews, discarding two because the interviewees remembered very little about their Writing Center experiences and thus were unable to contribute useful information. Two interviews are of the same informant, Danny Rendleman, who managed the Writing Laboratory for eleven years. These two interviews were conducted four years and three months apart; I chose to interview Rendleman a second time because, as I conducted research for this study, I realized that he would be able to answer a number of questions that had surfaced over time.

Most of the twenty-two taped interviews are retrospective; that is, the subjects are looking back to past experiences with the Writing Center. Only four are currently employed in the Center. These interviews cover the entire lifespan of the Writing Center from 1971 to 1996, with sixteen of the twenty-two interviews representing the Writing Laboratory during its first decade of operation. Eleven interviewees were connected with the Center as faculty or administrators working either in the Center or in the UM-Flint English Department. Ten interviewees were tutors, and two of these currently work in the Center. One present staff member started out as a tutor, one former interim director began her career as a tutor, and two former tutors and one former Lab manager are currently lecturers in the UM-Flint English Department. One interviewee is an

"outsider," a faculty member from Political Science who offered his impressions of the Writing Laboratory's image on campus in its early years. I was successful in locating and interviewing all but one of the former Writing Center directors on my list; however, since this one-year interim director--Elizabeth Graykowski--was charged with simply maintaining the *status quo*, her input is not essential to providing an accurate history of the Center.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using tape recorded interviews as a primary source of information. On the positive side, they have proven to be rich and varied in the details that they offer. The facts and impressions contained in these transcripts are essential to the story I am about to tell, and a piece of information brought up in one interview is often confirmed in others. In addition, I have found personal emphases and interpretations to be especially intriguing. Numerous colorful anecdotes have allowed me to bring the Writing Center and its staff alive in these pages. On the negative side, it must be kept in mind that personal interviews are not complete, objective statements of a single reality, but are filtered through individual recollections, and thus may be incomplete, contradictory of other interviews, or biased. In piecing together this history, then, I have found it helpful to compare the memories of several people describing the same

time period in order to identify common themes and make judicious selections of material to include in the study.

The case study as a method of inquiry

The case study is one of eight empirical research designs described by Janice Lauer and J. William Asher as being often utilized in composition studies (23-38), and although it most frequently appears in work by the Researcher branch of Compositionists, Stephen North points out that the case study can be appropriately used by writers in any mode of inquiry, including that of the Historians (201-2). The nature of such a study will be shaped, of course, by the concerns of the writer's methodological community: "All [such case] studies can be considered similar insofar as they focus on some 'unit' or phenomenon intensively. But the nature of that focus--how the scrutinized unit is conceived, how findings are tested and validated, what happens to the knowledge generated by the inquiry, and so on--these will all be a function of the sponsoring mode of inquiry" (202).

In *Applications of Case Study Research*, Robert K. Yin, a social science scholar, notes that the case study method is appropriate "when investigators desire to (a) define topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual conditions and not just the phenomenon of study, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence" (xi).

Social scientists often find it useful to combine the case study method with one or more other recognized methods inquiry, such as the analyses of archival records, interviews, statistics, and observation (Yin xi). While the particular combination of methods that I have chosen for the present study is as yet relatively rare in composition studies, then, it has already become an accepted avenue of approach in other disciplines, as Yin points out. This case study, depending as it does on participant recollections from the sometimes distant past, will be recognized as being more retrospective than studies that are based on recently observed events. By presenting what social scientists term a "thick description" drawn from interviews of participants--a number of whom participated in the day-to-day activities within the Writing Center from its beginning--and by drawing on my own knowledge of the Center as a participant-observer, I hope to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon in its context over a long period of time. Further, I will offer an interpretation of this description, highlighting recurrent themes and suggesting how the experiences of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center can give insight into the histories and experiences of other writing centers.

Readers of case studies in the field of composition will recognize that compositionists have adapted the case study method from the social sciences as a tool for research according to their own purposes and methodologies, a

frequent variation being the intermingling of ethnographic methods with case study methods. In fact, few self-named case studies in composition would meet all of the criteria for a classic case study as defined by Robert K. Yin, who has described in detail the distinguishing features of the various evaluation tools commonly used within the social sciences. Yin separates the case study from the ethnography, the grounded theory study, and the quasi-experiment (55-76). He identifies the distinguishing features of the case study design as: (1) assuming a single objective reality that can be investigated by following the traditional rules of scientific inquiry, (2) having the potential to be used for theory-building, (3) also favoring theory-testing, and (4) considering context as an essential part of the phenomenon being evaluated. In terms of data collection and analysis, Yin characterizes the case study as (5) favoring multiple techniques of data collection and (6) analyzing either quantitative or qualitative data (64). Yin also comments, however, that the various evaluation methods often are not kept clearly separated in everyday use (55) and that the case study method can be usefully combined with other methods (75-6).

My own study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center conforms, in the most general terms, to Yin's over-all description of the "case study" more closely than to any of the other recognized methods of inquiry that he

describes. The general observations for my study, which I will present later in this Introduction, lay out theories derived from writing center literature that are tested here; and the guiding questions (again, detailed below) are aids in building new theories. The importance of context is in fact a major concept expressed in one of my general observations. I have already described my multiple sources for data collection and evaluation, and it should be clear that my analysis of this data will be qualitative. The most obvious respect in which my case study differs from Yin's classic case study in the social sciences is my assumption about reality: Like ethnographers, I assume multiple, socially constructed realities (Yin 60). (A related part of this assumption, that the investigator cannot maintain an "objective" distance, will be discussed at length below, where I address the situation of writing from within.)

Because it has proved useful for a wide range of purposes in an increasing number of disciplines, the case study method has undergone recent re-evaluation and change. In contrast to Yin's definition of the classic case study, Robert Stake, Professor of Education and Director of the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, describes the case study method as applied in education and the social sciences in somewhat more flexible terms that are similar to the way in which I use this method for the present study.

He sees ethnographic, naturalistic, phenomenological, hermeneutic, and holistic studies all as falling under the rubric of "case study" (36). He emphasizes that a main objective in these qualitative studies is to create an understanding of the subject being studied as opposed to presenting an explanation of it:

The function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it. "Thick description," "experiential understanding," and "multiple realities" are expected in qualitative case studies. Pursuit of complex meanings cannot be just designed in or caught retrospectively....It seems to require continuous attention, an attention seldom sustained when the dominant instruments of data gathering are objectively interpretable checklists or survey items. An ongoing interpretive role of the researcher is prominent in qualitative case study. (43)

It is this view of the case study's purpose that I have adopted for my study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center. Yin's version of this research method would clearly be more suitable for a researcher presently engaged in observation of the phenomenon under study and striving for classic objective reality. My study, however, acknowledges multiple realities reflected in the recollections of twenty-two people, including myself, most of whom are former rather than present participants in the UM-Flint Writing center.

Major themes of the study

In formulating questions to guide my investigation into the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, I am

working with three generalizations about writing centers that can be drawn from the literature:

1. Context is a crucial factor in determining how a writing center will take shape and function.
2. A key to a writing center's success is its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the larger institution.
3. The personnel of many older writing centers experienced a marginalized status during their centers' early development.

I will examine each of these generalizations in this section and discuss them as themes that emerge from the narrative of events and developments in the history of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center.

The first observation, that context is crucial in shaping the identity of any center, becomes apparent on an examination of any center's development over time. In the introduction to their collection of writing center case studies, Kinhead and Harris observe:

It is [writing centers'] environment, academic and otherwise, that most directly shapes them, giving them form and substance, and the impetus to define themselves in certain ways. (xv)

Context is a difficult concept to define:

In addition to the institutions in which they are situated, writing centers often have smaller contexts--specific programs or departments of which they are a part. These smaller contexts, like the larger ones, vary widely....Thus many, perhaps most writing centers, exist within multiple contexts, all of which help to define the resulting programs. Often, these different

contexts exert opposing forces on a writing center program. As a result, programs most frequently compromise between the various forces that surround them, treading a sometimes tortuous path among conflicting needs and demands in order to serve each constituency fairly and effectively. (xv-xvi)

In making comparisons among the twelve centers in their study, Kinkead and Harris offer a chart that describes them according to size of institution, type of institution, administrative control of the center, location on campus, audience (i.e. student population), availability of computers, types of tutors, and special notes about the center (228-31). An examination of the separate case studies illustrates that these practical descriptors, most of which are context-related, have a profound influence upon where, how, and for whom individual writing centers offer their services. Each case study begins with a description of the broad context in which the writing center is situated and then discusses center services in terms of the influences and interactions of various contextual elements. General references to the importance of context abound in the Kinkead/Harris case studies. Muriel Harris at Purdue (1), Brenda M. Greene at Medgar Evers (32), and Irene Clark at the University of Southern California (112) all comment on the effects of institutional size and diversity of student population on their writing centers' operations. Edward Lotto of Lehigh University explains how being located within an engineering-oriented institution that values writing less than certain other types of institutions

affects the atmosphere for writing center staff (79-80). Julie Neff of the University of Puget Sound attributes her writing center's success, in part, to strategic alliances she has forged within her campus community (134); while Dawn Rodriguez and Kathleen Kiefer of Colorado State University state that the reluctance of their institution to support a comprehensive writing center held them back, for a time, from achieving their goals (226). These case studies, with their multiple references to the inexorable influences of situational factors, indicate that no writing center can be fully understood without an understanding of its context.

It seems appropriate here to offer a brief description of the present-day University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center. In doing so, I will follow both the context-related categories and the level of detail modeled by Kinhead and Harris in their thumbnail sketches of the twelve writing centers whose case studies appear in their collection:

- Size: 6,312 students in fall, 1995. 5,895 undergraduate and 417 graduate students.
- Type: Four-year liberal arts college; branch of a research university. Commuter campus.
- Administrative control: Has own writing center director, a tenure-track faculty member in the English Department. The center receives funding through the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Director reports to English Department chair and dean of CAS.
- Location: Third floor of the Classroom-Office Building, a central location on campus.
- Audience: Primarily students in the writing program, especially students enrolled in Writing Workshop, for whom work in the Center is a major part of their required coursework. Open to entire campus. Number of cross-disciplinary drop-in students is increasing.

Computers: Many computers are available for student use across campus, including a new computer writing classroom two floors above the writing center. The Center itself has seven Zenith and two Apple GS computers with five printers. (These usually are not all functional at once.)

Tutors: 18-20. Mainly undergraduates; some graduates. Lab manager and director also tutor.

Special notes: (1) Unique lab-tied course for basic writers. (2) Unique lab manager position. Age: Founded in 1971, this Center is three years older than the oldest centers included in the Kinkead/Harris study. (4) Use of portfolios and holistic scoring since 1971. (5) Connection to WAC program is being developed.

How is context a factor here? In providing information for the Kinkead/Harris context-related descriptors, it becomes immediately apparent to me that this seemingly static description of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center would not have been accurate five years ago, and probably will not be accurate five years hence. Much about the Center has changed over time, usually in response to changes within the larger institution. An examination of the Kinkead/Harris case studies shows that this is a common theme among the various studies, most of which include sections on the individual centers' histories explaining the factors that influenced their evolution.

Typical challenges recounted in the Kinkead/Harris case studies are budget cuts, administrative changes, institutional decisions about a writing center's role or affiliation, pressure to incorporate computers into writing instruction, and changes in student population. Irene Lurkis Clark observes, for example, that the USC composition

program's decision to institute portfolio grading had "significant pedagogical, ethical, and administrative implications" for the writing center (111), while Joan A. Mullen and Luanne Momenie cite "a substantial increase in student population...significant administrative changes, state budget crises, and the voting in of a faculty union" as context-related changes to which their two branch writing centers at the University of Toledo had to adapt within a space of four years (46). It is for reasons like these that Kinkead and Harris conclude that a writing center's ability to adapt to changing conditions and changing institutional needs is critical to its success.

The nature of these context-related conditions with which successful writing centers must cope introduces the third generalization concerning the marginalized status experienced by many centers in their early days. In the epilogue to *Writing Centers in Context*, Kinkead remarks, "When we talk about progress in writing centers, one of the visible signs of success is where the writing center is housed. As most of us know, many centers started out in windowless basements, broom closets, or stuffy alcoves" (Kinkead and Harris 233). Several case studies refer to modest beginnings in inadequate quarters or with insufficient funds, or tell about wars waged by means of paperwork to justify their centers' existence. Muriel Harris looks back on the early days of the Purdue Writing

Lab: "One problem was space, since the half of one room allotted to the lab was cramped from the start because we were asked to share facilities with a reading and studies skills center" (3). Joan A. Mullin of the University of Toledo-Bancroft Writing Center remembers: "It was...explained to me that, because of overcrowded conditions and a tight budget, I would have no clerical staff, no typewriter, no furniture, and, in fact, no office..." (46). Julie Neff describes the early writing center at the University of Puget Sound as being "so small that even when standing the director and peer writing advisors could not all be in the center at the same time" (135).

Such limitations regarding budgets, space, and materials experienced by many writing centers in their early years may be seen as concrete manifestations of the low regard in which academia originally held the idea of writing centers. Muriel Harris observes in a 1990 article which looks back on writing center history, "We traditionally have been the field hands waiting at the back door for a few scraps from the table of the real folk dining inside" (21). This "tradition of being at the bottom of the totem pole" (21), Harris points out, has changed over the past decade or so, to the extent that a writing program without a tutorial element is now seen as incomplete (15-16). Nevertheless, the experience of being marginalized was clearly a common

one for many early writing center personnel and was undoubtedly a shaping influence on the way in which they perceived themselves in the larger context of their institutions.

How the three themes connect

I will examine the role that each of these interrelated factors recognized in the literature--context, adaptability, and marginalization--has played in the development of one particular writing center's image. "Context" will prove to be a term having multiple meanings as I attempt to situate this center within time and space, within the history of composition studies, and within the growth of the UM-Flint academic community. In describing changes in the Center's multi-layered context, I will discuss ways in which the Center was called upon to adapt--not only altering the Center-tied basic writing course, the assessment process, tutor training, and the like, but also altering the collective self-concept of Writing Center personnel and the image that they projected to outsiders. Finally, I will examine the problem of marginalization for writing center personnel across the nation, relate it to the experiences and perceptions of the Flint staff, and show how this issue affected the Center's ability to adapt to its changing context.

I have used the three themes of context, adaptability, and marginalization as a superstructure for framing questions that will guide this case study. In formulating these questions, I have also kept in mind the fact that writing centers are not passive entities simply acted upon by outside forces. Kinkead and Harris remark:

The relationship between the writing center and its context...is not inevitably one-sided, with the writing center merely responding to the needs of various programs and of the parent institution. Successful programs establish relationships with their host environments that are best described as interactive--the writing center shapes its context as well as being shaped by it. (xvi)

My questions will attempt to capture the interrelationships and interactions among Writing Center staff and between the Center staff and their larger environment.

Guiding questions

1. How may changing institutional perceptions and needs have shaped the Writing Center over time?
 - a. What problems and issues caused the University of Michigan-Flint English Department to establish a writing center?
 - b. In what ways have the Center's structure, organizational priorities, and pedagogical approach remained consistent over time? What are some of the factors in maintaining these consistencies?
 - c. What changes have occurred in the Center, and what factors have influenced these changes?
 - d. How have the relationships between the Writing Center and the composition program, between the Writing Center and the English Department, and between the Writing Center and the University of Michigan-Flint campus evolved over time?

2. How have Writing Center personnel shaped and reshaped the Writing Center?

- a. What theories and experiences informed the decisions of the Center's two co-founders? How did these background elements translate into day-to-day practice? Which practices can be seen as pioneering efforts in composition pedagogy?
- b. How and why have various Writing Center directors either preserved the consistency of policies, practices, and approaches or effected changes?
- c. What contributions has each of the two Center managers made? What role has each manager played in promoting the consistency of day-to-day practice in the Center? How has each affected the image of the Writing Center?
- d. Which policies and practices in the selection, training, and delegation of duties to tutors have remained consistent over time, and which have changed? What role has a sense of community played in influencing tutor performance and shaping the Writing Center environment?

3. What role may marginalization, or perceptions of marginalization, have played in shaping the Center and its image?

- a. What were some early self-perceptions of the Center personnel? How did early colleagues and administrators perceive them?
- b. In what concrete ways did the early Writing Center experience a marginalized position on campus? How did this change over time?
- c. In what ways may marginalization have been perceived as a positive status by Writing Center personnel? What contributions may this perception have made to the success of the Writing Center?
- d. How may the changing status of compositionists and of writing centers have altered the self perceptions of directors, staff, and tutors?

Writing from the inside

I am not, in the traditional positivistic sense, a distanced and objective observer of the writing center described in this thesis. On the contrary, I am intimately acquainted with the Center itself, and I count as friends or acquaintances many past and present staff members. Although I have been connected with the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center in various professional ways for the past ten years, my associations with it go back perhaps twenty-one years. I received my A.B. degree in English and German from the University of Michigan-Flint in 1975. As an English major, I took courses with four of the faculty members whose tape recorded personal interviews will be quoted in the chapters that follow: Wes Rae, Bill Vasse, Greg Waters, and one of the Writing Center's founders, Pat Hartwell.

Patrick Hartwell was an important influence during my undergraduate years. I remember him as a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher whose fascination with language was infectious. I developed a particular interest in linguistics as a result of taking his introductory course in the subject. Although I never worked in what was then called the Writing Laboratory as an undergraduate, Hartwell gave me a tour of the Lab shortly before I graduated, when he recognized my interest in English language. He mentioned the possibility of a new Lab manager position that might receive funding for the following fall--the Senior

Instructional Associate job that, as it turns out, was to be held for eleven years by Danny Rendleman. Although Hartwell encouraged me to apply for this job, I decided to attend graduate school in Ann Arbor. I returned to the University of Michigan-Flint in 1982, first to teach in the English Department and later to also direct the English Placement Examination, serve as associate director and acting director of the Writing Center, and teach the Center-grounded basic writing course. When Danny Rendleman accepted a lectureship in the English Department in 1986, Scott Russell was hired to replace him as Senior Instructional Associate. I met Scott in his new capacity of Lab manager, worked with him for many years, developed a friendship, and married him in the fall of 1992. He is still the Lab manager. At this writing, I no longer teach at UM-Flint. After teaching in the English Department for nearly fifteen years, I left in the fall of 1996 to teach for the English Composition Board at the University of Michigan's main campus in Ann Arbor.

My research, then, is conducted from the position of participant-observer. I have chosen to study this particular writing center in part because I have been so closely involved with its development. I have a keen personal interest in coming to understand what my former colleagues, predecessors, and friends have contributed to the making of what I perceive to be an especially successful writing center. It is my contention that the qualitative

findings I present will be enriched by my own firsthand experiences with and observations of the Center and by my personal relationships with many of the people I have interviewed. While a project of this nature would certainly not have been considered credible or legitimate a generation ago, writing from within a culture, community, social class, or other group being studied by the researcher has become increasingly more accepted, particularly in the social sciences. In an article entitled "Dare We Say 'I'?" Bringing the Personal into Scholarship," anthropologist Ruth Behar offers multiple examples of autobiographical writing that has contributed or soon will contribute to scholarly knowledge. These examples include the as-yet-unknown work of an African-American doctoral student of Behar's acquaintance drawing on his grandfather's experience of the migration of emancipated slaves to the midwest, Zora Neale Hurston's well-known collection of the folklore of her own people, and the author's own study of a Mexican street peddler, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*, which concludes with a link between the subject's life and that of Behar herself. Behar summarizes the objections to such autobiographical work as follows:

No one objects to autobiography, as such, as a genre in its own right. What bothers critics is the insertion of personal stories into what we have been taught to think of as the analysis of impersonal facts. Throughout most of the 20th century, in scholarly fields ranging from literary criticism to anthropology to law, the reigning paradigms have called for

distance, objectivity, and abstraction. The worst sin has been to be "too personal." (B2)

Arguing that "personal evidence is evidence," Behar asserts that "the best of autobiographical scholarly writing sets off on a personal quest and ultimately produces a redrawn map of social terrain" (B2).

In *Academic Writing*, Janet Giltrow also comments on the introduction of the personal in research, pointing out that the "participant-observer" of some contemporary ethnographic studies, for example, presents qualitative findings that are informed by personal contact with the groups and individuals being studied (330-1)³. Giltrow sees this as indicative of more widespread changes in the scholarly voice. She offers the following explanation for these changes:

...It is feminist reasoning, at the end of the twentieth century, which has most sincerely invited the subject--the thinking, feeling, being, experienced in the complexities of daily life--back into scholarly writing.... Feminist reasoning has criticized research practices for being carried out from a masculinist position or point of view, and then representing that position as universal. So feminist research would be inclined to dismantle the form of knowledge constructed by traditional research practices, and expose that knowledge as not only not "objective" but also as serving the interests of those who work at it. (330)

Sandra Harding, a feminist social scientist, writes about research perspectives in some detail. Harding identifies the position of current feminist scholars as follows: "We have claimed the historical realities of our lives as the places from which our thought and politics not only do begin, but also *should* begin" (*(En)gendering*

Knowledge 100). In an essay entitled "Who Knows? Identities and Feminist Epistemology," Harding explains the difference between traditional research and feminist research as being located not in a new set of research methods but in methodology and epistemology (2-10). The researcher's personal relationship to the study is a crucial element:

The best feminist analysis goes beyond...innovations in subject matter in a crucial way: it insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of research....Thus the researcher appears to us not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests. (9)

This move to place the researcher inside the study redefines the so-called "objectivist" position: "Introducing this 'subjective' element into the analysis in fact increases the objectivity of the research and decreases the 'objectivism' which hides this kind of evidence from the public" (9).

In "Personal Experience as Evidence in Feminist Scholarship," communication scholars Karen A. Foss and Sonja K. Foss discuss admissibility of evidence and methodology. Stating that "the question of what criteria should be used to judge the admissibility of personal experience as evidence is irrelevant in feminist scholarship," (39) the authors explain that we are all experts on our own lives, and consequently no qualitative evaluation of individual experiences is appropriate (39-40): "Even if I've had a lot more of it, your experience is your truth. How can one

being prove another being wrong" (40)? In answer to the charge that feminist researchers may be in a position to privilege their own experiences or interpretations over those of their study participants, Foss and Foss explain that researchers have a presentational expertise and that they use these special skills as a means of helping others "give voice to their experiences" (40). In making choices about which personal accounts to use, how much of any account to include, and how to interpret this material, feminist researchers are again using their presentational expertise (40). "They constantly monitor their own perspectives in regard to the personal experiences they gather. They make every effort to facilitate the emergence of the experiences they report through presentational skills that honor and do not violate those experiences" so that the resulting document is "a joint construction of the participants' experiences and interpretations and researchers' presentational expertise" (41).

Sandra Harding sees feminist researchers as necessarily having multiple, and even contradictory, identities, so that they are making observations both from the inside and from without, from the marginalized position of women and the "center" position of investigators ("Who Knows?" 103-4). She sets the unmediated raw experience and observations of the participant against the "Standpoint" of someone who achieves understanding of experiences through science or

politics (104). The combination of perspectives is key to feminist research, in spite of resulting conflicts within the researcher:

We have criticized the "center's" claim that it alone can provide the one true story of the world. Even the central tendency in mainstream thought about science undermines such an idea. Scientific work--at least twentieth century scientific work--never claims to produce true statements, but only statements that are less likely to be false than the alternatives that have been considered....But we need not be equally skeptical of the idea that some beliefs are less false, better supported by the existing evidence, than others. (112)

It is the "outsider within" who best knows how to locate and access such evidence.

Although my study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center is not a feminist work--I am not writing specifically about women's lives and experiences--I am indebted to the research of scholars, particularly feminist scholars, who have deliberately and openly studied a group or milieu of which they were a part and have responded effectively to outside questions and criticism of their positions and methodology. I call attention here to my relationship with the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center because the extent of my involvement with the Center would not otherwise be immediately evident to the reader. I intend to make my stance clear: I am writing both from within and from without. Although the conjunction of method, mode, and source material in this thesis may be an atypical one, these separate components can certainly be

recognized as traditional approaches to research; yet my position in relation to my subject is not a traditional one. Although the reader of this thesis will encounter only occasional references to my own work with the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, it would be well to keep in mind my intimate ties to the subject of my own case study and history. Where minor facts and bits of information about the Writing Center are presented without documentation, the reader may assume that I draw on personal knowledge or experience to fill in occasional small gaps. I have also drawn on this personal familiarity in trying to convey my sense of the Writing Center as an organic thing, a complex and changing entity with its own individual identity. Finally, my firsthand observations will figure into the conclusions that I offer about the Writing Center's development, its success, and the formation of its distinctive image.

Notes

¹ While hundreds of articles have been published in the 1980s and 90s that describe some aspect of a particular writing center such as tutor training, student attitudes, writing in the disciplines, assessment of student writing, etc., fewer publications have attempted to provide an overview of a given center. Three noteworthy examples include (1) Lou Kelly's "One-to-One, Iowa City Style: Fifty Years of Individualized Writing Instruction," a study of what may be the oldest writing center in the United States, (2) Patrick Hartwell's "A Writing Laboratory Model," important here because it describes the founding and early operation of the writing center that is the subject of my own case study, and (3) Joyce A. Kinkead and Jeanette G. Harris' collection entitled Writing Centers in Context: Twelve Case Studies, which has provided useful insights for my study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center.

Examples of other case studies include Donald Gallo's "Birthing a Writing Lab," Myrna Goldenberg's "The Evolution of a Writing Center," William V. Miller's "Now and Later at Ball State," Janice Witherspoon Neuleib and Maurice A. Scharton's "Writing Others, Writing Ourselves: Ethnography and the Writing Center," Jane Opitz's "Saint John's Writing Workshop: A Summary of the First Semester Report," Leo E. Otterbein's "A Writing Laboratory," William Stull's "The Hartford Sentence-Combining Laboratory: From Theory to Program," and Robert Wess' "Making Connections: The Writing Lab at PSU."

² When using North's terms, I have preserved his system of capitalization. Throughout this study, capitalization of the words "Writing Center," "Center," "Laboratory, or "Lab" indicate the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center.

³ Giltrow offers, by way of example, Shirley Brice Heath's *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*.

CHAPTER ONE: THE WRITING CENTER IN CONTEXT

Part I: Flower Children, Social Reform, and the Development of Writing Centers

Establishing a context

In order to understand any individual writing center, it is necessary to understand the specific situational factors that have brought it into being and shaped its development over time. In this chapter I will provide information about the larger context in which the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center was founded in 1971. In describing the city of Flint and the campus of the University of Michigan-Flint, detailing the concerns of English Department members who were attempting to teach writing to a new type of student, and showing how these concerns led them to decide on a writing center as a solution to their problems, I hope to set the stage for the decisions and actions of the Writing Center's two cofounders. I would like to emphasize here that time is as important as place in this particular setting: The turbulent Woodstock-to-Watergate era of the late 1960s and early 1970s posed new challenges to educators which were partly responsible for the growing popularity of writing centers in general, as I will show later in this chapter. It will also be seen that this era generated the particular concerns on which the center at Flint was founded and

significantly influenced both the atmosphere of this new Lab and the self-perceptions of its staff.

An era of unrest

Between 1968 and 1974 the United States experienced unprecedented peaks of optimism and valleys of despair. The brutal assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy only months apart were followed a year later by the triumph of the first moon landing. Hopes were raised for a thaw in the Cold War when the United States met with the Soviet Union and China to discuss world peace, but Richard M. Nixon, the president responsible for this move, eventually resigned to avoid impeachment for campaign misconduct related to the Watergate break-in. The unpopular war in Vietnam continued, expanding into Cambodia before its eventual end in a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and a negotiated peace. There was strife between the "hippie" youth culture and the Establishment, exemplified by anti-war demonstrations on many college campuses and the clash of protesters with police at the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention; yet the gathering of half a million young people at an upstate New York farm made "Woodstock" a name evocative of "peace, love, and music." Finally, a number of advocacy groups (such as N.O.W., the Weathermen, the Black Panthers and the Yippies) were born out of protest and the struggle for equal rights (Barbour, et al. 17-18). The

explosive events of this era affected American life at every level.

Institutions of higher education could scarcely remain unaffected. Anxieties related to the Cold War and competition over the space race which had begun with the launching of Sputnik in 1957 stimulated interest in college education and attracted federal funding, even for the traditionally ignored subjects of literature and composition. Expansion of the corporate and state sectors, as well as a growth in the student-age population, dramatically increased the number of students attending college, and social and political changes added even further to rising enrollments (Berlin 120). Inspired in part by the Civil Rights Movement and the feminist movement, so-called non-traditional students who might in an earlier era have lacked the means or the incentive for attending college now seized opportunities provided by open enrollment. The college-level student population was transformed, then, not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of background.

The growth of writing centers in the United States

The writing center as a component of American college-level English instruction is a comparatively recent development. While it is true that the general concept of the writing tutorial is not, in itself, new--Stephen North points out that centers "have been around in one form or

another since at least the 1930s when Carrie Stanley was already working with writers at the University of Iowa" ("The Idea of a Writing Center" 436)--writing "laboratories," "clinics," or "centers" first received widespread attention around the late 1960s and early 1970s, in response to a perceived instructional crisis. Newly adopted open enrollment policies at many institutions had drawn in a diverse population of students, some of whom were not as academically prepared for college work as so-called "traditional" students had been. For these students, the typical freshman composition course--lecture-based and grounded in the assumption that students had already mastered the basics of the composing process--simply did not provide adequate experience for preparing them to write academic papers. Unlike Freshman Rhetoric 101, a writing center could provide the individualized one-to-one instruction that was desperately needed by less experienced writers. Gary A. Olson observes:

As the number of non-traditional students increased in the 60s and 70s, it became more and more apparent that writing could not be taught to a classroom of twenty, thirty, or more students. Such a pedagogy had always been a marginal method at best. In large classes you can teach grammar, you can teach literature, you can teach rhetorical patterns, but you cannot teach writing. The best way, maybe the only way, to learn how to write is by writing and rewriting. Beyond practicing writing, the writer can also learn a good deal by talking to a sensitive and responsive reader before and during writing and rewriting. The chief pedagogy of writing centers, tutoring, recognizes that writing is at once the most personal and the most social task students engage in. As Kenneth Bruffee explains...what we know, hence what we write, is a

product of social inter-action: our talk. Students' writing can improve through close and regular contact with a supportive, yet critical audience. Trained tutors, peer or otherwise, know how to listen and how to engage students in a constructive dialogue that becomes an essential part of the composing process. (xi-xii)

It seems likely that the *Zeitgeist* of the 1960s and 1970s not only was primarily responsible for larger numbers and wider diversity of the student population but was also a determining influence in the acceptance of the writing center as an increasingly common solution to the problem of underprepared students. The notion of one-to-one instruction was not new, but it fit in neatly with the social and political agendas of many academics. In an era of Utopian aspirations toward a non-racist, non-sexist egalitarian society, providing individualized instruction that recognized diversity in personal and social backgrounds and in levels of academic preparation undoubtedly held a certain appeal for those who would remake the world. There were sound pedagogical motives for establishing writing centers, but there were ethical motives as well. The sense of waging a social crusade was an important element in the newly formed self-images of certain writing center personnel. In a later chapter of this dissertation I will explore the implications, for the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center and for writing centers in general, of this social agenda.

Writing centers today

Although writing laboratories/clinics/centers began to receive attention at the time of the so-called paradigm shift in writing theory and pedagogy--when cognitive psychology, linguistics, and new research in composition were helping to shape the writing-as-process approach--it would be inaccurate to imply that these centers sprang up fully formed and flawless, reflecting the newest thought and the most effective pedagogy. Joyce S. Steward and Mary K. Croft characterize early writing laboratories as focusing on the most basic writing problems and sometimes relying heavily on the skill-and-drill approach:

The first labs were primarily remedial, many of them in technical schools or community colleges, and some of them served merely as depositories of material, self-teaching kits, or other equipment for drill in basic skills. Some writing labs were spinoffs of broader learning centers, usually those for remedial or developmental reading. Many such facilities served only students referred from specific courses, who sometimes came to earn a passing mark or attain a stipulated competency. (2)

Stephen North suggests that the development of what we might call the "contemporary" writing center dates from around the 1972 publication of Lou Kelly's book, *From Dialogue to Discourse* (North, "Writing Center Research" 25), which grew out of Kelly's experience at the University of Iowa Writing Laboratory. Certainly hundreds of the writing centers in operation today were founded during the mid-1970s (Harris, "What's Up and What's In" 15), but many were not yet "contemporary" in outlook or approach. In an essay entitled

"One-On-One, Iowa City Style: Fifty Years of Individualized Writing Instruction," Lou Kelly details the evolution of what is arguably the oldest writing center in the country--founded by Carrie Stanley in the 1930s--from its original Rogerian face-to-face tutoring through a period of isolated grammar and correctness exercises to the present student-centered tutorial. Lil Brannon notes that as late as the early eighties most writing labs were still workbook-driven or auto-tutorial (5). A great deal was learned through experience during the "adolescence" of these centers from the mid-seventies to the mid- or late eighties. During this period, they evolved from "labs," a name that came to imply the skill-and-drill approach, to "centers," places of genuine interaction and learning among students, tutors, and faculty.

It should be mentioned here that the writing center at the University of Michigan-Flint, while never a "lab" in the negative sense of that word, was originally called the Writing Laboratory, and retained that name until 1983. Later in this chapter I will explain the rationale behind this name choice. Throughout this thesis I will refer to the pre-1983 center as the Writing Laboratory.

That the writing center is not an ephemeral phenomenon but an integral part of many college-level institutions across the country is now an accepted fact. Not only are "contemporary" centers successful at supporting and

instructing basic writers, but they often assist English as a second language students, provide advice to writers at every level of expertise, and serve as the backbone of writing-across-the-curriculum programs. However, beyond the self-evident observation that all writing centers offer some form of one-to-one instruction, it is difficult to reach generalities about philosophy, purpose, or function that would be applicable to all--or even most--writing centers. The impossibility of formulating a generic description of either the ideal or the typical writing center is addressed by Kinkead and Harris, whose collection of case studies represents every type of institution--two-year, four-year, land-grant, private, ivy league, research, and so forth. After examining these studies, the editors conclude that they cannot clearly identify any common ideals among these twelve centers (227).

Although Kinkead and Harris are reluctant to make further generalizations--even to identify elements of a common philosophy which might be said to be characteristic of effective writing centers--other authorities have offered opinions on philosophy that are strikingly similar. In his often-cited article, "The Idea of a Writing Center," North asserts that the concept of a writing center

represents the marriage of what are arguably the two most powerful contemporary perspectives on teaching writing: first, that writing is most usefully viewed as a process; and second, that writing curricula need to be student-centered. This new writing center,

then, defines its province not in terms of some curriculum, but in terms of the writers it serves.
(438)

Joyce S. Steward and Mary K. Croft elaborate on essentially the same philosophical stance when they suggest that tutors and teachers in a writing center should be committed to:

- beginning where the student is
- having students write as the way to learn to write
- teaching writing as a process
- recognizing the writer's apprehensions and need for a reader
- using evaluation during writing, not just at the end
- allowing the writer time to grow, and to find the best way of working (6)

Interacting with the environment, teaching writing as a process, being student-centered: these, then, are at least three reasonable goals for contemporary writing centers, and many centers have undergone struggle and change in order to attain them.

It is noteworthy that the Writing Center at the University of Michigan-Flint is atypical in not having gone through a workbook-driven auto-tutorial phase and in not having experienced significant changes in organization or in pedagogical philosophy. The center's founders and early directors may be described as having taken innovative approaches to both theory and practice. Their knowledge of new developments in rhetoric, linguistics, and education shaped the overall structure of the Laboratory and set up an environment for testing the effectiveness of specific writing-as-process, student-centered approaches and

techniques that certain of their contemporaries no doubt considered radical, but are now widely accepted. Subsequent directors have recognized the merits of many of these early approaches and have preserved or adapted them, so that the Writing Center has retained and perfected a Lab-centered basic writing course, writing portfolios, holistic assessment, and peer tutoring across a span of twenty-five years.

Part II: Larger Contexts

The city of Flint

Located in Genesee County, Michigan, the city of Flint has been recognized for well over a hundred years as a transportation center. Its earliest factories--for the manufacture of wooden carriages--were built along the banks of the Flint River. Later, as the birthplace of General Motors and the world headquarters for three divisions of General Motors, Flint helped usher in the automobile era (Flint Area Convention and Visitors Bureau x). As the automobile industry prospered, abundant factory jobs drew increasingly large numbers of newcomers to the Flint area. Flint was a natural destination for urban migration from the South, especially during and after World War II.

The socioeconomic impact of the automobile industry on Flint can scarcely be overemphasized. The make-up of the populace as well as its standard of living; its hopes and

aspirations; its attitudes toward work, government, and education--all of these factors were influenced by the presence of General Motors. In his 1982 dissertation entitled *A Second Industrial Revolution: The Transformation of Class, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-Century Flint, Michigan*, Ronald William Edsforth traces this influence in an analysis of fifty years of Flint social history. In his introductory summary of events, Edsforth identifies significant developments in the story of Flint's social growth as ranging

from the first automotive experiments of its wagon-making entrepreneurs to the institutionalization of collective bargaining between the General Motors Corporation and the United Automobile Workers after World War II....the creation of General Motors in Flint; the swift rise and decline of municipal socialism; the organization of a "progressive" business class which monopolized economic, social, and political power until the 1930s; the impact of the auto-boom on everyday life and culture; the brief appearance of an influential KKK; the devastating impact of the Great Depression; and the emergence of a militant, but non-radical, working class committed to industrial unionism and the New Deal. (i-ii)

This final development--the rise of a new working class--has shaped the character of Flint to this very day. Factory workers comprise a large percentage of the population of Flint and surrounding areas. There is no stigma attached to a "shoprat" background. On the contrary, many local workers point with pride to a long family history of association with the automobile industry, to the involvement of parents and grandparents in the Great Sit-Down Strike of 1935, or to similar types of involvement with labor history in Flint.

From its early days, Flint had a reputation for being a regional center of culture (Schafer 1-2) and a city concerned with education (2-11). In 1970, approximately 50% of all high school graduates from the Flint Public Schools were expected to attend an institution of higher education, whether it be college, a technical or trade school, or a business college (Flint Chamber of Commerce 38). Opportunities for higher education in Flint were plentiful by this time, and prospective students had a wide range of options from which to choose, Flint Community Junior College, the University of Michigan-Flint, General Motors Institute, and Baker College of Business all being situated within the city itself. A relatively large percentage of the population in Flint could afford to attend local postsecondary institutions because of the automobile industry. Not only were many General Motors workers in a financial position to send their children to college, but the workers themselves could attend and have their educations subsidized by General Motors. As a result, local students--whether employees of General Motors or the children of employees--frequently entered college as the first individuals in their families to experience post-secondary education.

This civic interest in education received a decided boost through the sponsorship of local philanthropist Charles Stewart Mott and the Mott Foundation, formed in

1926. An early manufacturer of automobile axle assemblies, Mott observed that "we scatter our shots too much when we try to do good," and chose to concentrate on developing community improvement programs in education, recreation, and health primarily in the Flint area (Flint Chamber of Commerce 26). The eighteen-building college and cultural center complex--which included a theatre, an art museum, a planetarium, a library, community college buildings, and a building for the fledgling Flint college of the University of Michigan--was largely financed by Mott (26).

The University of Michigan-Flint campus

The University of Michigan-Flint came into being because of prominent citizens' interest in providing an opportunity for local students to receive four-year degrees from a respected university (Schafer 3-5). While the Flint campus was considered to be a college of the University of Michigan, it was from the outset intended to be relatively independent, being composed of autonomous departments that made their own decisions about curriculum, departmental procedures, the hiring of faculty, etc. (Schafer 12). Originally planned as a Senior College offering coursework that began at the junior level, the college operated as such from 1956 to 1965, when freshman and sophomore classes were added (Schafer iv). The educational objectives of UM-Flint, as set forth in the University of Michigan-Flint catalogue

for 1970-71, provide a succinct description of the college and its mission at the time of the Writing Laboratory's birth:

The Flint College is the sixteenth college of the University of Michigan and the University's only four-year college outside Ann Arbor. From its beginning in 1956 it has represented the combined efforts of the University and the Flint community to develop a distinguished educational program for young people and adults of outstanding ambition, ability, and potential for future leadership. Among its students are many who for financial reasons or because of work or family responsibilities in the Flint community would not have access to such opportunities as these if they were not available here.

Flint college students have the benefit of association in the University as a whole, and they also enjoy many of the advantages that are possible in a smaller school. At the Flint college primary attention is centered on the undergraduate. There can be informal contact between students and faculty. There is time for individual attention and opportunity for individual growth.

The College seeks to prepare its students to live a rich and productive life as individuals, as parents, and as citizens. In general its orientation is toward the liberal arts and sciences, and every student is expected to acquaint himself with several of these disciplines.

At the same time students increase their knowledge of a particular discipline by concentrating in a chosen subject or group of subjects. Concentration has the additional function of developing skills and knowledge basic to a profession or vocation. The College offers 19 concentration programs in the liberal arts and sciences, a program of business administration, and programs preparing for certification in elementary or secondary teaching. All programs lead to the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan. Certain selected upper division courses are offered in the late afternoon and evening hours during the regular academic year; there is also an eight-week summer session. (9)

When the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory first came into being, the University of Michigan-Flint had not yet expanded and relocated on a bank of the Flint River near the center

of downtown Flint. It was still a small, but rapidly growing, college around 1970-71. Most of UM-Flint's 2082 undergraduate students attended classes in the Mott Memorial Building. Located on East Court Street, the building was part of the Flint College and Cultural Center, its nearest neighbor being Flint Community Junior College. The Mott Memorial Building, perched on the edge of the community college campus, included classrooms, lecture halls, science laboratories and research rooms, a language laboratory, student committee rooms and activities center, a cafeteria, a bookstore, and a student lounge (*Flint College, 1970-71*, 9). Space was already at a premium:

As the sixties drew to a close the school, now well established and bursting at the seams, found itself in a curious position. As a Senior College, closely linked to the local Junior College and somewhat constrained as a unit of the [Flint] College and Cultural Development [Center], it had failed to grow at the rates initially projected. In an effort to break out of these constraints and by so doing to gain control of its own destiny, it had altered its nature becoming (in 1966) a full four-year college. The change in format led to a series of spurts in enrollment, necessarily creating perpetual shortages of space. These shortages were only partially alleviated by a doubling of the Mott Memorial Building and, in addition, by the adoption of a series of temporary expedients: use of rooms in a nearby church and of offices located on the top floor of the new C.S. Mott Library: none of which was a very happy solution to an on-going problem. (Schafer 52-3)

Growing concerns about student writers

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as today, the vast majority of UM-Flint students came from Flint and

surrounding areas, and most transfer students came from Flint Community Junior College (now C.S. Mott Community College), which had an enrollment of 8500 in 1970 (Flint Chamber of Commerce 47). As a Senior College, the University of Michigan-Flint had previously inherited most of its incoming students as juniors from the local community college, but after the establishment of a four-year program, UM-Flint drew on the same pool of local students for its freshman class as did the community college. For this reason, it is useful to have an overview of social-class-related success rates for the early community college students. A 1965 doctoral thesis by Kenneth Harvey Summerer provides data on completing sophomores at Flint Community Junior College, 75% of whom planned to transfer to a four-year institution and pursue a profession. While all social status levels were represented by entering freshmen, most came from middle and lower class status families, with a predominance from the lower classes. Completing sophomores, however, were usually not from the lower social status levels. These students tended to be middle class, with about 34% of their fathers holding positions classified as "professional." Completing sophomores were concentrated in the middle percentile range for academic aptitude, and this appeared to be the main factor that influenced student success in completing the sophomore year (Summerer 1965). Freshmen from the lower classes, then, with lower academic

aptitude--at least according to standardized tests--tended to slip through the cracks in the community college's system. Although Summerer's study does not offer a theory as to why lower class students tended not to complete their two-year courses of study at the community college, it is reasonable to conjecture that they entered less prepared for academic work and/or the academic environment than were the students from middle class families.

During the early years of the University of Michigan-Flint, such students were never factors to be dealt with, since their careers as students ended unsuccessfully at the community college level. However, the situation began to change after the University of Michigan-Flint received approval from the Regents of the University of Michigan and from the State of Michigan to become a four-year institution. The first freshman class was admitted in the fall of 1965. Within a four-year period from 1970 to 1974, undergraduate enrollment soared from 1816 to 3179 (James). In addition to experiencing a sudden expansion of the undergraduate population, faculty at the University of Michigan-Flint undoubtedly also began to encounter the same types of entering freshmen who would once have started (and ended) their college experience at the local community college. According to Summerer's study, these would have been students from predominately lower social status class families, whose test scores also suggested that they had

less academic aptitude than their peers and who were, most likely, insufficiently prepared for college. Many of these students were probably the children of General Motors workers, and therefore, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, they were often the first generation in their families to be able to attend college due to their parents' financial success. These first-generation students would have been less familiar with higher education and its demands than were students from middle-class and above homes. The impact of these students--entering, struggling, dropping out--would certainly have been felt at UM-Flint by 1971, the year in which the Writing Center began operation.

There had also been an increase in minority enrollment, the result of social changes described earlier in this chapter and of vigorous recruiting on the part of the University of Michigan-Flint. A number of students spoke nonstandard dialects of English--black, Chicano, Appalachian, rural (Hartwell, "Model" 66), and many arrived on campus at the start of their freshman year less prepared for college-level writing and reading than their middle-class peers. While this development fulfilled certain political and educational objectives for the college, it also posed a new problem: how to help underprepared students succeed at UM-Flint.

Early attempts at a solution

Wesley Rae, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Michigan-Flint, past Chair of the English Department and former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, recalls the situation and events which led to some concern in the English Department about undergraduate writing skills and the Department's first attempt to address these concerns:

In the late sixties and early seventies there was quite a push for universities to become instruments of social change of one kind or another, so there was a push to get minority faculty and to have minority students, and there was a push also to do various upgrade work for them. One of the first steps we took beyond English 101-102 was a course we called simply Communications I and II, which [was] taught by some minority faculty in the early seventies. There was certainly a composition component, but there was also a component of public speaking, of self-assurance, the sorts of things that one sees these days done in a first-year course of one kind or another like University 101. (Rae)

The two-semester course named Communications I and II offers an example of the communications course genre as described by James Berlin in *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. Emphasizing writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills and often designed for underprepared students, these courses flourished from the 1940s through the mid-1960s, after which period they gradually faded away (93-104), having failed to remedy the academic difficulties of a new student population.

William Vasse taught in the English Department at UM-Flint and served as Chair of the English Department and as Acting Chancellor and Acting Provost. Hired to teach literature in 1962, he remained at UM-Flint until 1982, when he left to become Provost at S.U.N.Y. New Paltz. Vasse recalls his own involvement with non-traditional students at UM-Flint as resulting from "the nation's worst race riot" (Vasse), which began in Detroit on July 23, 1967, and lasted nine days (Meyer 4). While most contemporary analysts recognized that the complexity of civil rights issues underlying this tragic event could not be treated with simple and immediate remedies, news analyst Jerome Aumente had noted in an article written for the *Detroit News* only two months before the riot that African-American leaders in the city of Detroit repeatedly cited poor educational opportunities as their foremost concern (Aumente 68). William Vasse explains the influence of the riots on policy-making at UM-Flint:

I believe it was 68 or 69 when UM-Flint developed its first special admissions program. This was in response to the Detroit riots. And I was one of the two faculty members to try to work on designing the academic aspect of the special admissions program....We recruited about thirty very street-smart and very bright African-American kids from Detroit--at least most of them were from Detroit--who for one reason or another sort of screwed up their high school programs and could not get into the University of Michigan except through a special admissions program. I began to really get rather afraid of what this program was going to do to UM-Flint, because I simply did not think that any of the faculty was prepared for this, and I wasn't even sure that I was prepared for it. So I said to myself, well you know if you really are that concerned, you'd

better take these kids on yourself, and so we did. I did in a special section of freshman comp. It turned out, of course, we learned fairly quickly that was exactly the wrong thing to do, that they should have been integrated and mainstreamed right from the beginning. But nobody really appreciated that at the time. And what I did was put them through basically a developmental writing program at a time when, frankly, I could not have given the term "developmental" to it because I don't think anybody ever used it, but that's what we were doing....(Interview)

The special admissions program pioneered by William Vasse and Alan Neiberg, a professor in the Psychology Department, eventually became known as the Challenge Program. Still in existence today, it underwent a series of changes which included, from about 1970 to the mid-1980s, mandatory summer courses in math and English for new Challenge students who were to begin as freshmen in the fall.

Because of his academic background and work experience, William Vasse was far better prepared to teach a developmental writing course than were most of his contemporaries--even though he had been hired to teach literature rather than composition at UM-Flint:

For about eight years before I went to UM-Flint, I was a graduate student on the Berkeley University of California campus, and taught in what was called Subject A, which was basically a remedial writing program [for entering freshmen].... Subject A, at least on the Berkeley campus, was staffed by graduate students....Many of us, myself included, were very interested in linguistics.--At that time, it was structural linguistics. And many of us came under the influence of James Sledd, who was teaching at Berkeley at the time. Jim Sledd was what you might call the gadfly of American linguistics...very concerned that what people thought of as Standard English, both written and spoken, was not a particularly useful measure, and not particularly

useful when it came to dealing with the transfer--if there is any transfer--of oral language to written language, and so forth. So, over the years, those of us at the Berkeley Subject A...developed sort of by instinct what would later be known as rhetoric-based writing. (Vasse, Interview)

Nevertheless, Vasse was not convinced that the developmental writing course, which he taught at UM-Flint in the guise of a freshman composition section, met the needs of his non-traditional students. "We very rapidly all felt that we needed to find different ways of approaching the writing problem," Vasse explains, "which very quickly was becoming not a problem of how to teach people who really didn't need a whole lot of teaching, but how to teach folks writing who really needed a whole lot of teaching."

The idea of a writing laboratory

Wesley Rae recalls that the issue of creating a writing laboratory was brought up in discussions that took place in the English Department around 1970 "largely as the result of our realization that something special had to be done for the new kinds of students that we were seeing in the Communications course" (Interview). This idea initially caused mixed reactions within the tiny (eight voting members) English Department. On the one hand, it was generally agreed that many of the new students swelling the ranks of UM-Flint undergraduates lacked the necessary background for successful college-level writing. It was also agreed that neither the English 101-102 sequence (even

with its "special" section) nor the Communication I and II sequence seemed to provide sufficient support and instruction. On the other hand, most members of the English Department at that time "were products of very traditional rhetoric [training]," whose areas of study were in literature as opposed to composition, and who felt uncomfortable with the idea of "remedial" coursework at the college level (Rae). Indeed, some department members did not consider composition itself to be a field worthy of serious scholarly attention. This is hardly surprising, given the time during which these discussions took place. As Stephen North remarks in his preface to *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*,

...with very few exceptions, there were no graduate programs in Composition before the mid-1970s. Composition, described often as the "ghetto" or the "stepchild" of English departments, was something that had to be taught--or, perhaps, endured. But it was not perceived as a discipline or a field, as a subject matter suitable for graduate study. (i)

It is to the credit, then, of the UM-Flint English Department of 1970 that its members did in fact reach enough of a consensus to agree to a program which must have seemed unorthodox--even a bit radical. Had three or four members of this small department dug in their heels, the proposed lab could never have come into being. William Vasse remembers the controversy over establishing a writing laboratory, but characterizes it as comparatively low-key:

I would say, only partly jokingly, that we never told some of the English Department that we had a Writing

Lab. I think many of the, shall we say less enlightened members, either couldn't see any reason for it or [were concerned about the Lab] potentially diverting the authority of instructors, or things like that.

My impression is that there wasn't really a whole lot of departmental conflict over the Writing Lab. I think those who weren't very impressed with the idea sort of ignored it and said, we'll let all those young guys go ahead and do whatever they feel like.

Part III: Beginnings of the Writing Laboratory

A Writing Laboratory founder

Patrick Hartwell, one of "those young guys," was a Victorian literature specialist who had also been hired to help shoulder the increasingly heavy freshman composition courseload. Arriving at UM-Flint in 1967, Hartwell had recently completed his doctoral work at UCLA. His dissertation was in literature--specifically on Thomas Hardy's prose style, a topic influenced by a linguistics course Hartwell had taken, but Hartwell's dissertation director was Ronald Freeman, a past president of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, who encouraged Hartwell to read work in rhetoric and composition. Through Freeman, Patrick Hartwell was introduced to Francis Christensen, Ross Winterowd, Robert Gorrell, Charles Laird, and others with national reputations for their work in rhetoric and composition (Hartwell, Interview). Bringing to the English Department at UM-Flint a keen interest in the teaching of writing and an unusually strong background in this fledgling field, Hartwell

gradually began "thinking of myself as a composition person and less as a lit person. So by the time I left there I was very much a composition person" (Hartwell, Interview).

Hartwell taught at UM-Flint from 1967 to 1976. He is currently Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where he teaches in the doctoral program in rhetoric and linguistics.

During his early days at Flint, Patrick Hartwell shared an office with William Vasse, and the two worked together over the problem of remedial writing students. Neither was pleased with the results of the standard remedial course that Vasse taught. After much discussion, they developed the idea of a writing laboratory experience that would not supplement a remedial course, but actually replace it. This was a unique idea in 1970 and it is still a unique idea today.--It may well be, Patrick Hartwell notes, that few other colleges in the country have such a course (Interview). The next step was to hire someone to set up a writing laboratory and be chiefly responsible for the instruction of remedial students. Hartwell, Vasse, and Rae decided to search for someone with a background in linguistics, since, at the time, this was virtually the only formal plan of study for a person interested in composition. As it happened, Patrick Hartwell had a particular linguist in mind, someone who had been a co-panelist with him at the

1969 Conference on College Composition and Communication
(Hartwell, Interview).

The Writing Laboratory's first official director

Hired specifically to help solve some of the problems of basic writers by creating a new writing laboratory, Robert Bentley came to UM-Flint with a background in English linguistics. He had taken doctoral courses with Robert Gorrell and Charles Laird at the University of Nevada at Reno. He had also taught at Creighton University, had done work in Black English vernacular, had experience working with inner city adults who were functionally illiterate, coauthored a book entitled *Black Language Reader*, and written and spoken a great deal about his chief interest. Now a professor in the Communication Department of Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan, Bentley taught at the University of Michigan-Flint from 1971 to 1975 (Bentley, Interview).

Robert Bentley describes an ambitious agenda established for him by his new department, not all of which was directly related to the proposed writing laboratory:

We had very specific charges. He was the Chair at the time. He said, first of all we have to have some relations with Mott Community College....We were sharing a campus and the [new UM-Flint] campus hadn't been built. He said, there's no relationship between the two [English] departments, and that's not good. We need somebody who can come in and make a relationship with them. We need some kind of a writing clinic--that was the term they were using for our Challenge students.... Here were these kids coming in the summer

time, but really having no connection with the academic part of the University, and then entering as freshmen after they graduate from high school and doing poorly, some of them.... So he wanted some sort of a writing center to help those students. They wanted to get started some kind of a linguistics program, and they hoped that the English Department could get more involved in teacher education. And they were also looking for ways to attract minority faculty. And...we started looking at some grants and some ways to attract grant money. So those were the things I was charged with doing. Not all by myself, thank heaven!

The Bentley/Hartwell collaboration

Patrick Hartwell had, in fact, been given joint responsibility with Robert Bentley for designing the new "Writing Laboratory" (Hartwell, "Model" 63). Hartwell and his likeminded colleagues had already set the stage by managing to obtain credit for the writing laboratory experience:

We kind of snuck the Writing Lab through the faculty and what we did was get faculty approval for the course English 199, Writing Laboratory, before we offered the course....In the fall of '70 we listed the course in the schedule, I think, but I just ran it out of my office, meeting students by appointment. The Writing Lab opened officially in Spring of '71, and Bentley did that. (Hartwell, Interview)

Hartwell and Bentley were in agreement on the importance of offering regular college credit for the Writing Laboratory course, in spite of the fact that many remedial courses at that time were not accredited. Later studies proved their position to be a practical one (Hartwell, "Model" 65), because students regarded such a credit-bearing course in a more positive light and consequently performed better.

By the time Bentley arrived on campus, space had been allocated for the Writing Laboratory--a tiny seminar room, about the size of a large broom closet, located next to the English Department office. Bentley recalls his days of collaboration with Hartwell on a plan for the new program:

Pretty much, people said, you can do what you want. I had Pat Hartwell, just a terrific mind, and the two of us brainstormed a lot in a little teensy room for our first center.

They had received enough backing from the English Department to make the project a reality; the course was on the books, and they had a place to meet students. The next step was to design and implement the program itself.

Organizing the Laboratory: a systems analysis approach

In designing the program, Bentley drew on his understanding of a problem-solving methodology known as "systems analysis" or "systems management." The approach originated with the radar technology work of British scientists during World War II. Mixed teams of experts from complementary disciplines combined managerial and technical knowledge in order to tackle new problems in mathematics and physics (Optner 3). Later applied to engineering, business, and computer science, systems analysis emphasized decision-making "as a primary focus of attention, relating communication systems, organization structure, questions of growth (entropy and/or homeostasis), and questions of uncertainty" (Johnson, et al., 12). Robert Bentley learned

about this interdisciplinary problem-solving approach from systems management expert Roger Allen, when Bentley and Allen served together on a committee charged with rewriting Creighton University's statutes. Bentley explains:

...Some of the principles he taught us--the separation of your assumptions or your principles from your procedures and your detail were incredibly useful to us as we wrote those statutes, and he would keep reminding us when we'd get bogged down in the day-to-day procedures, Don't tie the hands of the people who come after you with procedures. Give them principles, give them policies. So when I got to U of M, this was very much part of my thinking about the structure and the management of the Lab. That we were going to worry about imparting our policies and that we would be very clear what our policies were and not worry so much about the implementation of the procedures....It's a...different way of looking at academic things and at looking at the classroom in a slightly different way....This became a big part of our thinking about how you manage a classroom and how you manage a lab....If...this stuff has lasted, I think maybe it's because we emphasized policies or assumptions or theories and whatever you want to call them and [to] each person who actually directed the Lab we tried to say, You're the manager now. You are directing this Lab. Go ahead and set it up, but here are our expectations on the policy level. Here's the things we want to accomplish. Each person who came in to work in the Lab was able to bring something to those procedures.

Contributions to Writing Laboratory procedures eventually proved to be interdisciplinary in the truest sense, with both pedagogy and theory borrowed from rhetoric, linguistics, journalism, and literary studies.

The laboratory model

A unique structural feature of the Writing Laboratory and the Lab-grounded course was that they were, quite

literally, patterned after science laboratory courses. While students were asked to attend a once-weekly class meeting, they were required to log a certain number of hours per week in the Lab, actually writing. Patrick Hartwell explains the Writing Lab/science lab connection:

The Lab was specifically designed to take the place of a standard Monday/Wednesday/Friday course, but it was designed to do laboratory instruction; so the term "laboratory" to us, and in our rationale, referred to things like chem labs and physics labs. [As in the science labs] the credit formula two hours a week in the Lab meant one credit, twenty-eight hours logged over the fourteen-week semester. That comes directly from the way that physics labs and chem labs give credit for their laboratory work. Our feeling was that the individualized laboratory instruction would be more effective than classroom instruction. (Interview)

An initial problem with this system appears to have been that students sometimes failed to realize the importance of logging writing time in the Lab. Whether they neglected to see the numerical correlation between hours logged and credit hours earned, or whether they simply procrastinated until it was too late, several students who had signed up for three credits--meaning eighty-four logged hours of writing in the Lab--would be too short at the end of the semester to receive credit for the course. Since some of these students needed to carry a full load of credits in order to remain eligible for welfare or support from the GI bill, Hartwell and Bentley were reluctant to fail them for the entire course only because they were short on logged hours (Hartwell, Interview). The two writing instructors devised an unorthodox, but effective, dodge: They would have

students register for the Writing Laboratory course at the beginning of the semester without actually specifying the number of credit hours they hoped to earn. The actual number of credit hours that they did earn would then be filled in at the end of the semester. It was, of course, necessary to obtain administrative backing for this plan:

We found ourselves in a very awkward situation because we were offering kind of a normal enrollment situation; so Bentley and I went to see the registrar, and Bentley put a bottle of Cutty Sark on the table. We explained our problem, and the registrar allowed us to have students enroll for 0 credits.....They had to fill in the hours they needed for other courses [but not for Writing Laboratory], and at the end of the semester we awarded both grade and credit....Every semester we would go visit the registrar and Bob would put the bottle of Cutty Sark on the table and we would have our discussion. So the system we had was laboratory credit and credit upon performance. (Hartwell, Interview)

Although the system has changed somewhat since the days of Bentley and Hartwell--students no longer register for 0 credits--the registrar's office does permit students to drop and add credits for the Writing Center course at any time in the semester. Students who have signed up for three credits but only logged enough hours for two, for example, are allowed to drop one credit and still receive two credits rather than being given an N for the course.

A second feature modeled after the science laboratories at UM-Flint is the position of Senior Instructional Associate. During the first few years of operation, the day-to-day management of the Lab was a responsibility coordinated between the director and a secretary, Marsha

Ishard, whose appointment was shared with the President's Planning Commission, then run by William Vasse (Hartwell, Interview). In 1975 Bentley and Hartwell obtained approval to hire a fulltime secretary. However, they then asked that the position be upgraded to Laboratory manager.

[It was] a position that's defined in Chemistry and Physics labs....We went to the dean...and we said, What about So-and-so, the guy who hands out the test tubes in Chem lab who has been with the University...twenty years and was clearly not a teacher? But he handed out test tubes and kept track of all the equipment and worked with the students in the lab. So here is a valued employee in Chemistry doing something that the University recognizes [in] other circumstances of a certain status, and we said, That's what we want for our Lab....The description came right out of what the Chemistry department does. (Hartwell, Interview)

At the time of their request, Bentley and Hartwell had not yet worked out the details of what the job would entail. As it evolved, the Senior Instructional Associate position came to include such day-to-day business as helping hire and train tutors, scheduling tutors' work hours, supervising the tutors, tutoring whenever needed, giving guidance and assistance when tutors incurred especially challenging problems, administering and scoring pre- and post-placement tests, keeping lessons and supplies available, participating in grading sessions, and managing the Laboratory budget.

Peer tutors

The decision to hire a staff of undergraduate peer tutors to work with students in the Writing Laboratory has been identified by Patrick Hartwell as "our most important

procedural decision" ("Model" 67). While practical considerations figured in this decision--UM-Flint had no graduate program from which to cull graduate assistants--there was an agreement between Hartwell and Bentley not to recruit "experts," but to rely instead upon students who liked to write and who interacted well with others (Hartwell, Interview). From the beginning, the hiring policy was to make the tutoring staff "ethnically and sexually representative of the students they worked with" (Hartwell, "Model," 67). A third procedural decision made in regard to tutoring was that, unlike the practice of some writing centers, the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory would encourage students to drop in to do their work whenever it was convenient rather than signing up in advance for a specific time slot and a specific tutor (Hartwell, Interview).

Why "Writing Laboratory?"

Naming the new writing center was a matter of some concern since, at this early stage in the development of writing centers, they were often stigmatized as places where "bonehead" or "remedial" writers were sent to be "cured." When the idea of setting up a writing center first arose, English Department members referred to it as a "writing clinic," a title whose metaphor seemed inappropriate to Bentley:

I hated the term "clinic," which was the original designation and at one point was even catalogued that way. My objection was that students have a bad enough self-image already, and "clinic" is a place where sick people go to get well. A laboratory is a place where people go to experiment, and that seemed the perfect description for what we were trying to do. We wanted to experiment. (Bentley)

Danny Rendleman, the first Senior Instructional Associate, remembers the literal "laboratory" connection as being a factor in the name that Bentley and Hartwell had chosen:

In Bob and Pat's mind[s] they wanted it to be a place for students to come to work on projects that were adjunct to the English Department in the same way that science and math students would go to a lab and work on things that were adjunct to their regular classes. All in an effort to get it to move away from a punishment place. It was a place for students to do extra work or sharpen their skills. (First Interview)

Early days of the Lab course

Hartwell and Bentley taught the Writing Workshop course in alternate terms. Patrick Hartwell's first section of Writing Workshop in the fall of 1970, taught by individual appointment before the Lab had opened, was relatively small (Interview). When the Lab opened officially in the spring of 1971, Robert Bentley taught thirty-three students, who averaged about two credits apiece (Hartwell, "Model" 64). By fall Hartwell had fifty-five students in the Lab course. From this semester until 1975, when the Senior Instructional Associate position was first filled, the English Department provided release time each semester for two writing instructors to team-teach the course and keep the Laboratory running smoothly (64). Bentley and Hartwell believed in the

importance of involving other English Department members with the Laboratory course; so they eventually took turns teaching this course in alternate semesters in order to team-teach with interested colleagues (Bentley, Interview).

Taking stock: Looking at contextual and thematic threads

The University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory, then, grew out of the turbulence and change of the late 1960s in response to the needs of a new type of student. Because of the push for social equality on a national level and favorable economic conditions in the greater Flint area, increasing numbers of nontraditional students--minorities recruited from the Detroit area and first-generation students who were either factory workers or the children of factory workers--added to the already swelling enrollment at UM-Flint. Their presence created a need for an alternative approach to composition instruction; thus, the decision to establish a writing laboratory arose from the pedagogical and political concerns of the English Department faculty. The Writing Laboratory's cofounders approached their task with stronger academic and experiential backgrounds than many writing teachers possessed at the time. They designed the Lab according to contemporary organizational theories and drew both theory and pedagogy from the youthful but rapidly developing field of composition studies, as will be seen in Chapters Two and Three.

Several thematic threads that appear in accounts of Bentley and Hartwell's plans for the new Writing Laboratory deserve emphasis: (1) The Laboratory was designed specifically as a *substitute for a traditional classroom experience*. This highly unusual, if not unique, approach to teaching basic writing required students to log a given number of hours per week in the Lab during which they actually sat down and wrote as opposed to attending a conventional class. (2) The Laboratory's approach to instruction was advanced for its time in that it eschewed the all-too-common skills-and-drills format chosen for many other writing laboratories, was founded upon newly emerging theories of composition instruction, and relied upon one-to-one collaborative work with tutors. Consequently, this particular Lab avoided the pedagogical soulsearching and concomitant reorganization that a number of other Labs founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s eventually experienced. (3) Bentley and Hartwell began with three key criteria for their tutors: They were to be the students' peers, they were to be confident writers themselves, and they were to be adept at interacting with others. These three criteria at the core of Bentley and Hartwell's selection process were to influence tutor selection, and the tutors' collective sense of identity, for many years to come, as will be seen in succeeding chapters. (4) Bentley and Hartwell took the meaning of the word "laboratory"

literally, as it applied both to the organization and to the spirit of the place. Students had regular Lab assignments, logged in and out, and performed hands-on activities analogous to the practical lessons assigned in science laboratories. A Laboratory manager oversaw day-to-day operations. Bentley and Hartwell also encouraged students to see the Lab as a place to experiment with their writing, to try out new ideas and approaches in a spirit of discovery. Again, these science laboratory features had long-term organizational effects. I will show later how the inclusion of a Lab manager in the overall scheme proved to exert an unexpected influence on stability and continuity of Writing Laboratory practices and philosophy. (5) In utilizing a systems analysis approach for organizing the Writing Laboratory, Bentley and Hartwell foregrounded policy, while leaving present and future Lab instructors and directors the freedom to choose their own specific procedures for achieving the established policy. As a result, the overall plan for the Writing Laboratory and the Writing Workshop course has undergone few significant changes over twenty-five years. The five thematic threads that I have identified here will reappear throughout this study.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BENTLEY/HARTWELL YEARS

In Chapter One I described the events which led to Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell's receiving approval for a new developmental writing course and a space allocation for the Writing Laboratory. I concluded with an overview of the Writing Laboratory's organization during the early days of its operation. In this chapter I would like to return to the period in which Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell designed the Laboratory-grounded course that they had envisioned together. In Part I, I will introduce specific theories and theorists that informed their pedagogical choices, situating the works within a larger context by briefly reviewing the state of composition studies during the period in which Bentley and Hartwell were collaborating. I will begin by describing contemporary developments in composition studies, then discuss the shaping influence of linguistic research, and finally treat three scholars whom the two Laboratory founders have themselves identified as having had significant influence on their work. Part II will describe how the Writing Laboratory and Writing Workshop course took shape during the Bentley/Hartwell years.

Part I: Theoretical Influences

A patchwork of theory

In offering what is necessarily a skeletal review of this scholarship, it is not my intent to claim a direct transfer of ideas and techniques from any given researcher or theorist's pages to the daily pedagogical practices of Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell as they operated the Writing Laboratory and conducted the Lab-grounded developmental writing course. In the first place, the sought-after tie between theory and pedagogy in composition studies has historically been an unsatisfactory one. In *The Practice of Theory: Teacher Research in Composition*, Ruth E. Ray explains basic difficulties with the theory-practice fit by examining shifting definitions of research and theory and by describing the problematic, often dichotomous relationship between theory and practice (3-21). Secondly, it will become evident that Bentley and Hartwell, like many of their writing center colleagues across the country, drew upon epistemologically diverse and sometimes contradictory works, cannibalizing them for their own purposes. In an article entitled "Writing Center Practice Often Counters Its Theory. So What?" Eric H. Hobson suggests that there was in fact no single unifying theory for early writing center personnel to claim or reject:

Writing center theory grew out of practice because no theory called Writing Center Theory existed. Later, the theory drew from other disciplines because even as

isolated, decontextualized events, tutorials do not exist within the tightly defined, disciplinary structures of academe; rather, they work within a process and thus within the complex whole that is the person. Thus, educational, psychological, social, behavioral, and analytical theories as well as the means of investigating them had to be drawn into the writing center and then applied and reconstructed to fit what we do. Early writing centers' practitioners believed that to ensure the writing center community a respectable place within the culture of academe they needed to work within its dominant descriptive paradigm (of theory leading to practice), and so they had to cobble together theories which justified their practice. (3-4)

While Hobson's assertion that teachers and tutors in the early centers began their work in a theoretical vacuum is perhaps an overstatement of the situation, his implication that writing center personnel have necessarily functioned as practitioners *par excellence* is a point worthy of consideration. In *The Making of Composition*, North observes that the Practitioner community, which constitutes Composition's rank and file, has traditionally arrived at knowledge via practice (22-3). This knowledge "is driven...by a pragmatic logic: It is concerned with what has worked, is working, or might work in teaching, doing, or learning writing" (23). This is the bottom line for most teachers of composition, including those who work in writing center settings. It is a rare teacher of writing who has not borrowed bits and pieces of theory from a fairly wide range of sources.

Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell were certainly faced with a situation that compelled them to evaluate

pragmatically, for their own particular purposes, the new works being produced by a variety of theorists. Not only were Bentley and Hartwell attempting to establish a writing laboratory during the period described by Hobson when writing center theory was in its formative stages, but they were attempting to design a course for which no model existed: a developmental writing course that substituted laboratory experience for traditional class meetings. The theoretical patchwork that eventually formed a metaphilosophy for the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory borrowed from composition studies, linguistics, and behavioral psychology.

Composition and the winds of change

As I noted in the Introduction, English as a discipline is fairly young, having first taken shape in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the German university system's influence on American education (Connors 20). Although it was taught as a major school subject in this country beginning in the early 1890s, at the onset of the anti-progressivist academic reform movement in the mid-1950s, English was regarded by its critics as an ill-defined and poorly structured set of skills and conventions (Applebee 194). The academic reform that eventually redefined English studies and affected the whole of the English curriculum conceived of this new discipline as a

"tripod," the three legs of which were to be language, literature, and composition (192). However, the alliance of these three content areas posed certain philosophical and political problems from the very beginning (North 13-15), which have often been addressed at larger college-level institutions by the fragmentation of English studies into separate departments of Linguistics, English (i.e. literature), and Composition, or have led to the formation of special interest groups within English departments. Communication among the three groups of academics representing the "legs" of the tripod has been constrained.

The traditionally marginalized status of writing teachers is a subject that will be considered in Chapter Five. It should be noted here, however, that since the early days of English as a discipline, the teaching of writing has been looked upon as an undesirable chore. North observes that the "lowliest members of the English academic community...taught and administered the freshman composition courses in colleges and universities" (*Making of Knowledge* 44). Writing teachers were often graduate students or junior faculty who had prepared to teach literature but found themselves teaching composition because of their low positions in the pecking order. As time went by, an increasing number of writing instructors saw their allegiance as belonging to composition studies. The formation of the NCTE-affiliated Conference on College

Composition and Communication in 1949 clearly indicates the development of this newly developing sense of identity.

By the 1960s composition began to be recognized as an emerging field. This was the result of a series of events that caused people who were interested in composition to carefully examine both what was known about composition and how that knowledge was achieved. In the 1950s there was a perceived "crisis" in education--neither the first nor the last to be announced to the United States. It began with concerns about math and science, but the NCTE's shrewdly timed publication entitled *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961) directed government attention (and government funds) toward English, and in particular toward the teaching of writing (North 11-12). This brief federal interest in the field was a catalyst for change simply because it drew so much attention to writing and to those who taught writing.

Research into the composing process was still in its infancy, and early findings had not been widely disseminated. Janice Lauer describes the situation in the early 1960s as follows:

Within English departments, a distinct problem domain started to be claimed when certain people experienced a powerful sense of dissonance between their responsibility for teaching writing and the inadequacy of their understanding and training for doing so. They were confounded by the severity of illiteracy, the enormity of their task, and the scarcity of knowledge about the nature of written discourse and its production" (Lauer 21).

Further, until this time, those who conducted research in composition saw themselves primarily as isolated writing teachers, not as part of a community of scholars. There was no academic base--no system of knowledge-making--that could be identified as composition (North 11-14).

Comparisons with other disciplines, particularly with the sciences, began to be drawn--and the results were unsatisfactory. In 1963 Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer published *Research in Written Composition*, which had grown out of an investigation by an NCTE *ad hoc* committee on the State of Knowledge about Composition (North 16). The authors, who reviewed 504 studies relating to composition, made the following often-quoted pronouncement:

Today's research in Composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy: some terms are being defined usefully, a number of procedures are being refined, but the field as a whole is laced with dreams, prejudices, and makeshift operations. (Braddock, et al. 5)

North has called this study "the charter of modern Composition" (17) because of its shaping influence on the field. Two of its chief arguments were that the authority of composition as a field must be supported by research modeled on scientific methods of inquiry and that teaching should be guided by research. Although these ideas should not be accepted wholly and uncritically, it is important to note that they had a tremendous impact on composition studies, affecting scholars' and researchers' views on what

constituted proper modes of inquiry, legitimate ways of making knowledge in composition. As I will explain later in this chapter, Bentley and Hartwell adopted a pedagogical approach for their Writing Laboratory class that claimed to be founded on the principles of behaviorist psychology. Their choice exemplifies the new attraction in composition studies to scientific methods of inquiry.

Another development that gave force and direction to modern composition studies was the so-called "paradigm shift." The ferment of the sixties caused scholars both to reconsider classical rhetorical theory with its emphasis on exploration of ideas as part of composing and to repudiate previously dominant theories that had originated with 19th century philologists and grammarians. At the same time, researchers such as Janet Emig, in her 1971 study of eight high school seniors entitled *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders*, provided insight into how writers actually work. In 1978 Richard Young looked back at this "crisis" in the field of composition in his essay, "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention." Drawing on Thomas Kuhn's analysis of paradigm shifts in the scientific disciplines in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Young described conflicts and changes in the field as a "paradigm shift." The old, or "current-traditional," paradigm was one which stressed writing as an artifact. It emphasized product over process, the analysis

of discourse as small units (words, sentences, and paragraphs), and the importance of usage and style. Vitalist assumptions, holdovers from the nineteenth century, argued Young, had led many to doubt whether writing could actually be taught (Young 30-1). In contrast, the new paradigm assumed that instruction was possible and emphasized writing as process rather than artifact (35). Four years after the publication of Young's piece, Maxine Hairston offered what is perhaps the most detailed description of the new paradigm in "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing." According to Hairston, the new paradigm focuses on writing as a process. Instructors can help students while they are working through the various stages of this process. The paradigm is rhetorically based, and it recognizes the recursive nature of the activity of writing. Writing is seen not only as a form of communication, but also as a way of learning. It includes a variety of modes, is informed by other disciplines (notably cognitive psychology and linguistics), and can be analyzed and taught (86).

Although more recent commentators such as Susan Miller have questioned these earlier claims of a paradigm shift (106-8), contending that there is insufficient evidence of the influence on subsequent composition research or pedagogical practices to conclude that dramatic changes occurred, there were nevertheless clear political advantages

for compositionists as a group to suggest a scientific grounding by identifying themselves with a "paradigm" and to herald in new ways of thinking about and teaching writing. Regardless of whether an ideological change of noteworthy magnitude actually occurred, an innovative spirit began to guide the development of theory and research in composition studies just as the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory was becoming established.

The influence of linguistics on composition studies

During the early days of composition studies, the discipline of linguistics was an important source of ideas for compositionists. In *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*, Lester Faigley examines the rise and demise of linguists and linguistic theories' influence. Pointing out that linguists were leaders in the Conference on College Composition and Communication beginning in the 1950s, Faigley offers by way of example linguists' role in the correctness controversy, when they submitted research on language variation which contradicted standard pronouncements of what constituted "good" and "bad" English (80-1). Faigley judges research in usage and dialects to have been an especially significant contribution during the 1960s and 70s:

More important [than work in correctness] was work in sociolinguistics arguing that dialects considered prestigious or "standard" gain their status by being identified with the wealthiest and most powerful groups

in a society and not from their inherent superiority. Sociolinguists denied assumptions that speakers of "nonstandard" dialects are somehow deprived or suffer from a cognitive deficit by demonstrating that nonstandard dialects are as inherently logical as standard ones. A measure of the authority given to sociolinguistics during this time came with the 1974 *Students' Right to their Own Language* statement...which lists 129 entries on dialects and the teaching of writing in an attached annotated bibliography. (81)

Further, when composition studies began to be recognized as a distinct field or discipline in the mid-sixties and scholars such as Wayne Booth, James Kinneavy, and James Moffatt produced work in rhetorical theory, linguists offered parallel work in language studies (Faigley 81). Francis Christensen's theory of generative rhetoric and the Young, Becker, and Pike tagmemic rhetoric are influential examples of such endeavors (81-2). Theory and research in the 1970s built upon concepts that were first explored in the sixties with discussions of coherence (Ross Winterowd) and efforts to extend Christensen's generative rhetoric to the essay (D'Angelo, Grady, and Pittkin). These were attempts to forge a connection between linguistic theory and writing pedagogy, attempts that ultimately yielded less than satisfactory results according to Faigley (82).

Interest in sentence combining also grew during the seventies, evolving from Kellogg Hunt's work with syntactic development. Attempts were made to use sentence combining as a strategy for developing the syntactic maturity of student writers, the object being to help students learn to produce sentences with more noun modifiers and more noun

substitutes (phrases and clauses) in place of single-word nouns (Mellon; O'Hare; Daiker, Kerek, Morenberg). Studies failed, however, to show a connection between linguistic variables and perceptions of writing quality. Again, the theory-pedagogy link proved illusive; and by 1980, the general interest in applying linguistic theory to writing instruction had waned (83).

The Bentley/Hartwell connection to linguistic theory

When Bentley and Hartwell were working together to design the laboratory-based developmental writing course in the early seventies, the influence of linguistics on composition studies was at its peak. As noted in Chapter One, both Bentley and Hartwell had strong backgrounds in linguistics, and both have mentioned the impact of linguistic research on their approach to the teaching of writing (Bentley, Hartwell Interviews). While such concepts as the dynamic, ever-changing nature of language, the influence of economic and political power on the social acceptability of dialects, and the native speaker's grammatical competence were helping to shape new composition theory, they were as yet unknown to or unaccepted by many teachers of writing. However, they were already key concepts for Bentley and Hartwell.

While still at Creighton University, Bentley had put his knowledge of language studies to use by team-teaching a

course in nonstandard dialects with Samuel D. Crawford. Designed to educate teachers working at primarily African-American schools about Black English and related pedagogical matters, the course grew in popularity. Bentley and Crawford were soon in demand as guest speakers for a wide range of courses in various disciplines. Out of this experience came *Black Language Reader*, a compilation of essays by linguists and educators covering the definition of dialect, origins of Black English, contemporary Black English, experiences of teachers working with dialect, and the relationship of language and education. In the preface, Bentley and Crawford explain:

Some basic assumptions guided our selection of the articles....We are assuming that some of the massive failure to educate "nontraditional" students is, in part, a failure to understand that "culturally different" is not the same as "culturally deprived," and that "linguistically different" is not the same as "linguistically deprived."

We have tried to show, therefore, that Black English is a legitimate dialect of English which reflects a rich cultural tradition in America. We believe that a teacher who is attempting to impart reading/writing skills to students needs to understand not only those students, but also the culture they come from and the language capabilities they bring with them into the classroom. (i- ii)

Readers, in this day of political correctness and sensitivity concerning diversity, may find nothing controversial in the above assertions, but at the time Bentley and Crawford were coediting this essay collection, the idea of linguistic equality was just beginning to take hold. Such racist explanations for nonstandard dialects as

the "lazy lips" or "innate inability" theories were still being offered by some educators (Bentley and Crawford 3).

Both Bentley and Hartwell have mentioned their familiarity with the work of linguists Robert M. Gorrell and Charlton Laird, Bentley having studied with them at the University of Nevada. Long before Bentley's student days, Gorrell and Laird had themselves attempted a practical application of linguistic research to the teaching of writing when they co-authored a composition textbook. Their *Modern English Handbook* went through six editions between 1953 and 1976, and was among the earliest efforts to wed the disciplines of linguistics and composition studies. While this text, positivistic in epistemology, can scarcely be represented as presenting a complete process model of teaching composition, it does constitute a movement in that direction. The authors stress the "basic sequence" of writing: "prewriting, writing, rewriting"; they acknowledge learning to write is "a long job," and suggest that it can "best [be] thought of as intellectual and linguistic growth" (xvi). Drawing on sociolinguistic research, they discourage the correctness approach and suggest that "many so-called errors diminish" when students become more experienced writers (xvi). These ideas were shared by Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell.

Francis Christensen: A noteworthy influence

In "A Writing Laboratory Model," Patrick Hartwell credits three works in particular with influencing his and Bentley's decisions about how to teach writing in the new Writing Laboratory. The first of these three works is *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric: Nine Essays for Teachers*, a collection of writings by Francis Christensen. Hartwell specifically cites the second edition of this work (178), edited and introduced after the author's death by Bonniejean Christensen and expanded by the inclusion of three essays specifically aimed at teachers of composition.

Three threads that run through this collection are Christensen's assertions (1) that grammar texts in current widespread use are not giving advice that corresponds with practical, real-world writing practices, (2) that professional writers--not writers of grammar texts--should provide the models for grammatical and rhetorical practices, and (3) that grammar should not be taught in isolation, but should be wedded to rhetoric--that is, taught within the context of the composition class. Christensen's emphasis on the importance of having students observe and emulate the way English actually works when used by expert writers, as opposed to having them complete isolated grammar exercises based on the way old-style grammarians believe English should work, arises from his own studies of contemporary writers. An example is the essay, "A Lesson from

Hemingway," in which Christensen discredits the traditional stress on the substantive, the verb, and the main clause. He examines portions of Hemingway's short story, "The Undefeated," in order to show that professional writers recognize the importance of modifiers in expressing ideas and images precisely. Christensen shows three basic methods for describing an object or action with modifiers and suggests that these constructions are key to recognizing sentence patterns in current descriptive-narrative writing (45-60). His essay "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" introduces a system of analyzing sentences by "immediate constituent levels." This system grows out of Christensen's studies of the prose of contemporary writers, from which he deduces that professional writers tend to use right-branching or "loose" sentences made up of a subordinate sequence of modifiers (23-44). In "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph" he suggests that the paragraph can be seen as a sequence of structurally related sentences following the same basic principles as those of individual sentences (74-103).

Christensen's rhetoric of the sentence and the paragraph easily lends itself to exercises that help students learn how to expand shorter units of text with free modifiers that add detail without yielding cumbersome constructions. In Hartwell and Bentley's composition textbook *Open To Language*, they have included in the unit

"Style in Description and Narration" a section inspired by Christensen called "The Grammar of Free Modifiers" (219-27). They offer models and exercises that sometimes, like those in Christensen's essays, are derived from the prose of professional writers. For example, they provide students with the following kernel sentences: "We walked into the milking-shed. The milking-shed was a long room with perhaps thirty rusted stanchions." Students are to combine these kernels so that they result this single longer sentence taken from Truman Capote: "We walked into the milking-shed, a long room with perhaps thirty rusted stanchions" (221).

Lester Faigley describes the four essays on generative rhetoric contained in the Christensen collection as "the most important work on written language" to appear during the influential period of linguistics in the 1960s and 70s (81). Like Bentley and Hartwell, many writing teachers eventually based sentence-level and paragraph-level exercises on Christensen's work, and, as mentioned above, Christensen's rhetorical theory was expanded by various compositionists, who attempted to find direct pedagogical applications for the teaching of writing. Although James A. Berlin characterizes all linguistic rhetorics as positivistic in epistemology (9), Christensen's advice to composition instructors clearly opposes the current-traditional approach to teaching grammar.

Macrorie's *Telling Writing*

Ken Macrorie, Professor of English at Western Michigan University, is perhaps best known for the popularization of a term coined by one of his students to describe phoney, pretentious language. "Engfish," now a part of English Education jargon, was introduced in Macrorie's *Telling Writing*. The first edition of this unconventional and widely influential textbook appeared in 1970. The second edition, specifically cited by Hartwell as an influence on his and Bentley's approach to teaching writing ("Model" 178), was published in 1976. It includes two new chapters and a section called "Suggestions for Teachers," which details specific pedagogical techniques for encouraging students to care about what they write.

Although Macrorie's text does include a certain amount of time-honored advice about stylistic and structural considerations, its focus and pedagogy are markedly different from the rhetorics that still made up the bulk of composition textbooks in the early 1970s. The central theme is "truthfulness" in writing. Emphasizing the importance of writing from one's own authentic perceptions and experiences, Macrorie suggests:

This is the first requirement for good writing: truth; not the truth (whoever knows surely what that is?), but some kind of truth--a connection between the things written about, the words used in the writing, and the author's experience in a world she knows well--whether in fact or dream or imagination. (5)

Macrorie underscores the importance of invention techniques, introducing two strategies that were later explored at length by other compositionists and widely used by practitioners across the country: free writing and the writer's journal. He also suggests that students will be more apt to write about what matters to them if they have a real audience--not the traditional audience-of-one instructor armed with a red pen, but interested peers who will listen to and/or read a piece with the intention of providing helpful responses.

In *Open to Language*, Hartwell and Bentley devote their first chapter to "discovery" in writing. Two of the three invention techniques that they advocate are Macrorie's free writing and journal writing (5-8). While Macrorie's ideas are now so familiar to teachers of writing that they need hardly be described in detail, they were revolutionary in the early 1970s, and made an important contribution to the writing-as-process movement. North is dismissive of Macrorie, classifying him as a Practitioner and implying that his developmental model of learning to be untruthful in writing as one matures is simplistic (40-1). Faigley, however, connects Macrorie to the turbulent years of student activism, identifying him as one of the

writing teachers [who] saw the writing-as-process movement as an answer to students' rejection of traditional authority...[T]hey emphasized in their pedagogy the values that students cried out for--autonomy, anti-authoritarianism, and a personal voice. Influential early proponents of process invited

students to take control of their writing as a political act. (57)

Berlin's study of epistemological developments in composition sheds a somewhat different light on Macrorie's work. Berlin describes Macrorie as one of the leading expressionists of the sixties and seventies, a diverse group of theorists whose particular form of subjective rhetoric shared a common epistemology:

the conviction that reality is a personal and private construct. For the expressionist, truth is always discovered within, through an internal glimpse, an examination of the private inner world....[This rhetoric] denies the place of intersubjective, social processes in shaping reality. Instead, it always describes groups as sources of distortion of the individual's true vision, and the behavior it recommends in the political and social realms is atomistic, the solitary individual acting alone. (145-6)

Robert Zoellner: a key influence

The third work that Patrick Hartwell cites in "A Laboratory Model" as a major influence on the Writing Lab's pedagogical approach is an article by Robert Zoellner entitled "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy" (178), which appeared in the January 1969 issue of *College English*. Actually a fifty-three-page monograph, "Talk-Write" has been frequently been called to my attention in interviews and its importance underscored, not only by Bentley and Hartwell but also by such present and former Writing Laboratory staff as Danny Rendleman, Scott Russell, Greg Waters, and Linda Bannister as well as such former tutors as Jim Anderson,

Ellen Bommarito, Jim Clark, Linda Grimshaw, and Joanne Shabazz. During the Bentley-Hartwell years and beyond, "Talk-Write" was elevated to the status of training manual for all UM-Flint Laboratory personnel. It is of particular interest here not only because it provided a framework for the Lab-tied course and a foundation for the tutoring methodology of laboratory staff but also because it is one of the earliest widely-read works to stress the importance of approaching writing as a process rather than as a product.

"Talk-Write" in 1969

Richard Ohmann, editor of *College English* in 1969, introduced the monograph with a lengthy note, explaining his decision to devote nearly all of one issue to Robert Zoellner's study of pedagogy in composition. This note is worthy of consideration on its own merit because it describes the conflicts and confusion among college-level writing teachers at the time Bentley and Hartwell were working to design an effective developmental composition course. After stating that Zoellner "presents a strong and original argument on a subject of general interest to the readership" (267), Ohmann gives an assessment of the state of composition courses in 1969:

First, I think most people will agree that virtually no academic subject gets taught in such a variety of ways as does composition, many of those ways mutually incompatible in their assumptions. Apparently we have

no wide agreement on the nature and purpose of English 101. Second, the results of our teaching are at best mixed. How we judge our success depends in part on whether we think of English 101 as teaching students to write fluently, teaching them to think well, preparing them for liberal education, "exposing" them to some of the best that has been thought and known, helping them to become intelligent citizens, qualifying them for specific careers, or serving one or more of many other announced and covert aims. But even if we agree for a moment on one aim, such as the first, our success in achieving it can be, has been, seriously questioned. (267)

Ohmann suggests that "an argument like Mr. Zoellner's, which unpacks and sorts out a lot of conceptual baggage, is particularly valuable" (267), but he also warns that its value will be lost if it is regarded as "establishing still another method or school or approach, in a field already littered with gimmicks, hunches, and personal strategies" (267).

A summary of "Talk-Write"

Because Zoellner's impact on the founders of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory was significant, it is appropriate here to review the key concepts of the talk-write model before examining its place in composition studies and its influence on Bentley and Hartwell. In summarizing the monograph, I am omitting Zoellner's extensive references to studies in behavioral psychology, from which he constructed a conceptual framework for his proposed approach to composition instruction. Through the inclusion of occasional quotations and technical

terms, however, I hope to retain some of the flavor of the original article

Zoellner's critique of the current approach to teaching writing focuses on what he perceives to be a generally accepted, flawed metaphor of writing as the equivalent of "thought on paper." "This metaphor," he charges, "is outmoded, grossly simplistic, and inhibitory of genuine progress in teaching students on any level to write effectively" (267-9). Instead of emphasizing the finished product and attributing writing problems to faulty thinking, Zoellner suggests that the composition instructor recognize what each student writer actually does while he/she is engaged in the "scribal act" or process of writing. The problems of struggling writers may be rooted in "faulty or maladaptive behavior" (271).

Zoellner provides an overview of learning theory from a behaviorist perspective, stressing that the Skinnerian concept of operant conditioning is more appropriate than the Pavlovian reflex concept because the former focuses only on external behavior, is response-based, reinforces only behaviors that the organism freely engages in, and consequently respects the natural integrity of the subject. He argues that composition instructors should apply principles of behaviorist learning theory to the teaching of writing, concerning themselves with learning which they can actually observe, the "replicable and measurable external

event" (274) and reinforcing appropriate writing behavior instead of attempting to deal with internal thought processes, which cannot be observed. Instruction should stress stages of the writing process rather than simply specifying the requirements for a finished product, and instruction should be visible--actual observable behavior.

For the benefit of both teachers and students, the think-write metaphor should be changed to a talk-write metaphor, argues Zoellner. Thought and talk are normally seen as being separate, with thought eliciting no immediate response, but talk normally calls for a response from the listener. Since immediate response is important from a behaviorist perspective, a student should be encouraged to talk his/her way through a writing task. Talk-write pedagogy will work most effectively if the classroom set-up is non-traditional. Desks, chairs, and lecterns should be eliminated. Instead, there should be a wrap-around chalkboard or large pads of blank newsprint mounted on easels. This type of classroom set-up will permit many types of vocal-to-scribal dialogue involving the teacher and student(s), including certain selected students working in front of the class, groups of students working together, etc. The teacher will spend much of the time moving around the room, reading and discussing what is being written on the easels. The entire atmosphere Zoellner believes, will suggest "the sense of free possibilities of the artist,"

because the student may experiment, erasing or discarding whatever he/she chooses, much as an artist makes and rejects experimental sketches.

Zoellner identifies five principles for the talk-write classroom model which he believes to be central in importance: "concentration on the act of writing, rather than on the written word," "pedagogical exploitation of the verbal repertory," "a classroom environment so structured as to permit innumerable scribal responses," and "a classroom technique for developing chained sub-specifications of acceptable scribal activity geared to the capabilities of the individual student" (296). I will review these principles in Part II of this chapter, when I link them to Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell's practice of the talk-write approach in their writing laboratory and developmental class.

Zoellner discusses four additional behaviorist principles of his talk-write model. The first is that of intermodal transfer: The student's assumed preponderant skill in the vocal modality can be transferred to the scribal modality. The second principle is that of intermodal integration: Writing should improve the student's talk (making it more "literate") and talk should improve writing (imparting a more distinguishable voice). The third principle, sociovocal reinforcement, turns the artificially solitary act of writing into the social event

of analysis and criticism natural for any act of communication. Finally, the principle of autogenetic specification eliminates the problem of a student struggling to attain an "invisible archetype" of good writing by making his/her talk the specification for writing. Autogenetic specification "makes the student-as-talker the teacher and mentor of the student-as-writer in a kind of 'operation bootstrap' " (300-2).

A backward glance at Zoellner

Present-day readers of Zoellner's monograph may be somewhat put off or amused by his enthusiastic espousal of behaviorist principles. While the work of behavioral psychologists has certainly contributed to an understanding of learning, these ideas no longer appear revolutionary, as they would have done nearly three decades ago. Recent trends in psychology and education have also softened the jargon, so that Zoellner's use of such terms as "organism," "repertory," "reinforcement," "extinction," etc. may strike the reader as offensively impersonal. However, rather than simply dismissing "Talk-Write" as outdated, it is useful to place it in its proper context. Zoellner's monograph appeared only five years after the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer meta-analysis, which called for composition research that would be modeled on scientific methods and for pedagogy that would be guided by such research. "Talk-Write" is

clearly a response to this call. Setting aside the behaviorist framework, a contemporary reading reveals the timeliness and significance of Zoellner's argument in favor of teaching writing as an accessible process, not divorced from the student writer's linguistic skills and abilities, but rather supported by them. The emphasis on process over product, on rewarding students' efforts instead of focusing on surface feature perfection, and the stress on writing as a social act are all key elements of today's composition pedagogy.¹ These are the features that held appeal for Bentley and Hartwell as they searched for the most effective pedagogical approach to use in the new Laboratory-based developmental writing course.

In an article entitled "Composition Textbooks and the Assault on Tradition," which appeared in *College Composition and Communication* nine years after Zoellner's monograph, Donald C. Stewart hailed "Talk-Write" as one of several notable "assaults on the failure of the current-traditional paradigm to deal with the composing process" (182). Stewart sums up Zoellner's contribution as follows:

...Zoellner introduced a new dimension, physical behavior, into the writing process. Teachers were not ready then, as some still are not, to believe that writing difficulties, particularly in the work of remedial students, have less to do with the way their minds work and more to do with the way their muscles have been conditioned. There is evidence in some textbooks now, however, that some teachers are finally and grudgingly beginning to admit that composition is a heavily conditioned responsive process and that while they may object violently to an English teacher who tells them that principles of operant conditioning will

be useful in the composition class, they had better test his hypothesis before dismissing it as so much scientific hogwash illicitly invading the traditional territory of humanistic studies. But Zoellner's approach is still so original and so fundamental and so far beyond the boundaries of the current-traditional paradigm that most English teachers still regard it with intense hostility. Significantly, Zoellner was the first to recognize that problems with a dominant paradigm underlay resistance to his hypothesis. (182-3)

Although Zoellner's monograph has been routinely and prejudicially dismissed, Berlin has given *Talk-Write* the consideration that it merits. Berlin identifies Zoellner as the originator of one of two behavioral rhetorics, the other having been set forth by Lynn Z. Bloom and Martin Bloom in 1967 (140). Zoellner's article constitutes the "most detailed and best-known form" of behavioral psychology as applied to writing instruction (9). Neither Bloom and Bloom nor Zoellner attracted much of a following--letters responding to Zoellner's monograph in a succeeding issue of *College English* were in some cases irrationally critical (144-5)--but Berlin suggests that these rhetorics did markedly influence ways of thinking and talking about the writing process (145).

The patchwork completed

In concluding this review of literature that Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell have cited as important influences on their work at the University of Michigan-Flint, I would like to emphasize once again the impracticality of attempting to trace all of Bentley and

Hartwell's specific decisions and practices back to these theorists and researchers. Certainly some of the techniques advocated or pioneered by these writers do appear in the laboratory class and in the Hartwell/Bentley text, *Open to Language*. Further, as will be seen in Part II of this chapter, the two Laboratory founders chose their own interpretation of Zoellner's proposed pedagogy as a general framework for both the Writing Laboratory and the developmental writing course. However, as I have noted in the above discussion, the selections that Hartwell and Bentley have identified as being especially influential for them have differing epistemological origins, Zoellner and Christensen being positivistic in nature while Macrorie's roots are in a subjective rhetoric. Bentley and Hartwell made use of them as they saw fit.

Part II: Theory into Practice

Preliminary considerations

In 1971, when language was often dissected into parts which were then taught in isolation and when speakers of nonstandard dialects were actually described by some teachers of English as inarticulate--even languageless--the Writing Laboratory's founders saw their students as linguistically competent adults who might be following the grammatical rules of a nonstandard dialect, but who had nevertheless already internalized, and practiced within the

usual rhetorical contexts, a set of rules for a dialect of English. The task of instruction, then, would be to teach "a certain kind of *performance*--writing performance, a tacit, knowing-how skill--rather than effecting linguistic or cognitive competence by teaching conscious mastery of formal 'rules' of language or logic" (Hartwell, "Model" 66). These students were people who could be expressive, perhaps eloquent, in speech, even if they froze on paper. In many cases, they were also people whose aversion to writing might have arisen from negative school experiences in their pasts (Bentley, Interview).

Bentley and Hartwell believed that students who struggled unsuccessfully to write for a judgmental, evaluative audience might have less trouble communicating with a responsive audience of peers, so they designed a course--listed as English 199: Writing Workshop--that would consist not only of attendance at a class held in the Writing Laboratory, but also of mandatory attendance for four hours per week in the Lab. It would include interaction among class members and positive feedback from peer tutors in the low-key environment of a laboratory as opposed to a formal classroom. The intent was to encourage speaking, writing, reading, and listening as interconnective activities, with emphasis placed on "the communicative aspect of writing, on situational context, voice, audience, and paradigmatic form" (Hartwell, "Model" 66).

A non-traditional approach

Bentley and Hartwell concurred with Robert Zoellner's critique of contemporary approaches to composition instruction, and they recognized in Zoellner's talk-write pedagogy both a connection to current advances in the study of language and an affinity with their own past experiences of teaching writing. In recalling "Talk-Write," Bentley states that he was particularly engaged by "the idea of the writing classroom as an individualized center with the instructor...modeling and also being involved in the process," an approach that Bentley had tried and found successful when he created a writing center for functionally illiterate adults at Creighton University (Bentley, Interview).

From a historical perspective, the decision to use an interpretation of Zoellner's monograph as a guide for setting up a writing laboratory and lab-tied course may well have been unique. In the section that follows, I will discuss Bentley and Hartwell's use of Zoellner's five key principles as an organizational framework for the Laboratory course. In order to show their influence on both the Writing Laboratory and the Writing Workshop course, I will discuss each principle in terms of its translation into pedagogy and procedure.

The act of writing

Zoellner's first principle is "concentration on the act of writing, rather than on the written word" (296). His proposed classroom model, with its non-traditional arrangement of furniture and wrap-around chalkboard or easels with newsprint, provided a physical setting conducive to active participation and a pedagogy "directed to action rather than thought" (291). Bentley and Hartwell duplicated this setting as closely as possible, using long tables and providing artists' easels for group work instead of conventional desks (Bentley, Interview).

The emphasis on on-the-spot writing--both in class and during Lab time--and the absence of homework or required texts lent an immediacy to the act of writing. This was not a class in which students would take assignments home to work in puzzled isolation, nor did instructors carry away stacks of essays for grading and red-inked comments. Each student was able to observe the process of writing as modeled by the instructor in class and by the tutors in the lab, as they tackled and talked their way through the identical rhetorical problem that had been posed to students (Bentley, Hartwell, Rendleman Interviews).

Students in Writing Workshop were encouraged to see each piece of writing as something that evolved from disconnected jottings or freewriting through draft stages that began with rough work and eventually became more

polished, closer approximations to "correct English." Invention techniques were introduced, such as freewriting, clustering, and listmaking/brainstorming, which allowed students to explore their ideas by putting them down on the page informally and messily--without fear of evaluation. Students soon came to see that this exploratory work, though important to the ultimate success of a piece, was hardly written in stone. It was more like an artist's preliminary sketch, to be modified and defined as the idea developed (Bentley, Hartwell, Rendleman Interviews).

Exploitation of the verbal repertory

The second principle is "pedagogical exploitation of the verbal repertory, both vocal and scribal, which the student possesses as he enters the classroom (Zoellner 296). First, Bentley and Hartwell attempted to change students' learned perception of speaking and writing as two independent, even polarized, activities by building in many opportunities for the "vocal-to-scribal dialogue" that Zoellner had described as taking place between a teacher and student working together to expand the student's kernel of an idea. Instructors and tutors, composing aloud, modelled the talking-into-writing process both to the Writing Workshop class and to individual students. They also repeatedly talked students through stages in their own composing. In addition, students were given assignments in

class that required them to collaborate on a group composition, which would clearly have to be "talked out" before it could be written down. Finally, tape recorders were employed for a variety of pedagogical purposes:

The tape recorder...proved successful at all stages of the writing process. The drop-in student who had no ideas for a freshman theme assignment usually found that he or she did indeed have ideas after a few minutes of taped talk with a staff member. Students were encouraged to read first drafts into the tape recorder and then listen to them played back. They could then often identify weaknesses in sentence structure, coherence, and development. We also found that students who tended to leave off -s and -ed endings in writing tended to insert them in their speech, when faced with the somewhat formal situation of speaking into a recorder.² Thus, they could move back from their tacit awareness of grammatical signals in speech to the forms used to code those signals in writing. (Hartwell, "Model" 69)

In these ways, students' verbal competency was restored as a legitimate resource. The vocal-scribal link was reforged.

Secondly, students were helped to feel confident in whatever writing skills they currently possessed. Classroom assignments began not with full-fledged academic essays, but with short pieces that drew on the writer's real-world knowledge. Because writing assignments in the laboratory were individualized, a student always began where he/she could write comfortably and slowly met new challenges over the course of the semester. Tutors started students off with a variety of fluency exercises, which consisted of freewritings based on general prompts drawing from students' personal experiences or imaginations. They later moved on to more analytic kinds of writing as their scribal fluency and

self-confidence developed (Hartwell, "Model" 69). These lessons will be described in detail in Chapter Three.

An emphasis on quantity

Zoellner's third principle is "a classroom environment so structured as to permit innumerable scribal responses rather than just a few (296). Unlike the typical freshman composition course of the time, in which an instructor lectured about the elements of a successfully completed essay and students periodically wrote themes outside of class, the Writing Workshop course required six hours per week to be devoted entirely to writing--both in class and in the Lab. Fluency was a top priority, with students being given five- or ten-minute speed writing exercises in the Lab until they were able to put words on paper quickly and comfortably. Since the sheer quantity of writing that they were able to produce in a set time increased perceptibly with practice, students saw this as a sign of progress--often the first indication of success in writing that they could identify (Hartwell, "Model" 68).

Immediate reinforcement

The fourth principle is "a pedagogical situation which permits more or less immediate reinforcement of those aspects of the individual's scribal activity which represent functional improvement" (Zoellner 296). Bentley and

Hartwell's concept of a lab-tied course was designed to provide students with extensive, immediate one-on-one feedback. Carefully trained peer tutors were available to guide and encourage students at any point in the process. At the completion of each assignment, students were required to have the piece read by a tutor or instructor, who would give both oral and written comments. Not only did the peer tutor system provide immediate reinforcement, but it also gave the student an opportunity to engage in a useful dialogue about any piece of writing--an exchange that red ink in the margins of an isolated essay, read in private by an evaluating instructor, tends to discourage (Bentley, Hartwell Interviews).

Process, not perfection

The fifth and final Zoellner principle is "a classroom technique for developing chained sub-specifications of acceptable scribal activity geared to the capabilities of the individual student, with "bulls-eye" or "I've-caught-you-off-base" teaching reduced to a minimum" (296). The new Writing Laboratory course was also innovative in terms of the kinds of assignments given and the hierarchy of skills to be emphasized, as will be seen in Chapter Three. Patrick Hartwell describes the rationale behind Writing Laboratory assignments as follows:

In a real sense...we inverted the nineteenth-century hierarchy of *skills* which regarded "correctness" in

pronunciation as a prerequisite to correctness in writing and correctness in surface detail--grammar and spelling--as a prerequisite to larger elements of form. We replaced it with a quite different hierarchy, one that was broadly cognitive, stressing process and purpose rather than structure and correctness, the larger potentialities of style and form rather than grammar and usage. Since our goal was full adult literacy, we wanted to place no artificial, school-determined learning blocks in front of that goal. Students who wanted to become literate adults, we felt, should start acting like literate adults, not be sidetracked into mechanical exercises that had no immediate application to functional literacy. ("Model" 66)

In accordance with the principle process-not-perfection, Laboratory assignments began with a wide range of fluency exercises--writing prompts designed simply to encourage students to get a quantity of words down on paper. (See Appendix B for two examples of early fluency exercises.) These prompts drew on the writer's personal experience and observations or on his/her imagination, and required description and/or narration. Early in the semester, instructors and tutors made few comments about surface feature errors, such as spelling, punctuation, or grammar and emphasized instead the importance of simply writing a lot and writing with ease. Surface feature concerns were addressed on an individual basis later in the semester, although--as Bentley and Hartwell predicted--students quite often picked up on them with little assistance as their fluency grew (Hartwell, "Model" 70).

After students had achieved a degree of fluency and confidence, lessons would often take them in one of two directions:

A transfer of the student's well-defined sense of voice and rhetorical stance to its embodiment in the print code or a stress on writing as choice and manipulation. "Voice" in speaking was pinned down in print in a number of activities, both individual and group, most involving a game or play situation that built upon developing scribal fluency, such as identifying the qualities conveyed by the voice and style of a taped speaker and then imitating that speaker; adopting a specific voice for a particular purpose (a professor cancelling class, a driver talking a police officer out of a ticket); and identifying a parody of a style or writing parodies....Bob Bentley in particular was able to see the importance of journalism as an initial form for writing, giving students the basic form of a newspaper report and the new information from which the report was to be constructed. (Hartwell, "Model" 70)

Bentley and Hartwell shared Zoellner's dislike of the traditional "I've-caught-you-off-base" approach to evaluating writing, in which the hapless student struggled with an invisible set of criteria, turned in an imperfect essay, and received feedback in the form of copious critical comments written in red ink in the margins of the paper. For this reason, assignments in the new Writing Workshop course were arranged in a rough progression that emphasized mastery of larger cognitive concerns before stylistic matters and, eventually, editing skills. Not only was feedback usually immediate and personal, as has been described earlier, but no grades were attached to this feedback. Students received a single grade at the end of the semester, which was based on their overall performance.

Improvement and effort were prime considerations in grading (Bentley, Hartwell Interviews).

Overview of the Writing Laboratory course

While certain modifications have been made over the years, it should be noted that the basic mechanics of the original Writing Workshop course, as well as the overall pedagogical approach, have been retained to this day. In the Bentley/Hartwell years, students wishing to earn three credits were required to spend about four hours per week working in the Writing Center on an individual basis with peer tutors and were advised to attend a weekly one-hour optional class meeting. (Most students elected to attend the class regularly.) While five hours per week may seem at first glance to be an unusually heavy time commitment for a three-credit-hour course, it should be noted that writing assignments were generally completed in the Lab or in class. No homework was given.

In class, the instructor would introduce a single lesson or writing prompt, to be completed by everyone during that period. Students would all write responses to the same prompt, frequently collaborating with classmates in a small group. The instructor often wrote along with the students and shared his piece of writing with the class. Students received on-the-spot feedback both from classmates and from the instructor. In the Writing Center, students would arrive

individually, fitting Lab time into convenient slots in their class schedules. Each student would receive an assignment from a tutor, who based his/her selection of the assignment on the individual student's needs.³ When time permitted, the tutor would often sit with the student and model the process by writing a response to the same prompt. The tutor would provide encouragement and advice whenever needed, and read and commented on the piece after a draft had been completed.

Each student placed all of his/her writing in a manila folder usually kept on file in the Lab. Tutor and instructor comments were recorded on a log sheet in this folder, along with dates and times of the student's visits to class and Lab. In this way, both the student and staff could tell at a glance how many hours of work had been put in, which assignments had been completed, who had worked with the student, what comments had been made, and what kind of progress had been achieved. Both instructors and tutors concentrated on providing positive feedback, especially during the first few weeks of each semester, when the new Writing Workshop students were adjusting to an unfamiliar class format. Assignments were not graded individually, but each student's progress was discussed and evaluated during frequent staff meetings, an assessment approach which I will describe in detail in Chapter Three. Since students were not required to work with the same tutors throughout the

semester, it was common for most of the tutors to have some familiarity with most students' work, and folders of work were typically read aloud during staff meetings, so that everyone had input into each student's assessment. At the end of the semester the entire staff met for a marathon grading session. (Bentley, Hartwell, Rendleman Interviews).

Creating a non-threatening learning environment

A major barrier to becoming successful college-level writers for a good share of the Writing Workshop students was writing anxiety: a lack of self confidence and the conviction that none of their efforts could stand up to the invisible criteria of red-pen-wielding professors. Bentley and Hartwell believed that this feeling of inadequacy and dread of evaluation was most often the result of previous encounters with English teachers in high school (Interviews), whose pedagogy reflected what Zoellner dubbed the "traditional metaphor" or Richard Young described as the "current-traditional paradigm." In order to make their innovative approach to writing instruction work successfully and to lower the anxiety level of students who had already experienced failure in a conventional English class, Bentley and Hartwell took pains to deliberately destroy any sense of the usual classroom atmosphere, both in the Laboratory course and in the Lab itself. This was accomplished in a variety of ways, most of which involved either poking fun at

academic conventions or creating a campy, nonacademic environment (Bentley, Hartwell, Rendleman Interviews).

Bentley and Hartwell's favorite method of fostering a relaxed atmosphere for the Writing Workshop class was an ongoing spoof of all things academic. One example has to do with their solution to the problem of grade anxiety and its effect on fluency. Bentley explains that being "blocked" was a typical characteristic of the Writing Workshop students:

I believe that fluency has to precede everything else. Again, these are old ideas now in the nineties...but if you look back in the literature of the late sixties and early seventies there wasn't much being said about these new...nontraditional students....One of the things I saw was you put a pen in their hand and they choked up. Zoellner had noted that, too. A lot of times students freeze. (Bentley, Interview)

Hartwell offers the example of a particular student, Elizabeth, whose writing showed dramatic improvement as a result of her experience with informal peer group assignments:

This is a student who had failed freshman English, gee, five times? And when she came into the Lab we gave her a standardized test at the beginning....She achieved the highest score that we had ever seen and the highest score that was in the instructor's manual. So she was a brilliant student. She turned out to be hyper-correct....She was so critical of her writing that she could not write. She had the worst case of writer's block that I've ever seen. So we put her in a group ...and she would say "Well, we could say there are three reasons why...Now we could say there are three important reasons why, or we could say the three reasons that are..." [The others] would be writing this down, so they would generate the writing that she was not willing to generate. Once she saw that--"Oh! You can put it out on paper and then you can change it"--she cracked that block.... (Hartwell, Interview)

Students were assured that they would not receive grades on individual pieces of writing and would only receive a single holistic grade at the end of the semester. However, many students were skeptical about such an unfamiliar system of evaluation, while the mere idea of any evaluation at all (with its unavoidable risk of failure) was a potential cause of fluency problems for others. Bentley and Hartwell understood the importance of allaying their students' fears about grading early on. The two instructors quickly devised a playful but effective way to accomplish this:

We got the easels and the big art pads [as Zoellner recommended]. We had students write on that in teams, and we had to elect somebody scribe or secretary, and we'd "grade" these things. We'd have little boxes of whatever we could find from the [English Department] secretary's desk: gold stars, blue stars, express mail stickers, whatever. We'd walk around and look at these creations, and we'd stick whatever [stars, etc.] we stuck on there. Students would absolutely want to know what we were doing and what this "grade" was. It took a while for them to realize that this was fun. They would ask, "Now what does this mean?" and Pat Hartwell would always explain, absolutely deadpan, "Well, here's the grading system: blue stars, red stars, yellow stars, mail stickers, first class mail stickers...." [They would ask] "Yeah, but what does it mean?" and he would go through it again, word for word....Finally they got the idea that these two pros were crazy, that whatever it was they were doing, it was okay--they were going to be friendly. (Bentley)

Another method of downplaying the pressures and demands of the college environment in order to teach specific lessons was Bentley and Hartwell's use of mock lectures. Content area lectures that modeled traditional college-level lectures were routinely delivered in the Writing Workshop class, usually near the end of the semester when students

had developed some skills and confidence. The purpose of these lectures was to provide students with practice in notetaking and in writing essay exams based on the notes⁴. Although there was a certain degree of work involved--mock reading assignments and mock exams, for example--even "serious" lectures were not threatening because they were often spur-of-the-moment, and it was understood that the resultant notes and essay exams would be "just for practice," hence ungraded (Bentley, Hartwell Interviews). The lectures were so impromptu that often Bentley and Hartwell themselves had no idea as to what the content would be until they heard it along with their class.

Hartwell explains:

We'd grab somebody walking down the halls--a professor--and say, "Come in and give a lecture." He'd give a lecture and we'd ask for an essay exam. Usually he'd hang around, or we'd look at the essay exam and talk about what grade you'd give it....(Hartwell, Interview)

After awhile, certain professors became "regulars." An example is Neil Leighton, a political science professor still teaching at the University of Michigan-Flint, who would lecture on his special area of interest, Sierra Leone (Bentley). While students took the practice of notetaking, reading, and exam writing seriously, there was no pressure in the form of evaluation.

However, some of the most popular and effective "lectures" were actually Bentley/Hartwell spoofs of the lecture genre. Each of the two remembers with some

amusement a lecture delivered by the other. Hartwell recalls a Bentley presentation on anti-intellectualism in America replete with vivid examples and entertaining sound effects. When Bentley arrived at the particular subtype of anti-intellectualism known as anti-scientism, he would use a hypothetical science fiction movie "The Giant Frog" as an example, with the stock characters found in such grade-B movies: the older scientist, his attractive daughter, and the young scientist-hero. Students found this an entertaining illustration of Bentley's point about anti-scientism, and apparently were particularly taken with Bentley's frog-croaks, which were resounding "Greeps!" (Hartwell, Interview)

Hartwell's contribution to the spoof-lecture repertoire was even more exotic. Journalistic writing was used in the Lab course as a way of bridging the gap between personal and academic writing. One assignment was for students to listen to a lecture by "a prominent person" who happened to be in town (Bentley, Interview) and then write a news article about this talk. When Bentley was teaching the course, Hartwell would masquerade as the "prominent person," a Dr. Scheisskopf, who was an authority on the harmful effects of tomatoes. This lecture, "copped from one of the freshman English textbooks at that time" (Bentley, Interview), was written in the dogmatic voice of an expert presenting *non sequitur* "facts" intended to substantiate the claim that

tomatoes were a universal bane to humankind. Beginning with relatively conservative claims, the lecture gradually built up to connections between tomatoes and catastrophes that were impossible to take seriously. (For example, it was pointed out that a suspiciously large percentage of people presently dead had eaten tomatoes at some point during their lives.) Bentley describes the visit by Dr. Scheisskopf:

I would give him the straightest introduction in the world..."I don't know too much about our speaker today, but I understand he's an expert on tomatoes. He's going to tell us why his work is important."....And in would come Pat with this horrible German accent and start: "You can find them growing near high schools...." And little by little [the students would] catch on, and then I'd be the last to catch on. I would be shushing them as they would be starting to laugh....Finally I would catch on, and I would stop him. I would say, "Excuse me, sir, what is this? Is this a joke?" And he would say, "This is not a joke! This is serious stuff!" We'd get into this violent argument and I'd throw him out. I'd apologize to the class and say, "Write it up. Just write it up the way you saw it." (Bentley)

Hartwell's tomato talk, in satirizing the academic lecture genre, served several purposes besides offering practice in journalistic writing. It not only provided a humorous lesson in logic and in questioning authority, but it also taught students to make wiser decisions about notetaking. Typically they were so caught up in recording as many "facts" as possible, that the larger, unmistakably ridiculous premise eluded them longer than it should have (Bentley).

While anecdotal evidence suggests that Bentley and Hartwell's penchant for satirizing the academy was an

effective pedagogical tool, it nevertheless presents the peculiar contradiction of insiders pretending to be outsiders: Despite their joking approach to teaching the Writing Workshop course, in which they seemed to reject their role of evaluator and authority figure, Bentley and Hartwell were inescapably part of the system. As long as they were faculty members in the English Department and administrators of the Writing Laboratory, they were necessarily part of the hierarchical structure that surrounded them. The stars, stickers, and mock lectures were props for inspired playacting; in reality, the Writing Laboratory and its Lab-tied Writing Workshop course remained situated within the larger institutional context of the University of Michigan-Flint, and were ultimately governed by its rules, procedures, and expectations. One might speculate that Bentley and Hartwell did in fact perceive themselves to be outsiders in the sense that they believed themselves to be working on the margins of their institution, their department, and their profession. In a later chapter I will present material from interviews which indicates that at least some Writing Laboratory staff members experienced feelings of isolation from the academic community around them. Here, however, I would like to note that the Bentley/Hartwell spoofs suggest at least a playful claim of separation from the institutional context in which they functioned.

An unconventional atmosphere

There was a deliberately anti-academic air, too, about the Writing Laboratory itself. The handful of tutors who worked together in the early days saw themselves as engaging in an innovative--and perhaps radical--type of teaching. They were, in a sense, members of an exclusive club on campus, with a hip image to maintain. Students quickly picked up on the tutors' sense of camaraderie, which helped put them at ease in the Laboratory, as did the good-natured joking and pranks that the staff indulged in. Bentley offers two examples:

One time one of our tutors came looking for me...I was about fifteen pounds heavier than you see me today... and he came into the room with a harpoon. I don't know where he got the harpoon, but he announced he was looking for Bentley, the great white whale. Another time I came into my office and there was a box of Strohs beer on my desk. There was a live duck in there. So I pushed the duck down, closed it up, and... put it on Mark [Edmonds'] desk. He came in and screamed. I forget where it went from there, but that duck made the rounds of the university. (Bentley)

The welcoming, relaxed, and vaguely anti-establishment atmosphere of the Writing Laboratory as cultivated by Bentley and Hartwell went a long way toward helping students become more comfortable with the idea of a writing course. This atmosphere became something of a pedagogical tradition at UM-Flint, as will be seen in later chapters.

Open to Language

Both Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell eventually left the University of Michigan-Flint, Bentley accepting a position at Lansing Community College in 1975 and Hartwell moving to Indiana University of Pennsylvania the following year. Before going their separate ways, the two compositionists had begun to work together on a writing text. *Open to Language: A New College Rhetoric* was published by Oxford University Press in 1982. Although the text fails to capture much of the spontaneity and playfulness of Bentley and Hartwell's developmental writing course, it does draw on their experiences in the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory and embody a form of the theory and pedagogy that they came to value. The authors' background in linguistics is evident from such features as their discussion of students' linguistic competence, the integration of grammar instruction into the contexts of writing situations, a treatment of textual coherence, and an explanation of surface features as part of "the print code." Their attention to rhetorical concerns can be seen in such sections as the introduction of rhetorical choice and contexts, purposes and goals in writing, arrangement, invention, and Aristotle's common places. Christensen's work with sentences and paragraphs informs the authors' discussion of smaller units of text, while the "Bubblemug Voice" and the "Neutral Voice of Journalism" are reminiscent

of UM-Flint Writing Laboratory exercises. The instructor's guide, *Some Suggestions for Using Open to Language*, is worthy of mention because it could potentially have served as a substitute for a course in process-oriented writing pedagogy. It offers advice to new teachers of composition and reviews such newly-recognized teaching alternatives as conference-centered teaching, collaborative learning, team-teaching, writing across the curriculum, using media, and teaching with word processors,⁴ all techniques and ideas that Bentley and Hartwell used in the Lab. The guide also includes suggested readings and sample syllabi. Produced during a period when each major publishing house offered perhaps one or two genuinely process-oriented composition texts at best, *Open to Language* with its accompanying instructor's guide can be seen as a progressive piece of work for its time.

The Bentley-Hartwell influence

Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell's association with the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory was relatively short-lived. By 1976 both of the Lab founders had accepted positions at other institutions; yet their early decisions, which determined not only its structure and organization but also its philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings, were to guide the Lab's evolution for years to come. This enduring influence can be attributed largely

to a combination of background and inspiration. Both men were well-read in the relatively new field of composition studies, which was headed toward process-oriented approaches to the teaching of writing. Both were also keenly interested in linguistics and were especially sensitive to the social, and sociological, dynamics of language acts and acquisition. It follows that Bentley and Hartwell would have sought a pedagogical approach for their Writing Workshop course that reflected these concerns, but their ability to look beyond the potentially off-putting behaviorist claims of Robert Zoellner's Talk-Write pedagogy and recognize the strengths and merits of its underlying writing-as-process approach was a stroke of brilliance. Bentley and Hartwell's translation of this pedagogical theory into day-to-day practice resulted in the creation of a laboratory that was atypical for its time: Rather than a workbook-driven skills-and-drills autotutorial, the Writing Laboratory with its Lab-tied Writing Workshop course was from its earliest days a nonthreatening and supportive environment where students learned to behave in writerly ways, receiving immediate feedback and assistance at every stage of composing from prewriting to revision. Because of this forward-looking approach, the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory experienced no violent change of direction later in its development, as did a number of its contemporaries, but Bentley and Hartwell's stabilizing influence over the

long term can be attributed not only to their ideas, but also to their personal influence on future Lab directors, instructors, tutors, and staff, as will be demonstrated in succeeding chapters.

Notes

¹An interesting sidelight brought up by Berlin is that Zoellner, in a November 1969 interchange in *College English* with Bloom and Bloom, discussed in detail Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, arguing that he and his opponents could not communicate effectively because they were operating from two entirely different paradigms of human behavior (145), this application of Kuhn's theory appearing nine years before Richard Young's frequently cited article about the perceived paradigm shift in composition.

²These observations conform with the findings of William Labov. Bentley and Hartwell required the Writing Laboratory staff to read excerpts from Labov's *The Logic of Nonstandard English*.

³Tutor training included becoming familiar with the assignment drawers, which will be discussed in Chapter Three, and learning to recognize individual student progress. Discussion at staff meetings also included the work of individual students, so that decisions about a student's direction were often reached jointly.

⁴The discussion of writing instruction with word processors in 1982 is a particularly striking example of new ideas in composition. Bentley and Hartwell did in fact have their UM-Flint developmental students working with word processing in a rudimentary way during the 1970s, using huge monitors linked to the mainframe computer on the Ann Arbor campus.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF DIRECTORS IN DEVELOPING THE LABORATORY AND ITS COURSE

This chapter examines Laboratory directors and their impact on instruction in the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory/Center and the Lab-tied developmental writing course from the departure of Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell to the present. Part I summarizes the backgrounds, instructional contributions, and observations of various directors and acting directors of the Center. Part II focuses on specific developments in the Writing Workshop course.¹ It is not my intention here to step back and consider these directorships and their concomitant changes in terms of developmental stages; I will reserve such an evaluation for the final chapter of this dissertation. Instead I wish to bring together details that will show shifts in theoretical or pedagogical emphasis and the evolution of assessment practices, portfolio use, and Laboratory-based lessons. My two-fold purpose in compiling this detailed information is to provide a basis for readers to draw comparisons with other writing centers and to lay the groundwork for larger considerations in Chapter Five.

Part I: Writing Laboratory Directors

Lingering influence of Bentley and Hartwell

The guiding influence of Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell, both on the Writing Laboratory and on the Writing Workshop course, was not to end with their removal to other institutions, but remained in place long after 1976. Part of their continuing influence was due to specific philosophical, pedagogical, and organizational decisions, as I have shown in previous chapters; another factor was the succession of Writing Laboratory directors who came after Bentley and Hartwell. For several years, the faculty who held this position were people who had worked closely with the founders and who shared their attitudes about the teaching of writing.²

Providing actual dates of tenure for directors of the Writing Laboratory in its early years is virtually impossible. Between 1971 and 1975 Bentley and Hartwell passed the title back and forth regularly from semester to semester and also handed it over to colleagues who were willing to put in a one-semester stint. The two collaborated so closely, both with each other and with interested members of the English Department, in developing the Lab course and in establishing and maintaining a Reading Laboratory (directed by Mark Edwards) that individual contributions are in many cases impossible to identify. Hartwell observes:

The effort all the way throughout was very much a collaborative effort; so, as I try and look back, it is often impossible for me to say that this was so-and-so's idea, or this was my idea....Everybody's agreed that we all worked together. (Hartwell, Interview)

Greg Waters, who became the Laboratory director after Bentley and Hartwell had left, remembers that they were particularly committed to involving other English Department faculty in the Writing Laboratory's development through team teaching. Bentley and Hartwell's efforts to pass both teaching duties and the director's title around the department as often as possible were intended not only to enrich the Laboratory but also to inspire their colleagues to learn about new developments in the teaching of writing:³

Bob and Pat's...intention always was...team teach the directorship so that they would take their experience and...basis in content knowledge, and try to persuade a person with more traditional literary training to get interested....After [Bentley and Hartwell's] departure, we were less successful in getting new people involved in the team teaching effort. (Waters, Interview)

Bentley and Hartwell's active attempts to engage the interest and participation of English Department colleagues might also be read as an effort to preserve and strengthen the Lab's ties to the Department by demonstrating its effectiveness and legitimacy as a way of teaching writing.

Greg Waters

One member of the English Department who alternated with Bentley and Hartwell in directing the Lab was Gregory

Waters, now Provost at Montclair University. Waters taught at the University of Michigan-Flint from the summer of 1973 to the summer of 1984. Although he had received his Ph.D. from Rutgers for a dissertation in American Literature, it was his background in writing that sparked his interest in teaching at UM-Flint. Waters had worked in a writing laboratory on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus and was very interested in the teaching of developmental writing:

It was primarily the appeal of the Writing Lab that brought me to Michigan. I saw a growing need for people to work with students who had received poor training in writing during the high school years. I was impressed with both the people who were running the labs and with the fact that the Writing Lab was combined with the Reading Lab organizationally. And with the fact that the materials that were being used were discourse-based, rather than fill-in-the-blanks, which was what I found elsewhere. (Waters)

Waters describes his work with Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell as his "first formal introduction to the study of rhetoric." Already familiar with Edward P.J. Corbett's book on classical rhetoric, which had drawn his interest because of his own studies in Latin and Greek, Waters was introduced by his new colleagues to transformational grammar, to Francis Christensen's treatment of the sentence and paragraph, and to the expressionist theories of Kenneth Macrorie, Peter Elbow, and Walker Gibson (Waters, Interview). "Although I had interest in the teaching of writing, my training was almost exclusively critical in orientation, and I hit the ground running," Waters remembers. "I knew there were a lot of sources that I would

have to explore and learn, and I had a great opportunity to do that" (Interview).

One innovation in the Writing Laboratory course to which Waters made a significant contribution was the use of journalistic exercises to bridge the gap between fluency work and the formal voice of academic writing. This idea, originating with Bentley, quickly caught Waters' imagination. The two were able to work together effectively on this project because both had hands-on experience with journalistic writing. Having attended Pacific University on a journalism scholarship, Bentley had earned a double undergraduate degree in journalism and English. He financed his master's degree by writing for newspapers, especially the *Forest Groves News-Times*, where he wrote "sports--and everything else" (Bentley, Interview). As it happened, Waters developed an interest in journalism soon after arriving at the University of Michigan-Flint:

My very first year I came out [to Michigan] with a young family; and, as low man on the totem pole, it didn't look like I was going to get a summer teaching assignment. I was also interested in creating a journalism course for the department, and I began working that summer for the *Flint Journal*. They trained me, a young literary critic, as a reporter, chasing fire trucks and covering arts festivals. It was a great summer job, but it was also an opportunity to learn firsthand how a journalist approached the writing task. Then I began studying the textbooks and building the [journalism] program. (Waters)

Bentley and Waters saw journalistic exercises in Writing Workshop as a practical way to develop the more formal voice

of freshman composition and expository writing. Waters explains:

The closed form [of academic writing] was very difficult for many of them to reach, and I decided that some of the work we were fooling around with in journalism might provide the bridge, because journalism itself is a closed form. The writer's personal views could not intrude on the subject. The journalist was supposed to be very objective and present both sides to an issue, get in and get out, and write in a tight fashion....I found that the journalism offered me that bridge. It also, frankly, provided some role-playing opportunities for the kids; because it wasn't a tough English professor who was marking up student papers, but we would be like Lou Grant....We could play some roles marking [the papers], talk about professional writing and how we couldn't any longer grade people on how authentic their experience was, but rather how well they communicated, because we were trying to sell newspapers. It provided just that bridge that I thought was very useful.

Early on, Waters recognized the importance that Bentley and Hartwell placed on creating a relaxed and nonthreatening environment in the Writing Laboratory:

They really wanted to make the lab a fun place to work--a fun place for students to learn--and they wanted to create a very nonthreatening environment....They would have Dial-a-Duck jokes....It was just zany humor, so they were really committed to making this look like anything but a classroom. They wanted it to look like an advertising agency or the place where creative people would hang out.

As a Writing Workshop instructor and, eventually, Director of the Writing Laboratory, Waters agreed with his colleagues on the positive points of maintaining such an informal atmosphere, even though he sometimes felt a bit out of his element:

I had to struggle against type in order to perpetuate that, because it didn't come naturally to me. But

Mark Edmonds [reading center director] sort of looked like a Hell's Angel....He had very long hair and a beard, and always wore blue jeans and a leather jacket. Drove a motorcycle and claimed that he was there for affirmative action reasons to represent poor white trash. That kind of place. There were no sacred cows. It was a very funny place to work.

An old *curriculum vitae* indicates that Waters formally held the title of director of the Writing Laboratory from 1974 to 1978. He also used the informal title of director of freshman composition for this period. However, during his last six years at the University of Michigan-Flint, Waters became increasingly more involved in administration and increasingly less involved in teaching writing or running the Writing Laboratory (Waters).

Linda Bannister

One of the first students to tutor under the direction of Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell in the Writing Laboratory, Linda Bannister had gone on to graduate school at the University of Southern California. Between earning her master's and her Ph.D. in English, she returned briefly to UM-Flint and directed the Writing Laboratory for the fall semester of 1976. Greg Waters had taken a leave from his duties as Laboratory director, and the Senior Instructional Associate, Danny Rendleman, had also taken a leave in order to complete his M.F.A. Mark Edmonds, the reading specialist who worked closely with Writing Laboratory personnel and was

"part of the whole experience" (Bannister), was also absent during this period.

Although Bannister's interim directorship was brief, it is worthy of note because she was not an outsider, who might have introduced markedly different ideas and approaches to the Lab. On the contrary, as will be seen in Chapter Five, Bannister had an in-depth understanding of the Lab, a fondness for its mythos, and a great deal of admiration for its founders. Now chair of the English Department at Loyola-Marymount University, Bannister believes that the atmosphere in the Lab had already begun to change as a result of Bentley and Hartwell's departure when she returned as a fill-in director:

It didn't have the same flavor, because Bob and Pat weren't there....I did the best I could. I was still fairly naive and not "in charge," as it were... but the Lab seemed to have a little bit more formal feel to it. It was less informal, more structured, which I didn't particularly care for, knowing what it had been in the past. But I did try many of the same things [Bentley and Hartwell] taught me, and I think I loosened it up a little bit when I was finished. But it was definitely not the same place with them gone. (Interview)

Organizationally, though, the Laboratory functioned much as it had during the Bentley-Hartwell years. Bannister describes her one-semester directorship as a temporary one which basically maintained the *status quo* (Interview).

A new position

During the late 1970s, the actual semester-to-semester directorship was passed back and forth among English

Department faculty, much as it had been under Bentley and Hartwell's supervision. However, the make-up of the department itself had undergone changes which had an impact on the teaching of composition in general and the functioning of the Writing Laboratory in particular. With Bentley and Hartwell gone, Waters increasingly involved with administration, and William Vasse voted in as chair of the English Department, there were no tenure-level faculty left with formal training in rhetoric and composition who could oversee the Writing Laboratory and direct the teaching of composition. Every English Department faculty member was responsible for teaching some composition courses, and several part-time instructors were also employed to help with the load, but no one was an "expert." Within the discipline of English, composition was finally becoming recognized as a legitimate field of specialization, and writing was beginning to be seen--even by literature specialists--as a teachable subject. The English Department at the University of Michigan-Flint decided to hire its first tenure-track faculty member with a degree in composition. This person would head the composition program and also serve as director of the Writing Laboratory (Vasse).

Patricia Murray

Patricia Y. Murray, a former Los Angeles high school English teacher, earned a Ph.D. at the University of Southern California, under the direction of W. Ross Winterowd. Her impressive background--substantial teaching experience combined with having worked with a noted scholar in rhetoric--made her the favored candidate for the new position at UM-Flint. She was recruited by Vasse and came to Flint in the fall of 1979 and served as Director of the Writing Programs and the Writing Laboratory until the end of 1983, when she accepted a similar position at DePaul University. She currently directs the composition program at California State University, Northridge. One of Pat Murray's most vivid memories of teaching at UM-Flint concerned the economic situation of the city and its impact on the university campus:

It was the fall of 1979 when the bottom fell out of Michigan for the first time....The city was terribly depressed, and one of the first things I learned about UM-Flint was that when Buick was down, the university was bustling. So we had lots and lots of students--many older, returning students coming back, many of whom had come into the Writing Center.⁴ A great many middle-aged women who were so fearful of returning to school. That seemed to be a primary problem for them. They didn't think they could read and write and do college-level work...so the Writing Center served as a sort of re-entry program at the University. (Murray, Interview.)

Murray was well prepared to take over directorship of the Laboratory, in spite of the demands placed upon it by a dramatically increasing body of clientele. She had already

had experience with a college-level writing center, having helped to set one up at USC two summers before coming to Flint. An important part of organizing the USC lab had been creating new materials, and Murray brought some of these with her to Flint, adding in particular more materials that used sentence combining (Murray).

Murray remembers that Hartwell's "influence was still very pervasive in the Writing Center--and in the English Department, for that matter," in spite of the fact that there had been a few interim directors between Hartwell's departure and her arrival (Murray). She felt comfortable with the Laboratory's over-all philosophy and many of its techniques:

[Hartwell] had introduced many of the same techniques of teaching and tutoring that I brought with me, so in a sense it was easy to move into the Writing Lab because some of those things had been established. Things like conferencing techniques with students, invention techniques, ways of looking at writing as multiple drafting, and the like. So it wasn't necessary to start from a grounding where you had to change the whole concept of writing, because that was going on in the Writing Lab to begin with.
(Murray)

The day-to-day operation of the Lab was also smooth and orderly, an accomplishment that Murray attributes to Danny Rendleman, the Senior Instructional Associate who had been working in the Lab since its early days (Murray). Rendleman was not only supervising the Lab, but was also hiring and teaching the Writing Laboratory tutors when Pat Murray arrived on the University of Michigan-Flint campus. With

Murray's approval, Rendleman continued to be chiefly responsible for these duties throughout Murray's directorship (Murray).

Murray describes her own influence on the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory as a shift in emphasis toward more rhetorical considerations:

My training at USC was very rhetorical, even though it was a cross-disciplinary program. We had linguistics, we had some courses in speech communication, we had some rhetoric courses.... So we took a more holistic view of communication; and, while looking at the language very closely and doing work with microtexts was important, there is a larger context for writing, and its name is audience. So I think perhaps if I made any changes in the direction of the Lab, it was to expand a view of communication and get students to work with writing for other readers. (Murray)

Writing prompts from the Murray years stress the importance of audience awareness. The Young, Becker, and Pike tagmemic heuristic was introduced in the Lab during this period. However, Murray's rhetorical background probably influenced the Lab most in an indirect way: She taught an upper-level writing course called Rhetoric and the Writing Process, using Ross Winterowd's new text, *Contemporary Writing*. As will be seen in Chapter Four, the Writing Laboratory tutors had always been strongly encouraged to take this course. Under Murray's tutelage they emphasized the rhetorical aspects of written communication when they worked with students in the Lab (Russell, Interview).

Murray sees herself as having made few dramatic changes in the philosophy or practice of the Lab. Determining soon

after her arrival that it was operating efficiently, she devoted most of her energies to revamping the freshman composition program and left chief responsibility for the Lab to Rendleman. However, as I will show in later chapters, Murray's three-year directorship is significant because her dual responsibilities as director of both Writing Laboratory and composition program (under the title coined by Murray, "Director of the Writing Programs") permitted her to integrate the Writing Workshop course more effectively into the composition sequence, to use theories and practices from the Lab to influence and shape the teaching of composition at UM-Flint, and to close the gap between the English Department and the Lab.

Interim directorship

Elizabeth Graykowski, a lecturer in the English Department, had taught composition at UM-Flint since 1979. A student in the Doctor of Arts in English program at the University of Michigan, Graykowski was particularly interested in the problems of basic writers. During Murray's directorship, Graykowski often taught a section of Writing Workshop and devoted many hours of volunteer tutoring in the Writing Laboratory. When Patricia Murray left the University of Michigan-Flint in the summer of 1983, Graykowski collaborated with Danny Rendleman to keep the Writing Laboratory functioning smoothly. It is not clear

whether Graykowski was officially appointed Acting Director of the Writing Laboratory; however, she served in this capacity for a year. The English Department again launched a search for a tenure-track faculty member to hold the dual positions of Director of the Writing Laboratory and Director of the Writing Programs. Liz Graykowski aided the search committee and later continued her involvement with the Lab by teaching Writing Workshop and assisting the new director. Graykowski was perhaps the first staff member to use the unofficial title, coined by Murray, of Associate Director of the Writing Laboratory. Graykowski left the University of Michigan-Flint in 1988.

Lois Rosen

The next Laboratory director brought a somewhat different academic background to the position from that of previous directors. Lois Rosen was a former Philadelphia high school teacher who began graduate studies at Michigan State University "around 1974 or 75" (Rosen, Interview). Initially returning to graduate school only to take a single English Education methods class, with the possible intention of returning to secondary teaching, Rosen found herself caught up in the new enthusiasm about writing as process:

I took Stephen Tchudi's course, and he was very excited about writing, especially then, when things were just beginning to change. He was in on the ground floor. He had been trained with [Wally] Douglass... from the late 60s. That's when they first began to use the phrase "the writing process." Writing not as a skill

but a thinking, discovering process. I was quite excited about the kinds of things he talked about in that class and the stuff we read; and I considered going back or continuing to take courses, not knowing quite where I was headed at the time. [Tchudi] invited me to take two independent studies with him in Writing Theory, and he gave me every good book there was out; there weren't that many in those days....He gave me Janet Emig and Donald Murray, who had just done *A Writer Teaches Writing*--the one based on revision....He gave me Moffatt to read..and Donald Graves.... (Rosen, Interview)

While Lois Rosen's predecessor, Patricia Murray, had been a rhetorician who expressed some misgivings about the "romantic" Donald Murray and Peter Elbow school of writing instruction (Murray), the English Education-trained Rosen relied on them quite confidently (Rosen). Murray and Rosen can be seen as representing two differing intellectual orientations, one rhetorical and the other expressivist. Composition studies was coming of age, and there now existed different visions of the field.

Rosen came to UM-Flint in 1984 having acquired experience with writing centers through a part-time teaching position at Adrian College, beginning in 1980:

...[T]he department chair decided they needed a writing center, and he...tried to set one up, but it wasn't working too well. And they decided they needed a basic writing program. They were beginning to get students who really needed a lot of help. He announced once at a faculty meeting that he was thinking of coordinating the Writing Center with the basic writing program. Isn't that interesting? Because this is really what we are doing here [at UM-Flint]. (Rosen)

Rosen volunteered to work on this project. Her offer was accepted, and she was paid the equivalent of one course to visit various basic writing programs in the area. She also

attended the 1982 Conference on College Composition and Communication in Detroit, where she focused on sessions having to do with writing centers, and made a visit to the long-established and successful writing center at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (Rosen). Eventually, Rosen set up a writing center at Adrian, designed a basic writing program, trained tutors, and taught for two years before applying for the UM-Flint position (Rosen).

Rosen arrived in the fall of 1984, thirteen years after the founding of the Writing Laboratory. Finding the Lab to be intellectually incoherent, she describes it at that time as being "not in such great shape" (Rosen):

There was this whole mish-mash of people and philosophies and theories in there. There was nothing coherent behind what was happening in the Center....[B]ut gradually, as more and more people came in to work as tutors, the philosophy became more consistent because I was training all of them. (Rosen)

It should be noted that the Writing Laboratory had lacked strong leadership for some time. A succession of acting directors after Bentley and Hartwell's departure had been broken for three brief years by Patricia Murray's directorship. Wearing the two hats of Lab director and director of the composition program, Murray had determined that the Lab was functioning efficiently without her concentrated supervision. As previously mentioned, she had chosen to direct most of her efforts toward revamping the composition program (Murray, Interview). Liz Graykowski's interim directorship followed. While Danny Rendleman can be

credited with managing the Lab skillfully--maintaining day-to-day operations, hiring and training tutors, holding the necessary staff meetings and grading sessions, and generally preserving continuity in policies and practices--he could scarcely be expected to act as a professional writing center director, keeping current on developments in the field and evaluating the Lab with an eye toward the future.

Rendleman's management, coupled with an unusually strong program of tutor preparation (to be discussed in Chapter Four), succeeded in holding the Writing Lab together. However, it was Lois Rosen's work that established an intellectual coherence.

In 1984 there were several staff members who had worked in the Writing Laboratory for some time, Rendleman having acted as Lab manager for about ten years and Liz Graykowski having been involved in various ways for several years. In addition, there were tutors who had worked in the Laboratory previous to Rosen's arrival. Rosen worked with and observed these staff members, becoming familiar with the structure of both the Lab and Lab course before determining the changes that she would institute. These changes fell into three main categories: structural changes to the Writing Workshop course, new directions in tutor training, and changes in the image of the Writing Laboratory (one of which was to call it the Writing Center). Rosen's decisions concerning the Writing Workshop course will be discussed

later in this chapter. Her approach to tutor training and her influence on the Writing Center's image will be addressed in later chapters.⁵

Ann Russell

In the introduction to this dissertation, I explained my early association with the University of Michigan-Flint. In 1978 I received a masters' degree in English Education with reading specialist certification from the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus. After a brief stint of teaching high school English, I held a variety of jobs before returning to teaching, this time at the college level. I began teaching composition courses at Jackson Community College as an adjunct, discovered that I enjoyed teaching writing, and determined to make this my career.

Since full-time teaching positions at the college level were difficult to obtain, I began by holding two or three part-time jobs simultaneously, at institutions such as Jackson, Madonna College, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan-Flint. Usually I taught freshman-level composition courses. At Wayne State University I taught a basic writing course that provided me with much-needed experience in addressing the problems of basic writers.

I first heard about the part-time opening at UM-Flint from a neighbor in Ann Arbor, whose son was on the same soccer team as my son. Linda Borgsdorf was a part-time instructor in the English Department, and she encouraged me to apply one afternoon as we sat together on a soggy hill, watching a crowd of grubby little boys playing soccer. I was hired to teach English 111 in the winter semester of 1982 by then-Chair Wes Rae. Patricia Murray was director of both Writing Laboratory and Writing Programs when I arrived. I became a full-time lecturer at UM-Flint in the fall of 1986. The more I taught, the more fascinated I became with teaching writing. Eventually I began a slow progression toward a Ph.D. with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition.

By 1992 Lois Rosen's increasing involvement with English Education students, outreach efforts in the public schools, and work on a new writing in the disciplines program caused her to request that the directorship of the Writing Center be given to another staff member. By this time I had been actively involved with the Writing Center for several years. After Elizabeth Graykowski left in 1988, I had taken her place as Associate Director in the Writing Center, teaching the Writing Workshop course regularly along with Lois Rosen and assisting with such everyday business as interviewing tutor applicants, creating new Center materials, informally helping supervise the activities in the Center, participating in staff meetings, etc. I had

also directed the English Placement Examination Program since 1984 and had served as Acting Director of the Writing Programs during Lois Rosen's sabbatical leave in the winter of 1990. For these reasons Rosen asked that I be appointed Acting Director of the Writing Center for an indefinite period, an appointment that permitted me to supervise the Center and teach the tutor training course along with Writing Workshop.

As acting director, my responsibility was to maintain the *status quo* in the Writing Center, not to make substantive changes. My contributions, then, may be described as falling into two broad categories: public relations and tutor morale. As a member of the fledgling writing-across-the-curriculum committee, I hoped to see the Writing Center eventually become the hub of this program. As a first step in this direction, I worked to increase the Center's visibility on campus by sending out informational fliers about its services to every academic department, holding open houses, and creating a series of writing-related workshops open to all UM-Flint students. The last contribution was likely my most useful. Twelve separate workshops were made available, some designed by me and others put together by tutor volunteers under my direction. The workshops were taught by me, by Senior Instructional Associate Scott Russell, and by tutor volunteers. Workshop topics covered a broad spectrum: invention techniques,

drafting, revision, avoiding plagiarism, troublesome surface features of various types, writing for an audience, using and documenting sources, and writing resumes. Each workshop included a pre-and post-test to help students focus on new information and reinforce what they had learned, a presentation using an overhead projector and including active participation on the part of the students, and a handout for students to take away with them at the end.

Judging by the response, the workshop series appeared to meet a variety of needs for both students and instructors. Attendance was sparse during the first year workshops were offered, and it was a challenge to keep the tutors interested and encouraged, but better publicity during the second year improved attendance considerably. Initially we had resorted to posters tacked up around campus and to notices sent to such departments as Academic Advising and the Challenge program. It was not until we mailed lists of workshops to each academic unit, published them in the student newspaper, sent them out by e-mail to interested instructors, and announced them in composition classes that students began attending. Some instructors chose to award extra credit for participating in the workshops, and a few writing teachers made certain workshops mandatory. By the fourth semester, we were often offering two workshops a day, and fifteen to twenty students were attending each.

My duties as Acting Director of the Center ended when the position was made a tenure-track one, requiring completion of the Ph.D. I remained associated with the Writing Center, in that I continued to teach the Writing Workshop class and participate in staff meetings as an associate, until the end of the 1995-6 academic year, when I left to accept a position with the English Composition Board at the University of Michigan's main campus in Ann Arbor.

Robert Barnett

Robert Barnett became Director of the UM-Flint Writing Center in the fall of 1994, assuming a newly created position for a tenure-track director whose sole responsibility was to oversee the Writing Center and teach related courses, rather than simultaneously orchestrating the composition programs. Barnett received his B.A. in English from Alma College and his master's degree from Central Michigan University, where he tutored in the writing center (Barnett, Interview). Reflecting on his first tutoring experience, he draws a parallel between the Central Michigan center and the one he currently directs, noting that both are "nontraditional" in that their focus is on serving composition students who are enrolled in a lab-related course. The Central Michigan lab offered a freshman composition experience which combined a student's attendance at a typical first-year writing class with loosely-related

one-to-one tutoring in the Center. Barnett completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nevada-Reno in summer 1994. Barnett's dissertation director was Mark Waldo, whose special interest is the role writing centers can play in writing across the discipline programs. Barnett's dissertation in rhetoric and composition was a stylistic study of Walt Whitman's works. While writing the dissertation, Barnett taught basic writing and tutored in the writing center at Reno, where the chief clientele were students from a wide range of disciplines who came seeking help with their papers. Part of Barnett's tutoring duties at the University of Nevada-Reno included working with instructors in other disciplines to incorporate writing into their courses, experience that he utilizes in his present position at the University of Michigan-Flint (Barnett).

As of this writing, Robert Barnett has chosen to preserve the organization of both the Writing Center and the Writing Workshop course. His energies have been focused on publicizing the Center's services and working with faculty in other disciplines to develop writing assignments for their courses. As the number of non-Writing Workshop students seeking assistance in the Center increases--currently 700 students are tutored per semester in addition to the Writing Workshop students (roughly 100 in fall and 50 in winter)--he perceives a steadily developing problem with space and resources (Barnett).

Part II: Evolution of the Writing Workshop Course

The Writing Workshop course, as conceived by Bentley and Hartwell and perpetuated by their successors over a period of more than twenty-five years, is certainly somewhat atypical due to its built-in tie to the Writing Center. This is a basic writing course with a mandatory Laboratory component, in which students who wish to earn three credit hours attend class once a week and spend four hours of logged time per week writing under the supervision of tutors. The Laboratory component assures that students will receive individualized instruction with lessons tailored to their own needs, immediate support and guidance whenever they request it during the composing process, and instantaneous feedback at the completion of each assignment. The Writing Workshop course is also noteworthy because of its early and continued use of writing portfolios and holistic grading. In this section, I will detail the evolution of the Writing Workshop course, focusing on the development of portfolios, holistic grading, and the lesson bank which allows tutors to individualize Laboratory instruction. My approach will be chronological in order to provide a sense of each Writing Center director's contributions to the course.

Portfolios for teaching and assessing writing⁶

The writing portfolio has attracted a great deal of attention in recent times, since discussion and experimentation began in the early 1980s. However, this approach to teaching and assessing writing was instituted in the Flint Lab in 1971, ranking it among the oldest portfolio-based writing programs. As a prelude to tracing the Flint portfolio's evolution, I will briefly review the characteristics of the typical portfolio and research conducted on portfolio applications.

While the design and composition of portfolios will vary according to purpose and function, Kathleen Blake Yancey observes that portfolios used in writing classes typically exhibit three characteristics: "They are, first, longitudinal in nature; second, diverse in content; and third, almost always collaborative in ownership and composition" (102). A fourth element, widely recognized as a strength peculiar to the portfolio approach, is the inclusion of some type of metacognitive "writing about writing" or "process writing" (Elbow and Belanoff, *A Community of Writers*) that encourages students to reflect on their own composing processes and development as writers.

A review of research suggests several benefits to the portfolio approach. Roemer, Schultz, and Durst show that the portfolio-centered writing course successfully emphasizes process over product (455-469). Ford and Larkin suggest

that the instructor who uses portfolios as a teaching device assumes the role of coach rather than evaluator, with positive effects on teacher-student interaction (950-955). Elbow and Belanoff ("Using Portfolios to Increase Collaboration and Community in a Writing Program") see indications of portfolio-based grading being more valid than the end-of-semester exam approach (27-40). Christopher Burnham believes that students are more likely to assume responsibility for themselves as writers and learners in a portfolio-based course (125-139).

In reading Irvin Weiser's summary of the decision to use portfolios in Purdue's basic writing course, one is reminded of Robert Zoellner's emphasis on immediate and positive reinforcement for scribal acts. Weiser writes, "It [portfolio use] gave instructors an opportunity to respond to student writing in progress, to offer suggestions for continued revision as well as praise for improvement, and to suspend the assignment of grades until students had the time to learn, practice, and refine new writing skills" (90).

Portfolios in the UM-Flint Writing Center

The Flint portfolio began as a simple collection of student writing and was gradually developed over the years, shaped by changes in the Writing Workshop course, input from various directors, and a growing body of literature about

portfolio uses. Following Robert Zoellner's suggestion that students keep their writing together in a kind of artist's portfolio, Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell made this a requirement for all students working in the Laboratory. The earliest "portfolios" were referred to as "folders" or "files," and consisted of a manila folder with a log sheet stapled inside. The log sheet contained the following information: student's name, composition instructor's name, semester attending the Lab, time and duration of each visit to the Lab, cumulative hours earned in the Lab, title or type of assignment worked on during each visit, tutors' or instructor's comments on each assignment, and initials of the tutor or instructor who read each piece. By the end of the semester, each folder would typically hold several completed log sheets and all of the student's writing over the course of the semester, including invention work, rough drafts, etc. Although students were encouraged through verbal and written comments from tutors and instructors to reflect on their work in terms of progress made throughout the semester, no evaluation instrument or set of criteria was provided in the early days (Rendleman). Grading was done holistically.

Early portfolio evaluation

From the founding of the Lab until the directorship of Patricia Murray, evaluating student folders was a group

exercise for tutors and instructors, who met for long, informally conducted sessions about once every two or three weeks. Danny Rendleman, longtime Lab manager, recalls the early evaluation sessions as follows:

We would try to meet at somebody's house in the evening...drink lots of beer and go through every folder of every student....Most people attempted to show up despite other obligations like family and jobs. I would cart home the box full of folders and then to whosever house it was--very often Pat Hartwell's, once or twice at mine....[We would] see how the students were doing and prescribe what they were doing next. (Interview)

Much of the work to be evaluated was read aloud, and folders were also passed around the group. While those tutors who had spent the most time working with a given student would usually offer the most comments about that student's progress, everyone would have at least some familiarity with each student's writing and everyone's input was welcome. Occasionally long debates over a student evaluation would take place; but more often than not, the Writing Lab staff reached a quick agreement. Rendleman explains:

Back then it seems that what the students went through as far as assignments were concerned was much more lock-step than it is now. Pretty much, all students went through the same assignments because the students were more homogeneous back then. There was less of a spectrum of skills, I think, than we have now. I'm talking early days. So all the students could pretty much work through the same assignments at the same speed. It was easier for us to measure whether a student was keeping up....We measured them to a certain extent against each other, I suppose. (Interview)

When tutor disagreements over grading did occur, they were usually philosophical, centering on the age-old issue of

whether student performance should be measured against an ideal level of achievement or should be evaluated strictly on an individual basis according to each student's potential (Rendleman).

Although evaluation was conducted orally and spontaneously in these frequent "bull sessions," with no written guidelines whatsoever, all of the staff agreed on two general criteria. First in importance was some evidence of progress over the semester, improvement in the student's writing. The second criterion was effort, usually measured in terms of attitude and number of hours completed in the lab. Pedagogical feedback, in the form of comments written on the log sheets, moved students along in a predictable direction: "You would start out with fluency and content, and work your way into organization and structure, then of course surface feature...or whatever point we thought the student could handle and not be blown away by grammar or punctuation" (Rendleman, Interview). No grades were given on individual pieces of writing, and no midterm grade was offered. The sole grade that a student received for Writing Workshop was a final holistically determined grade for the course, reached by consensus among the tutors and instructors. During the early days of the Lab course, even three-credit students received a grade that was largely determined by the tutors rather than the instructors because attendance at the actual Writing Workshop course was

voluntary, rather than required, but work in the Laboratory was mandatory. This meant that the course instructors often had less contact with students and less detailed knowledge about their performance than did the tutors who worked with them regularly. While the Writing Workshop students were always fully aware that much or all of their grade would be determined by tutors, no complaints about this system were ever lodged. Students saw it as fair (Rendleman).

Patricia Murray's influence on portfolio grading

Although the Writing Center continues to use portfolios and continues to evaluate them holistically, both the portfolio and its assessment have evolved in response to changes in the student population, the Writing Workshop course, the Writing Center staff, and the available literature. At the time of Patricia Murray's arrival as new director of the Writing Laboratory and the writing programs, Flint's economy was headed for a downward spiral, and UM-Flint's enrollment was rising as a result. In particular, there was an increase in the numbers of returning students, who were older and more experienced in life than the typical freshman (Murray). The Laboratory course that had originally been designed in large part for Challenge students began to be populated with students whose backgrounds were more diverse and whose skills represented a broader spectrum than before (Rendleman). While Writing

Workshop was suggested for Challenge students, returning students who felt insecure about their writing skills, students who had low ACT scores, and students whose performance in other courses indicated that they needed to strengthen their writing skills, the course was not mandatory and no specific criteria were established that would indicate which students would stand to benefit most from taking the course. Murray, in fact, was at first mystified as to where her Writing Workshop students were coming from (Murray).

Patricia Murray had come to UM-Flint with considerable experience in assessment. She put this background to use by establishing a placement examination in writing and reading for all incoming students. (The placement examination program will be described in a later chapter.) Placement results indicated which writing and/or reading course a student would likely benefit from the most, but all placements were considered recommendations rather than requirements. Nevertheless, in formulating a set of criteria to be used for placement purposes, Murray was also establishing a general set of expectations for student writing in each of the composition courses.

It soon occurred to Murray that both Writing Laboratory tutors and Writing Workshop students would be helped by having some set of written criteria that could guide the assessment process. The number of students electing to take

Writing Workshop had increased, as had the number of tutors needed to work with these students. While staff size fluctuated, there were now usually between nine and fourteen tutors as opposed to four to six during the early years (Scott Russell, Interview). Bi-weekly assessment meetings of the entire staff were no longer practical. Instead, tutors began to meet as a group only at midsemester and on the day after classes were over, and the evaluation process became less oral and less group-oriented. A written assessment guide that could be used for midsemester feedback and the final course grade was obviously a practical way to adapt to the new conditions.

Patricia Murray recalls that tutors and staff members were in agreement on certain basic criteria for written work:

Actually, we were looking at about the same kinds of things that you would look at in a regular freshman writer, except that the starting point was less developed than in the regular freshman class--which was natural. That's why they were there. [There was progress] if there was some evidence of the writer's understanding, growing understanding, of putting together a piece that was genuine, sincere, expressed a person's real ideas, had some content, had some understanding of form (that is, paragraphs and sentences), and communicated. These were all rather nebulous ideas...but I think we all knew what we were doing. (Interview)

Organizing these criteria into a brief and clear evaluation instrument, however, was difficult. Murray's first experimental instrument was an analytic scoring guide which the tutors felt unprepared to use. Scott Russell remembers

the tutors' experiences with the Lab's first evaluation instruments:

There were maybe five different versions of the evaluation sheet that went down the pipe....The first one...broke everything down into [minute] categories, terribly minute. I remember trying to work with it... like pulling teeth. Nobody could work with that sheet; everybody felt uncomfortable. What wound up happening was the evaluation sheet as a tool was a failure because people wanted to mark in the middle. You were afraid to go to extremes, because it just didn't seem fair. You couldn't grade somebody on their subject-verb agreement because we weren't counting numbers. Maybe they bombed once in every piece, and maybe they messed up badly somewhere but they recovered in other places. The course itself was not designed to focus on that enough so that we would have a clear way to figure out what numerical category we should be marking subject-verb agreement in....It was ambitious, but the sheet itself was really predicated on syntax, and syntax requirements in textbooks rather than on what the course was having people do. (Interview)

Subsequent versions of the evaluation sheet during Murray's directorship were simplified, and evolved into a type of primary trait scoring that the tutors felt more confident about (Scott Russell). (See 1982 form in Appendix B.)

The latest midterm and final evaluation sheets that I have discovered in student folders from this period had evolved into a holistic scoring guide that is simpler and more general than any of its predecessors. (See Appendix B.) This guide indicates that student performance was being evaluated as excellent, good, or fair in the following six categories: fluency, organization, summary/reaction, analysis, surface detail, and revisions. In addition, the student's attitude was assessed as excellent, good, or fair. The staff member completing the form usually wrote an

explanatory comment as well as circling the grade for each category. A space at the bottom of the guide also invited instructor/tutor comments. This was usually filled in with a brief summative statement about the student's overall performance, sometimes with recommendations for writing-related work to be done the following semester. (See Appendix B for this and other writing folder contents from Murray's days.) Lois Rosen was to build on Murray's work with the portfolio as part of her general reshaping of the Writing Workshop course, as will be seen later in this chapter.

Reshaping and refining Writing Workshop under Lois Rosen

By the time Lois Rosen arrived in 1984, enrollment in the Writing Workshop course had grown to roughly sixty students per course section. Two sections were offered during fall semester and one in the winter. The loose structure of the course, which had once been an advantage in terms of creating a relaxed and reassuring atmosphere for students when class sizes were smaller, now caused problems both with instruction and with logistics. Rosen recounts her early experiences and the changes she made in response:

I had a hard time understanding how [Writing Workshop] was running. It was so different from anything I had ever come across before or knew about. Not so much about what was going on in the Writing Center, or with the one-to-one tutorials, but in what the class represented. What Liz [Graykowski] was able to tell me was that she and Pat [Murray]...used to hold class, and you came if you wanted to and you didn't if you

didn't want to. I'd never heard of such a thing before. I talked about this with Liz--it must have been the week before school started, when she was trying to show me how it worked. She showed me what the assignment drawer was like and she told me how she taught the course and what she did each week. Basically, you made up fourteen different plans, and you tried to sequence them so that they got a little harder from beginning to end. She admitted she never really knew quite what to do after Thanksgiving, because by then many of [the students] had fulfilled [the hour requirements for writing in the Lab], and it was always a matter of making do until the end of the term.--And class was optional! I'd never had an optional class before. What do you do if they don't come? What do you do if all sixty of them come?

...What I said to her was, "Look: I'm real uncomfortable with come-as-you-please. Would it hurt if we said you must come to class once a week?" She said, "That sounds like a great idea." So we had class once a week....After two weeks we decided to divide them in half. One half came one day and one half came the other. (Interview)

This was the first time since the thirteen-year-old course's inception in 1971 that attendance was required. Several years later, Rosen acted on the advice of Scott Russell, who had suggested that a new placement category be instituted (Scott Russell). Students needing the benefit of both class meetings and tutoring in the Lab would take the course for three credits, as had been customary, while those who only needed the support of one-on-one tutorials would now sign up for only one or possibly two credit hours of Lab work. The latter group would not be required to attend class, and would take the Lab course concurrently with the first semester of the regular freshman composition sequence.⁷

While Rosen's decisions about class meetings and placement credits gave a new shape to the course, she chose

not to change the overall structure or approach of Writing Workshop. From 1971 to the present, Writing Workshop has continued to be a course without a textbook. Every Writing Center director and every Writing Workshop instructor has emphasized writing as a process, and the classroom/Laboratory connection has been maintained. Students taking the three-credit-hour version work on a specific sequence of assignments given in class, but also complete four hours of writing per week in the Center, where tutors make individualized assignments from a large collection of instructional materials kept in the Assignment Drawers that have been created over the years by past tutors and instructors. These individualized materials are also assigned in a rough sequence. One-credit-hour students spend two hours per week in the Center, while the infrequent two-credit-hour students come for three hours per week. Students put in their Lab time according to their own individual schedules, rather than being assigned specific hours.

Refining and reshaping the portfolio

When Rosen first began teaching the Writing Workshop course in the fall of 1984, she decided to work with the materials and procedures that had been set in place by previous directors before making any changes. As noted earlier, she learned from Graykowski how the course was set

up and what it generally covered (Rosen). When the Writing Center staff met at midsemester and finals week to evaluate student folders, Rosen used the grading sheet that had evolved from Pat Murray's directorship. She noticed that long-time staff members were comfortable with the sheet; yet there was no written explanation of what each item meant.

We did a midterm assessment...and that form existed where you just circled. So I circled with everybody else. I watched what everybody else was doing and I hoped to God I was doing it right. I was as much a learner that year as anybody else, because it was such a new way of working with things for me. Then we came to the grading at the end and I didn't have a good handle on what they were doing. I couldn't figure out what the criteria were, what the philosophy was. I didn't know whether to trust them. But Danny [Rendleman] seemed to trust them, so I trusted them, too. Okay, but I was very uncomfortable with that first grading session that first term because I didn't feel we had any consistency to what we were doing. I just hoped we were not penalizing students or overgrading them. I didn't know what to look for in the folders myself, because it was all those tutors who were doing the work with the students; it was not my class where I was doing it by myself. And it was real uncomfortable. But I think I was the only one uncomfortable, so I let it go. It must have been about a year later when I said, Look: we need a clear sense of criteria. I don't quite know what's going on here. You've got these forms that say "excellent," "good," "fair," but I really don't know what all this means. I think we need to talk about it more and need to develop a stronger [set of] criteria.

That might have been when we either revised some very faulty criteria or we created the criteria sheet--what is fluency? define fluency--and talked about what it looked like. (Interview)

While a comparison of the older evaluation sheet with one designed during Rosen's tenure actually shows few changes in terms being used for evaluation (see Appendix B), Rosen did

design a companion sheet which defines in detail each of the terms on the evaluation sheet. (See Appendix C for this and other portfolio materials created by Rosen.) This set of definitions is given to every Writing Workshop student on the first day of class, so that the criteria for grading are much clearer to students than before. Tutors receive copies of the definition sheet; they also receive copies of goals to keep in mind as they help students through each category of assignments.

A certain amount of revision work had always been a part of the Lab course. Student folders from before Lois Rosen's arrival contain at least a few revisions apiece--sometimes as many as five. However, advice given to students about revision was scattered, and the number of revisions completed seemed to vary on an individual basis. While some student writers made substantive changes from one draft to another, others only corrected surface features. To Rosen, it seemed as if

students prepared these portfolios and really didn't revise. They just wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote. As if writing alone were to make writing better. Writing and feedback and more writing and feedback on the piece, but there wasn't too much of "do this over again." And there was no consistent revision. You didn't have to do any revision at all. There was some...when a paper was badly written or poorly organized. So you discuss with the tutor and reorganize, or whatever. But you never polished. I couldn't figure out where you got to the point where you got to rework and revise and polish. I came from MSU, where revision was the thing....Very early in the term I said, "I think there has to be revision in the folders. And I think we need to make it a requirement." I remember Liz's response to this: "Oh,

good! Now I'll know what to do after Thanksgiving."
(Interview)

After some experimentation, a set number of required revisions was added to the Writing Workshop course. Students taking the course for three credits did four revisions. Two-credit students did three revisions, and one-credit students completed two revisions. Each revision was to be accompanied by a short reflection about the writer's reason for choosing to work further on that particular piece. Finally, students were also required to write letters of introduction to their portfolios at the end of the semester, addressed to their instructors and tutors. The addition of formal revision pieces and reflections of student writers on their own writing processes has shaped the traditional "folders" into portfolios in the contemporary sense of that term.

Neither Robert Barnett nor I altered the contents, requirements, or assessment process for Writing Center portfolios during our directorships. The Writing Center portfolio has evolved into the following collection of works:

Type of material

Purpose

1. Individual writings done throughout the semester

To provide students with opportunities to experience several key types of writing situations while working at their own pace.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. Log sheet completed by tutors and/or instructors | To provide a means of informal ungraded assessment and both frequent and immediate feedback for student writers. |
| 3. Information sheet | To help tutors and instructors quickly learn about students' experience with and feelings about writing. |
| 4. Revisions | To encourage students to develop proficiency with the entire writing process and to view their work critically. |
| 5. Introduction to portfolio and brief reflections on revision pieces | To encourage students to think about themselves as writers and evaluate growth over the semester. |

The Assignment Drawers

When Bentley and Hartwell set up the Writing Laboratory in 1971, instructional material for basic writers was not as plentiful as it is today, and little of the available material was a philosophical or pedagogical match for the new Lab. Bentley and Hartwell scavenged for lessons, but they also created their own material. These lessons ranged from spur-of-the-moment ideas, like Bentley's narrative assignment, which begins with the sentence, "'Shit!'" said the Duchess, as she stubbed out her cigar," to exercises in journalistic writing or in the careful reading and written analysis of essays. Creating original material was a practice that became a Writing Laboratory tradition. Soon the Senior Instructional Associate and the tutors began

contributing, and the result is that there are presently several file drawers filled with lessons, some of them still dating back to the early 1970s. These drawers are filled with manila folders, some of them a bit worse for wear, and each containing a few xeroxed copies of a specific lesson. The lessons are filed according to category and subcategory, each of which will be described below. (See Appendix D for sample assignments.)

Writing Center records show that several of the major categories of assignments still used in the Center today were already in place when Rosen began as director. While Murray had added some new types of lessons such as sentence combining exercises, a tagmemic heuristic, and other rhetorically oriented materials, she had not altered assignment categories. The general divisions had evolved gradually over the years, as had a loose sequence in which lessons were to be assigned to individual students. Rosen chose to retain these, but she did have the Assignment Drawers "weeded out," updating and reorganizing each category, and she and the staff created two new categories as well (Scott Russell, Interview). The three largest and most frequently used categories of the older lessons were Fluency, Summary-Reaction, and Analysis. Fluency prompts were designed simply to encourage a new Writing Workshop student to put words on the page. Drawing on the student's personal experience or imaginative powers, a fluency prompt

is intended to help the student (1) become comfortable with invention techniques such as freewriting or brainstorming, (2) feel confident enough to write a page or so, and (3) become familiar with tutor feedback. (See Appendix C for two sample fluency exercises.) Tutors working with Rosen subdivided this category of assignments into Fluency I and Fluency II. Fluency I prompts are the most open assignments and might be characterized as focused freewriting. An example dating back to the earliest days of the Writing Center is the Worry List. In this two-part assignment, the writer is asked first to make a list of things that people worry about and then to choose one of the items on the list and write about it for a page or so. Fluency II prompts are a bit more directive, requiring the student to focus on details or write a narrative, etc.

Summary-Reaction was the second major category of assignments established by Rosen's predecessors. This assignment is designed to introduce basic strategies for writing about outside texts. Typically the student is asked to read a short article or essay, use prereading strategies to prepare to write about the piece, and then write a short two-part paper consisting of a careful summary and a reaction to the reading. Summary-Reactions had usually been assigned after a student demonstrated fluency; however, Writing Center staff felt that the gap between personal writing and the summary-reaction was too wide for some

students to negotiate successfully. This gap was filled in during Rosen's directorship with a new category of assignments: Read-and-Respond. This intermediate assignment, which I designed and wrote, asks the student to read a short article or essay and respond to it in a less structured and more subjective way than the Summary-Reaction. After successfully completing a few Summary-Reactions, a student would typically be given Analysis assignments.

A broad category, Analysis is subdivided into Analysis I, II, and III, and is intended to teach skills for writing analytically about the texts of other writers. While the distinction among these divisions has never been satisfactorily clarified (Scott Russell, Interview), there is a general progression from shorter and less complex assigned readings with specific study-guide style questions on which the student is to base a short paper to more complex readings analyzed by questions and answers that the student writer has formulated and which are then used as the basis of a paper. As of summer, 1996, Writing Center staff were working on a revision and clarification of the Analysis category. An intermediate category between Summary-Reaction and Analysis, called Argument, was added during Rosen's directorship, in part as a response to the needs of one-credit students, who moved through the fluency exercises fairly quickly but had difficulties with analysis

assignments. Argument assignments were actually culled from other assignment drawers and were recategorized. These assignments typically ask a student to argue from a personal stance on some controversial issue.

Overall use of instructional materials

The usual sequence that tutors follow in making individualized assignments from the Assignment Drawers is Fluency I, Fluency II, Read and Respond, Summary/Reaction, Argument, Analysis. Tutors decide on a case-by-case basis which lessons to assign from each category and how long a student should spend working in each category. (The Assignment Drawers contain so many prompts that a student could theoretically spend the entire semester working only in Fluency, for example. New prompts are added every semester, many of them products of the tutor seminar.) While Fluency remains the favorite category for both students and tutors, the tutors attempt to move most three-credit Writing Workshop students through Read-and-Respond, Summary/Reaction and--perhaps--into Argument. Only a handful of three-credit-hour students each semester have sufficient time and skill to progress to Analysis.⁸

Effectiveness of the Writing Workshop course

It has been generally accepted among faculty, staff, and administrators at the University of Michigan-Flint that

the Writing Workshop course strengthens students' writing abilities and increases their chances of success in other courses that require substantial amounts of writing. This perception seems to have been so pervasive that the governing faculty voted in favor of making placements into this course mandatory in 1986, and no one has asked the Writing Center to document the effectiveness of the course for many years.⁹ Once the Center's funding was secure, staff members apparently did not feel compelled to do further studies, with one exception. A study initiated within the Writing Center by Lois Rosen does indicate that the Writing Workshop course increases students' likelihood of success in the freshman composition sequence. Lois Rosen and Scott Russell conducted a study of 121 students who had taken and passed the Writing Workshop course for three credits from fall, 1986, through winter, 1989. Ninety-six of the students later enrolled in English 111, the first course in the two-course freshman composition sequence. Ninety-three of these students received a grade of C or better, with the average grade being 3.17 (B). Eighty of the original 121 students in the study then went on to English 112. Seventy-four of these students received a C or better, with the average grade being 3.27 (B). Considering that all of the students in this study were placed into the Writing Workshop course after being identified as having difficulty with college-level writing, Rosen and Russell

concluded that their relative success--achieving an average grade of B in subsequent writing courses--was affected by the Writing Workshop experience (Rosen and Russell).

While I have chosen not to examine student performance or attitudes in this thesis, I will make brief mention here of the feedback that students have given Writing Center staff over roughly the past decade. At the end of each semester, students are asked to compose an anonymous Writing Center evaluation and deposit it in a box in the Center after they have finished their portfolio work. No special forms or questions are provided for this evaluation, but a tutor speaks with each student briefly after he/she has completed all of the Writing Workshop coursework and is about to submit the final portfolio. In this conversation, the tutor suggests a few topics on which the student may want to comment: the course, tutoring, the Center's environment, lessons, etc. With the encouragement of the tutors, most students do complete these evaluations, which are later read by all interested staff. The overwhelming majority of students taking this mandatory course describe it as very helpful. The most frequently cited benefits are those of increased confidence and lowered anxiety in approaching writing tasks. Students will sometimes single out particularly enjoyable lessons and particularly helpful tutors in their remarks. Complaints are few, but these tend to concern personality conflicts with a tutor or the noise

level in the Center. By and large, comments are positive. Most students say that they would recommend the course to a friend and indicate that they intend to return to the Writing Center as drop-ins for help with future writing assignments.¹⁰

Notes

¹The Lab-tied Writing Workshop course was known as English 199 until Patricia Murray's directorship, when its catalogue number was changed to 109 in 1982. Here the course will be referred to as Writing Workshop to avoid confusion. The Lab itself was called the Writing Laboratory until early in Lois Rosen's directorship (the mid-1980s), when it was renamed the Writing Center. Since this renaming was a symbolic gesture, as I will explain in Chapter 6, I will use Lab or Center according to the time period under discussion.

²Because of Bentley and Hartwell's practice of sharing the directorship, it is unlikely that I have discovered and included here all names of faculty members who at some point directed the Writing Laboratory. Those who are included, however, are directors who served the longest or were influential in some way after Bentley and Hartwell's departure. I would speculate that although other faculty members held the directorship and team taught with Bentley or Hartwell for a semester at a time, they saw themselves as maintaining the *status quo* rather than taking the helm.

³Waters notes that for several years--perhaps until 1976--they were also occasionally assisted in teaching the Writing Workshop course by graduate assistants from the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus, an arrangement that eventually fell through when Ann Arbor stopped paying travel expenses.

⁴Although Patricia Murray refers to the Laboratory at the University of Michigan-Flint as the "Writing Center," it was officially known as the Writing Laboratory until Lois Rosen's directorship.

⁵ It should be mentioned here that Rosen began her appointment at UM-Flint with a heavier workload than she had anticipated. The tenure-track director of the Reading Center resigned unexpectedly, and Rosen was asked to add this position to her other duties. Rosen had acquired some background in reading theory and had participated in a Michigan State University-sponsored outreach program as a graduate student, which involved doing in-service work in literacy skills with public school teachers; therefore, she was prepared to direct the Reading Laboratory. She found a lecturer to teach the actual reading course, and she herself taught three writing-related courses in fall and two in winter--more than she had bargained for (Rosen).

Like the Writing Laboratory, the Reading Laboratory became a "Center" early in Rosen's directorship, but the Reading Center fell victim to budget cuts. The tenure-track

reading position was not re-approved, after which the Reading Center was supervised briefly by Julie Colish, a lecturer who had inherited the reading course. The Center was eventually phased out within perhaps two years of Lois Rosen's arrival. However, during the fairly brief time when she oversaw both centers, Rosen attempted to integrate their operations to some extent, particularly by having Writing Center tutors pinch-hit for absent reading tutors (Rosen). There was not, in fact, much tutoring going on in the Reading Center during its last days; students worked their way through individualized materials or through computer programs.

⁶Appendices B and C contain procedure-related portfolio handouts pre- and post-1985 respectively. Readers interested in the evolution of the portfolio will notice the retention of some materials and the expansion, revision, or addition of others in the post-1985 portfolio.

⁷This proved to be a distinct advantage, because the decision by the College of Arts and Sciences to make English placements mandatory in 1986 raised significantly the numbers of students required to enroll in Writing Workshop. (Actual numbers are not available.) The new one-credit-hour placement helped forestall the potential problem of unmanageably large Writing Workshop classes, because one-credit students were not invited to attend class. All of their work was done in the Center. Class sizes for three-credit Writing Workshop students dropped, in fact, to seminar size. Around 1990, when I had been teaching the course for some time, Rosen and I decided independently to require attendance twice a week for those students enrolled for three credits. This policy is still in effect.

⁸Although my purpose in this study is descriptive rather than critical, I would like to offer an observation here concerning the Assignment Drawers. While these drawers are time-honored repositories of UM-Flint Writing Center history, their contents and function might well be re-evaluated at this point, as might the tradition of teaching a textless Writing Workshop course. Fluency problems were a primary concern in the early years of the Lab; but today, fewer students taking the course need to begin with extensive work in this area. An inability to write academic prose or engage in academic argumentation and analysis is a far more common characteristic. While simple fluency exercises are legitimately used as limbering-up techniques, most students would benefit from moving fairly quickly on to other more analytic kinds of writing; yet both students and tutors prefer to linger in Fluency, because the rich and varied exercises in this division are easy and entertaining for students to write and for tutors to respond to. By

contrast, the Argument and Analysis categories are underused and underdeveloped.

Classroom instruction for the Writing Workshop course has always been synchronized with the Assignment Drawers. This was a practical plan in 1971, when the choices of textbooks for basic writers were limited, but today a number of excellent books are available that approach the teaching of writing in the same spirit as do instructors and tutors in the present UM-Flint Writing Center. The no-text policy might be reconsidered, a clearly defined limit placed on the number of Fluency exercises assigned to most students, and the Argument and Analysis categories developed both in quantity and in quality of assignments.

⁹In the early days of the Laboratory an effort was made to keep up-to-date documentation on the effectiveness of the Laboratory course because a report justifying the continuing existence and funding of the Writing Laboratory was required by the administration. (I will discuss this from a different perspective in a later chapter.) Ellen Bommarito, a former tutor who is now a lecturer at Flint, recalls spending many days each summer in the registrar's office scanning student transcripts with Lab manager Danny Rendleman in order to provide data on the overall academic success rates of students who were advised to take Writing Workshop course and who followed this advice, as opposed to students who did not elect the course (Interview). Unfortunately, although Robert Bentley, Patrick Hartwell, and Danny Rendleman (Interviews) attest to having written annual reports demonstrating the effectiveness of the Writing Laboratory and its related course for the edification of UM-Flint administrators, none of these reports has survived. The Writing Center's collection of records has been "cleaned out" periodically over the years, and searches through the University of Michigan-Flint archives, conducted both by me and by personnel from the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's office, yielded nothing pertinent.

¹⁰While no numbers have been kept, it has been staff members' experience that former Writing Workshop students often do continue to use the Writing Center as drop-in students.

CHAPTER FOUR: LAB MANAGERS AND TUTORS

In previous chapters I introduced the positions of Lab manager, or Senior Instructional Associate, and Writing Center tutor in conjunction with the organizational framework set up by Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell in the Writing Laboratory's early days. In Chapter Three I explained the tutors' role in assessment of student writing and in individualizing instruction for the Lab portion of the Writing Workshop course. Here I will examine the Lab manager and peer tutor positions in greater detail, recounting the decisions and theories that led to the type of staff currently operating the Center, showing how UM-Flint tutors have fulfilled the Writing Center's philosophy of collaborative learning, and describing tutor training over the years.

Part I: The Senior Instructional Associate

During its first four years of operation, the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory's day-to-day functions were supervised by Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell. The Laboratory was originally open from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. five days a week and staffed by perhaps one or two tutors out of a total number of five working during a typical semester. Arriving early on campus and leaving late, sandwiching their supervisory duties into

breaks between classes, the two founders managed to keep the Lab open and running smoothly while teaching a full courseload, but it was a demanding schedule. Because the concept of a writing center was new to the English Department, there was no recognition of a need for a full-time director who would receive release time in order to do hands-on work in the Lab. For a while Bentley and Hartwell were assisted by a secretary, Marsha Shur-Isard, whose time they shared with another department, but it soon became clear that a different kind of help was needed.

In Chapter One I emphasized the significance of the science laboratory model in developing the structure of UM-Flint's Writing Laboratory and mentioned that Bentley and Hartwell once again drew on the analogy between the Writing Laboratory and the science laboratory when they envisioned a Lab manager who would function similarly to the manager of a Biology or Chemistry laboratory (Bentley, Interview). They proposed that this staff member would constitute a fairly constant presence, assuring that the necessary materials were available, serving as a liaison between instructors and tutors or instructors and students, supervising and modeling tutoring behavior, scheduling tutors' work hours, completing paperwork, answering the phone, etc. The manager would be someone who was proficient at both writing and interpersonal skills, neither a clerical worker nor a faculty member, but a degreed staff member in the "professional/ administrative"

category (Rendleman, First Interview). This position is unusual for a writing center. While the Kinkead and Harris collection of twelve writing center case studies cites instances, such as the assistant director position at Utah State (206-7), in which faculty members perform duties similar to those of the University of Michigan-Flint's "Senior Instructional Associate," none of the case studies includes a management position held by someone who is not an instructor.

The UM-Flint Senior Instructional Associate or "Lab manager" position was created in response to an immediate need for practical, hands-on help in running the Lab. However, it has had a long-range influence on promoting and maintaining the Bentley/Hartwell philosophy and pedagogy over a long period of time that could not have been anticipated. As it transpired, this position would be filled over the years by only two people, both former students of the founders and both poets who were active members of the Genesee Writers. Rendleman managed the Lab from 1975 to 1986 before accepting a lectureship in the English Department. He recommended that Scott Russell be hired as his replacement. Russell still serves as Senior Instructional Associate. Since Russell learned first to tutor and later to manage the Lab under Rendleman's instruction, a remarkable degree of consistency has been maintained over the years in terms of approaches to tutoring

and everyday policies and practices in the Writing Center despite changes in Laboratory directors.

Danny Rendleman

A recent University of Michigan-Flint graduate, Danny Rendleman had been hired in 1974 to work in the university's Right to Read Program, a two-year grant-funded project administered by Bentley and Donald Thompson, a professor in the Education Department. Rendleman describes his Right-to-Read position as that of a "glorified secretary"--nothing particularly challenging, but an early opportunity to work with Bentley (First Interview). When the Writing Laboratory position became available, both Bentley and Hartwell encouraged Rendleman to apply. By this time, they knew him to be a dedicated and knowledgeable writer himself, sympathetic to their own philosophy of teaching writing. Rendleman states that he "bought into" Bentley and Hartwell's approach from the beginning, finding it in keeping with his own ideas (First Interview).

The two Laboratory founders weren't able to offer Rendleman job security. In fact, he remembers a nagging uncertainty about continued funding for the Writing Laboratory itself that lasted for several years:

It was never sure whether [funding] would be renewed from year to year. Maybe that was overstated, but it never seemed to be a permanent thing. [The lab] was always seemingly under fire, seemingly criticized from various quarters--not just by administration, but by faculty, too, who didn't quite understand what we were

up to. They didn't like the idea of giving credit grades for what they saw as remedial English. So I don't think we even suspected how long it would last... (Second Interview)

What Bentley and Hartwell were able to offer Rendleman, however, was the promise of exciting and challenging work (Rendleman, First Interview).

By 1975 the Laboratory had been moved to three small connecting rooms across from the English Department on the second floor of the Mott Memorial Building. About thirty students were enrolled in the Lab course each semester, with about seven tutors working part-time. Though the Writing Laboratory was only open from 10 o'clock to 3 o'clock, Rendleman's hours were longer, being taken up with placement testing and various types of paperwork. In addition to fulfilling hands-on duties in the Lab, Rendleman was expected to develop a solid theoretical framework by reading all of the articles assigned to the tutors and then moving beyond that material. In particular, he recalls Zoellner's monograph as a primary required reading for tutors: "He [Zoellner] was seen as the father--at least spiritually--of the Writing Center. In a real sense, the Lab was founded on behaviorism. Skinner's name was never mentioned, but the whole idea of positive reinforcement was key from the very beginning" (Second Interview). Other early readings Rendleman recalls included articles by Kenneth Bruffee and Francis Christensen (Second Interview). William Labov's

study of inner-city dialects and other dialect-related readings, in particular, were a must for tutor training:

The emphasis tended to be on [working with] minorities, because this was set up originally in conjunction with the Challenge Program, which was heavily populated by minorities....We were able to recruit some minority tutors, but as usual we got mostly middle-class whites; so we had to instruct them as to the kinds of clientele that they were going to be dealing with and understanding our position on Black English and dialects so they weren't going to come in and rip these students apart for having their own dialect.
(Rendleman, First Interview)

Beginning with these and other background readings, an important part of Rendleman's job quickly became representing and interpreting for the tutors the Bentley/Hartwell approach to working with basic writers. Aside from modeling tutoring practices himself, Rendleman often discussed assigned readings, solved problems, and gave guidance during the natural course of informal conversations with two or three tutors as they sat around chatting during lulls in the work day (First Interview).

Over the years, Rendleman continued to grow as a professional by expanding his reading and attending conferences. In 1981, when Patricia Murray was director of the Writing Laboratory, she arranged for Rendleman to spend six weeks at Kenneth Bruffee's peer tutor training institute in New York City. He returned from this summer experience to experiment with a formal tutor training seminar, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Second Interview). However, throughout his service as Senior Instructional

Associate, Rendleman never saw himself as an academic, but rather "as a working writer.... I never looked to get a Ph.D., and never looked to get an M.A. in writing. I liked the idea of M.F.A. It was a terminal degree" (Second Interview). A couple of years after he began managing the Laboratory, he started work toward the M.F.A. through Goddard University.

The fact was that Danny Rendleman saw himself primarily as a poet. He began publishing early in his career and has continued to write steadily and successfully over the years. To date, he has published seven volumes of poetry, has had publications in over two hundred seventy-five journals, and has received several creative artist grants.

It is a truism in the field of composition that those who would teach writing should themselves be writers. The experience of working regularly and seriously at writing is an invaluable aid to understanding the details of the writing process and helping novice writers become consciously and usefully aware of these operations. A key experience for Rendleman as a writer and as a teacher of writing was his involvement with two local writing workshops, the Flint Writers' Guild and the Genesee Writers. The former was a group organized in the early 1970s by Jim Heynen, a writer and teacher in the English Department at UM-Flint. The latter, and more enduring, group was formed in the late 1970s when Joe Matuzak, Josie Kearns, and several

other young local writers determined that they needed a peer response situation in order to receive feedback on their work. Although Rendleman had already published a first volume, he began visiting the group at the invitation of friends and eventually became one of the regulars. He learned a great deal from this workshopping experience about the dynamics of a successful writing group, the most useful kinds of peer responses, and--perhaps most important--how to relate to struggling writers as a peer rather than as an authority figure. Rendleman observes:

I was telling students about writing what I knew from my own experience, from my own successes and failures, not from any pedagogical structure or approach or philosophy, I think. So I don't know that that is a better way of doing, but that's just how I did it. And I would read with a certain--dare I say it?--sensitivity as a writer that was different from somebody who was reading from a teacher's point of view. (Second Interview)

Scott Russell

As classes were about to start in the fall of 1986, Danny Rendleman was unexpectedly asked by the English Department Chair, Frederika Bartz, whether he would be interested in a lectureship. The position had come up suddenly and had to be filled without delay. Rendleman had served as Senior Instructional Associate for eleven years, witnessing the departure of Bentley and Hartwell to other institutions, and working with a succession of Writing Center directors, from Greg Waters to Lois Rosen.

Rendleman's successor, Scott Russell, had graduated from the University of Michigan-Flint with an A.B. in History in 1973. After working in his family's business for several years, he found himself dissatisfied with the daily routine and determined to return to school part-time to complete a second major in English. He had met Danny Rendleman when they were both undergraduates at UM-Flint, and later when they both participated in the Flint Writers' Guild and the Genesee Writers. When Russell began work toward a second undergraduate major in 1978, he asked Rendleman to let him know if a tutoring position became available in the Writing Laboratory. Soon he was tutoring regularly in the evening for about eight to ten hours a week (Russell, Interview).

Scott Russell never worked for Bob Bentley or Pat Hartwell, although he had taken two literature classes from Hartwell in the early 70s and had been familiar with "Bentwell and Hartley's" popular Lab for some time. He began tutoring near the end of Greg Waters' directorship, when there were perhaps ten tutors working in the Lab and grading was still done in meetings at a staff member's home. The Bentley/Hartwell influence was still pervasive: No formal tutor training seminar had been established yet, but new tutors were still required to read a formidable stack of articles (starting with Zoellner, of course) and discuss them informally with the lab manager and/or director. After

the arrival of Patricia Murray, Russell took a class with her, Rhetoric and the Writing Process, which he now refers to as his "tutor training course" (Russell, Interview).

Scott Russell had been a part-time tutor for nearly seven years when he was offered the Senior Instructional Associate position, having worked with Waters, Murray, Graykowski, and Rosen. Even though it was represented to him as being a "very temporary fill-in" job with a modest salary, he accepted the Senior Instructional Associate position eagerly: "I really wanted a change in a career, so I jumped at it. Both feet. [I still think] it was a good move." Flung headlong into the job at a time when Danny Rendleman was hastily preparing to begin teaching and was therefore not immediately available to answer all of his replacement's questions, Russell experienced a few hectic days at the beginning. However, the tutoring staff posed no problem:

I knew many of the people there working as tutors. Trying to shift from [being a tutor] to being the person who is in charge was strange, and I never really felt like I was the boss, but they were really tickled because we all got along so well. I felt I was just there to be sure they had what they needed. (Russell)

After managing the Writing Center for over a decade, Russell still sees his first responsibility as "making sure [students and tutors] have what they need" in terms of materials to work with, but he can now quickly catalog a long list of other responsibilities. The more mundane of

his duties include scheduling tutors' work hours; handling paperwork, such as payroll and budgeting; seeing that computers and other machinery are repaired; and answering the phone:

There's a lot of time spent just answering the phone. We get calls from all over town about grammar. People from City government [and] General Motors will call us up and ask us a point of grammar, and of course I'm the one who handles that. When it's from the outside world, everyone else chickens out. (Russell, Interview)

He also functions as an on-the-spot representative of the English Department faculty, assuming the role of "a difficult person to deal with" when course requirements or placement testing requirements are questioned by students.

Russell estimates that about twenty-five percent of his time is spent on placement examination-related tasks. His duties include preparing testing materials, administering both group and individual tests, teaching tutors how to give the test, processing the scores, distributing to the appropriate academic units, providing students with test results, and counseling students who have questions about their placements (Russell, Interview). (A brief description of the English Placement Examination can be found in Chapter Six.)

Much of his day, however, is taken up with personal interactions that are vital to the smooth operation of the Writing Center. He sees himself as a morale-builder for the tutors, "being inspirational, keeping people interested....It's very useful to talk to people about

what's going on, how they're doing personally and as a tutor. Making them feel like they belong there and it's their place" (Interview). About fifteen percent of his day is spent "being the manager tutor person"--tutoring students himself, and team-tutoring:

I'm very apt [sic] with working with the tutor and the student. They get stuck. They're not going anywhere, accomplishing something, or there's a deadline to the piece of writing that's in question, or a little question about what would be a good move here, or is this understandable. I'm the second opinion.
(Interview)

Throughout the day, he is informally observing tutors, serving as a troubleshooter when necessary.

Part II: The Concept of Peer Tutors

The UM-Flint Writing Center tutors provide one-to-one instruction, both as a built-in requirement of the Writing Workshop course and as a service to any other interested students. Originally hired to work with the basic writers almost exclusively, they now have a broader clientele. This development is due partly to the Center's reputation and partly to the English Department's efforts at creating a Writing Across the Curriculum program. Writing Workshop students still have first priority in the Center, and drop-in service for other students has recently been replaced with scheduled appointments because of increasing demand.

Tutors' duties in conjunction with the Writing Workshop course include determining which Lab assignments are most

appropriate for each student, discussing assignments with students before they begin to write, helping students when they reach an impasse at any point in the process of writing, making sure that students use their Lab time wisely, reading and offering both verbal and written feedback on everything students write, moving students steadily along through series of assignments, reminding them about the requirements for hours of Lab time and numbers of revisions, meeting with students to evaluate their progress at midterm, grading one-credit students' portfolios at the end of the semester, and providing the instructors of three-credit students with information and insights about individual students. Tutors also assist any students who choose to come to the Center for help with assignments in any discipline. Tutors create new assignments, keep materials organized, and attend staff meetings. Recently there has been an increasing demand for tutors to visit classes in content area subjects to discuss writing strategies or offer advice on revisions.

Certain working terminology first used in 1971 is still used today. Although the Writing Laboratory became the Writing Center while Lois Rosen was director, students have not become "tutees" or "clients"; they are still simply "students," sometimes differentiated as "109 [Writing Workshop] students" or "drop-ins." Peer tutors have staffed the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center since its

earliest days, and the term "peer tutor," used at the beginning, is still used to describe the Writing Center staff today, although recent changes have made the "peer" descriptor less accurate than in earlier times, as I will point out later in this section. Here I would like to examine the idea of a "peer" staff.

Bentley and Hartwell were among the writing laboratory pioneers who set up peer tutoring programs around the time Kenneth Bruffee was doing his early work with peer tutoring at CUNY-Brooklyn. Bentley and Hartwell may in fact have anticipated Bruffee by a year or two (Bentley, Interview). In recalling the decision to operate with a student staff, Hartwell writes:

Our most important procedural decision was to use an undergraduate staff for individual tutoring of students enrolled in the laboratory. The student staff was chosen to be ethnically and sexually representative of the students they worked with, and we tended to look for people who were sensitive to the needs of others rather than simply English majors. In time, many of our staff were students who had themselves earned credit in the Writing Laboratory. ("Model" 67)

To Hartwell and Bentley, then, a "peer" was, at least in a general sense, an "equal" to the Writing Workshop student. He/she was, first of all, an undergraduate, someone at the same academic level as the students with whom he/she worked; but for the founders, "peer" also signified a student who shared other common experiences with students doing coursework in the Lab. Taken as a group, the tutors would ideally mirror the diversity of the students in Writing

Workshop, and tutors who had previously taken the Writing Workshop course would also share the experience of having taken a "remedial" class and having themselves been tutored in the Lab. Thus, the tutors would be more attuned to the students with whom they were interacting.

Hartwell and Bentley's dedication to shared backgrounds and especially to diversity among the Laboratory staff, is a theme that continually reappears in the transcripts of interviews I have conducted. Linda Bannister recalls, for example, that she was recruited to tutor in 1972 by Bentley, but almost rejected by Hartwell, who feared she was "too whitebread and too straight, too ordinary" (Interview).

Bentley and Hartwell's method of recruitment and standards for tutor selection had a long-lasting influence on the tutor population. The practice of seeking out prospective tutors who would represent varying ages and ethnic groups continued until quite recently, as did the tradition of recruiting talented students from the Writing Workshop course. Maintaining a balanced representation has always been difficult, however. The typical tutor applicant is a young caucasian female, and such a tutor generally stays with her Writing Center job longer than minority tutors (Bentley, Interview). Bentley and Hartwell dealt with the problem of balance by almost exclusively recruiting their own small staff from the students in the courses that they taught. They began with five tutors, and eventually

expanded the staff to between eight and twelve ("Model" 67). Today the number of staff members hovers around nineteen, making it difficult for the Center director to fill all vacancies by word-of-mouth. Instead, campus-wide advertisements for new Writing Center staff are now posted during the winter semester each year. Fliers are also distributed to English Department faculty, asking for tutor recommendations. This practice was begun during the 1977-78 academic year, when word-of-mouth and individual recruitment strategies began to prove insufficient (Bommarito, Interview). During my own directorship, I sent out fliers that urged English department members to be especially aware of older students or minority students who were good writers and were good at working with others.

An application form for prospective tutors evolved during the directorship of Patricia Murray that apparently asked for basic information about the student applicant (Rendleman, Second Interview), but copies no longer exist in Writing Center files. Lois Rosen redesigned this form, adding questions about the applicant's grades in English classes and over-all grade point average. A writing sample was also required. Rosen set up a formal interview process, in which the candidate met with the Lab manager, one or two experienced tutors, and often the Lab director (Rosen). This was an effective way to handle an increasing number of applicants for tutoring positions, especially since Rosen

could not have personally known all of the applicants as Bentley and Hartwell were once able to do.

There have been recent changes in the tutor population. During Robert Barnett's directorship, beginning in the fall of 1994, less emphasis was at first placed on diversity in terms of age or ethnic background when selecting among tutor applicants. As of winter, 1996, there were only four minority tutors, each working only a few hours per week. Only one of the tutors hired during the past three years was an older returning student, making a total of four out of eighteen tutors, and only one tutor was recruited from a Writing Workshop class. Barnett has expressed an intention to achieve more diversity among the tutoring staff, although he cites the same recruitment problems experienced over the years as a barrier to achieving the balance he would prefer (Barnett, Interview).

Over the past several years another change in the tutor population has gradually come about. It should be noted that not all UM-Flint tutors are "peers" in the strictest sense. While virtually all UM-Flint tutors begin working in the Center as undergraduates (with occasional exceptions like Scott Russell, who was hired as a tutor after graduating and while holding a full-time job outside of the university), there has been a tendency for some tutors to stay on after graduation. At this writing, there are currently four tutors who have already received their undergraduate

degrees. Two of them are now graduate students and one is employed full-time as an administrative assistant at UM-Flint. However, they are still referred to as "peer tutors," and, in the broad sense of shared experience and shared community, this would still appear to be an accurate descriptor. Robert Barnett, current Director of the Writing Center, believes that maintaining a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students is an advantage to the population of UM-Flint students who are served by the Writing Center, since there are now more graduate students on campus than during the Bentley/Hartwell years and since the Center is attempting to attract more varied clientele (Barnett, Interview).

Part III: Dynamics of the Tutor/Student Relationship Tutoring, collaborative learning, and writing centers

The concept of one-to-one collaboration is a pedagogical approach that has received growing endorsement over the past quarter of a century, particularly in connection with teaching writing. Not all writing centers are organized around this approach, but the Bentley-Hartwell Laboratory clearly was from its inception. Even though the student population has changed somewhat over the years, as will be seen in Chapter Five, and not all of the present tutors are "peers" in the Bentley/Hartwell sense of that

word, collaboration has always been central to the UM-Flint Writing Center's philosophy.

Issues of power and control

The concept of student/tutor collaboration in writing pedagogy first received widespread attention in conjunction with the growth of writing centers in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Kenneth A. Bruffee, a noted advocate of collaborative learning, was among the first to train peer tutors to work in writing laboratories. In an essay entitled, "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" Bruffee argues that both thought and writing are "temporally and functionally related to conversation (7)," and that

peer tutoring...like collaborative learning in general, plays an important role in education because it provides a particular kind of social context for conversation, a particular kind of community: that of status equals, or peers. This means that students learn the "skill and partnership" [quoting Lev Vygotsky] of re-externalized conversation not only in a community that fosters the kind of conversation academics most value, but also in the kind of community like the ones most students must eventually write for in everyday life--in business, government, and the professions. (8)

Bruffee defines "a community of knowledgeable peers" as "a group of people who accept, and whose work is guided by, the same paradigms and the same code of values and assumptions" (8). Bruffee's optimistic description of the tutor/student relationship as that of "status equals, or peers" is meant to contrast with a traditional teacher/student relationship, in which the unequal balance of power is a given.

Bentley and Hartwell began their work with peer tutors roughly at the same time Bruffee did, and their vision of the tutor/student relationship is similar to Bruffee's in at least two respects. First, like Bruffee, Bentley and Hartwell recognized the importance of social context to discourse production, a concept that was becoming increasingly familiar as a result of linguistic research. The Laboratory setting was intended to supply a specific social context for the Writing Workshop students (Bentley, Interview). Secondly, the Lab founders shared Bruffee's view of the tutor/student relationship as a hierarchy-free collaboration. The discussion in Part II of qualities that Bentley and Hartwell sought in prospective tutors suggests that they hoped to avoid situations in which tutors functioned as "little teachers," perpetuating a hierarchical structure that they believed may have contributed to the writing anxiety experienced by many of their Writing Workshop students (Bentley, Interview). Tutors who "worked well with others" and who shared common backgrounds and experiences with the Lab students would be equal partners in the learning process.

After a generation of experience with peer tutoring programs, writing center theorists today take exception to an egalitarian vision of the tutor/student relationship. In "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center," Andrea Lunsford's identification of negotiated power and

control as issues to be considered in writing center collaboration typifies the way in which the Bruffee-era description of tutor-student interaction has been problematized in recent years. Creating the right environment, articulating goals clearly, thinking through pedagogical problems relating to collaborative situations, and ensuring that collaboration is not used "to reproduce the status quo; the rigid hierarchy of teacher-centered classrooms" (6-7) are among the issues to be addressed in working toward "the idea of a center informed by a theory of knowledge as socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and shared, and of collaboration as its first principle" (9).

In an essay entitled "Collaborative Learning Theory and Peer Tutoring Practice," Alice M. Gillam summarizes perspectives on the dynamics of tutor/student interaction which differ from Bruffee's description of status equals engaged in conversation. After reviewing Thom Hawkin's notion of status equals who are bound by "identification"--an intimate bond similar to that between patient and therapist (42)--she recapitulates John Trimbur's argument that "peer" and "tutor" are contradictory terms which highlight the reality of inequality within a shared institutional status (42-3). Gillam reviews Andrea Lunsford's "Burkean parlor" concept of the writing center as a place where tutor and student construct meaning through

social interaction as peers who are equally "knowledge-able" (43). Theorists who dispute Bruffee's concept of the conversation that occurs between tutor and student include Muriel Harris, who points out that the focus is necessarily on the writer (44), and Harvey Kail and John Trimbur, who see this conversation as a crisis in which the student must unlearn a dependence on a teacher-like authority figure in order to approach learning from a fresh perspective (44-5).

Having modeled, supervised, and sometimes formally taught tutor-student collaboration in the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center for eleven years, Danny Rendleman agrees with Lunsford's emphasis on the importance of sensitivity concerning issues of power and control. Attempting to describe the practical, every-day development of a typical student/peer tutor relationship, as he observed them during his eleven-year stint in the Writing Center, Rendleman suggests that students are keenly aware of hierarchy, and that they may have ambiguous feelings about working with a tutor, who is, after all, located somewhere on the middle rung of the ladder. How helpful will someone in this position prove to be?

I think that [students] suspend their disbelief. For whatever reasons. They agree at some point...that I don't like this; this isn't a real teacher here. I'd like a real teacher, perhaps to do one-on-one instruction with me. But okay: I got to get through this. I want to get a good grade, I want to know how to write, I don't want to get thrown out--whatever--I want to keep my financial aid--so I think they agree to go along with it. How bad can it be? (Second interview)

Each relationship with a student is also a new negotiation for the tutor:

I think the tutor does the same thing. It's a two-way street. They both agree that they will suspend their disbelief for whatever goal that they have in mind. What seems to develop almost immediately, once they make that step, is sort of a trust in the process and a trust in the tutor and--I guess--a trust in the student for the tutor, too. (Rendleman, Second Interview)

Once a balance has been achieved, however, the tutor/student relationship is among the most effective approaches to learning:

The whole one-on-one aspect of it is so powerful that you cannot get it in a normal classroom....When a student comes in over a whole semester and tends to work with the same tutor for the length of that semester, that gets built up into a strong, powerful trust, ideally. (Second Interview)

The delicate balance that is eventually struck within such a working relationship can be difficult to achieve. Tim Retzloff, who tutored from 1987 to 1992, is currently a library assistant in the reference department of the UM-Flint Thompson Library. He offers a "success story" that is a good description of establishing a peer relationship with a student who saw control as an issue:

I had this older student. It was the tutor's worst nightmare. I tried so hard to work with this student! She was an evening student, and she resisted everything I had to say about her work. You know. [I would say] "You have to work on this area." "Well, why? I've done this fine and I don't want to work on this any more." Then she was really demanding that I justify everything I was suggesting. And I came real close to losing my patience with her. She came real close to losing her patience with me. But we worked on it, and she eventually went away and came back with a better piece of writing. After that, she wouldn't work

with anyone else. She always came to me, and we never had that tension again. I think she really needed to know that I was up front, that I knew what I was talking about and that I had her best interest at heart. (Interview)

Scott Russell believes that the key to successful tutoring, maintaining the balance of power and control, is developing an understanding of the human element at a level of detail seldom required in the teacher/student relationship:

You wind up working with human strength and human weakness. You have to know people, and know when they're chain-jerking, know when they're hiding, know when they're starting to really be clever and have a good time with you in a very adept way. When they suddenly jump ahead of you, you have to know when they've suddenly taken off and are ready to go--and don't need you any more....These are things that a lot of instructors in different institutions never need to know....[but] tutors who do well learn these things. (Interview)

Russell's description of what can potentially occur between tutor and student calls attention to the day-to-day fluctuations in a collaborative relationship. He believes that the successful tutor remains sensitive to such shifts and works with them skillfully for the student's benefit (Interview).

The tutor as therapist

Two interrelated metaphors widely used in the early days of writing centers were the center as clinic or hospital, where students were sent to be "healed" of their writing afflictions, and the center as madhouse, where

students went to be cured of their "wrong thinking" about writing (Carino, Pemberton). Although Bentley disliked such metaphors (Interview), some of their more positive implications were evidently communicated to the early tutors and passed down over the years. Since both of these metaphors imply the need for a kind of therapy, they also imply a therapeutic relationship between tutor and student. The idea of tutor as therapist, explored by a number of writing center theorists,¹ is a recurrent theme in the interviews conducted for this study.

As I mentioned earlier when describing their approach to the Writing Workshop course, Bentley and Hartwell believed that many of their basic writing students were hampered by writing anxiety because of previous experiences in the public school system. They anticipated this as a problem particularly for minority and nontraditional students, who comprised a larger portion of the Writing Workshop population than they do at present. The Bentley/Hartwell tutors were sensitized to anticipate these feelings, and, interestingly, the present-day tutors still emphasize the importance of understanding students' anxiety and helping them overcome it. Whether a given student comes to the Writing Center because he or she is required to take the Writing Workshop course or because an instructor has suggested some drop-in visits, whether the student's skills are weak or he or she is simply rusty from lack of practice,

today's tutors still expect that anxiety will often prove to be an underlying problem.

"Louise,"² a mature minority student who has been a tutor since the fall of 1993, describes what she experiences as the common phenomenon of student writing anxiety in terms that are reminiscent of the Bentley/Hartwell years:

Students are asked at the beginning of the semester to do a short essay on their writing experiences. Generally they write about negative writing experiences, and generally it's like somebody in high school or elementary school told them they can't write. So then they have had this idea for sometimes many years....I've had [Writing Workshop] students who came in who told me that they would not write letters to their family because they felt that they couldn't write....They are so overwhelmed that they won't write grocery lists, personal letters, let alone try to write anything formal like a business letter or a resume-- they won't even attempt that. (Interview)

Scott Russell emphasizes student vulnerability when he introduces new tutors to the Laboratory setting. He contends that part of tutor training is to teach tutors how to discuss student writing sensitively:

[F]or people who are inexperienced writers, who have been penalized for writing poorly by someone's standards, when they write, [their writing] is like a child. It's a very vulnerable thing....You can really hurt a student's feelings if you talk about their writing in the wrong way. (Interview)

"Helen" is a tutor who became familiar with the Writing Center when she was required to take the Writing Workshop course as an older returning student. Having tutored in the Center for about fourteen years, she suggests that part of a

tutor's job is to remove the anxiety and bolster the student's self-confidence:

The most important thing is to take away that fear of English or the path of high school composition courses. Once you take that fear away and let them know that this is no more or less than talking on the telephone--you're just taking the time and effort to put it on paper--convincing them that their ideas are just as valid and reasonable and important as any author that they've ever read or studied...they start to have fun because they have a better opinion of themselves. (Interview).

Tutors, then, are therapists in the sense that they are concerned with the students' emotional health (at least as regards writing) and actively work to restore it. "Terry," a young man who has tutored in the Center for nearly four years, remarks

It's not just about teaching writing. It's about helping students recover from their past encounters with a red pen. Helping them heal and go on to accomplish the things they need to do. (Interview)

In *Training Tutors for Writing Conferences*, Thomas J. Reigstad and Donald A. McAndrew write about the tutor as therapist, observing that Carl Rogers draws links between the relationship of teacher to student and the relationship of therapist to client in his client-centered counseling technique. Exhibiting "realness" and valuing the individuality of the learner are two concepts that Rogers stressed as being as important in teaching as they are in therapy (3-5). In their separate interviews, Louise and Helen maintain that these concepts are vital to the tutor-student relationship. Each suggests that the first step a

tutor takes in helping students overcome anxiety is to demonstrate a regard for them as equals and an appreciation of their individuality. Louise describes this as respect:

All students are people, and they come to us with a variety of experiences out in the greater world, because we have a lot of non-traditional students.... [E]very student should be treated with respect. Every person has value, worth, and I personally believe that we can learn something from everybody.

Helen agrees:

The most important things that I would tell [new] tutors...are that you are no better than any of these other students, and don't come off intimidating them and saying that you have the answers to everything--because you don't. If you know every word in the dictionary and every rule in the grammar book, then you can sit down and tell them "I know everything;" but I can guarantee you, you don't. You sit down and explore with them. You don't condescend, you don't look down, you don't intimidate, or you don't laugh at them.

Despite such impassioned insistence on the egalitarian nature of what is clearly a complex relationship, the tutor when functioning as therapist is not equal to the student, but is necessarily in the more powerful position of helper. This is only one facet of the tutor/student relationship, however, one more occasion for fluctuation in the balance of power and control.

"Therapy," which consists of offering encouragement and praise, is perceived as working a gradual transformation on students' self concepts ("Helen," "Louise"). Louise describes dramatic manifestations of increased self-confidence which she states she has observed among her students:

You can actually watch the evolution of a student in the course of four months in a [Writing Workshop] class....It is not just the writing skills; it is the way they walk into the room...it's their whole attitude. because they come in here [at first] and they're stoop-shouldered and they're wearing raggy clothes...and they're all closed. Their body language is very closed. You start working with them, and you say, "You have skills. You have talents. You did a really good job on that paper. I think you're ready to move on to something else, I'm so proud of what you did on that paper." Then they come in, and they're confident. In the beginning they have a couple of nubby pencils and some dogeared notebook paper. Then they come in, and they've got new pens and new notebooks and wearing nicer clothes....It's just personal pride....This confidence that they gain in the Writing Center spills over into other classrooms. I suspect it spills over into their personal life.
(Interview)

It is interesting to note the fervor of the tutors' comments as they attempt to characterize the affective aspect of the tutor/student relationship. Particularly in the quotations from Louise and Helen's interviews, one detects an almost messianic zeal, a tone that can also be recognized in the words of the early Bentley/Hartwell tutors. In Chapter Five I will examine the Bentley/Hartwell sense of social and political mission as it was communicated to the tutors. In closing the present discussion, however, I would like to suggest a connection between the therapist-tutor and the social-activist tutor. Both are helping roles with the ultimate objective of student empowerment, a legacy of the Lab founders.

A necessary tension

Andrea Lunsford suggests that the increasing popularity of collaborative learning approaches

reflects a broad-based epistemological shift, a shift in the way we view knowledge. The shift involves a move from viewing knowledge and reality as things exterior to or outside of us, as immediately accessible, individually knowable, measurable, and shareable--to viewing knowledge and reality as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed, contextualized, as, in short, the product of collaboration" (4).

A student's experience in the Writing Center may be his or her first exposure to a genuine collaborative learning situation. As Lunsford remarks, this type of learning still "goes against the grain of education in America" (7). In the western world today, work produced through collaboration may be devalued or discredited--perhaps even classified as plagiarism. A common misconception held by instructors who teach outside of writing centers is the idea that students who go to the center for help are actually having their papers written for them (North, "The Idea of a Writing Center" 441). Scott Russell remarks that it is not uncommon for students unfamiliar with the Writing Center to make a similar assumption. He recalls numerous instances of students attempting to simply drop off a paper to have it "fixed up" rather than participating in a learning situation with a tutor (Russell, Interview).

While the issue of text ownership has surfaced repeatedly in professional conferences and in the

literature, surprisingly, no one interviewed for this dissertation has brought up accusations of plagiarism or "too much help" raised in relation to tutoring in the UM-Flint Writing Center. This speaks well for tutors over the years who have endeavored to guide and encourage without being too directive. Several interviewees recall that leading a student to make his or her own changes in a text through skillfully asking questions was one of the central principles they were taught about tutoring (Grimshaw, "Helen," "Louise," Russell; Interviews). This type of interaction maintains a delicate tension between the two extremes of blatantly telling a student what to do and not providing enough input to stimulate insight. Learning is less likely to take place in either of these situations.

In "The Idea of a Writing Center," North describes the writing tutor's role as that of "a holist devoted to a participant-observer methodology," in the sense that the tutor carefully observes the individual student's "ritual" of writing and then works to effect positive changes in that ritual (435-436). The tutor's business is "to interfere, to get in the way, to participate in ways that will leave the 'ritual' itself forever altered" (433). The tutor-student dialogue fulfills a natural need for the student writer:

Nearly everyone who writes likes--and needs--to talk about his or her writing, preferably to someone who will really listen, who knows how to listen, and knows how to talk about writing too....A writing center is an institutional response to this need....Writing centers are simply one manifestation--polished and highly

visible--of a dialogue about writing that is central to higher education. (439-440)

UM-Flint tutor "Terry" observes:

You're helping students learn to talk about their writing, and to pay attention to the feedback they get. It's a give-and-take situation, and a lot of students aren't comfortable with it at first. And it takes energy, too. You have to stay alert. You can't get lazy, because then you don't make any progress. The student will just go back and do things the way he always did them before. A certain tension has to be maintained, but it's a necessary tension. (Interview)

Part IV: A Chronology of Tutor Training

This section examines the development of the tutor training program at UM-Flint from the first group of five tutors to the directorship of Robert Barnett, detailing the contributions of each director or staff member who took responsibility for preparing students to become peer tutors.

Tutor training in the Bentley-Hartwell days

Joanne Shabazz, currently Assistant Director of Student Development at the University of Michigan-Flint, now supervises the Challenge Program but she was once affiliated with the Writing Center, and was, in fact, among the first group of five tutors selected for the new Lab. Shabazz recalls the thorough training that she and her fellow tutors received. First, each prospective tutor took an introductory linguistics course and a course called "Rhetoric and the Writing Process." Then, the semester before the Lab officially opened its doors, the tutors met

for weekly in-service meetings with Bentley and Hartwell, in which they learned how to respond to student writing, how to offer advice on grammar and sentence structure, etc. (Shabazz).

Although the first "class" of peer tutors was the only one to receive training and complete the linguistics and rhetoric courses in advance of becoming tutors--from this point on, every tutor was trained on the job and did coursework while tutoring--the frequent staff meetings mentioned by Shabazz were to become a tradition for the Laboratory staff, who were paid to attend. Held at an instructor's or a tutor's home, they would begin as weekly meetings during perhaps the first month of the semester, then taper off to bi-weekly meetings or even fewer as the semester progressed. They consisted of two parts: a general discussion, often of an assigned reading, and then a progress review of each student's folder of writings. These evening meetings were work sessions with a social element that helped bond the staff and foster cooperation among the tutors (Hartwell, Bentley Interviews).

A three-hour directed reading course was soon added to the linguistics and rhetoric courses as a required part of tutors' training, for a total of nine credit hours of coursework (Hartwell, "Model" 67), making the UM-Flint tutor training program for undergraduate tutors exceptionally thorough and demanding. Although the directed reading

course eventually became a formal seminar after the Bentley-Hartwell era and the linguistics and rhetoric courses became suggestions rather than requirements, most tutors have continued the tradition, established in these early days, of electing of taking all three courses.

Tutors were assigned a hefty list of readings for the directed reading course, in which they met individually to discuss each assignment with the Writing Lab director (Bommarito, Interview). In addition to the Zoellner monograph, which I have discussed in detail in Chapter Two, tutors were assigned a wide range of articles on composition, rhetoric, reading theory, and linguistics to read and discuss one-on-one with Hartwell or Bentley (Rendleman, Second Interview). Several books were also assigned routinely, either as background material or as practical tools. (I have discussed Francis Christensen's *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric*, second edition, and Ken Macrorie's *Telling Writing*, second edition, in a previous chapter.) Labov's *The Logic of Nonstandard English* was a particular favorite of Hartwell's (Hartwell, Interview); a mimesis-based text called *Copy and Compose* by Winchester and Weathers was a favorite of Bentley's (Bentley, Interview); and Shabazz remembers *Strategies of Rhetoric* by Tibbits and *Crisis: The Contemporary Reader*, edited by Peter Collier, as offering practical help to tutors (Interview). Bentley remarks, "Some of our tutors were reading stuff that would

put PhD's in English to shame. It was not unusual for them to be borrowing an issue of *College Composition and Communication* or *College English* if there was some article that we saw and thought was useful" (Interview). Ellen Bommarito, presently a lecturer in the English Department at UM-Flint, was a tutor from the fall of 1975 to the winter of 1979. She left UM-Flint after receiving her undergraduate degree in order to attend graduate school at Indiana. "The first course I took [at Indiana]," Bommarito recalls, "was to be sort of a beginning-level graduate course review of the comp literature. There wasn't anything there I hadn't already read [at UM-Flint]" (Interview). Linda Bannister reports a similar experience (Interview).

It may be useful here to reflect on the type of reading that Bentley and Hartwell required of their undergraduate peer tutors. Hartwell characterizes the material assigned for the three-credit directed readings course as "urban education" ("Model" 67), works that dealt with nonstandard dialects and other topics showing relationships between language and social issues. The rationale for assigning such readings is clear: The UM-Flint tutors routinely encountered students whose previous lack of academic success was related to their marginalized status and/or their use of nonstandard dialects. In order for the tutors to work collaboratively with these students as "status equals" (to use Bruffee's term), they needed to have knowledge of and

respect for these sociologically-rooted differences. Other works listed above may be seen as providing overviews of contemporary linguistic, rhetorical, reading, and pedagogical theory. The fact that these assignments were broad and comprehensive, that they introduced concepts rather than simply serving as technical how-to guides, indicates three things: (1) a faith in the tutors' ability to assimilate complex and sometimes disparate ideas, (2) a collegial rather than a hierarchical approach to training the tutors--Bentley and Hartwell were sharing exciting new ideas and exploring them in one-to-one discussions or at staff meetings--and (3) a belief in the importance of arriving at large-scale principles for tutoring or teaching writing as opposed to focusing on details. This last point can be seen as a parallel to the Lab founders' systems analysis approach of stressing guiding principles for the operation of their Laboratory rather than specifying practices and procedures.

Danny Rendleman's role in training tutors

From the earliest days of the Writing Laboratory until Lois Rosen became Director in 1984, Danny Rendleman was actively involved in helping train the tutors. Not only did he discuss the assigned readings, but he also combed the professional journals for new articles about writing centers, collaborative learning and other topics that he

felt would be useful. He was a constant presence in the Laboratory, modeling successful collaborative learning techniques, informally observing as tutors worked with students and chatting with them about tutoring concerns (Rendleman, Second Interview). After first Bentley and then Hartwell left UM-Flint, Rendleman became the staff member chiefly responsible for tutor training. Having worked closely with Bentley and Hartwell, Rendleman's approach to tutor training and his selection of readings were influenced by their principles (Second Interview). Not only did he carry out this responsibility during the terms of a series of Laboratory directors, but he continued after the arrival of UM-Flint's first official Director of the Writing Programs. Patricia Murray was pleased with Rendleman's approach to tutor training and entrusted him with this ongoing responsibility (Murray, Interview). When Rendleman became curious about how the training for UM-Flint's writing tutors compared with that of other institutions, Murray helped him obtain funding to attend Kenneth Bruffee's tutor training institute in New York City in the summer of 1980:

I was there for six weeks and we went through, essentially, the course that is outlined in his book, *A Short Course on Writing*. His first edition had just come out, so it was brand new, and we were his first group to do this. We all met as a class, and we also had time to talk theory, philosophy, and pedagogy, but we essentially went through the process and wrote all the essays. It had to do, obviously, with peer editing. We would take it through drafts...in two stages: We would react to a person's essay by doing... a sort of outline response, [first] an objective response, then a subjective response to the person's

paper. Also he had other people come in and talk to us quite a bit. [There was] a guy from Columbia's social work department, and he would come in and talk to us about small-group dynamics....That was really fascinating. So it wasn't just a narrow attempt on his part to teach us his philosophy. He wanted to bring in some other things, and he had other people to come in and talk about writing across the disciplines....It was a very good experience. (Second Interview)

Rendleman returned from the institute to set up the first formal tutor training class at UM-Flint. However, he scrapped this approach after only one semester:

After teaching [Bruffee's approach] for one semester, I didn't like it so much. I liked it for me, but I didn't want to get into it as far as teaching our tutors much. (Rendleman, Second Interview)

While he could recognize the theoretical potential of Bruffee's plan, in practice it proved to be an awkward fit at UM-Flint because it was more regimented and less theory-based than the approach Rendleman had learned from Bentley and Hartwell:

I think the way our writing center was set up at the time, it wasn't as lockstep as the program he taught us was. We were more laid back, more subjective in our responses...so we found that talking more informally with the tutors and having them do readings in theory was of more benefit to them and to the writing center. (Rendleman, Second Interview)

Interestingly, the difference between UM-Flint tutors and Bruffee-style tutors went deeper than the training they received. Because they were recruited personally, new tutors could be selected for personal traits that made them particularly well suited to the Flint Lab. In Chapter Five I will explore the tutors' collective sense of who they

were. Here, however, Rendleman's remarks suggest that the tutors possessed a certain degree of independence. They were "laid back," resistant to "lockstep" organization. It would take more than training to make them Bruffee-style tutors:

[Bruffee's] program was set up more for teaching a freshman comp course rather than teaching the tutors, but he claimed that you could apply it to any group of students, actually....But it did not seem to apply very well with who our tutors were, how we recruited them, how they operated in the Writing Center. (Second Interview)

One useful aspect of the institute experience for Rendleman was his discovery that the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory appeared to be better organized than the labs of most of the others enrolled in Bruffee's course:

A lot of the other participants [came to the seminar without prior experience] or they had very unusual writing center set-ups--like they were run by some learning resources department--or they were just trying to get one going on their campus...and they envied what we had here. They saw it as a good deal, and they really couldn't understand why I was messing with something if it wasn't broke. But I wanted the experience to see what other people were doing. (Second Interview)

Rendleman felt that his description of the UM-Flint Lab may have helped some of his fellow institute participants clarify goals for their own labs. One idea that struck others as particularly innovative was the remedial course-for-credit, something that UM-Flint had already had in place for a decade. Rendleman came away from the institute with

the realization that his own writing center could serve as a model laboratory (Second Interview).

Patricia Murray and tutor training

Although Patricia Murray gives full credit for tutor training during her directorship to Danny Rendleman (Murray, Interview), she apparently had some involvement in this aspect of the Lab. Three former peer tutors recall the tutor training seminar that she taught at some point during her three-year tenure as director, and note its carefully planned interaction with staff meetings:

Dr. Patricia Murray developed a course for all new staff members, who meet once a week to discuss assigned readings in composition and teaching theory. Biweekly staff meetings provide not only the opportunity to discuss individual students' work but also a place to discuss more general techniques and theoretical issues. Peer tutors in the Flint Lab routinely read Zoellner, Labov, Winterowd, Shaughnessy, Odell, Young, and Emig by the end of their first year of tutoring. (Anderson, Bommarito, and Seijas, 36)

Murray left UM-Flint at the end of winter semester, 1983, and while a search for a new director was conducted, responsibility for training new tutors remained with Danny Rendleman.

Lois Rosen's contributions to tutor training

Lois Rosen replaced Patricia Murray in the fall of 1984. Taking up a position that entailed a heavier teaching load and more extensive administrative responsibilities than had originally been described to her, Rosen at first felt

overwhelmed by her new duties. As she became familiar with the Laboratory, her sense of tutor training was that it was a very informal, haphazard process as compared with similar courses that she had taught or was acquainted with at other institutions (Interview). Since neither Danny Rendleman nor Rosen's predecessor, Patricia Murray, recalls dissatisfaction with the tutor training process, it may be useful here to clarify Rosen's reasons for instituting changes.

Rosen's first objection to the course was based on instructional format. Although the seminar, which could be taken for either one or two credits, was already on the books, it had been taught more often than not as a one-to-one directed reading (Interview). This was the most convenient format during the early days of the Lab when the number of new tutors hired each year was small and unpredictable, but the tutorial staff had begun to grow steadily by the time of Rosen's arrival. The directed reading did not provide tutors-in-training with as many opportunities for discussion of course materials, observations, and day-to-day problems as would a classroom approach.

Rosen began experimenting with the seminar format during her first semester by teaching the four new tutors who had been recently hired. They met sporadically, sitting on the floor of her office and casually discussing issues in

tutoring (Rosen, Interview). Although this first course was organized informally, a pattern was soon established in which the tutor training seminar was offered every fall, usually for two credits. At least six new tutors were hired each fall and their regular once-a-week attendance was required. The first meeting took place after a half-day orientation session which both veteran and new tutors were required to attend. At this session, the instructional staff and experienced tutors explained how the Center operated, introduced new tutors to the "drawers"--the collection of writing assignments used for Writing Workshop--and led small-group discussions about responding to student writing. Rosen soon developed set procedures for the seminar. She recalls tutor Bob Bement suggesting that new tutors do the writing assignments that Writing Workshop students are asked to do, and she added this as a required part of the seminar. New tutors were also assigned observation time in the Writing Center, where they watched and wrote reports on the tutoring of long-time staff members.

Meanwhile, Rosen worked on compiling reading materials that she felt provided a more coherent view of tutoring issues and techniques, her second objection to the tutor training process as she had first encountered it at Flint. Describing the evolution of her seminar over a period of several years, she reflects:

I think the course began to take a better shape when I began to consider it very seriously as a course, and I began to talk in terms of a body of research information and a body of theory and a body of practice. There really are things you can do to be a better tutor....And I think that people began to take the course more seriously. (Interview)

After some experimentation, Rosen settled on the Muriel Harris text, *Teaching One to One: The Writing Conference*, along with supplemental articles that were often pedagogical in nature, as the reading for the seminar (Interview).

Rosen's expressivist background influenced her choice of reading assignments for the tutors in that the syllabus introduced new tutors to the pedagogy of Peter Elbow, Donald Murray, and Stephen Tchudi. Unlike the syllabi of previous directors, Rosen's reading list emphasized English education materials and offered few readings in linguistic theory. The latter development mirrors changes in the larger field of composition studies, where the influence of linguistics had begun to wane (Faigley 80-4). Through these changes in class format and procedures, as well as a different approach to reading materials, Rosen formalized a tutor training process that had once been somewhat *ad hoc*.

Ann Russell and tutor training

After becoming the Writing Center's Acting Director, I taught the seminar in the fall of 1992 and again in 1993. Lois Rosen shared a number of helpful ideas with me from her experiences and I followed her basic pattern, with a few

changes. I eliminated unpaid observation time and encouraged term projects that would involve small pieces of original research, which each tutor could conduct during his/her normal work in the Center. Whenever possible, following a past practice in the Center, I paired inexperienced tutors with experienced ones who could serve as mentors and models on the job. Every tutor seminar meeting began with a discussion of the new tutors' experiences in the Center during the past week, so that we could brainstorm together about practical matters and relate them to our readings. Like Lois Rosen, I used the Harrison text, but added Barbara Fine Clouse's *Working It Out: A Troubleshooting Guide for Writers*, a reference work designed to provide practical solutions to common writing problems. Because of my background in rhetoric and reading, I also added articles and lectures in these areas, including an introduction to post-Structuralist theory. Finally, I regularly invited guest speakers both to the seminar and to staff meetings for all of the tutors. The first guest speaker for the seminar was always an experienced tutor, but succeeding speakers were experts in such areas as English as a second language, learning disabilities, and writing in content areas; and they focused their talks on problems that tutors might encounter with students using the Writing Center. The seminar students concluded their semester of

work with a project which they presented to their classmates on some aspect of theory and/or practice.

Another tutoring aid, which I co-wrote with Scott Russell, was a twelve-page booklet called *Don't Panic: Tutors' Guide to Working in the Writing Center*. I distributed this to both new and experienced tutors at the beginning-of-year orientation session. Designed to solve practical, everyday problems, it answered questions about pay, opening and closing the Center, managing a sudden influx of students alone, where to find certain materials, fielding placement test questions, and dealing with students whose behavior seemed suspicious. It included sections on first steps in tutoring, administering the placement examination, and operating the computers.

When I first began working with the tutors, I sensed a morale problem. Remarks that several tutors made to me indicated that they felt divided among themselves and somewhat isolated from the English Department. Because of this, I made an effort to bring them together as a group and include them in English Department gatherings. I spent time "hanging out" in the Center, getting to know the individual tutors on a more personal level than had some of my predecessors. We held open houses, planned by the tutors, to acquaint the larger campus with Writing Center resources. I invited the tutors to attend the English Department Speaker Series, presentations by Department members,

combined with potluck dinners, which took place in the homes of English Department faculty. I also invited them to the Department Christmas parties, and I instituted an end-of-year "awards banquet," funded in part by a first-ever Writing Center bake sale, as a means of fostering a community spirit among the tutors.

Tutor training under Robert Barnett

Robert Barnett's assigned readings for the tutor training seminar cover a wide range of topics. They consist of articles that reflect the most recent concerns about tutoring, as well as some classics. Fall 1995 readings included such works as Patrick Hartwell's "A Writing Laboratory Model," Richard Leahy's "The Idea of a Writing Center: What a Writing Center Isn't," Donald Murray's "Teach Writing as Process, Not Product," a chapter from Muriel Harris's text, *Teaching One to One: The Writing Conference*, and an article by Robert Barnett himself, entitled "The Tutor as Counselor." Barnett uses annotated bibliographies of writing center literature compiled by the student-tutors as a basis for class discussion. He emphasizes role playing in class, having his students simulate tutoring sessions which are critiqued by classmates. He also shows videotapes of tutoring sessions that he made as a graduate student at the University of Nevada-Reno. An emphasis is placed on discussing practical

tutoring situations and relating them to theory. A long-term project is a theory-into-practice paper which gives tutors yet another opportunity to make the link between what they have read and what they have observed or experienced (Barnett, Interview).

"It changed my life."

The majority of interviewees for this dissertation have emphasized the long-term impact of the Writing Center experience on their lives. Perhaps as many as a score of former tutors now teach writing at some level. Linda Bannister remarks:

It really changed my life...because I had no higher aspirations than to teach high school English... but...went to graduate school because of my experience in the Writing Lab....I would not be where I am today, doing what I'm doing if it hadn't been for that Writing Lab [and it] prepared me for graduate school better than anything else I ever did. (Interview)

Jim Anderson and Ellen Bommarito, both lecturers in the English Department at the University of Michigan-Flint collaborated on an article back in 1981 with fellow tutor Laura Seijas, who presently teaches composition at nearby C.S. Mott Community College. While "An Argument for Peer Tutoring as Teacher Training" offers the tutoring program at the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Lab as a model for training future composition instructors, it also emphasizes the strong influence that this particular tutoring experience has had on the direction individual tutors took:

At present, all three of us are in graduate programs in composition; all three of us plan to teach composition at the secondary or university level. We come from diverse academic backgrounds, and we all changed our career goals after two to four years of working in the Writing Lab....(35)

The authors describe their training and their responsibilities as tutors at UM-Flint, concluding:

When peer tutors are given the majority of responsibility for dealing with students in a writing center, they do real work at a time when most people their age are not allowed to do real work. They make a difference in the lives of their students, a heady experience not likely to be forgotten. Since composition theory is such a new field, much basic research still needs to be done. An experienced peer tutor with a solid theoretical background is well prepared to develop assignments for the writing center, design programs to train new tutors, do research that may eventually be published, and give presentations at professional conferences. Tutors at Flint have done all of these things. Such activities produce valuable contributions to current research on composition, and peer tutors' participation in this work makes them aware of contributions that they personally can make to the profession. This is the best possible training for future teachers of writing. (37)

A thematic overview

Two factors in Bentley and Hartwell's early plans have worked to promote continuity in the Writing Center. The first is the position of Lab manager. Although Bentley and Hartwell could scarcely have predicted the long-term influence of this staff member, the manager has constituted a steady presence, especially important during times of transition or the absence of a director, and has helped preserve policies, practices, and the philosophy of the early Lab. A second factor in maintaining continuity is the

Writing Center's history of dedication to collaborative learning, which can be seen as connected to Bentley and Hartwell's knowledge of linguistic research. Unlike many writing laboratories founded in the late 60s and early 70s, the UM-Flint Lab did not begin as an auto-tutorial facility and then experience reassessment and reorganization. Instead, every Writing Center director, from the founders to Robert Barnett, has upheld the philosophy of teaching writing collaboratively. Bentley and Hartwell established criteria for selecting the type of staff members who would most likely perform successfully in a collaborative learning situation, and with relatively few modifications, these criteria are still in place.

Bentley and Hartwell designed an unusually rigorous tutor training program, a nine-credit sequence including one course each in rhetoric and linguistics and a directed reading course organized around one-to-one discussions with the Lab director. Both the amount of coursework and the nature of the readings provided tutors with better preparation for tutoring in the Lab than many composition instructors of that era received. Although modifications in tutor training have been made which emphasize the seminar course and only suggest, rather than require, the two additional courses, most tutors continue to take all three courses. In addition, the Bentley-Hartwell tradition of on-the-job training whereby tutors work in the Center

concurrently with taking the training seminar, is still followed. Today's tutors still receive more extensive training than the undergraduate tutors in many other writing centers.

Despite the intervening changes in leadership for the Lab, Bentley and Hartwell's early decisions about the nature, function, and training of their staff continue as powerful shaping influences on the present-day Writing Center, their merits acknowledged by a succession of directors. However, not every holdover from the "old regime," as it has been termed, has proved to be a positive force. In Chapter Five I will describe the tutors' sense of identity as it developed during the early years and show how this image, maintained long after Bentley and Hartwell had left, ultimately threatened the Center's progress and growth.

Notes

¹Reigstad and McAndrew provide a useful overview of writing center theorists' comparisons of therapist/patient and tutor/student relationships, but such comparisons continue to be made. Two fairly recent examples are "Bringing Tutorials to a Close: Counseling Termination Process" by Michael Steven Marx and "Family Systems Theory and the Form of Conference Dialogue" by Louise Z. Smith.

²The names of the tutors who are currently working in the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center have been changed to protect their anonymity.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT WRITING CENTER:
A CASE STUDY AND A HISTORY

VOLUME II

By

Ann Russell

A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER FIVE: CHALLENGE AND CHANGE IN THE IMAGE OF THE WRITING CENTER TUTORS

Every institution with a history has its own character, and people who come to see themselves as part of such an institution form ideas about what it means to belong there. They identify qualities that they believe to be characteristic of their group, and they make assumptions about how outsiders perceive them collectively. Shaped by individual personalities from the past with their own unique goals, ambitions, and attitudes, and transmitted both through formal methods--policies and practices--and informal means--modeled behaviors, attitudes, stories passed down from veteran staff members to the new-hires--this collective sense of self grows, becomes transformed, perhaps takes a new direction, but continues to influence the present and the future. In Chapter Five I will first examine the development of the Writing Center tutors' sense of identity in the 1970s and then show how changes in the larger institution and new expectations of the 1980s Center directors ultimately brought about alterations in the way the tutors came to see themselves. A key consideration will be the role that the tutors' self-perceived marginalized status played in causing resistance to change.

Part I: The Tutors' Sense of Identity

The tutors' strong identification of themselves as group members was a shaping influence on the early Lab. It was a perception that generated energy and vitality throughout the 1970s, but because it temporarily threatened the Writing Center's growth, particularly in the late 1980s, this sense of group identity necessarily underwent major modifications. In describing these developments I will focus on a characterization of the "old regime" peer tutors, as Ellen Bommarito has dubbed them (Interview): tutors who worked during the directorships of Robert Bentley, Patrick Hartwell, Greg Waters, and various short-term acting directors whose close association with the Laboratory founders resulted in a decade-long preservation of the *status quo*.

The former tutors whom I interviewed are Jim Anderson and Ellen Bommarito, now lecturers in English at the University of Michigan-Flint; Linda Bannister, Chair of the English Department at Loyola-Marymount University in Los Angeles; Linda Grimshaw, Financial Aid Director at the University of Michigan-Flint; and Joanne Shabazz, Assistant Director of the Student Development Center at the University of Michigan-Flint. I also corresponded with Washington Holifield, one of the first tutors hired by Bentley and Hartwell.

The mission

In Chapter One I introduced the factors of sociopolitical turmoil and demographic shifts in student populations as reasons behind the English Department at the University of Michigan-Flint's decision to offer remedial writing courses and set up a writing laboratory. Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell regarded their own work with the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory as a significant pioneering effort to help underprepared writers acquire the skills necessary for success in college. During the first several years of the Writing Laboratory's operation, there was an especially close cooperation between the Lab and the Challenge Program, which had as its purpose to help academically competent but underachieving students succeed at the university. Although exact figures are not available, the largest percentage of Challenge students were originally African-Americans and other minorities (Bentley, Shabazz, Vasse; Interviews), and as a result, a significant number of minority students and nontraditional students elected the Writing Workshop course. As energetic and politically aware young academics who had begun their careers in the turbulent 1960s, Bentley and Hartwell both recognized and welcomed the wider implications of empowering students whose socioeconomic status might well have barred them from college in the past.

This goal of empowerment comes across as a sense of mission in the Bentley and Hartwell interviews, and this mission was clearly transmitted from the Lab's founders to the early tutors. Four of the five old regime tutors whom I interviewed mentioned this issue without prompting, usually relating it to readings and instruction about Black dialects (Anderson, Bannister, Bommarito, Grimshaw). Linda Grimshaw, recruited as one of the first tutors, recalls that the Laboratory course was largely geared toward minority students (Interview). Jim Anderson remarks that learning about the linguistic features of Black dialects and their sociopolitical implications was "really the focus of the training we [received]" and observes that this training not only changed his assumptions about learning and teaching writing but also influenced his decision to earn a degree in linguistics (Interview). Ellen Bommarito remembers Black dialect issues as "a big concern" (Interview). Over all, former tutors' remarks convey a sense of having been engaged in an activity that was vitally important, in part because it had the potential to change the lives of the previously disenfranchised.

A collegial relationship

The relationship between Lab directors and tutors in the early years was a key factor in the way tutors came to perceive themselves. Usually people became tutors not by

applying for the job but because they had been personally recruited, most often by one of the Lab directors or instructors. At the age of seventeen, Ellen Bommarito wrote a single paper for her freshman composition class with Patrick Hartwell, only to be told that she "didn't need the class" and should be tutoring in the Writing Laboratory instead. She promptly made the switch. Jim Anderson was recruited in a similar way by Greg Waters. Linda Bannister remembers her feeling of pride in being recruited by Robert Bentley:

The way Bob presented it to me made me realize that it was quite an honor to be asked to do this, and at a school like U of M. Even though U of M-Flint was smaller than some of the Michigan campuses, it was still a big place coming from a high school with only a hundred in the graduating class, which was my experience. So I was sort of lost in the shuffle, and then suddenly I had been singled out as somebody who was...qualified to do something that sounded pretty spectacular to me....I felt like...he must see something in me that I [didn't] see myself.
(Interview)

This approach to hiring gave new tutors the sense that they had been set apart from other students, selected to tutor because of special qualities they possessed.

Once hired, tutors found themselves in a relationship with the Laboratory director, Lab manager, and instructors that was collegial as opposed to hierarchical (Rendleman, Second Interview). In this anti-Establishment era, breaking down the authoritarian structure that would have kept a greater distance between tutors and faculty was a pointedly political type of rebellion. As colleagues working together

to realize a common mission rather than student-tutors working under the watchful eyes of faculty, Writing Laboratory personnel were correct in seeing themselves as rebels against the Establishment, not only in political terms, but also in the sense that they deliberately and for sound pedagogical reasons turned the old authoritarian model of teaching upside-down in order to make the academy accessible for non-traditional students. The idea that this was a new, experimental approach excited the tutors. When Bentley and Hartwell took them as presenters to such professional meetings as the Conference on College Composition and Communication or the National Council of Teachers of English, the tutors were surprised and pleased to discover that professionals from other institutions were intrigued by their work (Bommarito, Grimshaw, Holifield). These experiences helped foster their feelings of accomplishing something significant. Joanne Shabazz remarks, "It wasn't just a job, because we were pioneers. We knew that nothing like that had ever been done....We were moving toward state of the art at that time." Linda Bannister comments, "I was doing something that was important, that was helping people." Attending these conferences also added to the tutors' perception that they were true colleagues of Bentley, Hartwell, and other UM-Flint instructors involved with the Writing Laboratory. Ellen Bommarito looks back on the self-assurance that she

and her fellow tutors from the early days felt about their work with some amusement:

I worked with a terrific group, many of whom went on to become writing teachers, but the notion that any of those people would have felt that they were the least bit unqualified to do anything, me included, [never occurred to them]....They were a really good group, but it's not hard to look back now and see a certain level of arrogance. Humility was not our strong point as a staff. (Interview)

The most obvious example of the unusual collegial relationship among Writing Laboratory staff concerns the tutors' roles in determining individual instruction for the Writing Workshop students and in assessing student performance. Tutors made day-to-day decisions about the types of assignments the Writing Workshop students would receive in the Laboratory and, as previously mentioned, peer tutors were also given the chief responsibility for grading students. Such decisions were not made in isolation: The tutors and instructional staff met frequently to discuss writing issues and individual student performance, and to assign grades, during quasi-social gatherings at the homes of Bentley, Hartwell, or other Lab personnel. Ellen Bommarito remembers being surprised not only by the extent of the responsibility assigned this group of undergraduates, but also by the confidence invested in them and the fact that the instructional staff took every tutor's comments seriously. Bommarito had an opportunity to hear outside reactions to the system when she attended an NTCE conference with Lab personnel, at which she and other tutors gave a

presentation. While members of the audience seemed to find the entire approach of the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory innovative, they expressed the most astonishment at the tutors' role in assigning grades (Bommarito, Interview). Bommarito herself had sometimes experienced doubts about the legitimacy of students grading students, but she was also aware that her fellow tutors invested a great deal of time, thought, and discussion into each grade awarded. She concluded that the Lab founders' trust in their tutors was justified (Interview). Bommarito observes of Bentley, Hartwell, and Waters:

They took good people to start with and smart people to start with, and gave them a lot of information--and trusted them a lot. It just gave wonderful results in terms of what the tutors could do, what they could be responsible for....I think the confidence that the people who ran the place had in us was deserved. We rose to the occasion because they gave us the intellectual and emotional support that we needed.

Linda Bannister sees the unusual collegial relationship between tutors and staff as an important influence on the tutors' self perceptions:

What we did was have meetings at their homes, and they would have barbecues or have us over for hors d'oeuvres....and sit around and talk about writing and talk about various student cases that we were having problems with....It was just an atmosphere of everybody [having] something to say that was useful. Nobody felt left out. It was a really felicitous kind of exchange because of the way they opened up not only their professional lives but their personal lives to all of us.

Ellen Bommarito concurs with this assessment. Although she jokes about herself and her tutor colleagues as having been

"arrogant little snots" because of the confidence and respect they received from the instructional staff, she identifies this collegiality as a factor in her own decision to pursue a career in the teaching of writing (Interview).

The Writing Lab as community

They saw themselves as rebels, if that is not an outdated term, and they saw themselves as a community, and it would be a kind of job that would be attractive to people who did not fit in other places but still desired a community of some sort. I'm a strong believer in the idea or concept of community. I think we all need those; we are all seeking those. This was one example of people who didn't quite fit in elsewhere but had found a home--certainly less than mainstream kinds of students; but again...the Writing Center sort of reflected the times, too. I think that the tutors were seen as much more peers of the people who were supervising the Writing Center and [of] me, the manager [in the early days]....They were peers of both the students whom they served and peers with people who were their bosses. They would party together, they would hang out together. (Danny Rendleman, Second Interview)

A theme that I have found present in all of the interviews of old regime tutors and staff is the sense of the Writing Laboratory as an exclusive club. Linda Bannister had heard intriguing things about the Lab before being invited to tutor there:

The Lab had this...reputation among the English majors of being on the cutting edge of what was cool in English, and it was sort of an *avant garde* approach at that time. It was really mysterious, but at the same time the word was out that there were neat things going on there....When I started working there and met all of the other people that they had invited to be tutors, I really thought I didn't belong because they all seemed so cool and fit together.

Membership began with the invitation to work as a tutor. It included a willingness either to be "different" in some way or to associate with tutor-colleagues who were different: People of various ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds were expected to work together comfortably for the common cause. Linda Bannister recalls:

[Working in the Laboratory] was tremendous. There was nothing like it, and the feeling--you could call it camaraderie or fellowship--there are all kinds of nice euphemisms that you can use to describe the relationships that they managed to create in that Writing Lab. But it was really spectacular how well they put together a...diverse group of people....My background and experience had not led me into contact with very many ethnic groups...and practically everybody else who worked in the Lab was some kind of minority. We had a hippie....There were black students who tutored there and Chicano students, and it was just an eye-opener for me. They were wonderful people, and I would never have met them otherwise. I think Bob and Pat brought out the best in all of us. (Interview)

There was definitely a counter-culture atmosphere in the 1970s Writing Laboratory. Several interviewees mention tutors who were hippies (Bannister, Bentley, Grimshaw, Shabazz) and references to liberal politics and unconventional attitudes surface from time to time.

Social relationships

The party aspect of evening staff meetings also helped form bonds among Writing Center personnel. All of the pre-Patricia Murray tutor-interviewees have mentioned these meetings, and several have described them in some detail. Debates about Lab-related issues such as student grades were

often carried on with vigor late into the night--sometimes even until the early hours of morning. Although work was the ostensible purpose for holding these get-togethers, social relationships were apparently an important component as well. A topic mentioned frequently in interviews of old regime tutors is the amount of alcohol consumption that is remembered as having occurred--hardly surprising since interviewees are, of course, recalling the days of their youth. I would point out that such stories stress the importance to this group of both social relationships and being daring.

The camaraderie extended into everyday life. Tutors became fast friends, had romances, or decided to attend the same graduate schools because of their interaction in the Lab. "Hanging out" in the Writing Laboratory when not actually tutoring was a common practice. Several of the interviewees from this period remember spending most of every day in the Lab because, as Linda Bannister explains, "it was a terrific place to be."

Zaniness and "in" jokes

A haven for tutors and students who saw themselves as somehow separate from their peers, a refuge from the formal atmosphere of classroom and lecture hall, the Writing Laboratory's atmosphere was also characterized by a certain amount of zaniness and by "in" jokes that only the tutors,

regular students, and instructional staff fully understood.

Linda Bannister recalls Hartwell and Bentley's love of

humor:

The two of them...would play off each other extremely well....It was sort of like a comedy team. They could go back and forth between being the straight man and the buffoon....It was their spirit that gave [the Lab] that kind of [relaxed] atmosphere. (Interview)

Bannister admits that the humor was sometimes sexist, but

"those were the days when it was still okay to do that."

She

has particularly fond recollections of Pat Hartwell's bad duck jokes. She remembers the following incident as having taken place in the Writing Center after it had been moved into the former college business office, complete with walk-in vault:

I was telling you about the duck jokes that Pat used to circulate. He was kind of like Groucho. He'd tell them out of the side of his mouth. And you knew that something was coming that was going to be a really bad joke....One day I came into the Lab and I knew he was gearing up to tell one of his jokes, and then I heard this...laughter in the background. It was muffled. I thought, "Something weird is going on." What he had done was to try this joke on everybody who had come into the Lab that morning, and if they weren't sufficiently pleased to suit him, he stuck them in the vault and locked the doors. So there were all these people in the vault laughing because they were in there....I, of course, got put in the vault with the rest of them, and pretty soon there were about ten people in the vault. He kept trying the joke out and it kept falling flat....I think some secretary heard us in there and finally let us out, but that was a memorable day. (Interview)

Exactly where the themes for a long-running series of Lab jokes came from is unclear, but everyone from this era recalls them.

Us and them

Although the old regime interviewees do not recall overt tension between the Writing Laboratory and the English Department most of the time, they characterize the connection between these two units as loose. Linda Bannister reflects:

I wouldn't call it a close link. Part of the ambiance of the Lab was that there was us and them. We were the sort of people who were doing the "real" work, and then there was the English Department....Pat and Bob had a really good relationship with the other English professors....but [the Lab] was clearly an arena that the other English faculty simply could not be players in. They were just not hip enough....They weren't part of it, except that they referred students to us, and so on. They would drop in occasionally to say hello, but you could tell that they weren't really us, you know....We all enjoyed our literature classes, but they just weren't connected to us in a practical way....It was a lot more fun to be a rhetorician.
(Interview)

Actual tension between the Lab and the Department is not brought up until near the end of the Bentley/Hartwell era, as will be seen later in this section.

The image

To summarize, then, the early tutors perceived the Writing Laboratory as a select society headed by enthusiastic, anti-Establishment faculty with an admirable

mission and composed of people who were different from their peers in a "cool" or "hip" way. They saw themselves as rebels united by the common objective of empowering the previously disenfranchised. Proud to be part of an innovative program, they regarded their work as vitally important and saw themselves as knowledgeable young professionals on the cutting edge of composition pedagogy. There was a closeness, a sense of community, and a funky clubbish atmosphere which--in view of the male leadership, the pervasive broad humor and sometimes sexist jokes, and the emphasis on social drinking--may perhaps be described as masculine in flavor.

Changing times

The characteristic atmosphere of the Writing Laboratory had evolved under the influence of Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell, who "were charismatic and knowledgeable and interesting and fun--all the things great teachers are" (Bommarito). However, Bentley left the University of Michigan-Flint in 1975, and within the space of a few years, Hartwell, Greg Waters, and Mark Edmonds also left for other positions. While Bentley's move signified the beginning of the end to the Lab staff (Bommarito, Interview), the departure of Edmonds indisputably brought the era to an end. The tutors' perception of Mark Edmonds is worth examining here because Edmonds obviously symbolized the counterculture

values that many of the tutors admired and claimed as part of their group identity.

One of the most colorful personalities from the 70s, Mark Edmonds was Director of the Reading Laboratory and at one point--1973--fill-in Director of the Writing Laboratory as well. A friend of Hartwell and Bentley, he worked closely with them on literacy issues. Edmonds was a much romanticized figure, recognizable by his ever-present leather jacket and "shades." He rode a motorcycle and was the central figure in a variety of no doubt apocryphal Hell's Angel-style sagas circulating around campus. While Bentley and Hartwell were vocally liberal and espoused pedagogical methods that must certainly have struck their English Department colleagues as unconventional, Edmonds' very appearance was a jolt to some of the more conservative members of the department (Leighton, Interview). He was, of course, greatly admired by the Writing Laboratory tutors as being the epitome of "cool", and when the English Department denied him tenure, the tutors, banding together in a show of solidarity, staged a protest. Their demonstration in a park adjacent to campus appeared on a local TV news program. Edmonds was granted another year at UM-Flint, standard practice for faculty who have been denied tenure, but the tutors believed that it was their support that won him an extra year (Anderson, Bommarito, Interviews). Edmonds did

ultimately leave for a tenure-track position at a Florida college, where he still teaches today.

The atmosphere of the Writing Center inevitably changed, perhaps with changing times, but certainly under the influence of the new "professional" center directors, Patricia Murray and Lois Rosen, each of whom had been hired to head both the Writing Laboratory and the composition program. Danny Rendleman (Second Interview) identifies a philosophical shift beginning in this period, which he believes brought large-scale changes in the tutoring staff and in the ambiance of the Writing Center:

The types of people who were recruited [to tutor] seemed to shift from the free-wheeling Bohemian kind of student to a more serious, perhaps Education-Department kind of student.

The nature of student clientele in the Center had also undergone changes:

[Writing Center instruction] shifted from concentration on what we saw as developmental students, Challenge-type students, to a more campus-wide population. So [the Center] broadened its aim somewhat, concentrating more on drop-ins....¹

Yet another change related to the political stance of those who directed and taught in the Lab:

[There was], may I say, perhaps a shift from somewhat of a Marxist concentration philosophically to something a little less leftist....From revolutionary to evolutionary or status quo.

Rendleman sees these developments as having been interconnected with the change in Lab directors:

Whoever came in to supervise established all of the policies. However that person may respect or like the

policies in place, [he/she] would naturally, going in, want to change some things....So the selection of tutors, the selection of what part of the population you were going to be aimed at, how the students were trained, what they read, every facet, I think, was affected by whoever supervised it. (Second Interview)

In Chapter Six I will offer an explanation for the change in philosophy first observed during Patricia Murray's directorship (Anderson, Bommarito, Rendleman, Russell; Interviews), which continued throughout Lois Rosen's directorship (Rendleman, Russell; Interviews). Here I would like to examine its influence on how the tutors perceived themselves as a group.

Between the inspired, even "charismatic" (Bommarito) leadership of Bentley and Hartwell and the arrival of Patricia Murray there was a period of *laissez faire* in the Laboratory when Greg Waters was becoming increasingly occupied with administrative duties at the college level and Mark Edmonds was preparing to leave. The previously strong supervisory influence of an active director and associate director was no longer present. The Laboratory continued to function much as it always had, calling upon past policies, practices, and lore for partial guidance.

Any change of directorship would certainly have caused ripples in the Laboratory, as the arrival of Patricia Murray certainly did. Jim Anderson was tutoring at the time Murray became the first director of both the Writing Laboratory and the writing programs. He describes the contrast between Murray's approach and that of her immediate predecessors,

Greg Waters and Mark Edmonds, as "drastic," a word that might be translated here as "more businesslike." Grading sessions, for example, were no longer parties in the homes of staff members, but instead were more formally organized and took place at the Center. In general

she was a more businesslike person, although she was very friendly....But she just wanted to put it on a less informal basis and basically run everything out of [the Laboratory]. And that's what we did. I think she eventually got a little more rigorous about [tutor] training....I did some development of training materials for tutors and polished up some of our assignments [for Murray]. (Anderson, Interview)

By this time, Ellen Bommarito was in her second year of graduate school at Indiana University, but she remembers the consternation of tutor friends who were still working at the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory. They felt that "everything was going downhill" because the grading sessions were no longer parties (Interview). While resistance to (and resentment of) change is a familiar human response, it has been shown in Chapter Three that Patricia Murray in fact made comparatively few changes in policy or practice in the Writing Laboratory. She relied upon Danny Rendleman to hire and train the tutors and to keep the Laboratory running smoothly while she focused most of her efforts on reshaping the composition program (Murray, Interview). Murray was at Flint for three years. Although her influence on the Writing Laboratory was comparatively mild, she did introduce changes in the direction of a more conventional, less campy atmosphere.

There was another gap, this time lasting a year, before Lois Rosen's arrival as the second person to direct both Lab and composition programs. Rosen's approach to the Writing Laboratory, which she soon renamed the Writing Center, was much more hands-on than Murray's. In addition to tightening up the assessment process and re-evaluating the assignment drawer materials, she became directly involved in the hiring and training of the peer tutors, as noted in Chapter Four. In addition, Rosen was more concerned with the Writing Center's image on campus--the way it appeared to other departments--than some of the earlier directors had been (Russell, Interview). She spoke of her concern about the Center's image at staff meetings and established guidelines for more professional behavior in the Center (Russell, Interview). This focus on the Writing Center's relationship to the larger context of the University of Michigan-Flint campus was necessary, and undoubtedly gave the Center a more professional air, but it also antagonized some of the tutors, who were accustomed to more latitude.

Resistance

In the winter of 1989 the tutors staged a mass resignation, which they accomplished by telephoning in individually to Scott Russell, who was by this time the Senior Instructional Associate. This particular act of group protest underscores the fact that the tutors no longer

saw themselves as colleagues of such Writing Center staff as the director, the Lab manager, or the associate director (the other instructor teaching the Writing Workshop course), because the protest was directed at them. The precipitating reasons for this walk-out are not entirely clear. Former tutor Tim Retzloff recalls this as a wage dispute and likens the call-ins to the "blackboard fever" strategy that public school teachers have sometimes used as a negotiation tool:

Initially when we were hired in, we were paid the same as any other student help [who] were on the custodial staff or any other work-study job within the university. We didn't feel that that was exactly fair, particularly because we had to take a course in order to be tutors...and we were also responsible in the process of assigning grades, so we thought that we should be paid in some measure to correspond to these responsibilities. I really didn't recollect this until someone reminded me, so I don't...trust my memory, but we staged a walk-out of sorts. We just didn't show up one day. We all called in sick....We wanted...them to appreciate how important we were to the Center and to the learning process....I'm not sure whether it was the result of this walk-out...[but] we eventually did get some kind of raise and some kind of built-in raise initiative, where if you were here for so long, you got a raise based on your years of service. (Interview)

While Retzloff remembers this mainly as a wage issue, Scott Russell, who was the recipient of the resignation calls and who had to discuss the causes of dissatisfaction with each individual tutor, remembers the mass resignation as having been precipitated by a particular event in the Center. According to Russell, a situation arose in which a certain female tutor admitted to unprofessional behavior toward male students using the Center. Her employment was terminated. However, since she was still considered a friend by her

former tutor colleagues, she dropped in to visit with them. A faculty member who had been involved in the decision to terminate the young woman's employment saw her in the Center and told her to leave. This incensed the tutors, who felt that the former tutor had as much right to enter the Center as any other student. Word got around, and the result was a mass resignation. Lab manager Scott Russell had to remedy the situation by slogging across town all of one winter evening and locating one tutor after another, to hear complaints and persuade each person to return to work (Russell, Interview).

As someone who was associated only informally with the Center at that time, I was told by several tutors that there was general dissatisfaction which seemed to emanate from friction between the tutors and the administration. I learned that some tutors had begun to release their frustration by small acts of sabotage, such as neglecting to keep accurate records of the drop-in students, whose increasing numbers could be used as an argument both for increasing funds for the Writing Center and for a shift in focus. Tension had been building and had simply come to a head at the time of the former tutor's visit to the Center. Indeed, it seems unlikely that a single incident would inspire mass resignation.

Changes in tutors' perceptions

A possible explanation for this temporary crisis in the Writing Center has to do with the changes in the way tutors saw (1) their relationships to administration, (2) their relationships to the larger campus, and (3) their collective image as tutors in this particular Writing Laboratory.

Firstly, with the change in administration came a more pronounced hierarchical relationship between the director (and associate director) and the tutors. The casual collegiality projected by Bentley, Hartwell, and Waters was replaced by the more formal and conventional leaderships of Murray and Rosen. Large group excursions to professional conferences no longer took place, and social interaction between tutors and such staff members as the director and associate director stopped. In contrast, the Lab managers-- Danny Rendleman, succeeded during Rosen's directorship by Scott Russell--still socialized with tutors, counted them as friends, and met them at what had become the "Lab annex"-- Hat's Pub--after work (Russell, Interview). One effect of this interaction was undoubtedly to pass on stories of the old regime-era tutors, transmitting the tutor ethos and self-perception of this earlier period to new tutors who had not experienced it first-hand and possibly inspiring nostalgia for the "good old days." Nevertheless, the Lab managers' relationships with tutor friends cannot have remained unaffected by the hierarchy at work: one of the

manager's duties was to communicate and enforce the director's informal concerns and formal policy decisions to the tutors. When these transmissions came as unwelcome news, the tutors tended to perceive the Lab manager as siding with Writing Center faculty. An example of this perception is the tutors' suspicious attitude toward Scott Russell at the time of the mass resignations (Retzloff, Interview). While old regime tutors had seen themselves united by an important mission and a sense of collegiality with the Lab manager, director, and other Lab course teachers, the 1980s tutors had gradually come to feel more distanced from and less appreciated by them.

Secondly, the relationship between the Writing Center and the larger campus had changed. As will be seen later in this chapter, Patricia Murray and Lois Rosen made active efforts to forge stronger connections between the Writing Center and the English Department, as well as between the Center and the broader academic community. Such connections would certainly have gone counter to the old regime image of the Laboratory, which in certain ways had functioned for many years as an administrative, social, and pedagogical island. Once a small, clannish society that focused on teaching the Writing Workshop students, the Center was now expanding its tutorial staff and acquiring an increasing number of drop-in students from all disciplines--

uncomfortable developments for those tutors who looked back on the early days with nostalgia.

Finally, it is my contention that certain tutors who worked under the directorships of Patricia Murray and Lois Rosen resented or even resisted change because of the inevitable revision in their perception of their group identity as tutors in the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory/Center. In the section that follows I argue that the early tutors derived energy and inspiration from their image of themselves as marginalized individuals working within a marginalized group. Here I would like to suggest that the perceived importance of a marginalized status was passed down across "generations" of tutors and was at the core of the tutors' difficulty with change.

Part II: The Marginalization Factor

On the edge of academia

In Part I, I described the tutors' group image as including a sense of mission and a feeling of belonging to an exclusive club. These two facets were united by the tutors' perception of being marginalized, and this concept lay at the core of their group identity. The perception of being situated on the edge of academia rather than accepted as full-fledged members of the community paradoxically worked to the tutors' advantage for a time.

In recent years the term "marginalization" has frequently been used to describe a power group's treatment of people or groups that are targets of discrimination and are consequently situated "on the margin" of mainstream activity. In professional literature over the past decade, either the term itself or the concept it represents has been variously applied to the field of composition, to writing centers, to composition teachers and writing center staff, and to composition and writing center students.

Concrete manifestations of marginalization, as this term applies to composition faculty and staff, may include heavier teaching loads, inadequate work space, lower salaries, fewer opportunities for full-time or tenured positions, less representation in departmental and college-wide government, less funding for programs, fewer opportunities for grants, etc. Subtler signs of marginalization may be the expressed or implied attitudes of other academics that their own endeavors are more scholarly or more important than those of their composition or writing center colleagues.

I would like to suggest here that, at times throughout the 1970s, various faculty and staff members of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory/Center felt themselves to be marginalized because of their work. Sensitive to attitudes within the larger discipline of English toward composition studies and the teaching of basic

writers, and sometimes encountering similar attitudes among colleagues at UM-Flint, Laboratory faculty conveyed these perceptions to the tutors. The admiration and collegiality that the tutors felt toward the Lab instructors and manager inspired an empathy that caused the tutors to identify with their experiences. For this reason, the instructors' and managers' experiences and outlook are equally as important in this discussion as are the tutors' first-hand experiences of feeling isolated or undervalued. While my interest, then, ultimately focuses on marginalization as it influenced the tutors' identity and actions, I will devote a significant part of this discussion to Laboratory personnel other than the tutors.

Because the phenomenon of marginalization played a role in the history of the Flint Lab, as it undoubtedly has in the histories of many writing centers across the country, it merits careful examination. In this section I will relate the Flint experience to broader issues in the field of composition and the subfield of writing center theory, as these issues were expressed in the literature.

The marginalization of composition studies

In embarking on an examination of writing center staffs' status, it should be noted that they were the targets of double marginalization, being situated in composition studies as well as in what were perceived as

"remedial" holding tanks for hopeless students. The inglorious position of composition studies has a history that goes back to its beginnings in the nineteenth century.

In the Introduction to this dissertation I alluded to the two-tiered system that developed during the nineteenth century in new departments of English, whereby the study of literature was prized and the study of composition was denigrated. While this inequitable system has certainly not vanished (witness the NCTE Wyoming Resolution of 1988, for example), composition studies were held in even less regard during the Bentley/Hartwell years of the UM-Flint Writing Center, the early to mid-1970s, than today. Inequities in working conditions occurred then, as now, not only because of the perceived prestige of teaching literature as opposed to teaching writing, but because of ignorance on the part of literature-oriented faculty who knew little about composition scholarship and who also tended not to value pedagogy-related activities and research.

The academy's low regard for composition studies has been explained in various ways. Robert J. Connors points to an image problem during composition's early years (from 1885 to after World War II): the lack of a distinct community of scholars with the organizational and bibliographical tools necessary for projecting a semblance of unity and direction (51-2). Susan Miller utilizes a number of frames-- "cultural studies, feminist theory and history, leftist

criticism, sociology, psychology, and poststructuralism"--to trace "the workings of alienation, isolation, and self-consciousness that must be at the heart of a political reading of composition...." (13) to examine composition's second-class status. One of Miller's key assertions, with implications for the marginalized status of students, is that freshman composition courses have from their inception served a gatekeeping function in relation to students, the intent being either to socialize or to screen out these would-be entrants into the academic community (51-3). Such a mundane function, with its concomitant task of reading and grading reams of "inferior" student papers, could hardly be equated with improving the minds and souls of young people, as the study of literature was often claimed to do.

Perceptions and self-perceptions of the doubly marginalized

While teaching composition has long been viewed by outsiders as a prosaic, drudgery-filled endeavor, working in a writing center is often perceived--even by other writing teachers--as being consigned to the innermost circle of Hell. Two imagined components of the writing center experience contribute to this attitude: types of clientele and the nature of the work itself.

Students who come to a writing center for help already constitute a marginalized group. A certain percentage of them have been separated from their academic peers, whether

by placement exam, by teacher referral, or by failing grades on written assignments. Such students are imagined by faculty outside of the writing center to be somehow defective, stupid, or even hopeless (Pemberton 12-14). Furthermore, as anyone who has worked in a writing center has observed, a disproportionate number of students who are designated as "underprepared" and are consequently required, referred, or in other ways guided toward the writing center are people who already belong to groups that are marginalized by the American majority. Marilyn Cooper points out that these students represent "the poor, minorities, immigrants--the untouchables of our 'classless' society" (48), types of people who are least likely to attend college in the first place. This should surprise no one, Cooper contends, because the importance of literacy "rests not on any inherent benefit derived from literacy itself, but rather in the way it is used to mark class differences and the way access to it is restricted through systems of schooling and testing" (62).

Teaching "basic" or "remedial" writers is imagined by those outside of writing centers to be a grim, sentence- or word-level struggle, tedious and taxing, without affording the instructor or tutor an opportunity to engage in intellectually stimulating activities. Misconceptions of the writing center as a fix-it shop, where only the most inept among students writers bring their papers for a

grammatical overhaul, are so common that they have been repeatedly addressed in writing center literature. For example, in "Growing Pains: The Coming of Age of Writing Centers," Muriel Harris describes the rapid proliferation of centers, but notes, in 1982, that their status is an uncertain one because they are "sneered at as 'comma fixing stations'" (3). Writing two years later, Stephen North castigates his colleagues for thinking that a writing center is "some sort of skills center" (435). In the same year, Gary Olson discusses the influence of similar negative attitudes in faculty outside of the center influencing the way writing center tutors and students view the center and their own work there (155). The theme of being misunderstood is still such a common one in writing center literature that it is alluded to in at least one article in every issue of *Writing Lab Newsletter* or *The Writing Center Journal*, the field's two professional publications. Such misconceptions about the work of writing center staff have made them the double victims of professional discrimination, since they are frequently the recipients of negative bias not only from colleagues in the wider discipline of English but also from the ingroup, i.e. colleagues in composition studies--a twofold discrimination that is not uncommon within marginalized groups (Lott and Maluso 2).

The sense of being marginalized at UM-Flint

The University of Michigan-Flint English Department's invitation to Robert Bentley to establish a writing laboratory on campus was by no means an indication that all members of the department felt comfortable with this idea. While few faculty in the department today are senior enough to recall the debates that occurred over the role of the Lab and its relationship to the English Department, an outsider recalls them clearly. Neil Leighton, a professor of Political Science at UM-Flint, arrived on campus in 1973. Having majored in English as an undergraduate, he struck up friendships with Bentley and Hartwell and found himself interested in the new Lab. Leighton recalls:

I really wasn't here for some of the earlier discussions [about the Writing Lab], but when I came along, Bentley and Hartwell were involved with it, and I got to know them quite well. As I recall, there was considerable split in the department of English between...the more literature-oriented [and the Writing Laboratory staff]....I recall that there were those who felt that it was beneath their dignity to be involved with this. There was a question of remediation; somehow, things that were remedial shouldn't have credit...that was one of the discussions. [Those who objected felt] that the people involved with it [the Lab] had credentials which were not necessarily as good as those who were in English literature. I remember much of the discussion and debate that went on, and obviously I picked up most of that second-hand from Bentley and Hartwell. Occasionally from the other side of the debate I would hear things, but they were somewhat circumspect, with me being an outsider.
(Interview)

Several interviews with former Writing Laboratory staff corroborate Leighton's recollection of the debates that perpetuated strained relationships between the Lab and some

members of the English Department (Bentley, Bommarito, Hartwell, Rendleman). A particularly sticky issue was the disagreement over whether students should receive credit for taking a remedial writing or reading course. Certain members of the English Department--and of other departments as well--were very much opposed to this idea. It came up for discussion not only in department meetings, but also in meetings of the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, since such courses had to be approved by a college-wide majority vote (Hartwell, Interview). However, both Hartwell and Bentley felt strongly about the importance of motivating students to invest effort into these courses by rewarding them with general education credits. In spite of opposition from some members of the English Department, credit-bearing courses for remedial writing and reading were approved.

Because the Writing Laboratory at UM-Flint had originated in response to a perceived problem concerning writing instruction for seriously underprepared students, it would have been reasonable for at least some of the UM-Flint English Department faculty to have shared the notorious "fix-it shop" conception of how their own Writing Laboratory actually functioned. But even if they understood the goals and practices of Bentley and Hartwell's Writing Laboratory, it is probable that certain of the English Department faculty did not agree with the Lab's pedagogical approach, with its set of priorities. In earlier discussions of the

Lab's approach I have suggested that emphasis is placed on the student as a developing writer, rather than on the specific writing assignment that he/she is working with. Stephen North offers the axiom, "Our job is to produce better writers, not better texts" ("Idea" 438).

It follows quite naturally, then, that any curriculum--any plan of action the tutor follows--is going to be student-centered in the strictest sense of that term. That is, it will not derive from a generalized model of composing, or be based on where the student ought to be because she is a freshman or sophomore, but will begin from where the student is, and move where the student moves....The result is what might be called a pedagogy of direct intervention. (North, "Idea" 439)

As in other colleges across the country at the time, there was some disagreement in the first place as to whether underprepared students should even be admitted. That they should receive additional assistance in the form of remedial coursework or support from a writing center instead of being tossed into the academy to "sink or swim" was a secondary issue. While the concept of teaching writing as process was no longer new to most composition instructors when Stephen North's article appeared in the eighties (438), it would still have been unfamiliar to many UM-Flint English Department members in the seventies, who shared with their colleagues the responsibility of teaching freshman writing and who taught according to the current-traditional paradigm, as they themselves had been taught to write.

There was yet another source of friction between department and Lab. In previous chapters I have explained

the pedagogical basis for the Writing Laboratory's relaxed atmosphere, its deliberate avoidance of the conventional authoritarian classroom approach to teaching writing. I have also described the staff in general as having liberal leanings, as seeing themselves as rebels, advocates of diversity and individuality. Because the image that they projected was distinctly anti-academic, they were bound to offend those faculty members who held rigid ideas about professional behavior. Neil Leighton comments on the impression the Laboratory staff made on some English Department faculty:

I think..the other thing that bothered people in English and other departments was that there was always a crazy cast of very dedicated characters hanging around the Lab who really didn't conform to the academic form or the academic stereotype....This would cause some of the more stodgy folks to bristle. The students loved it. (Interview)

This observation confirms the clash between the old regime Writing Lab's anti-academy stance and the more conventional sense of propriety held by "outsiders."

It is clear, then, that a conflict in standards and attitudes about the Writing Laboratory's agenda, pedagogical approach, and unconventional atmosphere once divided at least some English Department and College of Arts and Sciences faculty from Laboratory staff members. This conflict contributed to a sense of isolation and marginalization for those associated with the Writing Lab.

Issues of tenure and reward

In an earlier section of this chapter, I alluded to the low status of compositionists within the discipline of English, noting that their scholarly endeavors and their commitment to teaching have often not been valued or rewarded as highly as activities related to literature. Such attitude appears to have been the case among the University of Michigan-Flint English Department faculty, in spite of their genuine interest in seeing students succeed in freshman composition. Wes Rae recalls that the UM-Flint English Department originally consisted entirely of literature-oriented faculty. When they began to acquire colleagues in the 1970s whose chief interests revolved around the theory and pedagogy of composition, the "lit" people were for a time uncertain as to what constituted a strong background or a legitimate research interest in the new field (Rae, Interview). Problems came to a head whenever tenure and end-of-year evaluations took place, with the result that composition- or literacy-oriented faculty left for positions at other institutions (Bentley, Bommarito, Hartwell Interviews).

While Bentley decided to leave UM-Flint for Lansing Community College after considering a number of factors, personal as well as professional, one element was that fact that he had not yet completed his dissertation. The labor-intensive Writing Laboratory gave him little time for

research and writing (Bentley). The tutors surmised that already-tenured Patrick Hartwell's move to another university was influenced by Bentley's departure and by the failure of the English Department to recognize the value of Hartwell's pedagogical and Writing Laboratory-oriented work (Bommarito, Interview). I mentioned earlier that Mark Edmonds had failed to obtain tenure. At least two informants believed the English Department's denial of tenure for Edmonds was related to Edmonds' choice of a Doctor of Arts degree rather than a Ph.D. (Bommarito, Leighton Interviews). Tutors also attributed it to the English Department's preference for publishing over pedagogical activities (Anderson, Bommarito Interviews). It should be noted that while the tutors were probably not in possession of all of the facts in the three instances cited above, their involvement was deeper than would have been the case in many other laboratories. Not only did they enjoy collegial relationships with Edmonds, Bentley, and Hartwell, but their activist doings on behalf of Edmonds led to a tutor committee meeting with Frederika Bartz, then Chair of the English Department, who spoke with them candidly about the issue. Ellen Bommarito was a member of this committee (Interview).

Marginalization and the Laboratory's unstable status

For a number of years, funding for the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center was allocated on a year-to-year basis, an arrangement that the staff found unsettling:

It was never sure whether it would be renewed from year to year. Maybe that was overstated, but it never seemed to be a permanent thing. It was always sort of under fire. Seemingly criticized from various quarters--not just by administration, but by faculty, too, who didn't quite understand what we were up to....So I don't think we even suspected how long it [the Writing Center] would last. We knew we had a good thing, and I spent a lot of time compiling evidence that would prove to the nay-sayers that we were doing a good job. (Rendleman, Second Interview)

As I pointed out in an earlier chapter, Danny Rendleman and Robert Bentley recall the need to repeatedly justify the Writing Laboratory's existence by means of annual reports sent to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in which they used pre- and post- results of the College English Placement Test (CEPT) to show that students in the Writing Workshop course had made measurable progress as a result of their work in the Laboratory (Interviews). Danny Rendleman and Ellen Bommarito also spent many hours of every summer during their stints in the Bentley/Hartwell Lab looking through records in the registrar's office for data which would be presented in report form to demonstrate that, of the in-coming students who had been advised to take the Writing Laboratory course, those who followed this advice were more successful academically on a long-term curriculum-wide basis than those who had decided not to take the course (Interviews). Exactly when annual justifications

of the Lab's existence no longer were required by administrators is not clear; they seem to have passed into memory by the time Patricia Murray was hired as the first director of the writing programs. However, throughout the old regime years these required reports had the effect of creating doubts and anxieties about the Lab's future.

Misinterpreting administrative intent?

In the early years, Writing Laboratory staff may have felt unnecessary anxiety about their status with central administration, interpreting the annual reports required to prove their effectiveness and the modest space allocations provided for the Lab as indications that they were poised on the brink of oblivion. In a paper presented at the forty-sixth annual Conference on College Composition and Communication, Jeanne Simpson drew on her dual experiences as a writing center director and an administrator to identify common misperceptions that writing center staff have about central administration. Center staff often believe:

1. Central administration prefers to keep writing centers marginalized and powerless.
2. Central administration is where all the power is concentrated.
3. Central administration's distribution of funding support within an institution is unpredictable at best and capricious at worst.
4. Faculty rank and the situation of a writing center within a department accrues important prestige in the central administration.
5. Major curricular decisions are made in the central administration.

6. Retention, tenure, and promotion decisions are determined primarily by the central administration. (2-5)

On the other hand, Simpson's experience suggests that central administration's attitudes are as follows:

1. They have little direct information about writing centers because they don't have time to visit them.
2. They think in terms of staffing plans, space allocations, and personnel dollars.
3. So long as a program is funded, it is not seen as being marginalized.
4. Central administration does not see department affiliation as a prestige issue, but as a mechanical, organizational, or logistical issue. ("Perceptions, Realities, and Possibilities: Central Administration and Writing Centers" 5-9)

The fact that the University of Michigan-Flint administration provided increasing financial support and physical resources over the years demonstrates a commitment to the Writing Center's integration into and retainment by the campus community, but this commitment grew and developed over the course of several years, and its gradual development was evidently not apparent to the old regime Writing Laboratory staff.²

Rhetoric and self-perceptions

The rhetoric of writing center literature, as it addresses issues of marginalization, provides useful insights into the way in which writing center personnel have come to envision themselves. Anger and frustration with colleagues in the larger discipline are often close to the surface. Stoic commitment to individualized instruction in

the face of misunderstanding and discrimination against writing center personnel is often tinged with a hint of moral superiority. Explaining writing centers' status by means of an emotionally charged metaphor, Muriel Harris declares in a 1990 article which looks back on writing center history, "We traditionally have been the field hands waiting at the back door for a few scraps from the table of the real folk dining inside" (21). The undercurrents of racial and social discrimination and exploitation in this implied comparison between the treatment of writing center staff and the treatment of slaves should not go unremarked.

Stephen North expresses similar sentiments in his much-cited 1984 article, "The Idea of a Writing Center." North begins by making it clear that his essay is not intended for a "writing center audience," but rather for his "ignorant" colleagues in the English department. Mercilessly, he forces many of his readers to acknowledge to themselves that they belong in the latter category:

Do not exclude yourself from this group just because you know that writing centers (or labs or clinics or places or however you think of them) exist; "involved" here means having directed such a place, having worked there for a minimum of 100 hours, or, at the very least, having talked about writing of your own there for five or more hours.

After separating the sheep from the goats, North pours out his vexation:

What makes the situation particularly frustrating is that so many such people will vehemently claim that they do, really, understand the idea of a writing center. The non-English faculty, the students, the

administrators--they may not understand what a writing center is or does, but they have no investment in their ignorance, and can often be educated. But in English departments this second layer of ignorance, this false sense of knowing, makes it doubly hard to get a message through. Indeed, even as you read now, you may be dismissing my argument as the ritual plaint of a "remedial" teacher begging for respectability. (433)

The opening paragraphs of North's essay reveal an angry pride and an attitude of superiority which are inspired by his membership in the misunderstood fraternity of those who really know what teaching writing is all about. This article has achieved the status of scripture in writing center literature, appearing on reading lists for tutor training seminars across the country and has being cited countless times in professional publications and addresses. The article's chief appeal is the clarity with which it describes writing center philosophy, but a second appeal for those in the profession is, undeniably, North's rhetorical stance: He delivers a message to uninformed English Department colleagues that hundreds of other writing center personnel have longed to deliver, and in a tone that affords them deep gratification. In "Revisiting 'The Idea of a Writing Center'" ten years after the publication of the original article, North expresses ambivalent feelings about its lasting impact, pointing out that it "offered a version of what we do that is, in its own way, very attractive; but one which also, to the extent that it is a romantic idealization, presents its own kind of jeopardy" because it serves as a "highly visible version of our own mythology, a

public idealization" (9) that can be restrictive if not read by writing center professionals with a critical eye.

In another essay written in 1984, "Liberatory Writing Centers: Restoring Authority to Writers," Tilly Warnock and John Warnock conclude with a section entitled "The Writing Center as 'Outsider.'" Their characterization of writing centers is typical, not only because of the overtones of isolation and second-class status, but also because of the proudly defiant us-against-the-world rhetoric:

Liberatory centers are risk-taking operations, just as liberatory learning is risky business for individuals who allow for revision in themselves. These centers usually exist on the fringes of the academic establishment, often in unused classrooms, old barracks, and basements. Salaries for staff are often low and granted on a year-to-year, even semester-to-semester, basis. The primary materials of the center are the students' own messy texts. The body of knowledge is the students themselves. But despite those obvious signs of "decay," labs flourish and students know where the real action is. Voices are loud, and laughter and tears are frequent. It is these characteristics of the liberatory center scene that nourish liberatory learning because in such contexts faculty and textbooks are not the authorities: students are their own authors.... It is probably a mistake for centers to seek integration into the established institution. (22)

This passage, rich in innuendoes, merits a closer reading. Writing centers are "liberatory" because they free students from an oppressive hegemony enforced by faculty and by the voices of "experts," as embodied in professionally authored textbooks. In a writing center setting, students are empowered to control their own educations: They study "themselves," "their own messy texts." The sounds of

voices, of laughter and tears, demonstrate students' engagement and indicate that this approach to learning is more humanized, more relevant, and (by implication) nobler than the traditional one. Writing center staff members become revolutionaries by helping students achieve this freedom. Staff members are engaged in an exciting endeavor--"risky business," "on the fringes," "where the action is"--and the fact that they may endure low salaries, unstable positions, and inadequate work conditions on behalf of the cause qualifies them for something akin to sainthood. To lose this sense of working in a rebel stronghold by "seeking integration into the established institution" would be "a mistake," a sellout.

Marginalization as a shaping influence on self-perception

In this chapter I have drawn on the interviews of former tutors for impressions of how the Bentley/Hartwell era staff envisioned themselves. I have also discussed at length probable causes and effects of discipline-wide misconceptions about writing center staff and have shown how such attitudes were perceived as being played out on the University of Michigan-Flint campus by members of the old regime Writing Laboratory of the 1970s. Here I wish to review and combine the information presented in previous sections in order to offer some generalizations about how the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Laboratory tutors

seem to have regarded themselves in relation to their Lab positions.

Old regime Writing Laboratory staff shared a two-pronged mission made up of social and pedagogical agendas. Instructors, Lab manager, and tutors alike believed fervently in the importance of their daily work. Its significance went beyond helping students develop the skills they would need in order to succeed in college-level coursework, Writing Lab staff were engaged, as they understood it, in a struggle for social justice. Their goal was to empower the socially disenfranchised through educational opportunities. There was a strong sense of identification with students from marginalized groups. Some staff members were themselves minorities or women, who, through firsthand personal experiences and through the messages of the civil rights and feminist movements, were made keenly aware of how discrimination and powerlessness affected individual lives. Everyone on the Laboratory staff, however, tutored students who fell into these categories, and the nature of the tutor-student relationship caused tutors to identify closely with these students and their problems (Anderson, Bannister, Bommarito, Grimshaw Interviews).

The second prong of the Lab's mission concerned the pedagogical approach by which they were to accomplish the goal of social empowerment. The tutors regarded the

Laboratory and its method of operation as state-of-the-art writing instruction, a bold, pioneering experiment that defied traditional classroom hierarchy and gave Robert Zoellner's talk-write pedagogical theory a real-world arena. UM-Flint Writing Laboratory staff were in the vanguard of the process movement and believed that tutors, no less than instructors, knew more about current composition and linguistic theory than did many people nation-wide who were teaching writing, a realization that may have accounted for the tutors' "arrogance" (Bommarito, Interview). The tutors had an investment in making their innovative Laboratory function effectively and in demonstrating its success to others, both on campus and at conferences.

What they were doing, then, struck the tutors as being revolutionary on two fronts--and anti-Establishment activities were admired by liberal academics in the seventies. However, such activities also have the effect of isolating a group from larger mainstream institutions. While participating in conferences and reading the literature gave the tutors the sense that they belonged to a marginalized group within the discipline of English that also viewed itself as set apart by reason of its greater knowledge of and commitment to teaching writing, their own experiences on campus and the experiences and attitudes of the Lab instructors and manager certainly contributed to such a perception. With funding allocations seemingly

dependent upon the required annual justifications for the Lab's existence, central administration appeared to be the Lab's antagonist (Rendleman, Second Interview). The English Department's early mixed reactions toward the Lab and disagreement as to the scholarly merit of Lab-related and pedagogically-oriented work by Laboratory faculty also caused the tutors, by association, to sometimes feel undervalued by and separated from the English Department.

Without downplaying the very real disadvantages and discomforts that writing center personnel have traditionally endured as a result of their low status, I would like to suggest here that, up to a certain point, supporting a worthy cause in the face of opposition and skepticism can be stimulating. On a day-to-day basis, the knowledge that one is doing important work in spite of the obstructions and negative attitudes of outsiders can serve as a powerful elixir. Further, a shared sense of being marginalized can enhance a shared sense of mission, thereby strengthening group identity and loyalty. Writing center literature implies this effect, as was seen from an examination of the rhetoric.

How marginalized were they?

It is hardly surprising that, due to the variety of their experiences and the nature of their recollections,

interviewees' comments about a sense of being undervalued or even treated in a discriminatory way because of their association with the Writing Laboratory cover the range from a mild feeling of being seen as separate to a strong conviction that the staff were marginalized. On one hand, it is clear that there was initially some philosophical disagreement between Writing Laboratory personnel and other members of the academic community over the wisdom of providing "remedial" help to underprepared students and the appropriateness of offering this help for college credit. There were misconceptions about the Lab's function and disapproval of its anti-academic atmosphere. Some tenure and promotion decisions may have been, at least in part, adversely affected by these disagreements and misconceptions. On the other hand, the Laboratory continued to receive funding and eventually became firmly established on campus. In spite of opposing voices, the College of Arts and Sciences faculty did approve both Writing Workshop and the Reading Laboratory course for credit. The English Department, committed to the importance of its writing program, eventually created a tenure-track directorship for the Laboratory.

A summary of change

Certain similarities in background and experience caused Pat Murray and Lois Rosen to lead the Writing Center

in the same general direction, away from an insular emphasis on the Writing Workshop students and toward service to the larger campus. Completing their graduate work at a time when the field of composition studies was gaining recognition and respect, Murray and Rosen had fewer status-related obstacles to negotiate than their predecessors. Certainly they both saw themselves as professionals welcomed into the English Department for the purpose of strengthening and uniting the writing program as a whole. Both had previously helped establish writing centers at other institutions, and their image of what it meant to work in a writing center clashed with that of the UM-Flint tutors. It is to be expected that the changes in policy and practice within the Writing Laboratory that were instituted by each of these directors were at first met with a certain degree of dismay by the tutors.

The mass resignation recounted earlier in this chapter was an expression of the tutors' resistance to reassessing the way in which they saw themselves--joining the "Establishment" of the larger institution by cultivating a more conventional image and letting go of their sense of a marginalized status, which, while it had generated energy and enthusiasm in the past, prevented the tutors from wholeheartedly serving the larger campus.

Change did inevitably come about, partly achieved through frank talks at staff meetings (Rosen, Interview),

partly through the passage of time with its inevitable turnover in the tutorial staff, and partly through the gradual relinquishing of the old regime image. No staff member besides Lab manager Scott Russell remains from the old regime, and the lore of the old days has all but died away. None of the interviews conducted with present-day tutors or letters received from them indicates the presence of those tensions and emotions that surfaced during the Writing Center's change in relationship to its larger context

The mid-nineties Writing Center community

Because the bulk of my data for this study was collected before Robert Barnett's directorship, my observations about the tutors' sense of collective identity must conclude with my own mid-nineties directorship. During this period there were indications that the tutors saw themselves as part of a community, though not as close-knit or as exclusive a community as in the Bentley-Hartwell years. Nearly all of the tutors developed social relationships with some of their colleagues. Tutors partied together, took trips together, critiqued each other's papers, gave each other rides to work, visited sick members of the staff, baked goodies for everyone, etc. Tutors left daily messages, often with allusions to "in" jokes, on the Center chalkboard. The mail folders Lois Rosen had provided

for the tutors which eventually came to be used more for unofficial correspondence than for anything else. An amorphous Lab-wide newsletter *cum* debate *cum* fictional story with Writing Center personnel as characters, written by the tutors, seemed to be constantly circulating. Often racy and always humorous, it overlooked no one on the staff, and served to foster a sense of community.

I also noted a sense of commitment that went beyond everyday duties in the Center. Tutors who were not scheduled to work would drop in to visit with friends and end up tutoring--without recording these hours as paid time. When I launched a series of all-campus workshops, tutors volunteered their time to design and teach these workshops; and they persisted throughout a first year of discouragingly low attendance, helping to strengthen and publicize the series until eventually the Writing Center was packed for every workshop it offered. Tutors also volunteered to attend and bring food to events intended to publicize the Center--events which, again, started as poorly attended open houses and gradually became successful, thanks to the tutors' patience and dedication.

No longer a campy place where "cool" tutors and staff hung out, the mid-nineties Writing Center was nevertheless still a community, still composed of tutors who were dedicated to helping students gain confidence and skill in writing.

A final look at the image issue

The influence of UM-Flint Lab leadership on the early tutors is a key theme in understanding how the tutors' self-image developed. Among other qualities, Bentley and Hartwell possessed charisma and a facility for recognizing talented young students who would make good tutors. They demanded much in terms of preparation and commitment, but repaid the tutors with a collegial relationship, respect, and responsibility. Becoming part of the closeknit community in the old regime Writing Laboratory would have been a heady experience for any young person. By invitation only, new tutors joined a group of bright, dedicated, self-confident young faculty and staff whose anti-Establishment attitudes and shared goal of empowering the disenfranchised through education lent a certain aura of romance to the work of the Writing Laboratory.

The Lab's mission of empowerment dovetailed with the idea of marginalization. Through the experiences and perceptions of admired faculty and staff, as much as through their own experiences, observations, and reading, the tutors came to see themselves as set apart from the rest of campus, engaged in educational endeavors that were undervalued or even scorned by others. That this status resulted from their commitment to help minorities and other marginalized students only intensified the tutors' enthusiasm and commitment. Theirs was an unusually strong sense of

identity and one that served them well until the Writing Laboratory began to experience philosophical and political shifts, and began adapting to a somewhat different type of student clientele.

The fact that the old regime identity of the Writing Lab tutors lived on considerably longer than might have been expected--long after Bentley, Hartwell, Waters, and Edmonds had left--indicates its power and appeal. Passed on as a legacy from one tutor "generation" to another, sustained by Lab manager Danny Rendleman's presence and supervision, vestiges of this self-image continued throughout the 1980s as tutors struggled with changes in the Center.

As Murray and Rosen responded to a new mandate by leading the Center into a more cooperative relationship with the larger campus, tutors had to give up "ownership" of the Center and accept a more conventionally hierarchical structure. They needed to let go of what had become a cherished isolation and recognize their responsibility to serve a wider clientele. These changes came about gradually but inevitably. While the mid-1990s tutors no longer saw themselves as members of an elite club, they still demonstrated a feeling of community and a fervent dedication to the students they tutored.

Notes

¹This was also the period when a significant increase in the number of older returning students, particularly women, was noticed in the Writing Laboratory. Economic problems in the automobile industry inspired many factory workers to reassess their plans for the future and to return to college for alternative career training (Murray).

²As noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, a body of lore exists in the literature which associates writing centers' marginalized status with the typically inadequate physical space and equipment allocated them in the early days of writing center history. Like many of its contemporaries, the Writing Laboratory at the University of Michigan-Flint began in cramped quarters. During its first six years of operation, the Laboratory was moved three times, acquiring more space and greater visibility with each move. It began in a small seminar room, then went to a classroom-sized space that had formerly housed the campus's bookstore. The third room, previously occupied by UM-Flint's business office, was a bit larger and more visible still, being located next to one of the building's two main entrances. Several computers were available for student use with hook-ups to the Ann Arbor campus.

While staff members from the Lab's early years enjoy telling about the challenges presented them by the various inadequate or unconventional sites for the Lab, it should be noted here that until the move to the riverside campus, space was at a premium for all academic departments. (See the discussion of campus growth in Chapter One.)

The fourth, and final, move to date for the Writing Laboratory occurred in 1977, when the University of Michigan-Flint sold the Mott Memorial Building on Court Street to Mott Community College and moved to a newly constructed campus on the banks of the Flint River. Having more space and a better location than the previous Lab facilities, it is presently housed on the third floor of the central building in the "new" UM-Flint complex. Situated near the juncture of two tube-like walkways that connect CROB with buildings on opposite sides of the campus, the Writing Center is centrally located and easy for students to reach. The main room, about twenty-seven feet long by twenty-four feet wide, is where most of the actual tutoring takes place. It is furnished with several long tables, some carrels, a couch, two upholstered chairs, and a coffee table. A back room, about fourteen by twelve feet, can be separated from the main Lab by a folding partition. It contains seven Zenith word processors and two Apple G-S word processors, along with five printers. Finally, a six by nine office adjoining the Center belongs to the Senior Instructional Associate. Although the Writing Center's

equipment does need to be upgraded, its present size and location clearly indicate an acknowledgment of its worth and a commitment to its long-term support on the part of the larger institution.

CHAPTER SIX: EXPANDING AND STRENGTHENING TIES

By the late 1970s attitudes had begun to change. There was by now an awareness within many college English departments of composition studies as a developing field of scholarly endeavor. Similarly, writing centers were beginning to be recognized as useful and well-established institutions rather than ephemeral phenomena that simply "sprang up" as stop-gap measures in response to the influx of non-traditional students (Hairston 82). Nearing the end of its first decade, the UM-Flint Writing Laboratory had made a permanent place for itself on campus. It had been allocated ample space in the new Classroom Office Building and was receiving regular long-term funding. The Writing Workshop course, still taken as an elective, had grown steadily in enrollment.

It was at this point that the English Department created a new position, Director of the Writing Programs.¹ For nearly thirteen years this tenure-track position included the dual responsibilities of directing both the composition program and the Writing Laboratory, a combination that effectively closed the gap between Lab and English Department. By the time these two sets of responsibilities were again separated the Writing Center's image had been reworked: It was more mainstream, more clearly connected with the English Department and the larger

campus. In the 1990s, as UM-Flint faculty became increasingly concerned about writing in the disciplines, the Center was better prepared to address these concerns. This chapter will describe the growing connections between the Center and the Department, the campus, and beyond.

Part I: Strengthening the Links Between the Center and the
English Department

Writing Center and composition program

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the director of the writing programs no longer functions as director of the Writing Center, the latter set of duties having been once again split off into a separate position.² However, while they were directors of both the composition program and the Lab, Murray and Rosen were indeed successful in bringing the English Department and the Writing Center closer together. In Chapter Five I examined, from the tutors' point of view, Murray and Rosen's successive efforts to change the mission, enlarge the clientele, and broaden the scope of the Writing Center. Here I will describe Murray and Rosen's reworking of the two-semester freshman composition sequence to show how each of the two directors either forged or strengthened links between the English Department and Lab through her administration of the composition program.

A need for re-organization

Although most of the English Department faculty in the 1970s were literature-oriented, Robert Bentley feels that they were committed to offering good freshman composition courses (Interview). Each member of the department regularly taught freshman English, and some of Bentley and Hartwell's "lit" colleagues made an effort to keep current with developments in rhetoric and composition. Bentley cites Frederika K. Bartz as an outstanding example of a colleague who strongly supported the Writing Laboratory, taught well-informed composition classes, and even took her turn at teaching the Writing Workshop course and helping with the Laboratory (Interview). Later, as Chair of the English Department, Bartz championed the establishment of a strong writing program.

However, Bentley remembers the two-course freshman composition sequence at the University of Michigan-Flint as being rather disorganized:

The freshman English program was not terribly coherent at that time. This was something that distressed me and, I think, Pat. There was a sort of common 101 course, and they were using that *Modern English Handbook* by Gorrell and Laird, by the way. Then 102 was a do-your-own-thing. Each instructor announced a theme....One, I remember, was teaching Cowboy English. I inquired as to why this was happening, and he said Well, because he liked cowboy movies. That seemed to be his rationale. So whatever the instructor wanted to do with the class was okay, and the students wrote about it, so we had everything from Chaucer to revolutionary literature. It was rather incoherent and it bothered me a lot. (Interview)

Such perceived disorganization in the composition courses was one of the determining factors in their decision to create the new position.

Patricia Murray's work with the composition program

As the first Director of the Writing Programs, Patricia Murray saw her primary goal as "setting up some standards for and giving some direction to the freshman writing program" (Interview). She began by holding several meetings of the composition faculty at which they worked together to establish a list of minimum standards for the two freshman writing courses, College Rhetoric and Critical Writing and Reading (Murray, Interview). As these two courses began to take on new shapes, it was agreed that Freshman Rhetoric would introduce students to the writing process, and Critical Writing and Reading would emphasize research writing. A short list of acceptable texts which taught writing as process and covered the agreed-upon material was drawn up for each course, and instructors were asked to choose from the list when they placed their textbook orders. While instructors could use readers for their writing classes, they were no longer to teach Critical Writing and Reading as if it were another literature course. As the goals of the composition sequence became more distinct, Murray was able to link these courses more effectively with

the Laboratory course, Writing Workshop (Murray, Interview).

Murray remarks:

In a sense it was good to have that double appointment because then you don't separate what goes on in the Writing Lab, which is often considered just a kind of service low-level operation, from the other stuff, which was "legitimate"--you know, freshman composition. But by being both, having a foot in both programs, you are able to do some mediation between the two and make sure that they go together, that they mesh. (Interview)

In fact, Murray had discovered on arriving at Flint that the Writing Laboratory's pedagogical approach was more progressive than that of many of the regular freshman composition classes. "Things like conferencing techniques with students, invention techniques, ways of looking at writing as multiple drafting, and the like....That was going on in the Writing Lab to begin with, but it was not going on necessarily in the freshman writing program," so Murray introduced these ideas to the composition instructors (Interview). Murray used exchanges of teaching techniques and professional articles as one method of generating discussion. She introduced James Kinneavy's aims of discourse to the composition staff and organized descriptions of the goals for freshman composition courses around these aims. Another method for generating discussion was a holistic reading session which took place once a year: Every College Rhetoric instructor would administer the same essay examination to his/her classes. A rubric would be agreed upon, and instructors would rate each other's student essays. Instructors could do with these scores what they

chose; the idea was simply to meet together and talk about standards and expectations in order to build group consensus.

Lois Rosen and the freshman composition sequence

It was Lois Rosen who assembled a well-prepared staff of composition teachers. By the time of her arrival on campus, it was rare for a tenure-track literature-oriented faculty member to teach composition. Most of the writing staff were part-time adjunct instructors hired specifically to teach the freshman composition sequence. Supported by Department Chair Freddie Bartz, Lois Rosen received permission to create several full-time lectureships.³ At this writing, there are seven lecturers and four part-time adjuncts. Most of the writing staff have done graduate coursework in rhetoric or English education, and all are experienced teachers of composition. Rosen has invested considerable energy in staff development, holding idea exchanges and encouraging attendance at professional conferences. She has organized and co-presented in-service workshops, such as a portfolio workshop that she and I gave in 1991 and a writing/reading connections workshop in which she was assisted by several staff members. During the 1995-96 academic year, she arranged for three computers-and-writing workshops to be offered in the new Computer Writing Center, a networked writing classroom containing twenty-four

MacIntosh computers using Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment software.

Over twelve years of directing the writing programs, Rosen has developed and unified the various writing courses offered at UM-Flint. Her extensive collaborative work with staff members on clarifying the philosophy, goals, course content, and methods of instruction for the freshman composition sequence in particular are evident in the booklet entitled *The Writing Program at the University of Michigan-Flint: Course Guidelines and Information*, which is provided to every incoming member of the composition staff. The opening statement of philosophy reflects the unity within the program that has been achieved during Rosen's directorship:

Writing is a powerful tool for thinking, learning, and discovering ideas as well as a means of communicating what we know to others. Therefore, developing writers should have multiple opportunities to use written language for a variety of purposes both private and public and to write to a variety of audiences, including the self, peers, teachers, and unknown general readers. Since writing and reading are closely related, students should also be given ample opportunity to develop their critical reading abilities in conjunction with their writing abilities through close reading, analysis, and critiquing of the writing of their peers and of published authors.

Writing should be taught within the framework of the writing process--prewriting, drafting, revising, proof-reading, and publishing--with emphasis on helping students develop a repertoire of strategies that will help them deal successfully with each stage of writing a paper.

The ultimate goal of our writing program is to prepare students for the writing they must do throughout their years of schooling and to lay the foundation for the writing, both personal and job-related, that may be required of them or that they may

wish to do after leaving the University of Michigan-Flint. (Anderson, et al., 1)

This informed and unified vision of the composition program is a product of the extensive faculty development and collaborative work among composition staff members guided by Rosen's efforts.

Part II: Linking the Center, the Department, and the Campus Change of name, change of image

As readers of writing center literature are aware, what an institution calls itself is of some importance both in shaping its sense of identity and in projecting a positive image to outsiders. Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell had chosen the name "Writing Laboratory" for the UM-Flint facility because the designation previously used by the English Department had been "Writing Clinic," and Bentley and Hartwell disliked its connotations. As Bentley explains, "Students have a bad enough self-image already, and 'clinic' is a place where sick people go to get well" (Interview). Bentley and Hartwell found the term "laboratory" appealing because it suggested a place where experimentation and discovery occurred (Bentley, Interview).

Peter Carino examines the three most commonly used designations for a writing tutorial facility from a post-structuralist perspective in his article, "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Our Metaphors: A Cultural Critique of Clinic, Lab, and Center." Noting that "clinic" was in

fact one of the most frequently used metaphors for a place in which writing "remediation" occurred during the early days of writing centers, Carino validates Bentley and Hartwell's perceptions of the "clinic" designation. In discussing the term "lab," however, he suggests that work required of students in the writing lab came to be seen as remedial help for students who were somehow deficient, rather than as complementary to material covered in the regular writing classroom (36). After offering a socioeconomic background of the 1970s as the context in which "lab" became a popular term, Carino concludes:

This cultural sketch of the 1970s, a thumbnail history of the forces resulting in marginalization, applies to writing centers whether we call them clinics, labs, or centers, but I think it has more bearing on the designation *lab*. The idea of experimentation and innovation, multiple possibility and productive chaos, which informed the metaphor for those who chose to call their enterprises labs persists today as many of them have largely succeeded in maintaining this sense of the praxis of their labs as microcultures. For this reason, I believe the lab metaphor has not gone the way of the clinic metaphor. Still, for those who read the metaphor pejoratively, it is a short step to making jokes about students being dissected in the writing lab or tutors creating Frankenstein monsters. (37)

While Carino notes both positive and negative possibilities for the interpretation of the term "writing center," he suggests that

yoked simply with *writing*, *center* forms a bold and audacious metaphor aspiring to powerful definitions as in "the center of a circle, of revolution, of centripetal attraction; and connected uses (OED, 1035).... Aspiring to this sense on campus is to move toward empowerment, not only by claiming to be central to all writers but also through such activities as the

training of teaching assistants, faculty workshops for writing across the curriculum, credit courses, grammar hotlines, and tutoring for standardized tests such as the NTE and GRE (446).

Weighing the negative connotations of the word "laboratory" against the positive and looking ahead to the extension and expansion of Writing Laboratory services such as those catalogued by Carino, Lois Rosen changed the facility's name to the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center soon after her arrival.

The English Placement Examination

The establishment of the English Placement Examination (EPEX) and the Department's increasing emphasis on its importance have served to forge links not only between the Writing Center and the English Department, but also between the Center, the Department, and the University of Michigan-Flint campus as a whole. In order to show how these interconnections have developed over the years through the evolution of EPEX, I will briefly trace the development of the placement program.

Early placement testing at UM-Flint

In the early days of the Writing Laboratory, placement into the Writing Workshop course was not mandatory. Students taking part in the Challenge Program or students with low scores on the CEPT were advised to take Writing Workshop (Bentley, Interview). A freshman composition

instructor might suggest to a struggling student writer that he/she drop this course and receive preparation in Writing Workshop before returning to the regular two-course freshman sequence, but no one was required to follow such a suggestion. At some point during the Bentley/Hartwell years, the English Department established a placement test that consisted of an impromptu writing sample. This was administered through the Writing Laboratory (Bentley), but the practice was evidently discontinued at some point before Patricia Murray's arrival (Murray, Interview).

The fact that an impromptu writing sample was used at all during the 1970s at UM-Flint is another indication of the extent to which Bentley and Hartwell kept up to date on developments in the field of composition studies. During this period there were comparatively few specialists in writing assessment (White, "Teaching," xv), and most assessment programs relied upon multiple choice tests of usage and mechanics skills (xii-xiii). However, attention became focused on writing processes, and as research into the cognitive aspects of writing came to the forefront, teachers of composition began to recognize that the teaching of writing and the assessment of writing needed to be more closely aligned. In their composition classes, instructors taught invention techniques, strategies for communicating effectively with specific audiences, multiple drafting, revision techniques, and so forth. However, when students

were being assessed as writers for placement purposes, exit exams, and the like, they often were not asked to actually write anything themselves, but rather to recognize grammatical and mechanical problems in multiple choice questions. Composition instructors began to see that it made little sense to test these isolated skills instead of asking students to demonstrate their writing abilities by actually writing (White, "Apologia," 33-4). This gave rise to the timed impromptu essay, an assessment tool that is currently used in over 70% of colleges and universities that assess student writing (30). The limitations of the timed impromptu have always been recognized, and in recent years the debate about this method has been heightened by the advent of portfolios. Nevertheless, there is still widespread agreement that the timed impromptu used as an assessment tool is preferable to the multiple-choice test. Assessment authority Edward White remarks, "While it is naive to imagine an essay test as a valid measure of all writing, it is disingenuous to ignore the fact that the production of writing for an essay is a wholly different activity than filling in the bubbles on an answer sheet" ("Apologia" 35).⁴

Links between EPEX, the Department, and the campus

Patricia Murray was introduced to holistic scoring when she taught in the Los Angeles school system. Nevertheless,

she was distinctly in the minority from a nationwide perspective (White, "Teaching," xiii). Focusing chiefly on organizing the composition program, Murray reinstituted the written placement exam a year before leaving UM-Flint:

I'd had a lot of experience doing holistic scoring, masses of exams, for LA city schools and had trained teachers to do that kind of reading, so when there wasn't any placement exam at Flint, I brought in some of that background with me and set up the English Placement Test. I even brought the test--exam questions--with me from California....You'd be surprised how those questions could be recycled. I had also been reading Advanced Placement English Exams for a few years and continued to do that while I was at Flint. So I had access to ongoing training for myself and doing reading of masses of exams and holistic scoring and also had access to the kinds of prompts that could be used for placement exams.
(Murray, Interview)

Elizabeth Graykowski accepted responsibility for directing and supervising EPEX after Pat Murray left; the EPEX directorship was converted into a paid part-time position at this time. Graykowski used Murray's testing materials and procedures without alteration. She offered me the directorship of EPEX beginning in winter, 1986. I held this position until the end of summer, 1996, when I left UM-Flint. During these years, faculty-approved mandatory placements and certain key changes in the testing rubric played a significant role in bringing the Writing Center, the English Department, and the campus into closer contact.

Because it had been the practice for most English Department composition staff members to regularly read and

score the EPEX entrance essays and to receive compensation for this work, the testing program had always provided a natural context in which to discuss student writing. In considering placements for individual students, staff members routinely compared notions of what they considered to be successful writing for their own courses. However, in 1986 most members of the composition staff knew very little about what was taught in Writing Workshop. This was not surprising because the practice of inviting colleagues to take turns teaching the Lab course had been discontinued after the old regime years. By the time I began teaching at UM-Flint in 1981, the Lab director and one lecturer who served as an associate director were the only instructors to teach Writing Workshop. During my directorship a new rubric was used that stated more clearly how the essay scores corresponded to course placements. This rubric also reflected an easily understood progression in expectations for essays from the lowest to the highest category, based on written descriptions of the goals for Writing Workshop, College Rhetoric, and Critical Writing and Reading.

This was the first time the EPEX rubric had reflected a clear connection between the Lab course and the introductory composition courses. The new rubric helped the composition staff become more familiar with the goals and philosophy of the Writing Center course and gave the staff opportunities to discuss the link between that course and the introductory

courses which they taught. Because the new rubric was converted into a handout for students and academic advisors which explained the meaning of the test placements, it also aided a larger audience in understanding the complete composition sequence.

In 1986 the College of Arts and Sciences voted in favor of making English Placement Examination results mandatory placements. This decision of the faculty rose out of a concern for the students as developing writers. There was a growing sense among instructors across the disciplines that students were insufficiently prepared for college-level writing or for the writing they would later encounter in their professional lives. When placements became mandatory, changes became necessary both in the Writing Center and in testing and advising procedures. As fall semester began, the Writing Center was swamped with students having to take Writing Workshop. There were two reasons for the swelling numbers: First, some of the underprepared students who would normally have avoided the test (and by default would have avoided taking Writing Workshop for three credits) were no longer allowed to do so. Secondly, there was a new category--a dual placement in College Rhetoric for three credits and in Writing Workshop for one credit. Because of the dramatic rise in numbers of students needing to work in the Writing Center, the first year of mandatory placements was hectic for the Center staff; consequently, in the

following fall several extra tutors were hired and trained. Staff size was maintained at nine to twelve tutors until recently, when the number rose to nineteen.

Mandatory placements ultimately caused Academic Advising and Student Life to become more familiar with the Writing Center, its course, and its services. The Academic Advising office now had the burden of enforcing the new English placements. Suddenly it became important for advisors of incoming freshmen to understand EPEX placements and have some idea of the goals of Writing Workshop. Advisors had to insist that students take the English Placement Examination and register for the appropriate composition courses.

Since the EPEX director and Lab manager worked together to administer the tests and process the scores, timely processing of the scores had to be budgeted into the Lab manager's duties. The director and manager now had to work more closely with Academic Advising and Student Life, since the latter department soon assumed responsibility for linking EPEX testing to their orientation schedule. More frequent testing sessions needed to be offered to accommodate students and opportunities for taking the test on a drop-in basis in the Center were added. For this reason, all Writing Center tutors have been trained to administer the placement examination, a responsibility that has turned out to be fairly labor-intensive for Writing Center staff.

These developments in the English Placement Examination program have proved to be effective in helping maintain an efficient and unified composition program that links the Writing Center to the regular composition sequence and both of these writing program components with the larger campus.

The writing across the curriculum program

Because UM-Flint's writing across the curriculum program (WAC) is another link between the Center and the campus, it deserves a brief mention here. Efforts to establish a WAC program at UM-Flint began in the summer of 1991, when Lois Rosen assembled a committee of interested composition staff members. The committee determined that an initial assessment of current faculty interest in and work with student writing across the disciplines should be conducted by means of a questionnaire, which was designed over the summer and distributed in the fall. This was followed two years later in the fall of 1993 with a survey of current upper division writing courses in the disciplines. The results of both surveys indicated a growing concern about and interest in student writing. By this time the committee had expanded to include faculty members from several disciplines outside English. A campaign was launched to encourage more across-the-board faculty involvement by inviting two guest speakers: Larry Levy, a WAC director from Delta College, who visited during

the fall 1993 semester, and Patricia Stock, director of Michigan State University's Writing Center, which conducts workshops for faculty bringing writing into courses across the university. Stock's visit took place in winter, 1994, and was billed as an official kick-off of the WAC program at Flint. Stock gave two faculty workshops, one student workshop, and a public talk, and part of this took place in UM-Flint's Writing Center. This setting was chosen to increase campus-wide awareness of the Center's services, including its potential for supporting WAC-related activities.

The program has grown slowly but steadily. A twice-yearly campus-wide WAC newsletter is distributed, and Lois Rosen and Robert Barnett conduct faculty development seminars on such topics as designing and evaluating effective writing assignments. The Writing Center tutors and Lab manager have become involved in the WAC program through requests from content area instructors for classroom visits from the Center. These classroom visits often involve one-to-one consultations with students on early drafts of papers, peer group work, explanations or presentations focusing on a particular kind of assignment or writing problem, and so forth. An increased awareness on campus of the Writing Center's services can be partly attributed to the WAC program.

Part III: The Center Reaching Out

The Center, the campus, the student community

In the 1970s, the University of Michigan-Flint was essentially a one-building campus, where all of the faculty and many of the students had at least a nodding acquaintance with most of their peers. Among the student body the Writing Laboratory quickly gained a reputation for being a friendly place. Though tutors may have viewed themselves as an exclusive club, other students found the Lab a refuge of sorts. Robert Bentley describes the atmosphere:

[The Lab] was new, and it was working because we were excited about it, and also the university community was so small. We were just a tiny little island on that Mott Community College campus. And you knew when someone from Challenge flunked out. You knew about it. And you knew when somebody got a B from Raphelson or a B from Bill Meyer in Political Science. You knew and you heard about it. They came into the lab and announced it: "Yes, man, I got a B out of Meyer's Political Science class. You know, on my last test." Maybe the tutors would cheer, and we'd have to get coffee or pop or whatever and celebrate. So we were close to the students and tutors...and we had a ton of fun. (Interview)

The university community was small enough that Lab personnel could monitor the progress of individual students. Because the Lab staff were broadly representative of the student body, when questions came up at staff meetings about issues involving the backgrounds or personal lives of specific students that affected their work, tutors could often approach them as friends in order to find out what was happening with them (Hartwell, Interview).

On this small campus, even the Lab instructors were sufficiently familiar with individual students to show their personal concern when students lagged behind. Bentley was particularly worried about the drop-out rate of male minority students, so he tended to keep tabs on those who were taking the Writing Workshop course:

I used to sometimes go after the students, especially the males, who were most distant from the academic background. I can remember...finding them hanging out in the basement over at Mott's student center, yelling at them. [They would say] "Who's that...guy coming over here yelling at us?" but I wanted them to succeed, and if I had to drag them by the ears back to the Lab to put their hours in, sometimes I'd do that.
(Interview)

The Writing Laboratory's positive influence on individual students soon became apparent to faculty outside of the English Department. Political Science Professor Neil Leighton observes that, from the early days of the Writing Laboratory, a number of minority students received support from the Lab that helped them succeed academically at UM-Flint:

One of the things the Lab did right off, and it owed a lot to Hartwell and Bentley and later Mark [Edwards], was that more than any other program that I recall around here, it probably really succeeded in socializing black students into the university. And although the instructors were predominately white, there was tremendous rapport. They created almost an informal club or group which stuck together long after the students had gone on with their college work and were no longer part of the Lab. And it expanded [into] kind of a group network which was really very significant. (Interview)

Leighton further asserts that the Writing Center has had a significant influence on the local community in an even broader sense:

One of the fascinating things was the number of students...whose scores [on the CEPT] were terrible... but [took the Lab course] and went on to be very successful locally, so there was a direct link to the community by improving their writing, and so on. One went on to work for the department of public works. Some others went on to work in legal offices, some to get law degrees. Just looking from the perspective of Political Science and students that I know, one very bright student that couldn't write worth a damn went in and... within a couple of years--I couldn't believe it--was one of the best writers I've ever seen. So it's had a tremendous success in my view for very low cost. (Interview)

Although the University of Michigan-Flint campus has grown so large that it is now difficult for Writing Center staff to know every Writing Workshop student on a personal level, tutors and instructors still make an effort to connect with students as individuals. It is common practice for a staff member concerned about a student's performance or attitude to discuss the problem first with the student, and then, if appropriate, with other Writing Center staff members or a content area instructor who may know the student fairly well. The Center still has a loyal band of regular student visitors, some of whom have completed the Writing Workshop course.

Outreach activities

The Center has a tradition of sponsoring a wide range of literacy-related activities involving students and educators

outside of UM-Flint. Bentley recalls the Lab's first outreach project at Flint for educators as a joint effort with the community college:

By...1973 we put together a summer institute under the old [Education Professions] Development Act program, and co-hosted it with Mott Community College....We got fifty thousand federal dollars, we bought tons of equipment, we had Challenge summer students there for our participants to work with, and we had rather an impressive array of consultants coming in to talk about reading and writing and linguistics and media and so on. (Interview)

Another project was designed as a faculty development opportunity for a specific area school:

We also had a program funded first of all by the Jack and Jill Foundation, which is a black foundation, and that attracted some black men. That was to go to Dort School...and work with the teachers there, and their attitudes toward the language of the students, and see if we could test the Labov hypothesis that if you could change the attitudes of the teachers toward the students [you could positively affect student performance]....(Interview)

This second project was so successful that it brought in substantial grants for UM-Flint:

We ran [the Dort program] for a year, which then got us the attention of the federal government and the Right to Read program, which was very well funded at that time. We wound up with two Right to Read grants to train teachers through the English Department jointly with the Education Department. Again, we hooked up reading and linguistics and the urban experience and sensitivity to the needs of ethnic minorities, and so on. We had a thing going there that brought in about \$100,000 from Right to Read. (Interview)

The Writing Center has continued over the years to sponsor outside activities related to literacy. While records of many events and projects have not been systematically preserved, several examples of ongoing

outreach efforts can be cited. UM-Flint's annual Summer Institute for gifted students in grades five through ten includes a writing section that has been held in the Center for at least the past ten years and has generally been taught by Scott Russell and one or more other Center staff members, most recently by Center Director Robert Barnett. Russell has also regularly taught a Lab-based summer writing-in-the-sciences workshop for the upper elementary school children of migrant workers. Lois Rosen has held several Flint Area Writing Project seminars in the Center. Yet another example is the Second Annual Michigan Writing Centers Conference. This conference was organized by Robert Barnett and hosted by the Writing Center staff in the fall of 1995.

Plans for the future

Robert W. Barnett, current director of the Writing Center, wrote a document during winter semester 1996 entitled "Goals and Objectives of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center." (See Appendix E.) Here he sets forth seven wide-ranging goals, each of which is supported by more specific objectives. The latter, in turn, are broken down into actions that can be taken. The courses of action that strike me as being particularly appropriate and useful for the UM-Flint Center may be categorized as campus outreach activities. Barnett proposes, for example,

that beginning-of-semester class visits by Center staff be "expanded" to make students more aware of the Center's resources, that the Center offer joint workshops with Cooperative Education and the Career Center on job-related writing and preparation for interviews, and that the Center "continue and strengthen" its partnership with the Writing Across the Curriculum program (1, 3-4). Such actions are ways of responding to the mandate for closer connections to and increased services for the larger Flint campus, a direction the Center has consistently pursued since the 1980s.

Barnett also suggests the use of Writing Workshop portfolios to study tutor effectiveness and course impact on students (2). Here I would like to stress the potential value of using the portfolios for these and other related studies. To my knowledge, from the founding of the Laboratory to the present day, no such studies have been undertaken, yet the portfolios would undoubtedly prove to be a rich source of information. Periodically discarded in order to furnish space for newer portfolios, these collections of writing might be stored over longer periods of time and used for a nearly endless list of purposes: to discover how changes in Lab assignments affect student performance, to see how the increased emphasis on revision and reflective writing from Rosen's directorship to the present has shaped the portfolio in new ways and influenced

individual students' work, to study the various categories of assignments as *genres*, to discuss and periodically re-evaluate ideas of student progress, etc. The log sheet containing tutor and instructor comments might yield ways of categorizing and evaluating tutor comments, identify and examine the unspoken Writing Center *ethos*, provide insights into writing situations that seem to be particularly problematic for students, identify types of feedback that help or hinder, note student responses to feedback, etc. Sets of portfolios might be used to determine how successfully course objectives are met. Most significantly, an on-going study of portfolios could contribute to the formal history of a writing center that has already been active for twenty-five years.

Notes

¹Patricia Murray gave this position its name. Although the only "program" at the time was the composition program, Murray was anticipating future developments. After Rosen's arrival a writing minor and the writing across the curriculum program were established.

²When directorship of the Writing Center was once again separated from directorship of the Writing Programs, it was at first a non-tenure-track acting directorship, which I held from winter 1991 to summer 1994. It then became a tenure-track position, currently filled by Robert W. Barnett.

³It scarcely needs to be mentioned here that another common manifestation of marginalization in composition programs is an English Department's reliance on poorly paid part-time instructors to teach these courses. When Lois Rosen arrived at UM-Flint, nearly all of the composition staff were part-time employees. While she could scarcely have obtained tenure-track positions for these staff members, she did manage to create several full-time lectureships with better pay and more security. The Center directorship is tenure-track, and the English Department will soon request a third tenure-track composition position. Rosen is to be credited with these developments.

⁴ Although this discussion covers only the essay portion of the English Placement Examination, there is also a reading component. Students with weak reading skills are required to take English 100: Reading Workshop. A reading test for placement purposes has been administered for many years, although it is not clear when this practice began. When I first became director of EPEX, the Nelson-Denney was administered along with the impromptu essay exam for the writing component. Perhaps a year or so after this, the Nelson-Denney was discontinued in favor of Degrees of Reading Power. Julie Colish, who regularly teaches English 100 and was the last director of the Reading Laboratory, has made the decisions regarding testing for reading skills; but the test has always been part of EPEX. A pilot program was recently instituted which involves dropping the reading test and using ACT scores for placement into the reading course. Although incoming freshmen will all have taken the ACT, transfer students may not have ACT scores. The latter group still takes the Degrees of Reading Power test.

CONCLUSION

Part I: What Is Success?

In the Introduction to this dissertation I stated that my first motive for conducting a case study of a single writing center was to add to the gradually accumulating body of case studies in this field, thereby contributing to an eventual understanding of how successful writing centers might be characterized. In concluding this study, then, it seems appropriate to consider the meaning of "success" as it relates to the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center. Is the center successful? Based on my own long-term observation of the Center, I would answer this question with an unqualified "yes", but offering objectively verifiable proof of its success poses a difficult problem. Aside from the anecdotal evidence of this study's interviewees--all of whom have indicated either directly or indirectly that they perceived the Center to be successful at improving student writing--and a previously mentioned follow-up study of the Writing Workshop course conducted by Lois Rosen and Scott Russell, no documentation exists which purports to prove the Center's achievements. (See Chapter Three.) Throughout much of the 1970s the Center directors were required to submit annual reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in order to receive continued funding. These reports apparently showed a marked improvement in CEPT

scores for students who had elected the Writing Workshop course. An additional type of data for the annual report, gathered by means of transcript analyses, indicated that students who elected the Workshop course after being advised to do so because of low CEPT scores or poor performance in composition courses went on to earn higher grade point averages than did their peers who had chosen not to elect the course (Bentley. Bommarito, Rendleman Interviews). How much could these reports have told present-day readers about the early Laboratory's success? Since the reports were evidently number-oriented, being pitched toward an administrative audience with a notorious fondness for figures, the richness of qualitative evaluations that people who work with writing tend to prefer may have been lacking. The numerical data that convinced administrators of the Laboratory's success and worth may have left many questions in the minds of a different readership. This is a moot point, however, since no copies of the old reports have been located.

Writing center literature suggests various types of assessment that can be conducted to evaluate a center's success: internal (feedback from tutors and students), campus-wide (feedback from faculty and academic departments), and external (observations of professional consultants) (Steward and Croft 92). Typical instruments for gathering data include questionnaires, surveys,

interviews, discussions, case studies of individual students, and the examination of student writing and records (92). The UM-Flint Writing Center has not conducted formal on-going assessment activities, so that data is not available for a present-day assessment.

What is less clear in the literature is what lies at the heart of such assessments: the definition of success for a writing center. The questions that must be asked in conducting an evaluation are what has the center identified as its goals, and what progress has been made in achieving them? Obviously, helping students become better writers is the central goal for most centers, but additional or supplementary objectives will necessarily vary: Individual centers' goals are tied to their institutional contexts, shaped by such considerations as the size, nature, type of clientele, and specific needs of each campus. Because centers vary so widely from one institution to another, no single set of criteria for evaluating writing centers' degree of success is widely applicable (Harris, "Theory and Reality"). In order to assess the Flint Center's success throughout its long history, then, an evaluator would need to know which goals were identified by the various directors as meriting particular attention. No documents exist which list such goals from any period but the present. A lack of both formally identified goals and data of the sort mentioned above stand in the way of an objectively

verifiable assessment of the Flint Center's long-term success.

Nevertheless, a few pragmatic observations can be made about the UM-Flint Writing Center which, taken together, suggest that its worth is recognized by the larger institution and therefore indicate some measure of success. First, the Flint Center did not disappear, shrink, or lose funding, as did its twin Reading Laboratory. Instead, it has expanded its staff, services, and clientele. The Center has evidently achieved a defined place within the institution, as indicated by a predictable budget allocation no longer dependent upon annual justificatory reports and a 1986 faculty-wide vote in favor of mandatory student placements into the Writing Workshop course. Finally, increasing numbers of faculty across the disciplines are sending their students to the Center for tutoring and are contacting the Center to ask for help in teaching writing in their courses. Is the Center a success? In terms of survival, growth, stability, and recognition, it would appear to be.

Part II: Compelling Ideas from the Early Years of the Writing Laboratory

The preceding chapters have constituted an archaeological exploration of underlying theories and assumptions on which the Center was founded and which have

influenced its development over time. During this excavation of the Writing Laboratory's early years several themes were uncovered, compelling ideas which had a lasting effect on the Lab and which may be posited as factors in its overall success. I would like to review these themes here and show how they are interrelated.

The goal of student empowerment

A central theme emerging from this study is Bentley and Hartwell's goal of empowering students by strengthening their abilities to communicate effectively in writing. This goal forms the basis for the old regime mission; all other themes from the Lab's early years relate either directly or indirectly to this goal.

Robert Bentley and Patrick Hartwell worked together effectively because they shared similar philosophical outlooks on writing instruction which were affected by the political climate of the times. Their dedication to working with writing processes as opposed to written artifacts can be seen as a political stance relating to issues of authority and control, as can the larger process movement in composition studies (Berlin 145-55). Bentley and Hartwell recognized that the current-traditional paradigm presented a situation in which a composition student might well feel baffled and powerless. Such a student would typically be required to produce an essay with little guidance or insight

into the actual writing of the piece, then submit the finished product to an instructor/authority figure, whose often mysterious red-ink comments and evaluations carried the weight of a grade without the benefit of enlightenment. With the focus shifted to processes of writing, however, students had some control because they learned to see each paper as evolving, as something that could be shaped and revised. Composing was no longer a solitary and enigmatic event; students could receive coaching at any point during the actual writing of the piece. The balance of power between students and instructor was less one-sided.

This goal of student empowerment can also be recognized in Bentley and Hartwell's use of sociolinguistic findings to prepare the tutors to work with minority students. Through readings and staff discussions they taught the tutors to respect all dialects as linguistically equal and to encourage student writers' acquisition of edited standard English because it gained them control over larger and potentially more influential audiences, not because this was the "correct" or superior dialect. From this perspective, tutors were more likely to see themselves as collaborators with students in their quest for self-empowerment, rather than standard-bearers for correctness (Anderson, Interview).

Recognizing the merits of Zoellner's monograph

A second theme with wide-ranging implications is the influence of Robert Zoellner's pedagogical ideas on the early Lab. Bentley and Hartwell's interpretation of these ideas provided a systematic way of uniting their political agenda with their knowledge of linguistic research and recent developments in composition studies.

Bentley and Hartwell began their joint project not only in philosophical agreement, but also in agreement as to how writing should be taught. Unlike many of their contemporaries, they were astute enough to look past the off-putting behaviorist psychological jargon in Robert Zoellner's "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy for Composition" and discern the value and significance of his plan for teaching writing. Zoellner's model was particularly appealing because it was a process-oriented approach set in a non-traditional classroom, in keeping with Bentley and Hartwell's pedagogical and political position. It also recognized writing as a context-situated social act and emphasized the interconnectedness of all language activities, particularly writing and speech--concepts that Bentley and Hartwell had encountered in their study of linguistic research. These ideas about a writing class format formed the basis for their Laboratory course.

Guiding concepts in the Laboratory and Lab-linked course

The idea of substituting a laboratory experience for a conventional basic writing course was highly unusual, as was the idea of designing a writing laboratory for the specific purpose of offering such a course, yet Bentley and Hartwell saw this approach as the most logical way of implementing Zoellner's pedagogy. The Laboratory was student-centered (North, "Idea") in every way. It provided a less hierarchy-dominated environment than the traditional classroom. In this setting students were better able to observe writing being modeled by instructors and tutors, receive coaching throughout the composing process, obtain immediate feedback ("reinforcement") on their work, and experience whole language learning through collaboration with their peers.

Having students create writing folders, or portfolios, long before the use of portfolios for teaching and assessment became widespread, is another noteworthy feature of the Lab course. Based on Zoellner's idea of the artist's portfolio, it was intended to help students see their writing as works in progress, sometimes sketchy or experimental, rather than set in stone. This freedom was enhanced by the fact that individual pieces were not graded; a single holistic grade was assigned for the entire portfolio at the end of the semester. Together these factors allowed students to feel more in control of their work and their progress in the course.

Growing out of the Bentley/Hartwell approach to writing pedagogy was a balanced view of writing that characterized the Lab from its earliest days. Many writing centers of this period began as skills-and-drills laboratories organized for autotutorial instruction, but this was never true of the Flint Laboratory. Here students received one-to-one guidance at their own individual paces, from the beginnings of writing fluent, readable prose to mastery of the conventions of edited standard English prose. Writing was never reduced to a formula and students were never marched lockstep through a predetermined set of lessons.

Another characteristic of Lab instruction was attention to language. Bentley and Hartwell's broad knowledge of linguistic theory and research was reflected by many of the lessons they assigned in the Laboratory and the readings they required of their tutors. Attention was paid to language at every level, from sentence combining and the generative rhetoric of the sentence and the paragraph to the "print code" of standard English, discourse theory, and the social significance of dialects and registers--a topic that formed yet another tie between instruction and the Lab's mission of student empowerment.

Noteworthy characteristics of the Lab staff

Bentley and Hartwell also took an innovative approach to staffing their new Lab. The unique position of Senior

Instructional Associate provided the Laboratory with a continuous supervisory presence which freed the director to think and act on larger issues. Although Bentley and Hartwell could not have foreseen how influential this position would become, the Lab manager proved to be a force for continuity long after Bentley and Hartwell had left, perpetuating powerful ideas about language and discourse, ways of treating students as writers, and approaches to training tutors that the Laboratory founders had introduced.

The early tutors were remarkable for their personal qualities, their extensive preparation, and the weight of their responsibilities. Although Hartwell identified a promising tutor candidate as a student who was a good writer and worked well with people (Interview), other qualities obviously came into play. Confidence, intellectual curiosity, respect for diversity, a sense of mission in helping others, and the perseverance to complete a fairly lengthy course of study were all characteristics of many of the early tutors. In addition, tutors were intended to have a peer relationship to the Writing Workshop students, the word "peer" having a more exacting meaning in the Flint Lab than it may have had elsewhere. In the early years it meant that tutors were undergraduates and that the collective group of tutors should represent the racial, sexual, class, and age-related diversity found in the student body.

Academic preparation for the tutors was formidable: a directed reading with the Lab director and election of two three-credit courses (Introduction to Linguistics, and Rhetoric and the Writing Process). Supplemented with discussions of writing-related issues at regular staff meetings, this extensive background was not only unusual for writing center tutors but constituted more preparation than many graduate students or writing instructors of the day received.

Tutors felt inspired by the charisma and enthusiasm of Bentley and Hartwell. They enjoyed a rare collegial relationship with the Lab director, manager, and teaching staff that contributed to their feeling of being valued. They gave presentations at professional conferences. Their opinions about the Writing Workshop course and its students were solicited and respected. In addition, the tutors were in the unique position of being students who actually graded other students, since they were responsible for evaluating the work of the Writing Workshop students. These responsibilities fostered in the tutors a sense of ownership where the Laboratory was concerned.

The tutors' perception of being marginalized

The early tutors developed an unusually strong collective sense of identity. They saw themselves as belonging to an autonomous group of knowledgeable and

politically savvy semi-professionals who used their skills to help marginalized students become empowered, which was the Writing Laboratory's chief goal. They perceived themselves and the faculty members associated with the Writing Laboratory to be marginalized by the English Department and the larger campus because of the relatively low status of composition studies and of writing centers in the 1970s. This sense of struggling against the system generated energy and enthusiasm in the early Lab, but eventually threatened to prevent the Writing Center from meeting the changing needs of the larger campus.

Although there are repeated references to the phenomenon of marginalization in writing center literature, little attention has been devoted to the effects of marginalization on writing center staff members' perceptions of their identities. Other case studies would contribute to the profession's understanding of this phenomenon and, at the same time, provide a new perspective for researchers on the history and development of their own individual writing centers.

Part III: Themes for a Time of Change

A new mandate and professionalization of the Center

The most significant changes for the Writing Center, in terms of the scope of its services and the image it presented to the larger institution, took place in the 1980s

and early 1990s. Patricia Murray and Lois Rosen successively directed the Center during these years, holding joint appointments as director of both Center and writing programs. In making each of these two appointments, the English Department carefully chose the Center director for her academic preparation in composition. Because the field of composition studies was becoming recognized as a legitimate focus for scholarship, and writing centers were no longer regarded as new and gimmicky institutions, both Murray and Rosen envisioned the directorship as a respected professional position and the Center as an integral part of the larger campus.

During these years the Center acquired a more professional image and began to look outward. It was no longer an island whose chief purpose was to accommodate the Writing Workshop students. Increasing emphasis was placed on drop-in students from across the disciplines, and connections with the composition program were strengthened. During Rosen's directorship the Center successfully responded to growing campus-wide concerns of the faculty regarding student writing by helping to strengthen the system of placements into the composition courses and by taking part in a new writing in the disciplines program.

A revision of the tutors' self-image was essential to the Center's growth. Had the tutors continued to see themselves as isolated and marginalized champions of an

undervalued cause, the Center could not have met the changing needs of the larger institution. It was necessary for the tutors to give up their fierce sense of ownership, to recognize their connections to the campus, and to project a more businesslike image. These alterations in the group's identity were not achieved without conflict, and they took place gradually. Formalization of the tutor training seminar, decreased emphasis on the social aspects of tutor meetings, tutor turnover, and the establishment of a more conventionally hierarchical relationship between tutors and faculty all played parts in this change.

Part IV: The Center's Evolution

A developmental overview

In *The Writing Laboratory: Organization, Management, and Methods*, Joyce S. Steward and Mary K. Croft describe the development of a hypothetical writing center in terms of four identifiable stages, which they have borrowed from business experts Cyrus F. Gibson and Richard L. Nolan (81-83). These stages are initiation, expansion, formalization, and maturity. While Steward and Croft warn that "growth does not proceed in neat, sequential stages but in progressions and regressions and fits and starts" (81), they are nevertheless able to offer characteristic descriptions of writing centers in these various phases. Although the UM-Flint Writing Center does not conform precisely to each

of these stages, it can be seen as having experienced each one.

The initiation stage is marked by tentativity and uncertainty regarding the laboratory's organizational position within the larger institution. The lab seems to be focused around the individual people who have established it. The budget may be modest or short-term; its existence is not widely known. As time goes by, staff members struggle with questions about the scope of their responsibilities, and they may encounter hostile or threatened reactions from faculty outside of the laboratory (82). The Bentley/Hartwell years can be described as the Flint Lab's initiation stage, during which the Lab struggled on from year to year with a short-term budget and a feeling among the staff that the Lab itself could be a short-term endeavor. The personalities of Bentley and Hartwell loomed large, and the Lab seemed in some respects to operate in isolation. A number of "outside" faculty members vocally disagreed with the idea of awarding credit to "remedial" courses such as Writing Workshop.

Steward and Croft's expansion stage is characterized by rapid growth in numbers of clientele, in the director's responsibilities, and consequently its staff members. Staff training programs will be revised to meet new challenges (83). In the formalization stage, the lab achieves full stature and a clearly established location within the campus

structure. Permanent funding is granted. Priorities, plans, and procedures are firmed up, and roles of the various staff members are clarified (84). Characteristics of these two stages were intermingled during the directorships of Patricia Murray and Lois Rosen. The Lab directorship became linked to the directorship of the writing programs at this point. Rapid growth, caused in part by older returning students seeking alternatives to work in the automobile factories of Flint, began during Murray's time. The change to mandatory placements into Writing Workshop swelled the numbers of students coming to the Writing Center during Rosen's years of directing the Center. A subsequent increase in the tutorial staff took place, and Rosen formalized the tutor training course. The Center had been granted a permanent budget by the time of Murray's arrival, and staff members began to see the Lab as accepted and established. During this period, refinements were made in the Writing Workshop course and in the assessment process. Lines of authority were clearly drawn, with tutors assuming a more conventional position on the ladder of hierarchy.

Finally, in the maturity stage, Steward and Croft's hypothetical lab has developed a sense of stability. Its existence is widely known across campus. Although well established, the lab will face new demands and challenges from time to time, so that it does not remain static (84).

For the Flint Center, this period began around the middle of Rosen's directorship. The writing-across-the-curriculum program and other campus-wide requests for involvement by the Center have posed interesting challenges that are being met in fruitful ways, but the Center nevertheless has achieved a constant and well-recognized presence on the Flint campus under the directorship of Robert Barnett.

From innovative lab to mainstream writing center

The Flint Center's growth can be analyzed from yet another perspective, that of its potential for serving as a model to other, newly developing, writing centers. Neophyte centers could certainly have learned much from the early Bentley/Hartwell Lab, with its innovative Lab-tied course and process-oriented approach to writing instruction, but the Lab remained on the cutting edge only during the actual years when Bentley and Hartwell were present. With their departure and the gradual disengagement of Greg Waters, the Lab lost its previous strong leadership and entered a period of stasis. Under Danny Rendleman's management the best policies and practices of the original Lab were preserved, but no new ground was broken. The Writing Center has been brought up to speed in recent years: Like many other centers around the country, it serves the entire campus and has become central to the WAC program. In this respect it can be seen as a model of a typical present-day writing

center, continuing to do worthwhile work, although it currently makes no contributions to new research or pedagogy.

If the UM-Flint Writing Center is no longer a pioneer, this is in part due to the limitations of its environment. The Flint campus is overwhelmingly composed of undergraduates. There are only six master's level programs, none of them in English or in literacy-related disciplines; hence, no eager graduate students are presently conducting research in the Writing Center. While there is interest at Flint in exploring computer-based writing instruction and on-line tutoring, as a number of other writing centers have done over the past decade, this is not at present an achievable goal. The Center itself still lacks the technological capability for such endeavors, and it is located on a commuter campus, so that students cannot be expected to have easy access to computers, as is the case on the University of Michigan's main campus. These limitations will no doubt be overcome in time; meanwhile, the Center must rely on face-to-face tutorials in order to continue its tradition of successful student-centered writing instruction.

Part V: Professionalization of Writing Centers

The transformation that the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center has undergone, from a small and insular

laboratory to a professionalized campus-wide center for varied writing-related activities, exemplifies changes that other writing centers across the country have undergone in recent years. Writing centers are moving from the margin to the mainstream, receiving at last the recognition and respect that other departments and disciplines have already enjoyed for decades. Change seldom comes without struggle, however, and contemporary writing center literature suggests that more than a few old-guard writing center personnel are proving to be unexpectedly resistant to joining mainstream academia. The root of the problem is most likely the long-term effects on self-image that past marginalization of writing centers has brought about. To some writing center faculty and staff who remember the old days, finally becoming successfully integrated into the larger institution feels wrong. It feels like selling out.

In an article entitled "The Unpromising Future of Writing Centers," Terrance Riley argues that "the least promising future we can imagine for ourselves and our writing centers is the very one we long for; that our pursuit of success and stability, as conventionally measured, may be our undoing" (20). Comparing the development of writing center-related concerns to those of three other once-new and controversial fields--American literature, literary theory, and composition studies--Riley discerns a pattern:

...[T]hese are the usual conditions of the interest group seeking a place in the university, and the subsequent stages in the evolution of academic respectability follow a predictable pattern as well: high idealism and frustration with institutional inertia result in the attempt to reform and renew the parent discipline from within, an attempt which gradually but surely gives way to a series of compromises in which the original packet of revolutionary energy is tapped off into academic business as usual. (21)

Riley points to such warning signs of imminent professionalization for writing center personnel as the fact that they are developing an insiders/outside mentality; constructing a history of the field; establishing networks, national conventions, and field-specific journals; and generating field-specific dissertations and job descriptions (29). His argument implies that a marginalized status may have paradoxically positive effects on the marginalized group. It can generate enthusiasm, energy, a sense of mission--characteristics of writing center staff that may be lost if they join mainstream academia:

... [If] we want to offer an alternative to mass education, we must reject its mythology of expertise and permanence. Our energy at present derives from what we have left of happy amateurism, and from our sense of being in transition, our extroversion of purpose, and our interdisciplinarity. If we find a way of publicly rejoicing in our impermanence, we may preserve the energy and the purpose. If not, we will almost certainly become, like everyone else, introverted and disciplinary. And that will be our success. (32)

That professionalization of writing centers must inevitably occur--is, in fact, occurring right now--seems clear enough. That the move toward legitimacy and

recognition should be lamented is less clear. The present case study of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center, in its focus on tutors' self-perceptions and their subsequent conflicts with the goals of professionally-oriented center directors, confirms Terrance Riley's belief that the common experience of marginalization can serve to unite, motivate, and energize writing center staff.

However, it also suggests that the image such a staff develop of themselves may perpetuate their isolation and prevent a center from effectively responding to changing needs within its larger institutional context by making corresponding changes within itself. This attitude, too, can be described as "introverted and disciplinary," whether it is held by the tutorial staff or by writing center faculty and administrators, yet as Kinhead and Harris suggest, writing centers that are not context-sensitive are less likely to survive and thrive.

What Riley fails to take into account in his comparison of writing centers with other newly professionalized fields is the full significance of the center's uniquely student-centered, as opposed to subject-oriented, position within the academic community. While a recognizable body of writing center literature certainly exists, it encompasses theory and pedagogy, and does not constitute subject-matter to be taught by tutors and instructors to writing center students. Writing centers specialize in individualizing

instruction, helping students become better writers regardless of the disciplines in which they write--an expertise which can be applied at the institutional level, as in a writing in the disciplines program.

Such respected writing center scholars as Muriel Harris ("Growing Pains: The Coming of Age of Writing Centers") and Stephen North ("The Idea of a Writing Center") have advocated involvement with writing in the disciplines since the early eighties. The fact that there has been a steady trend in this direction (Gaskins 6) indicates a possible interrelationship between the increasing acceptance and respect that writing centers are afforded and their ability to meet recently identified needs campus-wide. Cooperation between the center and content-area instructors has the potential of presenting writing center personnel with interesting and engaging opportunities to apply their expertise in individualized instruction through a partnership that benefits the institution as a whole; consequently, center staff members need not settle for drawing their inspiration from a sense of martyrdom to a worthy cause:

Every institution, like every writing student, has individualized needs. Writing centers that apply their traditionally flexible and responsive strategies not just to individual students but to their own institutions as a whole can enrich their staffs and their schools by developing innovative programs well suited to their own settings. Providing staff members with new options and stimulating contacts, such programs provide the challenges and risks that keep individuals growing and vibrant--and that make staff

members feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. (Endicott and Haviland 5)

Tutors who are encouraged to see themselves as professionals, to participate in conferences and contribute to the literature, will be likely to perform with as much energy and dedication as tutors of previous generations who grappled with the negative aspects of a marginalized status. Furthermore, faculty who refuse to become so "professionalized" that they lose touch with the dynamic experience of tutoring one-to-one will certainly avoid the possibility of becoming "introverted and disciplinary."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UCRIHS approval letter
Consent forms for interviewees
Questions for interviewees

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

September 27, 1994

TO: Ms. Ann Russell
1647 Melrose Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823

RE: IRB #: 94-376
TITLE: THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT WRITING
CENTER: A CASE STUDY AND A HISTORY

REVISION REQUESTED: N/A
CATEGORY: 1-C
APPROVAL DATE: 09/22/1994

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project. However, since UCRIHS cannot approve data gathered prior to its review and approval, approval for data collection began on September 22, 1994.

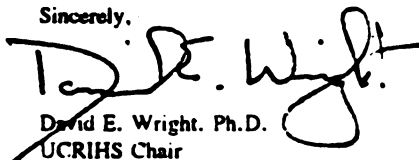
Renewal: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must use the green renewal form (enclosed with the original approval letter or when a project is renewed) to seek updated certification. There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

Revisions: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB # and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

Problems/Changes: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly: (1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or (2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517) 355-2180 or FAX (517) 432-1171.

Sincerely,



David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:pjm

cc: Dr. Kathleen Geissler



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
225 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

517/355-2180
FAX: 517/432-1171

Consent Form: Writing Center Director/Teacher Interview

Ann Russell has my permission to tape record an interview with me concerning the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center and to use the information I provide in this interview for:

- ☐ dissertation purposes
- ☐ use in scholarly publications
- ☐ presentations at professional meetings
- ☐ presentations at departmental seminars
- ☐ all of the above.

Ann Russell may/may not quote me or refer to me by name.

I do/ do not wish to retain the right to review any manuscripts before publication or presentation and to give or withhold my permission for the use of information provided in the above-mentioned interview.

(name)

(date)

Consent Form: Writing Center Tutor Interview

I consent to participate in a study of the development of the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center. I agree to be interviewed about my experiences as a tutor and to have this interview taperecorded for later transcription and possible use in a doctoral dissertation.

The study has been explained to me. I understand that my participation is not linked in any way either to my employment in the Writing Center or to any present or future courses I am taking/might take at the University of Michigan-Flint. Any opinions I express during the interview or any decision on my part to discontinue participation in the study will not result in a penalty or consequence either to my work as a tutor or to my standing as a student at UM-Flint. If I request that the researcher not use certain opinions, observations, or information that I provide during the interview, my request will be honored.

I understand that the results of this study will be treated without reference to my identity and that my confidentiality will be protected. Only the researcher will know my identity. I will be referred to in the dissertation by a pseudonym. My name will never be published.

Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to me at my request. If I have further questions, I can contact the researcher for more information.

(name)

(date)

**Some Questions About Directing or Teaching
at the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center**

Dates: When did you come to UM-Flint, and when did you leave?

What were you originally hired to teach? Could you tell me something about the beginnings of your interest in teaching writing? Were there particular people, theories, approaches, etc. that you feel influenced you as a teacher of writing, early on? Any key articles/books? Did you find yourself reacting against a particular approach or theory?

What types of students and writing problems was the lab intended to address? What goals did you have for the lab?

How were tutors recruited, selected, and trained? How did you see their role in the lab? Do you feel that certain types of students were more drawn to tutoring than others?

What types of instructional materials were used? Where did they come from?

Was lab work tied to a course? What was the format of the Writing Workshop course (and the Reading Workshop course, if applicable)--lecture? workshop? a combination? What was expected of students in terms of hours spent in the lab, type and amount of work done, etc.? How were student writers evaluated?

What was the relationship of the lab to the English Department? to the composition program? to the campus? Did you perceive any changes in those relationships over time?

If you can think of any anecdotes--perhaps about a particular student, tutor, lesson, etc.--that would help illustrate a point you've made or suggest the "flavor" of the lab at the time you were involved with it, please include these.

Did you write or present at a conference any material connected with the Writing Center? If so, please provide any information possible about this material. I would also be appreciative if you would send me a c.v. and list of publications.

**Some Questions for Tutors and Former Tutors
at the University of Michigan-Flint Writing Center**

How and when did you first become a tutor? Were you recruited? Did you respond to an advertisement? Who hired you? Who directed the Center while you were a tutor?

What first appealed to you about tutoring? What expectations did you have when you were first hired? Were your expectations met?

What kind of training was provided for you? Did you attend a tutor training class? If so, who taught it? What do you remember best about the class? Were any other types of classes either recommended or required? Were you asked to read certain books and/or articles that stick in your mind?

Did other tutors influence your performance as a tutor? If so, in what ways? Please comment on the ways in which tutors related with each other while you were a tutor.

What were your duties and responsibilities as a tutor? What kinds of students and writing problems did you tend to work with most often? (Is there an anecdote that would help illustrate your answer?)

What kinds of instructional materials did you work with, and where did they originate? Did you personally create any instructional materials?

When you were a tutor, was there a close link between the Writing Center and the English Department? Please explain.

If you are no longer a tutor, when did you stop tutoring and why? How would you reflect on the experience of having been a tutor? Has it influenced you either professionally or personally? Please explain.

Did you ever write and/or present material at a conference that was related to the Writing Center? If so, please provide any information possible about this material.

APPENDIX B

1982 writing folder evaluation form
Early to mid-1980s writing folder contents

[illegible]

[REDACTED]

WRITING LOG SHEET 1 Credit

DATE	TIME	CUM	ASSIGNMENTS. PLEASE BE SPECIFIC	INITIAL
9-1	3:50	2	Class - Free Writing 10 min.	RF
9-3	2-4	4	Diagnostic - Selves Theme Idea List: "War Is Not Blameworthy To The Participants"	OK
9-9	3:00 5:00	6	S/R - "Linguistic Sexism" - very good - concise	OK
9-10	1:30-3:30	8	This was difficult - you handled it well? NEXT TIME: Wm Strong "Sentence Combining" p. 52 - LASER ① Combine each sentence group into one sentence ② Write an essay, expanding the sentences 2 pages OK	B.W.
9-16	3:00 6:00	11	Question of Values - need to work on clichés + wordiness Exercise to Practice Informal Vocabulary: Man w/ the Money Picture: Write a 2 page story, concentrating on simplicity and explicit detail.	OK
9-17	1:30 3:00	12.5	Fluency II - The Painter Story	GTT
9-23	4:00 6:00	15.5	Dialogue - the way people talk Write a 2 page essay - About	OK
9-24	2:30 4:05	16	One person - showing how this person talks - his dialect.	jm
9-30	4:15 6:00	18	MEAT-O-MATIC, Prejudice things we seldom what they seem	OK
10-7	1:10 4:45	20.5	Definition: What is Prejudice? The Blump	KSK
10-8	2:10 4:00	23.5	Rock 1970 - good	GTT
10-21	2:50 5:30	26	S/R. Why I want a wife	OK
10-28	2:40 4:45	28	Jabbarwsky	GTT

NAME _____

SEMESTER _____ YEAR _____

109 CREDIT HOURS _____

WRITING LAB INFORMATION SHEET

Please fill out the top half of this information sheet. If you aren't sure what to put in the blanks, guess, or leave blank and fill in later. Thanks.

ADVISOR _____ DEPARTMENT _____ CREDIT HOURS COMPLETED _____

MAJOR _____ HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED _____

1. If you have taken English 100, 109, 111, or 112 here at UM-Flint, give instructors' names and your final grades.
2. List the courses and instructors you now have.
3. Briefly explain what you would like to achieve in the Writing Lab--better organization, punctuation, analysis, research skills, etc.

Thank you--and we're looking forward to working with you. Have a good semester.

ENTRY TESTS: ESSAY _____ CEPT _____ NELSON-DENNY _____ OTHER _____
 SAT/ACT/OTHER _____ TRANSFER? NCFD? _____

WRITING LAB: ENGLISH 109

The Writing Lab lets you earn academic credit while learning how to write better. We give you short exercises and essays and show you how to do them - teaching you the ground-rules, proving to you that writing can be fun, and building your own writing confidence. There's no homework or textbooks - all work is done in the Lab. You supply the paper and effort and we'll see to it that your writing improves.

To earn one semester hour of credit, you must log 28 hours during the semester in the Lab, or two hours a week. For two credits, you need 56 hours, or four hours a week; for three credits, 84 hours, or six a week. The Lab is located in room 305 of the CROB; check with us for our hours. We also hold Lab class for all Lab students (check the course schedule for its time) so that you can log hours either by working in the Lab or by attending class. We recommend you do both, but most of your time should be logged in the Lab. The Lab staff will keep a tally of your total hours on your log sheet in your folder. We do ask that you leave your folder with us at the end of the semester. If you have questions about this, see Mr. Rendleman.

What we demand of you is that you write every time you come to the Lab or class. Writing is the only way to improve your writing; no writing, no credit. Though we try to keep the Lab low-key, those who are simply wasting time will be asked to withdraw. If you log less than 20 hours in the semester, your grade will be N (no credit); if you log more than 20, but less than the minimum 28, your grade will be I (incomplete), to be completed within five weeks of the next full semester.

You can finish the course any time in the semester, as soon as you've logged enough hours. If you finish before the semester's end, the Lab staff, Mr. Rendleman, and the Lab director will determine your grade at the next staff meeting. If you have questions concerning your grade, direct them to the Lab director. Though you can finish any time, we

(over)

ask you not to spend more than eight hours a week in the Lab. Otherwise, there wouldn't be enough time for all we're going to show you to sink in.

Your final grade is not an absolute, objective indicator of your level of writing ability. We aren't here to make this assessment. We're concerned with improving your writing skills; your final grade will reflect your writing improvement over the semester. We don't grade on a curve, so you'll be graded individually.

We look forward to working with you.

WRITING LAB PROCEDURES

Again, welcome to the Writing Lab. What follows is not a list of rules and regulations but is, instead, a guide to getting around in the Lab and functioning within our (loose) structure.

1. Student files are kept in the top drawer of the tall middle file cabinet (grey) near the blackboards, in more or less alphabetical order.

2. In each folder is a log sheet. Each time you come in, get your folder, and write in the date and the time. When you are ready to leave, have a tutor sign you out (i.e. the time and their initials). Refile your folder.

3. Please return assignment sheets you have finished with to the metal box on top of the file cabinet where your folder is kept. They are not worth hoarding in your folder.

4. Please try to log your time in hour blocks--not half hours or quarter hours.

5. Label everything you write with your name, the date and the title of the assignment. Feel free to staple multiple-page assignments together. This way, if something is lost from your folder, it can be returned to you.

6. Try not to write on the assignment sheets. Paper for making notes to yourself is available from a tutor.

7. Never hesitate to approach a tutor with a question--whether it concerns procedure or an assignment or life at the university in general.

8. Help yourself to our books. A sign-out sheet is located somewhere on the bulletin board. If you cannot find a book or the sheet, ask.

WRITING LAB STUDENTS

If the Lab is busy and there is no tutor immediately available to read over your work...DON'T WASTE TIME SITTING AROUND!!

1. Proofread your work--check spelling, punctuation, grammar. Use the many handbooks and dictionaries available.
2. Try a new revision--experiment.
3. Find an essay or story you would enjoy reading and writing about. We have hundreds in the readers and rhetorics on the shelves. This is your library to use.
4. Think of how an assignment could be improved. Or invent a completely new assignment for other students.
5. Work on a Writing Lab Class Assignment.

Thank you

WRITING LAB STUDENTS

Now that we are about half-way through the semester, allow me to make a few observations. Please feel free to discuss with us your thoughts on these matters:

1. Try to pace yourself in logging your remaining hours. Don't wait until the last week to make up time. You will only harm your writing.
2. A silent writing lab is a bad writing lab. Learning to better your skills in writing involves a lot of writing, reading, and talking. We welcome that. But try to do most of your talking about writing. If you want to relax and socialize--fine. Everyone needs a break when you work as hard as we make you work. But have a tutor sign you out first, so you can go have a Coke or take a walk.
3. Remember to proof-read your work before asking a tutor to look it over. We don't expect you to show us perfect work--only work that you care enough about to go over the best you can.
4. If you and another student finish an assignment at the same time and the tutors are busy--swap papers with each other. Talk about what you were trying to do. Tell each other what you like about the writing; tell each other how the writing could be improved.
5. We do the best we can with a limited number of tutors. If you feel you are not getting enough individualized attention when we are busy (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 10:00 to 2:00), try to arrange your lab hours at less busy times. We really want to give each of you as much time and attention as possible. Help us out.
6. Noise levels have been kept nice and low this semester. Thank you. You have been good about not bringing food into the lab, too. Consideration is the key to cooperation and progress and learning. Keep up the good work.

We hope your mid-terms go well and that you have success in the remaining weeks of the semester.

Danny & the staff.

WRITING LAB EVALUATION

STUDENT'S NAME _____

SEMESTER/YEAR _____

FLUENCY: Greatly increased. Student has a lot more to say now and seems to feel more comfortable saying it.

ORGANIZATION: Is getting better but I would suggest some more free writing assignments. _____ went quickly from fluency into summary/reaction as he's not creating his own organization techniques just relating someone else's.

SUMMARY/REACTION:

Well down. _____ can zero in on the main points in a story or essay. Reactions: long, opinionated and sufficiently documented.

SURFACE DETAIL:

Misuse of prepositions. They are often used as conjunctions. Unsure about where to paragraph sometimes.

ANALYSIS I: - Could move on to this area but I would consider giving _____ some working on paragraphing and topic organization to make sure.

ANALYSIS II:

ANALYSIS III:

OTHER:

For two credit hours _____ just needs many more hours. - at this point 24 hours should have been logged.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Progress
- Good work but just need to see more of it

TUTOR _____

SUGGESTED GRADE:

NAME _____

SEM/YR _____

CREDIT HOURS 2

1. FLUENCY

A B C

Comments: Nice non-forced flow. intention, are well illustrated.

2. ORGANIZATION

A B C

Comments: Shows much thought.

3. SUMMARY/REACTION

A B C

Comments: Nice work

4. ANALYSIS

A B C

Comments: Strong - powerful writing.

5. SURFACE DETAIL

A B C

Comments: Constructive use of Details.

6. REVISIONS

Number finished 1111

Comments:

7. ATTITUDE

Excellent Good Fair

Comments:

8. GENERAL COMMENTS:

TUTOR _____

GRADE A

APPENDIX C

Post-1985 writing portfolio contents

Term	Yr
F	W

LOG SHEET

111 Yes No
Instructor _____
Credit Hours of 109

[illegible]

Information Sheet English 109

109 and the Writing Center

The Writing Center lets you earn academic credit while learning how to write better. We give you short exercises and essays and show you how to do them—teaching you the ground rules, proving to you that writing can be fun, and building your confidence. There's no homework or textbook—all work is done in the Center or in class. You supply the paper, ink, and effort, and we'll see to it that your writing improves. All we ask of you is that you write every time you come to the Center or class, discuss each piece of writing with your instructor or a tutor in the Center, and make a genuine commitment to improving your writing.

Logging Credit Hours

To earn credit in the Center, you must log a certain number of hours as follows:

1 Hour of Credit = 28 hours logged (about 2 hours per week)

2 Hours of Credit = 56 hours logged (about 4 hours per week)

3 Hours of Credit = 84 hours logged (about 6 hours per week)

If you are taking 109 for 2 or 3 credits, you will log these hours by attending class for 1 hour each week and coming into the Center for the remainder of these hours to write and to work with our tutors.

If you are taking 109 for 1 credit along with 111, you will log all your hours in the Writing Center.

Writing Center Hours

Monday-Thursday: 8 A.M. - 7 P.M.
Friday: 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.

You may work in the Center whenever your schedule permits, in blocks of one hour or more. However, you will receive more individual help from the tutors if you can come to the Center before 11 A.M. or after 4 P.M. During the peak hours of the middle of the day the Center is often quite full which makes it difficult for the tutors to spend extended periods of time with individual students though they will always try to go over your work with you before you sign out. It is also to your benefit if you try to come at about the same times each week so you can work with the same tutor or tutors and they can get to know you and your writing.

Grading Policy

Since we're concerned with improving your writing skills, your final grade is a reflection of your improvement over the semester, not an absolute, objective indicator of your level of writing ability. We do not grade on a curve, so you'll be graded individually on the improvement reflected in your work.

If you log less than 20 hours in the semester, your grade will be an N (No Credit). If you log more than 20 hours, but less than the minimum 28, your grade will be an I (Incomplete), to be completed within five weeks of the next full semester.

Students whose placement exam required them to take one credit of 109 along with 111 will not be permitted to take 112 until the 1 credit requirement for 109 is completed with a passing grade. Students whose placement exam required them to take 3 credits of 109 before taking 111 will not be permitted to take 111 until 3 credits of 109 are completed with a passing grade.

Writing Center Procedures

Again, welcome to the Writing Center. What follows is not a list of rules and regulations but is, instead, a guide to getting around in the Center and functioning within our (loose) structure.

1. Student files are kept in the top two drawers of the tall, far left file cabinet, near the blackboards, in alphabetical sections.
2. In each folder is a log sheet. Each time you come in, get your folder, and write in the date and time. Then get a new writing assignment from a tutor or continue to work on a previous assignment. When you have completed an assignment, go over it with a tutor. Try to leave enough time to go over your work with a tutor before leaving the Center. When you are ready to leave, have a tutor sign you out (i.e., the time, their initials, and a comment about your work in the space provided on the log sheet). Refile your folder.
3. Please return assignment sheets you have finished working with to the metal box on top of the file cabinet where your folder is kept. They are not worth hoarding in your folder.
4. Please try to log in your time in one hour blocks--not half hours or quarter hours. You must log at least one full hour per sitting to be given credit. We will allow the first hour you spend to be the 50 minute academic hour. Subsequent hours spent in one sitting must be full 60 minute hours.
5. Label everything you write with your name, the date, and title of the assignment. Feel free to staple multi-page assignments together to avoid getting them confused or misplaced. Try to keep the assignments in your folder in chronological order, first assignment on the bottom, last assignment on top.
6. Please don't write on our assignment sheets as you tend to give away either good ideas or bad ideas to the next person who uses them. There's nothing wrong with giving away ideas, good or bad ones, save that they tend to muddle the appearance of things.
7. Never hesitate to approach a tutor with a question--whether it concerns procedure or an assignment or life at the university or life on other planets, or the way the world is going someplace in a hand-basket.
8. Help yourself to our books. A sign-out sheet is located somewhere. Ask a tutor.

THE WRITING CENTER EVALUATION

1. **FLUENCY:** By "fluency" we mean the ability to produce a lot of writing. We are looking at how you approach the assignment: do you take notes, try out various ideas, begin with a rough draft, etc? Your ability to be fluent and self-confident should improve over the semester. It's all a matter of over-coming the fear of the blank page—a fear we all have.

2. **USE OF DETAIL/ILLUSTRATION:** Here we are looking for your use of specifics, evidence, concrete description to back up what you are trying to say or prove. Do you simply give abstract generalizations, or do you show your reader in detail what you are getting at? Do you simply quote material, or do you show the reader in your own words that you understand the material? This is a skill you should learn for all writing situations—essays, essay tests, analysis of literature, reports, etc.

3. **ORGANIZATION/COHERENCE:** In this category we are looking for your ability to use paragraphs effectively, as well as transitions between paragraphs. Is the work organized logically and clearly, staying with your main point, making everything cohere? Or do you go off on tangents, confusing the reader? Are you able to handle chronological order, cause and effect, analogy, comparison, and so on.

4. **SUMMARY-REACTION/ANALYSIS:** S/R assignments help you to read and write about the content of an article or story. Analysis helps you to read and write about the underlying tools of the author: tone, audience target, style, rhetorical devices, unstated assumptions, etc.—the form of the article or story. S/R tends to be your subjective opinion about what the author has to say; analysis tends to be your objective evaluation of how the author says it.

5. **MECHANICS/GRAMMAR:** While we believe that mechanics and grammar are best learned by writing and not by learning rules of usage, we still value your ability to have a good grasp of accepted practice. We are looking at your proof-reading skills, at your ability to make use of the dictionary and other reference books on usage, and at your work on polishing final drafts. We don't expect you to memorize punctuation rules, but we expect you to care about your writing enough to look closely at the details of spelling, agreement, tense, wording, and yes, punctuation.

6. **ATTITUDE:** By "attitude" we mean how enthusiastic you are about improving your writing. We expect you to be open to suggestions and to try different things without too much argument (but please feel free to ask questions and offer alternative ways of doing things). We expect you to work hard and not waste time. We want you to show initiative in revising and polishing your work without us bugging you about it. In other words, we look for a sincere desire on your part to make your writing better.

7. **REVISIONS:** one (1) hour of credit = two (2) revisions
 two (2) hours of credit = three (3) revisions
 three (3) hours of credit = four (4) revisions

Please keep in your folder all drafts of your assignments to show us the steps your revisions went through. You will then select two, three, or four of these revisions to polish into final drafts as part of the requirements of the course.

NAME _____

TERM _____

109 CREDIT HOURS
REQUIRED _____ENGLISH 111
INSTRUCTOR _____

ADVISOR _____

DEPARTMENT _____

CREDITS TOWARD
DEGREE _____LAST SCHOOL
ATTENDED _____

IF YOU HAVE TAKEN ENGLISH
100, 109, 111, OR 112 AT
U OF M-FLINT, PLEASE LIST
INSTRUCTORS' NAMES AND YOUR
FINAL GRADES BELOW:

PLEASE TELL US SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH WRITING.
DESCRIBE YOUR WORST EXPERIENCE WITH WRITING. DESCRIBE YOUR
HAPPIEST. RELAX. DON'T WORRY ABOUT SPELLING OR GRAMMAR.
THINK OF THIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT AS A CASUAL LETTER.

THE WRITING CENTER: MIDTERM EVALUATION

STUDENT'S NAME _____ HOURS _____ SEMESTER-YEAR _____

1. FLUENCY COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
-------------------------	-----------	------	------

2. USE OF DETAIL COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
-------------------------------	-----------	------	------

3. ORGANIZATION/ COHERENCE COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
--	-----------	------	------

4. S/R & ANALYSIS COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
--------------------------------	-----------	------	------

5. MECHANICS/GRAMMAR COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
-----------------------------------	-----------	------	------

6. ATTITUDE COMMENTS:	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR
--------------------------	-----------	------	------

7. REVISIONS COMMENTS:	NUMBER FINISHED _____
---------------------------	-----------------------

GENERAL COMMENTS:

TUTOR _____

Preparing Your Portfolio: How-Tos

Purposes

For you: Preparing your portfolio gives you a chance to review all your work in 109 this term and assess your own growth as a writer. It also gives you a chance to present your work at its very best for final evaluation. The process of self-reflection that you undergo in preparing this portfolio will help you determine where and how you have grown as a writer and what you still need to continue to work on. Becoming a capable writer means much more than just producing better papers. It also has to do with your attitude toward writing, your self-confidence as a writer, your understanding of the writing process, and your ability to evaluate and improve your own work. Look for evidence of growth in all these areas as you prepare your final portfolio.

For the 109/Writing Center staff: Reviewing all the writing you did this term plus your own self-analysis and reflections permits us to see how you have grown and changed as a writer and how you perceive your own writing development in 109. This helps us give you the fairest possible assessment based on what we see as well as what you tell us you have learned.

How-Tos

- 1. Select pieces for revision:** 2 for 1 credit students
 3 for 2 credit students
 4 for 3 credit students

You may choose anything you have written in 109 this semester, but please be sure to include at least one piece that is either an argument, an opinion, a summary/reaction, or an analysis.

Some possible reasons for selecting the pieces:

- you like the piece and want to work on it further
- we like the piece and told you it has potential
- you were dissatisfied with the piece when you wrote it, but now you know why and also have some ideas on how to improve it
- you feel it is a good representation of what you can do as a writer; it reflects your style, tone, voice, perspective on the world, personal interests or opinions.

- 2. Revise, polish, and proofread** these pieces with the help of the tutors and your 109 instructor (if you are a 2 or 3-credit student). Make each one representative of your very best writing, applying all the writing skills you learned in 109 this semester. Proofread carefully.

3. Write a short "reflection" for each revision after you complete it. A "reflection" can discuss any or all of the following: How you came to write this piece. The process you used in writing the piece. Why you selected this piece for one of your final revisions. What this piece shows about you as a writer. How you feel about the piece now that it is revised. Anything you might want to say about the topic, the piece of writing itself, the work you put into it, or your feelings as you worked on it.

Put the "reflection" for each piece on top of the final draft of that piece.

4. Organize your portfolio: Put your final revisions on top of all the rest of the writing in your portfolio. Put all the drafts of a given piece together with a paper clip, the final draft on top, the "reflection" on top of the final draft. Below that, arrange all your Writing Center pieces in chronological order with the earliest pieces on the bottom. Keep pieces composed in class in the separate colored folder, also arranged in chronological order with the earliest pieces on the bottom.

5. Write a case study of yourself as a writer: See attached directions. Put your case study on top of your portfolio so it is the first thing a reader sees when he or she opens your folder.

Last Words from the Writing Center Staff:

We hope you enjoy the process of re-reading, self-evaluation, and reflection that goes into preparing this portfolio. It is meant to give you a chance to recognize the results of your hard work all term and to help you set personal goals for your future growth as a writer throughout college and beyond. The Writing Center staff also looks forward to reviewing your work one last time because we know we will see your improvement over time and enjoy your best pieces.

Final Portfolio Checklist
English 109

Please check off the items below as you complete them. Remember, you must do two revisions for one credit, three revisions for two credits, four revisions for three credits. By the last day of the semester, you should have completed the number of required revisions, worked in the Center or in class for the required number of hours, and prepared your final portfolio by completing all the items below.

Revision #1

revision conference_____ revision completed_____

final proofreading completed_____ reflection completed_____

Revision #2

revision conference_____ revision completed_____

final proofreading completed_____ reflection completed_____

Revision #3

revision conference_____ revision completed_____

final proofreading completed_____ reflection completed_____

Revision #4

revision conference_____ revision completed_____

final proofreading completed_____ reflection completed_____

Case Study of Yourself as a Writer in 109 _____

Writing Center Evaluation _____

NAME_____HOURS COMPLETED_____TUTOR_____

APPENDIX D

Sample writing assignments from the University of Michigan- Flint Assignment Drawers

Bentley/Hartwell years:

**The Blump
Worry List
Diagnostic**

Murray years:

Writing From a Personal Point of View

Rosen years to present:

selected assignments

The Blump

The Blump is a sci-fi monster. You are one of the few people who have seen it and survived. Now the police need a witness to provide them with details on what you saw.

1. What is its size?
2. Any distinguishing characteristics such as unusual appearance or behavior?
3. Where were you when you saw it?
4. What did it do?
5. How did it kill its victim? Describe what you saw happen.
6. Could you tell where it came from?
7. Do you have any other information or details about its habits or behavior?

FLUENCY:**WORRY LIST****PREPARE:**

- I. Quickly write a list of fifty things that everyone has to worry about. It should not take more than fifteen minutes. The list has already been started for you.
 1. making lists
 2. bowel movements
 3. death
 4. missing the bus
 5. herpes
- II. Now, explore the ways in which your worries can be grouped. Perhaps you have listed several financial worries or several general, global worries (i.e., war, poverty) or several personal worries. Try grouping similar worries together.

WRITE:

Now write an essay discussing one group of worries and how they effect you personally. Let your reader know why you are worried about these things.

(approximately one to two pages)

Diagnostic

READ: We are all made up of many selves. Another way of saying the same thing is that each of us plays several roles in our lifetime. For instance, a single person may have these various selves: full-time student, food checker at a supermarket, big brother to a foster child, sole wage earner in a family or bass player with a band.

PREPARE: Write brief answers to the following questions.

1. Identify your several selves clearly.
2. How are those selves different from each other?
3. What do those selves have in common with each other?

WRITE: Now write an essay that describes your various selves using the above questions as a guide.

(approximately 30-45 minutes)

Writing From a Personal Point of View

Prepare: Choose an event from your life that you are willing to tell others about in an informal, personal piece of writing. Perhaps you have won an award, invented something, aided a person in need, survived hard times, overcome a handicap (physical or emotional). Choose an event that you are willing to talk about.

Write: Now write an essay describing your subject to your readers. Talk to them as if you were telling a story; as if they were sitting next to you and listening.

FLUENCY/QUOTE

"YOU'RE THE LAST PERSON I EXPECTED TO SEE HERE."

Use the above quote in a story. You can place it anywhere within the story you like, at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end (yes, you can choose!). Before or while writing you should keep the following questions in mind:

- 1) Who is saying this?
- 2) Who is the speaker talking to?
- 3) What is their relationship? (old friends, casual acquaintances, parent/child, husband/wife, etc.)
- 4) What is the speaker's tone of voice? (surprised, sarcastic, annoyed, etc.)
- 5) Where does this take place? (bar, wedding, Hudson's, etc.)
- 6) What are the circumstances?

(2 pages)

Your next-door neighbor is an elderly physicist who has spent her entire life studying time. She has just discovered a limited way of sending someone into the future. She explains to you that if you sit in a certain battered green armchair in her living room, close your eyes, and clear your mind of all thoughts, she can send you 200 years into the future. You will find yourself sitting in a room with one of your descendants. You may speak with this person, but you may not leave the armchair. In half an hour you will automatically return to your own time period.

After hearing about this new invention, you agree to help test it. You sit in the chair and follow the old physicist's instructions. To your amazement, the thing actually works!

What and whom do you see?

Is your descendant (maybe your great-great-great-great-grandson/daughter) at all like you?

You have only half an hour. Do you have any advice for your descendant? Is there anything you want to ask?

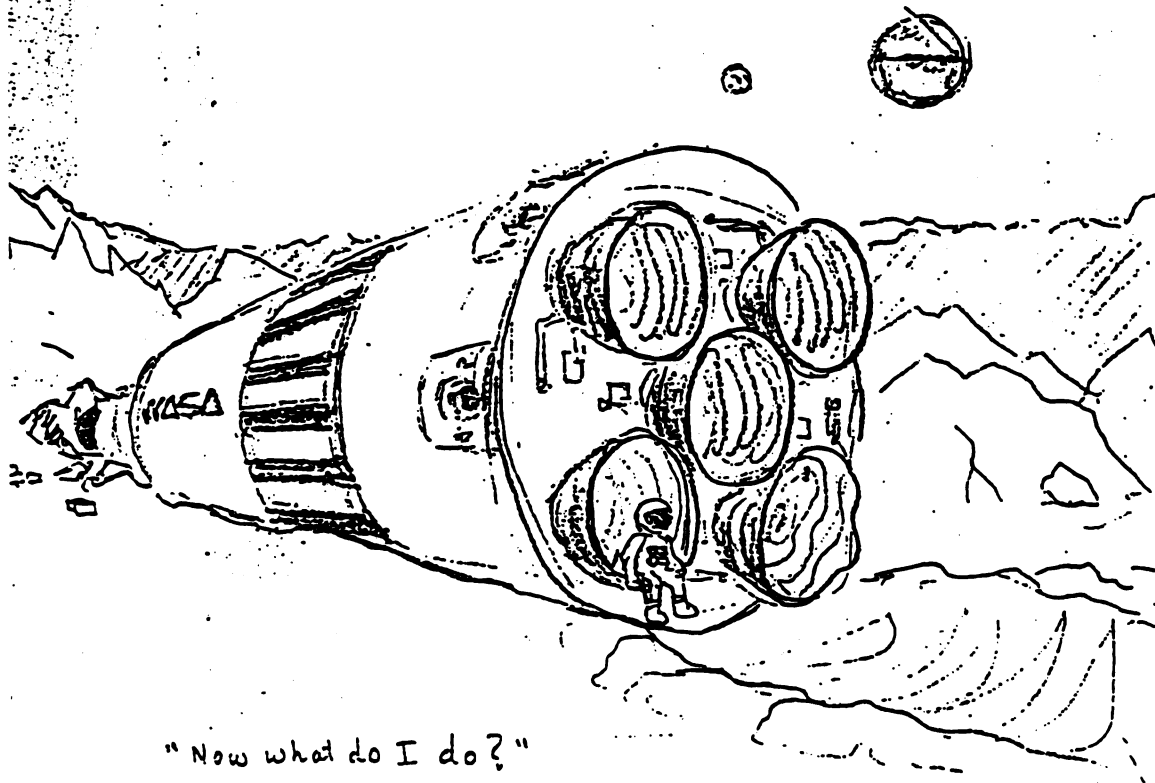
Does this experience change your life in any way?



FLUENCY I

NEW WORLD

Close your eyes. Wait! Don't close your eyes or you won't be able to read. Imagine your eyes are closed. Your spacecraft is plummeting toward the planet's surface with a huge tail of black smoke trailing behind it. The computer has failed and you have to land manually. Luckily, the land runs smoothly and most of the equipment can be salvaged; but there is no hope for leaving the planet on this spacecraft. You force the hatch open and fall onto land. Tell us about it. Is it hot or cold? Can you breathe the air? Just one sun on the horizon? Any vegetation? Any locals? Be descriptive.



The "Gotcha" Contest

You can choose to play a game in the Writing Center that may win you a prize and will definitely improve your writing skills. This game involves fooling either one of the tutors, Scott Russell, or your 109 instructor by (1) writing something that is **not true** but is so convincing that your victim believes it, or (2) writing something that **is true** but somehow doesn't sound true, so that your victim thinks you must have made it up. Sometimes you will write two versions of the same paper and your victim will have to guess which one is the genuine version. Here's how the game works:

1. If you think you may want to play, sign up on the sheet being passed around in class or tell a tutor in the Writing Center that you would like to sign up. All participants' names will be put on a chart in the Center. The "victims'" names--the people who are targets for being fooled--will also be listed on a chart.

2. Any assignment you are given in the Writing Center can be turned into a "Gotcha" assignment. You probably won't want to play the game with every assignment you get, but when you're in the mood to play "Gotcha," tell a tutor. You will be given a "how-to" sheet that gives you some tips on playing the game with that particular type of assignment. The tutor will also give you some suggestions if you like and may suggest a victim--maybe another tutor, for example. This will be the person you try to fool.

3. After you've written a draft of your paper, show it to the tutor who is your accomplice. Get some advice about whether it's ready for your victim, or whether some changes need to be made. Follow whatever advice you are given, then ask your victim to read the paper. **Don't tell your victim that this is a "Gotcha" assignment unless you have to.**

4. Let your victim offer comments about the paper, just as he/she would do for any assignment. If the victim doesn't say "Gotcha!" or "This must be a Gotcha assignment" and if he/she then goes on to give you a new assignment or to sign you out of the lab, you can say "Gotcha!" and win a point in the game. If you "get" someone, make sure he/she records this on the log sheet.

5. Every time you "get" somebody, a dot will be placed after your name on the chart. Every time a victim is fooled, a dot will be placed after his/her name, too. At the end of the semester prizes will be awarded to the top five winners. A booby prize will be awarded to the victim who has been fooled most often. **NOTE:** We're not talking about big prizes here. This isn't Wheel of Fortune. We're playing the game for fun, and to encourage you to develop your writing voice and the way you think about/plan for your audience. Just have a good time with this!

READ AND RESPOND

What's your opinion and why?

In this assignment, you are asked to read an article and respond to the issue that is discussed. Tell what you think about the issue and give your reader some reasons for why you think the way you do. You may want to follow these steps in writing your read-and-respond paper:

1. Identify the issue. What is the article mainly about? What is the writer's point of view? Is the writer for or against something? Or is he/she just exploring the issue without giving a point of view?

2. Decide what your response is. Here are some possible ways in which you might respond. (Remember that you only need ONE kind of reaction.)

- Agree with the writer's point of view.
- Disagree with the writer's point of view.
- Agree with some parts and disagree with others.
- Relate the issue to one of the following:
 - a personal experience.
 - the experience of someone you know.
 - a conversation you have had.
 - something you've read.
 - something you've seen on t.v.
 - material covered in a course you've taken.

3. Decide what your reasons are for your reaction. You should try to give at least three.

4. Write your reaction carefully, paying attention to organization and development. As you write, ask yourself these questions: Did I give the name of the article and writer near the beginning of my response? Did I tell what the issue is? Is my main idea (my response) clear? Are my supporting points (reasons for my response) clear? Did I give the reader enough details and examples? Did I find and use one or two good quotes from the article to help get my point across?

Summary/Reaction Guide

Idea behind S/R: why do this?

The idea behind S/R is to become involved with controversy and issue, to join the debate. An essential part of any course work in the humanities and social sciences is to be able to respond to what you read in writing. To do this well, there are certain steps that you can practice (and modify) to suit your talents and skills. You have to let your reader know clearly and efficiently the title, author, and basic content of what you're talking about. You have to be able to make it clear to your reader what your stand is, why you are going on so about this thing. You have to figure out ways to relate what you say to the article.

Pre-reading:

1. Survey -- Look at the title, the author's name, subtitles, pictures or graphics, and bold print headings in the article.
2. From these, try to predict what you think the article is going to be like. Think about what sort of article it is.
 - What is it about?
 - Is it going to be serious or funny?
 - Is it another typical article of its kind?
 - Is it about what the title suggests?
3. Write down, your answers to these questions and then see if you're right.

Pre-write notes:

1. Read the article/essay.
Write a sentence stating the author's main point.
2. Re-read the article and take notes on significant points. Take quotes from the essay. These should support or explain your main-point sentence.
*Be sure to look up any unfamiliar terms or references before you continue on with the assignment.

Now start your paper. Discuss your sentence and notes with a tutor before you begin to write.

3. Briefly summarize the article. This portion of your paper should be fairly short, no more than a page or so. Don't write a blow-by-blow account of the essay. If you feel inclined to rewrite the essay, talk to a tutor.

Your summary should include the author's name, and the title of the essay. It should be able to explain the basic idea of the article to someone who has not read it before.

4. React to the article. How do you feel about the topic that is dealt with? Do you agree or disagree? Why? You are welcome to use examples from personal experience, but don't get distracted from the purpose of your paper.

Writing about literature, while not so complex and technical a task as writing a research paper, does call for two kinds of non-writing skills. These non-writing skills are to read literature and to interpret it. The brief review in the text of the principles of literature should help you get ready.

After acquiring a working knowledge of those principles, and after reading the selection you intend to write about, you need to use a modification of the classical invention technique as the creating stage. Ask yourself questions about the selection. The Baker's Dozen in the text, repeated here for your convenience, make a good starting point.

BAKER'S DOZEN

Questions to ask yourself about fiction

1. Is there anything particularly unusual about the setting? Does the setting itself serve as a "character" in the story? How significant is time in the story? How is the setting presented?
2. What is interesting about the major character(s)? How does the major character change? How is character in the story revealed—by author's comments, by others' remarks in the story, by things the character does and says?
3. What is the point of view? How would the story be different if it were told from another point of view? Does the point of view shift? If so, what is gained/lost by this shift?
4. What insight does the author give in this story? How is this theme revealed? What is my reaction/response to this theme? Is this theme universally true? Can I compare this theme to one in another piece of fiction?
5. What makes the story "good"? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? Will this story last?
6. What do I know about the author's other writing? Can I say anything about this story by comparing it to stories written in other times in history? Do I know anything about the historical context of the story? Is there anything about the time when it was written that

would illuminate the author's purpose? Can I discuss the way this piece of fiction is like/unlike other pieces of fiction? Can I compare/contrast this story with another one written by the same author? Do I know how this story was received by the public? by critics?

7. What is the conflict in the story? How is this conflict revealed? How is the conflict resolved? Is this resolution believable?

8. Is there anything unusual about the way the story is written? Are there a lot of flashbacks? If so, of what value are they in the story? Can I say anything about the author's style? Is there anything different about the form—say, drawings interspersed as in a Vonnegut novel or sentences run together as in Faulkner's work? If so, what is there to say about this form? Are there any motifs that recur throughout the story—water, nature, clocks, gardens, bouquets, snakes, etc.? If so, can I trace any development in these? Or can I relate them to the theme/conflict/tension in the story? Does the author do anything unusual with words? Is there anything special to say about the language?

9. Are there two types of people, two opposing philosophies contrasted in the story? If so, how are these related to the theme? How are they revealed? Can I compare/contrast two characters and relate this to the meaning of the story?

10. How does the author establish the tone of the book? How does this tone relate to the conflict? the theme? the resolution? the characters? Does the tone change in the story?

11. Is the theme of the story a criticism of society? institutions in society? government? people? Is the theme a celebration of life? an affirmation of the good? Is the theme a warning? concern?

12. What is the most important development that occurs in this story? What is significant about that?

13. Is this story believable? What makes it realistic? What makes it a fantasy? If it is a fantasy, can it also be "true"? If it is realistic, can it also be "false"? What makes the story believable or unbelievable?

In the shaping stage, you must consider your audience, form a thesis, and write an essay supporting that thesis with detail. Since your audience is usually your teacher and your classmates, that part of the shaping is not too difficult. The thesis must be very carefully done and fully supported by evidence from the work itself. The more details, the better. Completing such a paper requires that you do the kind of careful writing you would do for any other paper.

GENERAL GUIDE TO ANALYZING ESSAYS

An essay is more than a random collection of ideas; it is a literary work in which the author combines form and style to express ideas as forcefully and compellingly as possible. In analyzing an essay, then, it is important that you examine the way ideas are expressed as well as the nature of the ideas themselves.

In a good essay, the title, introduction, thesis, supporting ideas, transitional devices, and closing are integrated in a unified and coherent structure. The tone and diction of the essay are free from problems and appropriate to the essay's organization and purposes. And the ideas proposed in the essay are supported by reliable evidence and logical reasoning. In short, a good essay's structure conveys its meaning clearly and eloquently.

This guide has been formulated to help you examine in detail the essays you read and write. It provides questions that you can use to examine the rhetoric, evaluate the logic, and explore the ideas in an essay. Literary terms used in this guide are defined in detail in the Glossary.

EXAMINING RHETORIC

Organization

1. What mode of discourse is used?
 --Argument? Logical argument? Persuasive argument?
 --Description? Objective description? Generalized
 narration? Summarized narration?
 --Exposition?

2. Is the title general or specific? Are metaphors, alliteration, or other devices used in the title? If so, for what purpose?

Are there subtitles? If so, what purpose do they serve?

3. Is there an introduction? Does the essay begin with a quotation? An anecdote? A straw man? General information? Statistics? An allusion? A rhetorical question? An unusual statement? A statement about the significance of the essay's thesis?

What is the purpose of the introduction? How does it relate to the essay's thesis? How is the transition made between the introduction and the essay?

4. Is the essay's thesis implied, or is it directly stated? Where is it most clearly expressed? What does this location suggest about the essay's emphasis?

Is the thesis repeated in the course of the essay? If so, why do you think the author has done this?

5. What is the main pattern of development used to present supporting ideas? Classification? Example? Definition? Analysis? Process analysis? Comparison and contrast? Analogy? Cause and effect?

Is there sufficient unity in the essay? Do all of the supporting ideas pertain to the thesis? Are enough ideas presented to support the thesis? Are too many ideas presented?

Is there sufficient coherence? Are the ideas presented in an appropriate sequence? Is this sequence chronological, spatial, logical, or is some other form of organization used?

Are ideas linked by appropriate transitional structures? What transitional methods are used? Parallel structures? Coordinating conjunctions? Subordinating conjunctions? Repetition of essential ideas? Enumeration of ideas?

Is there foreshadowing? Flashback? If so, how is each device used?

6. How does the essay close? with a reassertion of proof? A summary of the points made in the essay? A statement of deeper meaning? A statement of thesis?

Style and tone

1. Is figurative language used in the essay? If so, what kinds are used? Metaphors? Personification? Similes? Idioms? Hyperbole? Others?

For what purpose are the figures of speech used? Do they contribute to the beauty and tone of the essay? Do they enhance or obscure the essay's meaning?

2. Does the essay contain highly technical or difficult language? Could simpler synonyms be used with greater effectiveness?

3. Does the essay contain many general or abstract words? Do they obscure meaning? Could specific or concrete words be substituted to express more clearly the essay's meaning?

4. Are there diction problems in the essay? Do you find examples of jargon, triteness, pretentious words, or slang? What effect does this use of language have on the essay as a whole?

5. What is the tone of the essay? Humorous? Angry? Informal? Scholarly? Ironical? Matter-of-fact? Other? Does the tone coordinate well with the purpose of the essay?

6. Are the sentences in the essay long and complex? Brief and simple? What does the style of the sentences contribute to the essay as a whole? Does the style of the sentences detract in any way from the essay?

7. Are there any sentence problems? Do you find examples of wordiness or deadwood? Undue repetition of words, sounds, or meanings? Inappropriate cuteness? Other problems?

EVALUATING LOGIC

Evidence

1. What are the author's qualifications? Does he or she have the education and experience necessary to write about the topic? What else has the author written? Is he or she known to have a particular bias toward the subject?

2. What magazine or book does the essay appear in? What is the reputation of that source? Can you depend on it for honesty and accuracy?

3. What is the publication date of the essay? If timeliness is important, is the material up to date? Have there been important developments in the area discussed since the essay was published? Is the issue discussed in the essay still important, or is it outdated?

4. Has the essay been cut? If so, do you think the deleted material could provide important clues as to the honesty and accuracy of the essay as a whole?

5. Are the facts accurate? Is the number of facts cited sufficient to prove the author's point?

6. Do the opinions and quotations cited come from qualified authorities?

7. Does the author use any descriptive devices to strengthen the essay's argument? Does the author use misleading statements? Loaded or slanted words? Slogans? A misleading writing style? Bandwagon appeal? Sentimental appeal? Appeals based on misleading authority? Any other devices?

Reasoning

1. Is the major proposition (thesis) stated clearly? Is it stated in an unbiased, unslanted way? Is it arguable?
2. Are all of the relevant minor (supporting) propositions stated?
3. Are all difficult or problematical terms defined?
4. Are all counter-arguments anticipated and answered?
5. If inductive reasoning is used, are generalizations based on sufficient evidence and are hasty generalizations avoided?
6. If reasoning by analogy is used, is the analogy based on a sufficient number of characteristics shared by the things being compared? Are both weak and false analogies successfully avoided?
7. If deductive reasoning is used, has the major premise (generalization about the class) been arrived at inductively from sufficient evidence? Does the major premise ignore any significant fact? Is the fact stated in the minor premise (application to a specific member of the class) true? Does the conclusion follow logically?
8. Are there logical fallacies in the essay? Do you find examples of over-generalization? Unsupported inferences? Assumption of proof by failure to find the opposite case? Special pleading? Avoiding the question with a non sequitur or ad hominem attack? Begging the question? False dilemmas? False sequences? Other fallacies?

Comprehending and Interpreting Ideas

1. What is the title? How can it be paraphrased? What does it suggest about the essay's thesis? The tone of the essay? The viewpoint from which the essay is written? The essay's emphasis?
2. What does the introduction tell you? Is it aimed simply at attracting the reader's interest? If not, what does it suggest about the essay's thesis? Its tone? The author's viewpoint? The emphasis of the essay?
3. What is the essay's central thesis?
4. What supporting ideas are used to develop the thesis? What do the transitional structures show about relationships among ideas in the essay?

5. What ideas are presented in the closing? What do they tell you about the essay's emphasis? Its meaning? Its implications?

6. What levels of meaning lie behind the ideas given? What do the ideas suggest about what our world and our behavior are like at present? About what they should be like?

Applying Ideas

1. How do the ideas in the essay apply to your current activities and ideas?

2. Does the essay suggest any changes you might make in your life in the future?

APPENDIX E

**"Goals and Objectives of the University of Michigan-
Flint Writing Center"**

by

Robert W. Barnett

1996

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN-FLINT WRITING CENTER**

GOAL 1: Assist all students in advancing their writing abilities and critical thinking skills in relation to their university education and in preparation for their respective careers.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Maintain and improve collaborative tutoring for writers at any level, including first year students, advanced writers, and graduate students in any course across the curriculum.

Continue offering individualized tutoring on a drop-in basis and establish blocks of time for tutoring by appointment.

Implement small-group tutoring in the Center.

Offer group tutoring in courses where writing is assigned.

Enhance the on-line tutoring provided in the Center.

Expand hours of operation to include Sunday evenings.

Continue collecting instructors' assignments, and work to increase the number of participating instructors.

2) Work collaboratively with other units on campus to provide services that illustrate the importance of writing, both in the academy and in the work environment.

Offer Writing Center/Cooperative Education and Career Center staff workshops on resume/cover letter/interview preparation to enhance the assistance that both offices provide for students.

Offer Writing Center/Cooperative Education and Career Center workshops for all students across

campus on resume/cover letter/interview preparation.

Establish a partnership with the Marian E. Wright Computer Writing Classroom to assist students with on-line composing and peer collaborative tutoring.

Establish a cooperative network with the Academic Enrichment Center for the purpose of creating a two-way referral system, where students needing help with writing would be referred to the WC by the AEC and students needing help learning course contents would be referred to the AEC by the WC.

Work closely with other units such as Student Services and Enrollment Management to enhance student retention efforts in the area of writing performance.

Work closely with Educational Opportunities Initiatives for creating additional support for minority and at-risk students.

GOAL 2: Maintain and enhance the quality of the English Department's Developmental Writing program as it pertains to the Writing Center to more effectively facilitate students' learning processes.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Continue collecting English 109 student writing samples for future research into issues related to Developmental Writing and Writing Center intervention.

Maintain the file containing sample writing portfolios from English 109 students each Fall and Winter semester to evaluate the effectiveness of the English 109 program.

Study portfolios to evaluate the effectiveness of peer tutoring on the development of student writing.

Use the portfolios to track the academic success and graduation rates of students who have completed the English 109 program.

Apply for research grants to begin assessment of the Developmental Writing/Writing Center program, using sample portfolios as the basis for research.

2)Continue to revise and update the writing assignments given Developmental Writing Students each semester.

3)Review and update the student sign-in and portfolio folders.

GOAL 3: Enhance the Writing Center's physical and technical facilities for the purpose of effectively and efficiently accommodating the increase in student and faculty use of the facility.

OBJECTIVES:

1)Provide open and private tutoring for group and individual tutoring sessions.

Review current research and data pertaining to the noise factor in Writing Centers as it pertains to effective tutoring.

Establish staff policies that suggest ways in which to reduce the non-productive noise factor.

Submit a proposal the English Department chair and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences requesting more space in order to accommodate open and private tutoring.

Seek funding for new tables and chair that are more comfortable and compatible with the needs of peer tutoring.

2)Maintain and improve the quality of service of all Writing Center computers.

Continue offering tutoring for students who compose and revise their papers on the Writing Center computers.

Establish an e-mail help line to assist students with writing-related questions and problems.

Work closely with ITS to ensure quick and efficient maintenance of all computers, printers, and network services.

Apply for internal and external funding to replace all computers and printers with IBM 486 computers and laser jet printers.

Apply for internal and external funding to maintain the hardware and software of new computer equipment.

GOAL 4: Continue increasing the awareness of the Writing Center's presence to students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Increase the awareness of the role the Writing Center plays in the university curriculum, and continue an aggressive campaign to inform the university of all services provided by the Writing Center.

Continue and expand class visits at the beginning of each semester to inform students of the tutoring and computer services offered by the Writing Center.

Update and distribute flyers, brochures, posters, etc. that inform the university community of the Writing Center's operation.

Continue publishing an annual newsletter, informing the university community of Writing Center developments and accomplishments, targeting specific populations (i.e. transfer students, first-year students).

Work more closely with student organizations and academic departments. Give presentations at meetings that illustrate how writing relates to specific fields of study.

Maintain the use of campus e-mail as a means of communicating with students, faculty, staff and administrators.

Submit articles and announcements to *Michigan Times* and *Currents* that pertain to the Writing Center.

2) Provide more opportunities which introduce students, faculty, staff and administrators to the Writing Center.

Establish an active role for the Writing Center in Freshman Orientation.

Organize an annual open-house invitation for the university community at the beginning of each academic year.

Encourage more campus tour groups (i.e. Admissions) to stop in at the Writing Center so that staff members can briefly explain the services we provide.

Invite instructors to bring their students on a short tour of the Writing Center at the beginning of each semester, especially those who teach first-year courses.

Invite all administrators and department representatives to attend Writing Center staff meetings throughout the year to learn more about our services and to expand on collaborative efforts.

GOAL 5: Enhance the development of professional staff and student tutors.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Provide more opportunities for the professional development of the Senior Instructional Associate.

Re-evaluate and update the job description for the Senior Instructional Associate position.

Continue to include the SIA in the decision-making process as it pertains to the operation of the Writing Center.

Consult the SIA for input when planning the tutor training seminar each fall semester.

Collaborate with the SIA in the areas of research, conference presentations, and the writing of articles for professional journals.

2) Provide more opportunities for the professional development of all peer tutors.

Secure a 10%-20% wage increase for all student tutors, which more accurately reflects the duties they perform and which will potentially eliminate the need for tutors to seek supplemental or alternative employment.

Provide periodic training workshops for tutors in the areas of collaborative one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring, resume, cover letter, and personal statement preparation, and computer-assisted tutoring.

Continue to collaborate with tutors on projects for presentation at local, regional and national writing center conferences.

Continue to involve tutors in the decision-making process as it pertains to the operation of the Writing Center.

Involve returning tutors in enhancing the training seminar for new tutors. Invite them to share their past and present experiences with new tutors during the seminar.

Involve tutors in collaborative writing projects with the external community, including area secondary schools, community organizations, and individuals requesting supplemental tutoring.

GOAL 6: Develop the existing partnership between the Writing Center and the Writing Across the Curriculum program.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Work closely with WAC to promote the value of writing in the disciplines, and create more opportunities for faculty to incorporate discipline-based writing into their courses.

Maintain membership on the Writing Across the Curriculum committee.

Continue participation in the WAC workshop series for faculty.

Continue hosting Writing Center/WAC informational open houses for faculty, staff and administrators.

Increase contact with individual faculty members to assist with designing writing assignments for their courses.

GOAL 7: Build a more solid network with other writing centers and with the external community (i.e. secondary

schools, Flint community).

OBJECTIVES:

1) Enhance existing collaboration with other writing centers on local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

Maintain membership and increase involvement in the Michigan Writing Centers Association, the East Central Writing Centers Association, and the National Writing Centers Association.

Continue editorial work on the Michigan Writing Centers Association Newsletter.

Host future writing center conferences and idea exchanges.

Attend and present papers at future writing center conferences.

Attend National Writing Center Institutes for training on the collaboration with local area schools.

2) Increase the local school community's awareness and knowledge concerning the services we provide.

Invite local teachers to bring their students on a tour of the Writing Center when they visit the UM-Flint campus.

Offer Writing Center services as a part of on-campus Summer Institutes and workshops for students in the local schools.

3) Develop partnership with local schools to promote the importance of the role of writing in education.

Collaborate with local community colleges to develop or enhance writing centers at their institutions.

Create on-site tutoring where Writing Center staff members provide individual and group tutoring for high school seniors.

Provide workshops for high school teachers on the role of writing centers in the schools.

Help local schools establish their own writing centers or writing support services.

Assist local schools in enhancing existing writing centers or writing support services.