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**WRITING CENTERS PROFESSIONALIZE: VISIONS AND VERSIONS OF
LEGITIMACY**

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

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GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Chere Lynn Peguesse entitled The Professionalization of Writing Centers: Visions and Versions of Legitimacy

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
1. THE AMBIGUITIES OF PROFESSIONALIZATION FOR WRITING CENTERS.....	5
<i>Methodology</i>	12
METHOD OF ANALYSIS.....	12
METHOD OF RESEARCH.....	14
STUDY PARTICIPANTS	16
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	16
<i>Contested Terms</i>	18
<i>Overview of Chapters</i>	29
2. OF MEMORY AND FORGETTING: A PERSPECTIVE ON IDENTITY FORMATION IN LITERATURE, COMPOSITION, AND WRITING CENTERS.....	30
<i>The Entrance Exam leads to the Rise of Literature</i>	34
<i>Economizing the Word: Vernacular English</i>	38
<i>Identity Formation and Composition</i>	40
<i>The Emergence of the Idea of a Writing Center</i>	43
<i>Using History to Galvanize Writing Center People</i>	49
3. "MANAGING THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE": WRITING CENTERS, COMPOSITION, AND THE QUEST FOR RESPECTABILITY	58
<i>Dealing with Impurity</i>	61
<i>Passing the Buck</i>	67
4. DEFINING PROFESSIONALISM: THE UA WRITING CENTER AND TUTORS	74
<i>The UA Writing Center within the Land Grant Institutional Context</i>	76
<i>Situating the Center Among Other Academic Support Units</i>	79
<i>The U of A Writing Center</i>	81
<i>Professionalism defined, or "It Looks Better if You have a Secretary"</i>	85
<i>Invisible Contexts</i>	91
<i>Utopian Visions counter Material Conditions?</i>	93
5. ASU TUTORS: THE VALUE OF STRUCTURE.....	97
<i>Teacher College Beginnings: Arizona State University</i>	97
<i>The Writing Center in the Network of Academic Support Programs</i>	99
<i>The ASU Writing Center</i>	100
<i>Professionalism Defined, or "We Have Good Hierarchy Here"</i>	103
6. PROFESSIONALIZATION AS CONNECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY	110
<i>Tutor Identity and the Disciplining of Writing Center Work</i>	112
<i>Writing Centers as Participatory Democracies</i>	117
APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA WRITING CENTER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	124
APPENDIX B: ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER TUTOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS.....	162
Works Cited	178

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the ambiguities of professionalization for writing centers and presents an alternative way to approach what I believe is an inevitable process. Toward that end, my project is to examine how the discourse surrounding the professionalization of writing centers constructs scholars, tutors, teachers, and writing. In particular, the focus of my project is to compare how tutors' self-definitions of professionalism reflect/deflect how professionalism is defined in the scholarly literature and in arenas outside of academia. The conclusions I draw are based on my research of two local writing centers in two southwest universities as well as a survey of the intertwined histories of literature, composition studies, and writing centers, and my experience co-directing a writing center for two years. My argument is that writing center workers ought to look outside of academia for organizational models more closely aligned to political activism such the civil rights movement and women's movement, and to capitalize on the interdisciplinary nature of writing center work to create a "participatory democracy," in which participants theorize from their experience and value the process over gaining expertise.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AMBIGUITIES OF PROFESSIONALIZATION FOR WRITING CENTERS

The question of whether a particular practice is enabling or oppressive, enlightening or limiting, is a situated question, one that we much enact rather than decide once and for all.

--Lisa Ede, "Writing Centers and the Politics of Location" (126)

I would very much like to find some safe place to stand, some professional identity and pedagogy to embrace. Above all, I would like to discover a history within which I could affiliate myself.

--Jasper Neel, Aristotle's Voice (126)

These quotations encompass for me the ambiguities of the professionalization process and resonate with a growing sense of ambivalence by those in English Studies about what is gained and lost in acquiring a professional academic identity. Ede's argument above addresses the ethics of professionalization by asserting that our practices are oppressive or enabling depending on the situation. Implied here is the notion of choice: we can choose to practice--or professionalize--in a certain way even as we work within various material constraints, and that we must closely examine our immediate situations to make our choices. Ede resists the good/bad dichotomy by stressing how our decisions and definitions are contingent and must change. But even as this flexibility is

important, it nevertheless inspires responses such as Jasper Neel's plaint for "a safe place to stand" and some professional identity/pedagogy/history that doesn't oppress and alienate. It is a utopian vision, which isn't to say that it is a futile vision. Such a vision spurs us to come as close as we can. Scholars such as Richard Ohmann, James Slevin, John Trimbur, Susan Miller, bell hooks, Stephen Katz, and Bruce Horner contend that the discourses we use to construct academic communities and identities must also be recognized as acts of exclusion and alienation. Particularly through historical accounts of disciplinary formation, Ohmann, Miller, and Neel work to complicate the stories those in English Studies have traditionally told about themselves as specialists. Those who align themselves with writing center work have also recently been revisiting writing center history in similar ways, focusing on points of ambiguity and tension to reveal how writing centers have been situated in a much more complicated way than we have imagined them.

I contend that none of these historical accounts of disciplinary formation can be read in isolation; writing center history is bound up with composition studies and literature in ways that draw attention to the artificiality of hierarchy and the limiting and even damaging aspects professionalization brings. It is still our tendency to imagine a linear, progressive rise to professional status of first literature, then composition studies, then writing centers. However--and we must constantly remind ourselves of this--at the crux of each of these "specialties" is the teaching of reading and writing; what differentiates these specialties is how they *value* reading and writing. In other words, the three areas of study are much more basically alike than they are different. As I will

elaborate in Chapter Two, the reasons literature became a discipline were not because of some inherent theoretical sophistication of the subject matter, but through much more humble circumstances: the creation of a college entrance exam. Because literature lent itself well to being categorized by genre, it dominated the subject matter of the exam.

Part of the process of claiming theoretical sophistication is to reject what seems simplistic and mundane. The drudgery of teaching writing was considered that mundane work and was clearly distinguished from teaching literature. In response, Patricia Bizzell points out that "...writing teachers have traditionally responded to this denigration by defiantly embracing it—ever a tactic of the oppressed—and announcing their pride in their preoccupation with pedagogy" (Dobrin 1). What happens in this circumstance is the odd separation of theory from practice—a practice composition studies mimics from literature—and so within composition studies there is both theory-hope and theory-dread. Those invested in writing centers have inherited this hope/dread construct.

From another vantage point, the English Studies reward system—research, service, and teaching—reflects the still current hierarchical order of literature at the top and writing center work at the bottom. Since literature is considered theoretically rich and therefore the best field for the production of scholarship, rewards for research are valued most highly. Literature equals research. Composition has long been considered a service—something necessary to offer but simplistic in method and impoverished in content. Composition equals service. Teaching, at the bottom of the reward scale, is further identified with composition, and also reflects how working with students is valued the least. Writing centers not only work with students, they work with them *individually*.

What can be theoretically interesting about that? Furthermore, writing centers generally represent themselves in a relationship of service to institutional practices of literacy. Like composition, writing centers are working through themes of clientele, staffing, and institutional identity. Things *are* changing, however slowly. For example, calls for refiguring the tripartite rewards for research, service, and teaching abound in national listservs such as the WPA and Wcenter, and arguments, studies, and discussions about redefining service so that it "counts" as intellectual work proliferate in the professional literature (see Boyer; Bloom, Daiker and White; Hartzog; Janangelo and Hansen; Bullock, Trimbur, and Schuster; Robbins; Susan Miller). Ten years ago, Ernest Boyer made the argument that we need to change our ideas about what is most valuable in our scholarship. Through a 1989 survey of faculty, Boyer and his colleagues found that research is still the foundation from which service and teaching spring, and that this view has created a hierarchy of functions. Rather, Boyer argues, we need to complicate our views about how teaching shapes both theory and practice. We can do this by enlarging the definition to include service and practice. He proposes a four-part model: *the scholarship of discovery*, which is research; *the scholarship of integration*, which contextualizes research results and processes; *the scholarship of application*, which applies knowledge responsibly (the service component); and *the scholarship of teaching*, which focuses on how we teach what we teach. I believe that such a change will expose much more lateral relationships among the specialties in English Studies as well as among all the social sciences. It is part of the work of this dissertation to support the

redefinition of those relationships because I believe that our concept of what it means to be “professional” comes out of those relationships.

In writing center work, Terrence Riley voices his concerns about recent calls for professional advancement by examining how literature and composition have made their claims to legitimacy by devaluing the people and jobs that attracted us in the first place: students and teaching. The article, titled “The Unpromising Future of Writing Centers,” attempts to make the argument I originally set out to make in this dissertation: that is, that writing centers should *not* professionalize because professionalization is a corrupting force (I believed this even in the face of my own professionalization/corruption). As I interpret Riley, when we choose certain kinds of power, we become more concerned with acquisition of more power and less concerned about people; we become more concerned about distinction and less concerned about relationships. Students, Riley points out, are ultimately the losers in this game. When writing centers function properly, they encourage the intellectual development of a student writer by emphasizing personal engagement and the value of process over expertise. Formally measuring a student’s ability is abandoned altogether. But when writing centers try to make themselves more visible and legitimate to the university at large—by becoming more *familiar*—they “invariably move closer to the mass education model” they have prided themselves on resisting (20-21). Riley’s point is well taken; I believe his concerns and observations are generally accurate. However, the article is constructed on an uncomplicated set of polarized notions about expert/amateur, theory/practice, conventional/revolutionary. Riley also assumes that writing centers have always been somehow “outside” the

academic hierarchy, and that they aren't complicit in "mass education." As seriously as I take these flaws, Riley's concern—which met with hostility from some readers of *the Writing Center Journal*—is one that many others are reconsidering.

The question of whether or not professionalization will somehow damage writing centers' more ethical and humane approach to teaching writing is strongly echoed in the scholarship over the past ten years particularly. Nancy Grimm and Peter Vandenburg provide insightful if disturbing analyses of how writing centers' humanitarian intent may "hide the fact that we don't always accomplish as much as we think we do and that in the long run we sometimes do more harm than good" (Grimm 7). Because writing centers have long been associated with remediation, they currently tend to distance themselves from "different" students and align with more mainstream literacy practices as a way to establish legitimacy. Writing center theory takes its cues from current composition theories and yet they position themselves as a service to composition. Using Foucault, Grimm pinpoints how writing centers are implicated in disciplinary forms of power. Because we fail to question established cultural beliefs—such as how our culture locates the "problem" of literacy in individuals and the "solution" in institutional practices—we are blind to the ways writing centers analyze, measure, and supervise "abnormal" writers. Tutors have little time to move beyond identifying the expectations of an assignment and helping students at least move closer to fulfilling those assignments. Our attitudes toward students and the location of the "problem" of literacy are crucial issues to explore in tutor training as well. Peter Vandenburg further cautions that we need to rethink how we train tutors so that we don't normalize for them "the stratification of institutional work into a

competitive, exclusionary, and sometimes violent hierarchy of discursive practices” (Vandenberg 78). In a course he designed to introduce tutors to the professional discourse, the lesson they learned at some cost was

–“the capacity of a power discourse to index its participants along its literacy standard...One of the writing center scholarships most hallowed ideals, the possibility of a hierarchy-free ‘collaboration’ of equal peers, crumbled as they came to grips with the inviolable relationship between authority and authorship in the academy (74).

As Grimm and Vandenberg articulate, it is vitally important to recognize how institutionally determined writing center work is.

Given these calls to reflect critically, my project is to examine how the discourse surrounding the professionalization of writing centers constructs scholars, tutors, teachers, and writing. In particular, the focus of my project is to compare how tutors’ self-definitions of professionalism reflect/deflect how professionalism is defined in the scholarly literature. The conclusions I draw will be based on my research of two local writing centers in two southwest universities as well as a survey of the intertwined histories of literature, composition studies, and writing centers, and my experience co-directing a writing center for two years. I do not propose to sort out which argument is better/worse, but to look at how particular discursive practices reveal assumptions and values of authors. Nevertheless, I am also making the argument that professionalization is inevitable and even desirable for writing center workers if the process can be grounded in connection and activism.

Since I have chosen the profession of teaching college writing, and further, since I have chosen writing center work as the goal of both my research and career niche, this

dissertation serves several local and global purposes: first, if we think that institutional legitimacy was (and still is) difficult to achieve for the field of rhetoric and composition (witness WPA listserv discussions, *Resituating Writing*, *Gender Roles and Faculty Lives*), writing centers will have an even more difficult time because their position and status is rooted in *tutoring*, a practice considered a step below an already devalued occupation, *teaching*. Second, I assume that writing centers will professionalize. I believe that a close examination of the formal and informal discourse concerning professionalization will serve to empower us to be better mentors and teacher/tutor trainers, and will suggest modes of professionalization that forefront connection rather than exclusivity. In examining our own rhetorical practices, we can learn how to utilize the continually emerging knowledge of 'the field' in conjunction with our local experiences to create positive change.

Methodology

Method of Analysis

A range of scholars who work from a rhetorical perspective even as they are in different disciplines has influenced my methods of analysis. By "rhetorical perspective" I mean the kind of critique that studies the way discourses achieve certain effects on people, and assumes that discursive practices are forms of power and performance. Following Margaret Marshall, I also assume that a rhetorical perspective encompasses more than persuasion; it is a complexity of language and relationships between human beings that can be both manipulative and beneficial (10). Rather than focusing on the outcomes of various arguments, I attend to the ways of talking about professionalization

in English Studies, particularly in writing center work, and I read for the relationships constituted between author, readers, and subject, and ask questions about the implications of those relationships. The value of this perspective, as Marshall clearly puts it, is that "observing, describing, and directing attention toward relationships constituted through rhetoric does not provide a set of absolute values to be used in making judgments but rather engages each of us in a dialectical process in which we determine what our judgments are to be and why" (11). Examining how writing center tutors define professionalism reflects how their values and assumptions are constituted in larger socio-cultural forces and can tell us much about the complexity of writing center work as well as about scholarly definitions of professionalism.

Like Foucault and Burke, I am interested in the ruptures and ambiguities of totalizing discourse--in this case the discourse on professionalization--and look to those at "the extremities" (i.e. tutors) for clues about how local knowledge is constructed (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*; Burke, *Grammar of Motives*). Local knowledge and social action, as Geertz says, "are comments on more than themselves...Small facts speak to large issues, winks to epistemology, or sheep raids to revolution because they are made to." Along with theorists in social construction, I believe that language both reflects and constitutes our cultural assumptions and values. Like Geertz, I believe that we are suspended in "webs of significance" and that it is language that constitutes that web. And like Burke, I believe that different cultural groups select certain relationships as meaningful. These relationships aren't realities, they are interpretations of reality; hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality

is. All finite schemes of interpretation differ in the way they divide up experience: some things happen in spite of others, some because of, some regardless of (Permanence and Change, 36). In other words, I believe that cultural values, assumptions, interpretations, and the ways in which people navigate and contend with them are made manifest in discourse. The discursive practices of both the tutors (informal) and scholars (formal) in writing center work can reveal how their values and assumptions can and have shaped their professional sensibilities.

Method of Research

I used an in-depth interview method because it is most appropriate to my task: to understand the meaning tutors attach to the idea of professionalism. In order to understand their subjective understanding of professionalism, it takes time to listen closely, carefully, and respectfully. Interviewing tutors in a writing center also respects and enacts a general writing center philosophy that we learn by talking about ideas. I. E. Seidman, in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, suggests a 90-minute, three tiered interview session with each participant. Seidman is primarily interested in interviewing educators about their experiences, and the three-interview series allows the researcher to understand people's behaviors within the context of their lives. Seidman assumes that participants are strangers, and the long time length allows trust to grow between researcher and participant. However, it was appropriate in my research to interview each tutor for an hour for several reasons. The participants in my study were not strangers: they were tutors with whom I had already worked or knew. In the case of the ASUWC, participants were tutors with whom I had established contact through email. Tutors from

both schools also had one-hour time slots. To take up an hour and a half would mean cutting a student's time with a tutor in half. My own time constraints and the knowledge that I had to transcribe the interviews also influenced my decision to limit interviews to an hour. As a result I was able to interview more tutors; the three-interview per tutor approach would limit how many tutors I could speak to within the time frame of my research.

Many contemporary researchers in Composition Studies use a qualitative approach. Shirley Brice Heath's research on how language shaped attitudes in schools and communities in the Carolina piedmont is a work I became familiar with ten years ago and has inspired me to pursue ethnographic research. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, and Tarule's *Women's Ways of Knowing* has also been a guiding approach from early on. Wendy Bishop also argues for the relevance of qualitative, ethnographic, phenomenological research in composition: "for some anthropologists, storytelling is an adequate--perhaps the only possible--reporting strategy, a strategy that accentuates a researcher's situatedness and subjects' voices." Also influential here is Ruth Ray's work, *The Practice of Theory: Teacher Research in Composition*. Ray's work is grounded in feminist studies because it is a kind of critical discourse that focuses on points of ambiguity or divulges those points by exploding binaries we use as "common sense." Ray's work also values connection and activism. By listening to the stories tutors and directors tell about their work in writing centers, I hope to get at underlying assumptions about what it means to professionalize from a variety of perspectives, and to suggest ways writing centers can "take a stand" professionally while resisting the more

hierarchical, elitist practices of the institution. (206). Beverly Moss, whose work with the literacy of Church was influenced by Heath's work, gets at the heart of the power of ethnographic work: "ethnography allows the researcher to tell a story about a community- a story told jointly by the researcher and the members of the community" (154).

Study Participants

From the UA Writing Center (UAWC) I interviewed nine consultants. My method for choosing these consultants was on a volunteer basis. Five women and three men each granted me a one-hour, tape-recorded interview. One woman and one man were graduate students, both from Russia. I signed up for one of their regular tutoring hours to conduct the interview. From the ASU Writing Center (ASUWC), I interviewed the director and three volunteer undergraduate tutors. Due to time constraints, only four tutors were available from the ASUWC during the time of my research. Three men and one woman participated. The names of all the interviewees have been changed. Gender balance was not a main criterion for choosing tutors to interview.

Interview Questions

My questions were designed to move the tutors' thinking from general to specifics so that I might see how they negotiated the meanings of their definitions of professionalism in different contexts. The questions are deliberately open-ended to create a dialogue between the tutor and myself.

The questions I designed, in the order that I asked them, are as follows:

1. How would you define professionalism in general?

2. How does your conception of professionalism relate to the mission of the writing center?
3. What kind of prestige do you feel goes along with being a tutor here?
4. What do you see as the relationship between the writing center and the university at large? Between the writing center and composition?
5. How would you change the mission, structure, or location of the writing center?

Appendices A and B contains the transcripts of each interview. Question one asks the tutor to draw upon her/his cultural conception of professionalism and question two asks the tutor to juxtapose that cultural conception with the local sense (or lack) of professionalism in the writing center. Often this question elicited a reflection on professionalism as both a code of conduct and a marker of status. The third question about prestige brings the tutor to reflect more specifically on professionalism as status. Having worked through these, I next ask the tutors about their knowledge of where the writing center fits in the larger institutional structure of their university. I wanted to understand the tutors' sense of history and their impression of what "outsiders" perceive about the writing center. Finally, the last question asked tutors to imagine alternatives for the writing center. This question, routine within the mentoring system of the UAWC, often elicits wonderful suggestions for improving the center, but also provided a window on the tutors' sense of their own power and responsibility within that structure.

Contested Terms

In a 1935 speech to the American Writer's conference, Kenneth Burke proposed to the intellectual left that the term *worker*, and the images writers create about the worker, reinforce rather than subvert the hegemonic work of advancing capitalism. Instead, he suggested the term *the people*, a symbol that Burke argued would destroy the illusion of a classless, communal America while preserving that utopian vision of a classless society. Burke believed that *the people* was fluid enough to have political significance. His audience threw tomatoes. Perhaps his audience imagined it harder to create images of *the people* for the very reason that such a thing is *too* fluid. And perhaps the idea that the term was meant to decrease the separation of the intellectual and physical labor was (and remains) a frightening prospect. At any rate, Burke called these writers' bluff:

One can't expect to keep painting these riveting portraits of workers under capitalism, of degradation and alienation, and have people identify with workers, much less spend their intellectual energies and feelings on behalf of workers. These portraits may enlist our sympathies, but often create an effect of repulsion. Your representations are being received as 'other'...you must somehow bring them within-make sure their fate and ours are bound up with each other. (qtd. In Lentricchia, 27-28)

Burke is asking the intellectual left enact something rather than represent something; to identify rather than objectify through language with the human beings they are writing about. The problem Burke identified above is echoed in the "term wars" in writing center work, especially in regard to the terms *tutor* and *professional/professionalization*. This story about Burke's rebuff by the intellectuals of the time also serves as a representative

anecdote for the subject of this dissertation in that at the heart of arguments for and against professionalization is how the student/tutor is or should be defined.

Although writing center people are less inclined to throw tomatoes at each other, there is a debate afoot about what we should call those whose work has historically been referred to as "tutoring." The term *tutor* is contested for many reasons. Most obviously, *tutor* carries the baggage of remediation, and many writing centers in the past were indeed sites of remediation. Stephen North's germinal essay, "The Idea of a Writing Center," laments the persistent perception of writing centers as sites of remediation into current times. And although the majority of writing centers train students with the idea that a peer will have better rapport with students asking for help, *tutor* has conventionally implied someone older and more experienced, and many writing centers have tried to create terms that are more attuned to the writing center situation, hence the title *peer tutor*. But being labeled both *peer* and *tutor* precipitates an identification and loyalty crisis. The best explication of the contradiction of peer tutor, a title many centers have adopted, is John Trimbur's "Peer Tutor: a Contradiction in Terms." This article elucidates how tutors are constructed one way, as superior students who have been rewarded with grades and "jobs" like that of tutor, and in another way, as peers, students who have similar experiences and expertise. Trimbur astutely points out the liminal position especially new tutors occupy is due, ironically, to their success in school. The conflict arises between the tutors' expectations born of the traditional top down mode of knowledge production and the way the traditional model of teaching and learning that tells tutors they are not qualified to pass down knowledge to their tutees (22). Through

tutor training that emphasizes experiential knowledge first and theoretical knowledge second, Trimbur argues that tutors can then be grounded in student culture rather than professional culture.

Other titles, too, are created to fit the particular situation in which a writing center operates. For example, the UAWC favors the term *consultant*, because other tutoring centers use the term tutor, particularly our "cousin," the Writing Skills Improvement Program, which hires MAs and PhDs as tutors for minority and financially disadvantaged students exclusively. The term consultant also better describes an ideal relationship to the student that downplays differences. There are also "Writing Fellows," "Writing Peers," and even "Writing Specialists." Still other writing centers, such as the ASU writing center, favor the term tutor because it seems more honest about what actually happens, that there *is* a difference in experience and expertise and it should be acknowledged. Another reason the term *tutor* is avoided in many writing centers is that, as I have mentioned above, the term tutor reinforces the "non-professional" work of writing centers. Directing a program that employs student tutors rather than teachers or faculty is obviously at the bottom the educational pecking order. *Tutor* is nevertheless the most pervasive label used in writing center work. Since an appropriate term has not yet been developed, for practical purposes I will use the term tutor as the general term to designate the students whose job it is to work with other students who come to the writing center seeking help. When I begin to discuss particular writing centers, I will use the term preferred by that center.

Many scholars have written extensively about professionalization and its attending ethics. The most widely known critique of professionalization in English Studies is Richard Ohmann's work, *English in America*. Being a professional, according to Ohmann, is less about power and rank and more about status (215). Particularly in English, an assumption is that the professional does not move from a position of subordination to one of command; rather, s/he moves upward in distinction through accomplishments and awards (216, 236). Professionals convince the public of their value through established conventions:

- * They offer something vital society needs
- * They offer it in a way that is detached and objective
- * They know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs
- * Their expertise comes from a body of theory and not just practice or hands-on experience
- * They have had long training to master skills and knowledge (235).

These conventions lend themselves to a "natural" hierarchy that simultaneously serves the public in the above ways and conspires against it (209). As Ohmann sees it, "part of our function is to sort out the elites and domesticate the rest" (231). . Many others have made this same critique, but before I turn to them, it is important to tease out the relations between *disciplinarity* and *professionalization*. First, what is disciplinarity? Messer-Davidow, Shumway, and Sullivan devote an anthology of essays to this question. According to these authors, disciplinarity is neither the foundation of disciplines nor their essence, but rather "about the coherence of a set of otherwise disparate elements: objects

of study, methods of analysis, scholars, students, journals, and grants, to name a few” (*Knowledges* 3). To borrow from Foucault, disciplinarity is the means by which ensembles of diverse parts are brought into particular types of relations with each other. Timothy Lenoir, in an essay concerning the scientific disciplines, extends Foucault’s definition: “attention to discipline is not merely about institutions and professionalization; it is above all concerned with bodies—human bodies. Disciplines are institutionalized formations of organizing schemes of perception, appreciation, and action, and for inculcating them as tools of cognition and communication” (7). Keith W. Hoskin explains that the genesis and expanding power of disciplinarity in education are “outcomes of simple and humble changes in education—to be precise, at the level of educational *practice*—changes that took place during that latter part of the eighteenth century” (272). Three new educational practices fundamentally transformed how students learn how to learn: (1) constant examination; (2) numerical grading of examination results; (3) the insistence on writing by, about, and around students. These pedagogical practices in a real sense produced a new way of constructing the self: as critical-interpretive, technical-scientific, and rational-economic (280). All arenas, as they developed into increasingly narrowed specialties, remain dependent upon examination, grading, and writing, and it is through these acts that we are disciplined by our disciplines. From this we can extrapolate that an academic professional is someone who has been socialized through rigorous examination, grading and writing of professional discourse and who is credentialed at the end of this process, and who now can in turn examine, grade, and insist that others write. At the heart of the professionalization

process, then, are the examination, grading, and writing that creates competition and hierarchical organization. In general, the idea of a writing center is to assist writers: testing and grading are rejected outright as pedagogical strategies. This rejection of two basic elements engendering disciplinarity has made writing center pedagogy cutting edge work as well as undervalued work—not yet a discipline, but under the disciplinary umbrella of composition.

Many scholars have discussed the dangers of such a process. For example, Ernest Boyer argues that our current view of valuable scholarship—the production of theory—limits it to a hierarchy of functions: scholars do research, out of which all other functions spring (15). Coming at it a little differently, Susan Miller argues that professionalization creates a high/low dichotomy that creates a "new grotesque" caused by separating from an objectionable entity: mere teaching (140). In other words, in our attempt to mark such boundaries, to unite, and to purify the field of composition is also the very process of exclusion teachers of composition object to. Jasper Neel observes that the professionalization process makes it easy to lose an ear for human discourse—that which reveals the position from which one speaks with its attendant emotional, political, cultural, and religious orientations—and speak solely to those within the charmed circle (121). Like Susan Miller, Neel is very aware of the exclusive nature of professional discourse. Drawing on ancient Greek history, he argues that the emergence of writing and its association with intellectuals—who represented the aristocracy—engendered a professional discourse that grew in opposition to democracy. Professional discourse offered the expertise of a single knower, speaking from a position grounded in the idea of

a universal Truth, hierarchy, and unequal power relations as divine providence (109). In reflecting on the above perspectives on professionalization, two Burkean concepts come to mind: the "process of purification" and the "bureaucratization of the imagination." As a process of purification, professionalization means creating a culture of distance from those without special knowledge, particularly theoretical knowledge, considered to be the purest, most objective form of knowledge that has the most legitimating power. As a bureaucratization of the imagination, fresh, original ideas are organized--by that I mean compartmentalized, specialized, systematized--until they become naturalized and lose their vitality. Professional ideology, observes Ohmann, offers the comfort of identifying the worker's own welfare with that of society while simultaneously claiming to be independent of the social matrix, which is the same criticism Burke leveled against the intellectual left in the 1930s. Professionalization is a way of escaping the powerlessness of ordinary work and worst rigors of competition in industrialist capitalist society (Ohmann 251). Most recently, Bruce Horner echoes Ohmann's and others critique of professionalism. He argues that the discourse of professionalism limits our thinking about the work of Composition because only one mode of scholarship is legitimizing: the production and distribution of theory (251). Furthermore,

In this discourse, the work associated with such activities as teaching is deemed 'labor,' the implementation of the work of professional knowledge...the discourse of professionalism assumes a particular work path as one of progress and elevation for individual disciplines and their members, depending on their success in acquiring, producing, and distributing knowledge, and the further removed this knowledge appears to be from lay knowledge, the greater the stature of the individual professional or discipline. (375)

In the 25 years since Ohmann's analysis of professionalization in English Studies, scholars are still making the same observations, and it seems that professionalism is a largely negative social process. To summarize: historically, professionalization is characterized by the following actions:

1. Form professional organizations
2. Perform research
3. Publish theory
4. Document service
5. Teach

Undergirding this list is the assumption that following this traditional trajectory will build job security, ensure funding, and develop the intellectual camaraderie important for producing and distributing knowledge. The most valuable commodity in this scheme is the production of theory without which one could not claim professional status. As many scholars have critiqued it, this naturalized definition of professionalization masks the complexities of performing any of the above duties, and it is especially in the 1990's that critiques of the process have dominated discussions about the means and ends of professionalization. An alternative list based on these critiques might look like this:

1. Develop exclusive, specialized language
2. "Theory drift" means devaluing teaching and service
3. Let concern for professional status distract from helping students

The problem, as I see it, is that little balance is achieved in the scholarship on academic professionalism/professionalization. It has been vitally important to deconstruct the

professionalization process; now we need to enrich this largely negative spin with a more balanced and complex vision.

These critiques construct scholars in English Studies as elitist, self-interested careerists who think of students as a problem to be solved or to be shunted off as menial labor.

Ironically, the authors of these critiques have themselves acquired, produced, and distributed knowledge in an academically sanctioned forum, using academically sanctioned writing styles and gestures to others' authority. Certainly, there are those self-interested careerists out there--I have not yet worked with any--but this portrait of professionalism in English Studies does not encompass an expansive portrait of the complexities of professionalization. No single portrait will, no matter how accurate it seems. Various arguments for redefining the process have in common two things: what counts as scholarship must be expanded to include the intellectual work of teaching, administration, and service, and activism must be a part of our professional work. How we go about enacting that activism depends upon the scholar. Sharon Crowley, for example, enacts her activism by showing how required first-year composition courses demean students and exploit graduate student instructors and argues that we should reject our professional allegiance to it. Horner, on the other hand, asserts that we must align ourselves with our colleagues in the grade schools and high schools to convince the public that the material conditions of teaching need improving. He says,

Rather than pleading for improved working conditions on the basis of Composition's putative status as a professional academic discipline in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge...we should align ourselves with the majority of those most at risk...those [students and] teachers with whom we are simultaneously closest in our work (and in

the public imaginary), yet put at most distance by our 'professional' aspirations: primary and secondary school teachers (393).

In making this allegiance, Horner argues that we must reject the "quest academic professionalism in defining the work of Composition and to construct a sense of tradition in Composition as an active and activating force central to it's work" (367). Burke might interpret this stance as a strategy of identification with those whom we have distanced ourselves to "make sure their fate and ours are bound up with each other" (qtd. In Lentricchia 28).

All of the above authors' critiques of professionalization focus on a negative socialization process that reinforces unequal and oppressive power relations. To want to professionalize somehow necessitates stepping on someone else. While the force of their arguments are strong and insightful, Bruce Robbins provides a corrective vision that further complicates what it means to professionalize.

In *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture*, Robbins examines the deradicalization of intellectuals as they have become increasingly tied to the professions. Yet the term professionalism, Robbins asserts, "is a source of ambiguity, an ethical and political problem" (36), and he questions the "knee-jerk" response to professionalism as the systematic exclusion of the public (45). Instead, the creation of a profession arises out of new social customs that had been considered "natural" (such as childbearing), and, for better or worse, opened them up to a new consciousness of alternatives, to a new possibility of choice (50). Society and professionals exist in a dynamic relationship that can encompass the dual loyalties to professionalism and

activism. Robbins cites social workers as models: they do not see that becoming more professionalized means becoming less activist. Robbins explains,

To protect the state is to protect your job. In a routine sort of paradox, this is one thing social workers do, or fail to do, when they attempt to speak up for clients and against the state. All of this is compatible with self-interest. All of it is arguably in the interests of the clients as well. Both state and profession exist in an organic dynamic relation to a political constituency (220).

In other words, social workers' self-interest is served in protecting their jobs by representing clients' self-interest to the state. I argue that writing centers are professional in this way. Historically, writing centers have always been attached to composition as I will elaborate in Chapter Two, and as composition has professionalized to become Composition, writing centers have come to occupy the dual position of a site for cutting-edge pedagogy as well as a site for the "drudgery" of grammar instruction. Like social workers, writing centers are grounded in the material exigencies of students' struggle with writing and in the institutional hegemony that naturalizes the idea the literacy "problems" are located in the student and not in the institution. Writing centers "speak up" for students and against the institution indirectly; they re-imagine traditional top-down pedagogical approaches and rely on student expertise masked as traditional and academically sanctioned relation of tutor/student. At least that is the ideal. The term professionalization, then, can mean both exclusivity and connection, both colonization and activism. It cannot be one without the other, which doesn't make things any easier, but at least clearer. A professionalism of connection and activism seeks to strengthen the dynamic relations among teaching, service, and theory in the way Boyer advocates. It

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seeks to "...align with public constituencies in redefining and pursuing the public good in [our] work with students" (Horner 394). Its quest is to answer the question, "is it possible that theory is after all translatable into a common language, and a common language that is also a critical language?" (Robbins 96).

Overview of Chapters

The rest of the chapters are organized to begin with a macro-level discussion of the intertwined histories of literature, composition studies, and writing centers in order to contextualize a micro-level analysis of two specific writing center tutors' perceptions of professionalism. Chapter two provides an overview of that history. Chapter three is a comparative analysis of the scholarly discourse on professionalization in composition studies and writing center work, and its purpose is to draw on the similarities of arguments made for professionalization. Chapters Four and Five contextualize two local writing centers--the University of Arizona Writing Center and Arizona State University Writing Center--within the landscape of their institutions and then provides an analysis of interviews with tutors. Chapter Five discusses how the scholarly assumptions and arguments are tested against the local perceptions of tutors in particular writing center and institutional settings. In this chapter I will also synthesize conclusions drawn from these analyses and suggests a model for a professionalism of connection and activism for writing centers.

CHAPTER TWO
OF MEMORY AND FORGETTING: A PERSPECTIVE ON IDENTITY
FORMATION IN LITERATURE, COMPOSITION, AND WRITING CENTERS

The stories of the rise of writing centers are inextricably tied to the stories of the rise of both composition studies and literature as disciplines unto themselves. All three began in response to "crises" involving large numbers of "underprepared" students. All three began with marginal status for a variety of social, cultural, economic, and institutional reasons. For example, English as a subject area before the Civil War had no definable content. It covered a range of subjects from the study of grammar to linguistics, and it was only in the fifteen years after Harvard's implementation of the entrance exam that English Studies, in the struggle for space and respectability in the new research university, emerged as *Literature*. Teaching composition became devalued as *Literature* rose, but because teaching composition involved large numbers of students, instructors developed ways to deal with those numbers by experimenting with the lab approach—students working in groups—which is the precursor to current writing center practice. All three, as well, rose to disciplinary status (writing centers are still in the process) not necessarily through ideological or intellectual discussions, but as strategies to address practical, material needs. Such modest beginnings are an important part of how each of these fields creates their subjectivities and those of students, historically

perceived as passive, naïve, and unprivileged. I will elaborate of this construction later in this chapter.

In the following survey of each of these fields, I will provide a brief overview of historical accounts and then comment on the historical perspective used and why. My purpose is not to tell a definitive historical narrative; rather I wish to examine the ways in which these stories have been told in order to identify patterns of representation that have contributed to professionalizing these fields. Economic, social, and cultural influences are shaping the rise of these fields, and while there is not room to treat these in detail, I will provide brief sketches of these forces as they arose in particular situations. I take my methodology here from proponents of revisionist history who reject a progressivist, evolutionary, and objective account of a subject area and instead look to particular, local situations. These local situations provide a corrective to unified narratives that do not allow for rich detail and complexity. Toward that end, I will work against the strictly chronological account of first literature, then composition, then writing centers and focus instead on interrelationships of all three, for all three were integrated and became distinct due to changes in literacy practices that led to specialization in universities.

I agree with Richard Miller when he says that there is no institutional history of English Studies, but a series of histories, and from this assumption it follows that there are "a range of competing, conflicting, and indeed contradictory commitments to be found in each sub-specialty" (176). Also influential to this chapter's rendering of these interrelationships is Kathryn Fitzgerald's Foucauldian analysis of the formation of English Studies, which demonstrates the power of local historical work to enrich "big

picture” narratives. These master narratives have indeed uncovered significant common patterns but tend to force dissimilar details into unified narratives about subjects. In terms of writing centers, Peter Carino disrupts the unified narrative of writing center history that claims writing centers as we currently know them really began in the 1970's and naturally progressed from theoretical naivety to sophistication. He does so by calling for a cultural model of history, noting that "historical discourse constructs the past as much as it records it" (30). These authors' approach to revisionist history is a result of the attention to the powerful shaping force of the postmodern turn toward discursive practices that have saturated the humanities and social sciences. Those in the social sciences have called this the "discursive turn," which denotes an attention not simply to "language" where "words" become one more datum to collect, but to language as discourse: the construction of meaning through the interchange of words. Carino notes the pervasiveness of this theoretical perspective as he outlines a cultural model of historiography. The cultural model

- (1) draws upon post-structural assumptions and moves of recent cultural criticism and new historicism;
- (2) is aware of its own act of historicizing and the dilemma of representing history in language;
- (3) calls for thick descriptions of the multiple forces impacting writing centers;
- (3) accounts for progress with an awareness that progress is not linear;
- (4) recognizes significant figures without reifying their work as doctrine.

Even as the cultural model provides a richer historical account, Carino warns, no historical model will account for everything because all models are subject to the influence of time period and cultural/political/economic forces.

Two historical approaches to which he applies the cultural historical perspective are the evolutionary and dialectic models. The evolutionary model adheres to the "neat march of progress" school of history, and cites the open admissions initiatives of the 1960s and 70s as the point of origin for remedial clinics and labs. The dialectical model places open admissions centers in a pedagogical and political dialectic with writing programs and other institutional entities. For example, in "Trends and Traditions in Writing Centers," Muriel Harris discusses the ongoing dialectic of writing center workers trying to explain themselves to colleagues and fight marginalization. Both the dialectic and evolutionary models serve the general purpose of creating solidarity. In terms of writing center histories, the dialectical model is "nourishing, for it reinforces centers' self-styled image as radical innovators, inspiring new initiates into the fold and heartening old hands" (39). In creating the flattering image of innovation and liberation, the dialectical model is highly selective and the writing center community must guard against accepting this image uncritically. The cultural model of history serves to enrich evolutionary and dialectical models, and it is this approach I will draw on to provide a perspective on the identity formations of literature, composition studies, and writing centers. Many of the histories I have surveyed do not examine how similar are our assumptions, values and approaches; rather, the focus is upon difference as fields jockey for position in the academic hierarchy. Ironically, it is our way of defining and justifying our differences

that connects us. In other words, the professionalization process-forming organizations, producing theory, performing research, staking out territory, etc.--makes fields look rather less specialized than we would like to think. As I mentioned above, the "discursive turn" in the humanities in general has led to identity crises in history, anthropology, sociology, literature, and rhetorical studies because all agree that that a rhetorical approach unites them more than it makes them different. Ethnography, for example, uses literary schemes and tropes as Hayden White has pointed out. Historians too incorporate literary elements in their historical accounts, and have moved out of the archives and into the field, providing richer pictures of their subject areas.

This review of the relationships among three subspecialties in English Studies is a "big picture" survey, the purpose of which, as I have stated, is to uncover significant common patterns. The particulars of local situations will be dealt with in chapters three and four where these common patterns will be tested against local conditions in two university writing centers in southern Arizona.

The Entrance Exam leads to the Rise of Literature

In an article about the formation of English as a school subject, Katherine R. Fitzgerald uses a local historical perspective to show how literature as a field arose in part from rather mundane circumstances. She writes:

The records reveal that in meetings called in the early 1890's to thrash out college/secondary school articulation, literature became central...in the process of perfecting the technology of testing for college admission. To say this is not to deny that intellectual and ideological concerns are implicated in the eventual privileging of

literature, but to draw attention to the significant effects of a particular local event, the ritualization of an examination. To date, the site of the examination, the institution's 'normalizing gaze' in Foucault's terms, has been entirely overlooked in explanations of literature's dominance in the English curriculum. (437)

The creation of the entrance examination on writing marked a turning point in the organization of both institutions of higher learning as well as secondary and primary schools. Prior to 1874, the year Harvard instituted its entrance exam, English as we know it today did not exist in pre-Civil War education. Teachers in secondary schools taught an inconsistent variety of topics including grammar and rhetoric, history of literature, history of English, linguistics, and composition (438). Also at this time, massive changes were occurring in the organization of both secondary and higher education, and the inconsistency of secondary school English curriculum mirrored chaotic circumstances in higher education.

The research university had begun to replace the classical curriculum of the eastern college. (See Boyer, Thomas Miller, Connors, Berlin). In the competition for space in this new university, English Studies had inherited the discredited classical rhetoric space and debates raged over what content area would replace it. A student attending the university at this time might study philology, literary appreciation, linguistics, classical rhetoric, and elocution and composition (Fitzgerald 437). When Harvard instituted its exam in 1874 and half the students failed, these inconsistencies in both secondary and higher education gained notice. The literacy crisis in this time period had less to do with the "underprepared student" than it did with an inconsistent curriculum. The institution of the exam was the first step in standardizing the curriculum.

The exam originally had three components: a section testing names, dates, and biographies in literature, a section on composition, and a section testing grammar by requiring students to correct "bad sentences." After a series of revisions performed between 1885-1895 by various committees representing the secondary and college constituencies, grammar and composition--composing ideas on general topics--had been dropped from the exam, and literature became the sole focus. As Fitzgerald comments, the very skill the exam purported to be testing was subsumed into the content of literature (447). The college/secondary school articulation helped systematize and organize the exam around literature because it easily lent itself to such systemization for several reasons: Reading lists could be controlled, and the readings could further be broken down into two questions, one that addressed what Louise Rosenblatt would call "aesthetic" reading and one that required analysis. This two-question strategy satisfied secondary school teachers who felt that literature should be appreciated more than closely studied, as well as the college philologists who valued lengthy, reasoned analysis (447). In short, this new organization of the exam around literary works offered instructors in both college and secondary schools a way to design courses with more consistency. Committees also decided that secondary school teachers would have the added task of teaching composition, assuming that it was a subject more properly belonging to their station and training. As Fitzgerald concludes,

The story of the development of literature as a secondary English's central intellectual component is at least in part the story of a surveillance technology configuring a substantive content amenable to normalization rather than a history of a body of knowledge establishing its intellectual coherence and legitimacy. (450)

Fitzgerald's story of the rise of literary studies provides a corrective vision to the "villains and heroes" historical narrative tradition and is important for both how she tells her story as well as for what it contains. By looking at how master narrative histories play out in local situations--this one being a series of committee meetings to design and revise the late nineteenth-century college entrance exam--Fitzgerald focuses not on a single aspect of the exam's influence but on the relationships it created and the spaces it opened for an emerging specialty. And in looking at how conflicting expectations about composition and literature in education get worked out, Fitzgerald follows Graff's lead in *Professing Literature* in that she reveals conflicting, competing, and contradictory elements that gave rise to a profession. She departs from Graff in that his institutional history focuses entirely on the field of literary studies, sweeping aside how teaching composition made literary studies possible. Similarly, some recent historians in composition such as Connors, Berlin, Jarratt, Crowley, Lunsford, and North, share a singular devotion to rhetoric and composition, even as their methodologies and purposes differ. In other words, these authors justifiably turn the tables on Graff's history by leaving Literature either out of the picture completely or mentioning it as a sideline. Understandable as this strategy is, it is less productive than a history of relationships among the subdisciplines because such a history attends to the political and social contexts that contain those relationships.

Economizing the Word: Vernacular English

The proliferation of print literacy helped to propagate the ideology of "good taste" through correct grammar. The colonial New England area had a higher proportion of educated people, and the Puritans' interest in reading the Bible in the vernacular ensured a demand for extensive schooling (Baron 125). Thomas Miller adds that although literacy rates were highest in this area, books were widely available, and colonialists read closely the few books available, most popular of which was the Bible. The Puritan influence also shaped the relationship between speech (public and private) and morality: "physical punishments were meted out to those considered guilty of various linguistic infractions, including swearing, anger, scolding, and gossiping" (Baron 125). T. Miller also adds that other social phenomena supported a literate public such as The Great Awakening, which was a broad-based social movement that emphasized oratory based on print. Extemporaneous speeches by traveling preachers relied on print sources first, and the demand for pamphlets and other types of religious print in the vernacular increased. The movement "fostered critical literacy through reading societies, schools, and academies, many of which evolved into high schools and colleges" (4).

Another phenomenon affecting the formation of college entrance exams around literature was the move to teaching vernacular English, which, according to Fitzgerald, secondary teachers willingly accepted. Nevertheless, writing by the 1890s was treated as a skill, and literature had been elevated to the status of subject (440). American English after the Civil War drew increasing attention as the nation gained pride in its self-sufficiency. According to Rollo Laverne Lyman, whom Dennis Baron claims is the only scholar to write a history of early American grammar instruction, there were two forces at

work that equalized the status of English and Latin: the sense of need for preservation and standardization (in the way that Latin had been standardized) and the need to establish American English as the language of the New World, free from outside influences (Baron 124-25). Berlin and Connors enrich this perspective by revealing that in addition to patriotism, massive immigration and industrialization created the need to define an elite class separate from immigrants as well as to assimilate them and to meet the demands for a vernacular amenable to the rapid shift toward corporate capitalism (Berlin 17-37; Connors 66). This is the age where clarity and correctness became particularly important to Americans.

So with all this attention to print and cultural literacy, why was teaching composition considered menial labor? T. Miller explains that basic skills became separated from a "higher" form of literacy, which developed "taste" in students through literature. Basic skills were taught through the essay, which "became the technology that defined the difference between Literature and literacy" (6). I also believe that a marketplace ideology emerging in the industrialization era made it easy to assume that if a product is widely available, it decreased in price. If literacy is the product made available to wider and wider constituencies, it becomes both essential and devalued. The creation of a desire for literacy in the public realm leads to the assumption that every household should be literate enough to buy and to vote, and a mass force of literacy teachers is necessary to educate every household. Basic literacy, needed to buy and to vote, becomes "common" and not worth much money in terms of pay for the teachers, and the essay seemed to have little purpose beyond the writing classroom. The ideology

of upward mobility as well as the nationalistic impulses Lymon points out above prompt these teachers as well as the public to demand correctness, clarity, and cleanliness in writing, so that male students might obtain suitable professional positions while this demand simultaneously worked to maintain class divisions. Composition classrooms, therefore, become sites of political and cultural tensions over literacy. Literature becomes a depoliticized, specialized, theoretically rich area of research as colleges shift from a traditional classical education to a research university. Literature forgets a past rooted at least in part in the exigencies of exam design and forges a new memory of itself as part of a long tradition that parallels its classical counterparts. But what of composition studies' memory? How has it characterized itself to itself and to outsiders?

Identity Formation and Composition

Susan Miller's rereading of the "denigrating tale" of composition as a marginal group is a cultural historical account, focusing specifically on the tensions between literature and composition and how that tension created a particular subjectivity of the student, without whom compositionists would have no identity. Along with Richard Miller and Kathryn Fitzgerald, S. Miller contends that "neither group had fully explored their original and continuing mutual dependency, the ways that the position of one is actually required by the socially constructed status and larger cultural implications of the other" (2). From this more sociohistorical standpoint, Miller asserts that "A corrective good story about composition, like new feminist versions of women, depends on including characters and their ordinary daily actions in the symbolic domain that

traditionally marginalizes them, denying their significance in symbolic as well as factually 'reality'" (3). Drawing on a variety of theoretical perspectives, S. Miller's "good" story reveals the complexities of the gap between status and identity, which she traces to the "powerful attitudes toward student writers and unprivileged writing [that] inevitably control the status of composition studies, its relations to those outside of it, and its self-images and ways of working out its new professionalization" (195).

What I find most powerful in S. Miller's historical account of the unequal relationship between literature and composition is her attention to cultural formations of gendered identity, and how those symbolic identities are so deeply entrenched that they appear natural. For example, S. Miller asserts that in constructing the subjectivities of students as innocent, inexperienced, and in need of "civilizing," as has historically been the case, institutional attitudes and practices toward students rely on theories of individualistic process pedagogy that "finally treat them as emerging, or as failed, but never actually as responsible 'authors'" who are participants in their own learning (196). In constructing students in this way, we form our own professional identities around the discourse of marginalization and remediation. S. Miller observes that like other marginalized groups, composition has responded to imposed definitions of "mere service" and lack of theoretical sophistication in two ways. One way is to model the group in power and claim equality based on similarity: the integrationist position. The other way is to call for separation and claim equality based on difference: the separatist position. The problem with the integrationist and separatist moves is that "they haven't worked on the fundamental structure that necessitated them" (183). An alternative, S.

Miller argues, is to focus less on building a body of knowledge and more on becoming conscious about the political contexts in which we work. For example, we would look critically at the hegemonic strategy that "makes 'low' status intrinsic to student writing and by extension demeans those who are deeply involved in its academic treatment" (183). Toward that end, S. Miller calls for compositionists to reverse these habits of teaching writing as a series of tasks to accomplish within the limited confines of the classroom by emphasizing how writing is accomplished by actual influential people in professional life. Specifically, S. Miller calls for compositionists to imagine a new theoretical approach that

[Redefines] 'process' and other pedagogical emphases in political terms by specifying some essential elements in any writing event. These include the Purpose or outcome intended in writing, its temporal and spatial Situations, its actual and imagined Participants, appropriate Evidence and Language, and conventional Form or Presentation. (198)

In other words, Miller is advocating an approach to teaching writing based in the actual results of writing rather than solely in the process of writing. This is not a pendulum swing back to a focus on product by any means, as I read her argument. Rather, the results of the writing attends to the effects of the writing on an audience, and if we keep in mind that audiences change over time and therefore the requirements of the writing change, then we have a better conception of how writing moves beyond the walls of the classroom and gets accomplished in other professional settings over time. Thinking about how we read and write histories can help us better understand writing itself as well as how it has been taught.

My experience in writing center work and in teaching professional writing courses reinforces the effectiveness of the theoretical approach articulated above. Particularly in my business writing courses, the realities of being responsible for the results of the writing, time and space constraints, technological glitches, and collaboration become central in conversations about how the actual writing is done. Students rise to the challenge of becoming active participants in the writing task and appreciate the out-of-class feedback from reviewers who are either the target audience for the documents they create or they are professionals who do the writing. In the writing center, student writing is often contextualized in the larger structures of their lives and their education, a move beyond mere textual features, and it has been this way for much longer than many of the histories I have surveyed indicate.

The Emergence of the Idea of a Writing Center

The idea of individualized instruction was something that teachers of rhetoric in the 1880s and 90s realized was essential but completely unmanageable because of the increasing numbers of students. Robert Connors records that

The average freshman class was 200 or more students in many institutions, and these teachers were attempting to teach a course that required a certain amount of personal attention to each student. The expectations around the turn of the century was that each teacher would provide six to eight hours of personal conference to students for each two hours of class time. (Connors 70)

At some universities, the pattern was one professor and one to three assistants were responsible for 600-800 students (70). No wonder instructors began experimenting with

alternative techniques for teaching writing. Precursors to current writing centers arose around this time in response to the growing numbers of students--not simply in response to growing numbers of bad writers--beginning as experiments with "writing labs:" class time devoted to one-on-one instruction and small group work.

In "Early Writing Centers: Toward a History," Peter Carino shows how early writing centers conducted practice in ways that both deviate and foreshadow writing center practice today. Carino explains that the laboratory method was a classroom format in which instructors used peer groups and provided individual help, both approaches characteristic of current writing center practice (105). There has been an unfortunate tendency in writing center scholarship to ignore the fact that writing center current practice came out of classroom work (see Hemmeter and Healy), although I agree with Lisa Ede that those who work in writing centers "know things that composition specialists who work only with graduate students--or even those who teach undergraduate writing classes--can't know" (101). At any rate, the laboratory approach instructors used in classrooms developed into separate facilities in the 1930s, such as the University of Minnesota's lab established in 1934 (106).

The 1930s were another time of unprecedented growth in mass education. Children of immigrants began to attend college, and again we hear the lament about the underprepared college student. Individual instruction was also popularized by John Dewey at this time, who believed that the "aim of all education is to combine self-development, social harmony, and economic integration" (Berlin 47), and the combination made the time right for the new writing lab approach.

Lou Kelly's historical representation of Iowa's Writing lab, established during this era, illuminates the clashing philosophies of the institution and the lab. In "One-on-One, Iowa City Style: Fifty Years of Individualized Instruction," Kelly traces the thread of an attitude toward students: prizing them as individuals first. Kelly writes that the Iowa Writing Lab's first goal is to "learn our student writers," and this goal has been present since the inception of the lab in the 1930s. The early Iowa writing lab opened in response to the "discovery" that too many of their students "couldn't write." In the 1930s, according to Kelly, her university had a kind of open admissions policy and matriculated anyone who had a high school diploma. Like the 1970s open admissions, the population drawn to the university had varying degrees of writing experience. This article breaks with the progressive model of history in that it does not pinpoint the 1970's as an origin, but the initiation of a writing lab in response to a similar "crisis" keeps this local history within the realm of progressive evolution. The individualized instruction has always been there; the student population and emphasis on grammar exercises are what have changed. No longer does the lab draw only "bad" writers--writers who were so-labeled by professors and banished to the lab--but writers of all kinds who come voluntarily. And no longer do lab instructors have students diagram sentences or "teach to the test"; lab instructors have students discuss these areas both in writing and in conversation. Indeed, the power is located within the negotiating group and not imposed from above. Kelly's story has a cheerleader-like quality: "After responding to whatever they've said, we usually ask a question which tells them we'd like to hear more on that subject; then we try to add a cheering comment, about writing or the weather, anything to affirm their

existence . . ." (19). Even in the lab's early grammar-drill days, Kelly was trained to " . . . say something nice, find something to commend so [the students] would feel less demeaned. And we were supposed to tell them what was wrong with their writing" (13). The tension between being a cheerleader for the student and having to "tell them what was wrong" reveals the clashing philosophies of the institution and the lab, and further illustrates Susan Miller's point about how students are constructed on the larger cultural plane as innocents who need civilizing.

In the 1940s, Carino documents the influence of the Armed Forces English programs on composition and writing labs. In fact, he asserts that these programs put the "communication" in the CCC journal. The Armed Forces English programs were intensive, two semester writing, reading, and speaking courses meant to prepare officers in WWII (107). The pedagogical approach was to let officers learn at their own pace rather than consuming a set load of course material. The approach was conducive to the tutorial. In the 1950s, writing labs not only seemed to be a part of writing programs, but also began to question their purposes and identities. For example, the series of questions Carino gathers from 1950 CCCC reports on writing labs are still unresolved in writing center work: "What kind of place should the lab be? Who should work there? What kind of services should be provided? What form should tutorials take?" (108).

Although there were writing labs that predate the usual historical point of origin of 1970's open admissions, and those writing labs often sought to see the student in a wider context and value his/her knowledge, the stigma of remediation seemed to grow in the 60's and early 70's. As in 1880 and again in the 1930s, another sweeping change in

both literacy practices and immigration prompted the open admissions policies and the lament was heard again: How do we deal with severely under-prepared students? The work of composition that has been most devalued—grammar instruction--could now be taken care of by the individual instruction writing centers provided, and they proliferated during this period without gaining much academic respect. Carino writes,

The concern with rejecting the stigma of remediation and with creating an identity separate from the classroom is a recurring motif throughout the CCCC workshops of the 1950's. This scenario foreshadows the results of open admissions two decades later when labs and centers proliferated at the same time they were denigrated as havens for the remedial student. (112)

This history shows the similarity to the stories of composition. Many versions of writing center history pinpoint the 1970's as the era in which writing centers emerged because of the rapid changes in university policy concerning literacy: open admissions provided many non-traditional and underprepared people access to higher education, and instructors struggled to find ways to "fix" or accommodate them (depending upon whom you talked to). Writing centers are often characterized as moving from theoretical naivety to sophistication during this period, a "neat march" of history strategy that Carino critiques. Like Fitzgerald, R. Miller, S. Miller, and T. Miller, Carino argues for historical accounts of writing centers that take into consideration the various contexts of the subject and how those contexts influence identity construction. Carino draws from his own extensive research to show how writing centers were not only more variegated and complex than has been represented, these early centers look more like our current centers than not ("Early Writing Centers" 104).

Carino has critiqued Ray Wallace's 1991 article for its uninformed attempt at history ("Early Centers" 104). Carino accuses Wallace of presenting a narrow view of a writing center past and its "unsound" pedagogical practice of grammar drills, attention to error, and helping "problem" writers (mostly first-year students). Wallace does provide a list that focus on these things. Wallace's purpose in doing so, according to Carino, is to advance his vision of progress ("Oh! We're more sophisticated now."). Carino portrays this vision as manipulative and deceitful in the "Early Centers" article (1995). In a later article, Carino takes a less harsh view in that he admits that evolutionary and dialectical models have some historical validity.

Wallace's article proposes to "dislodge the negative image of the lab, an image we have foisted, or allowed to be foisted, on ourselves for quite some time" (82). He highlights the negative aspects of a "lab" and the positive aspects of a more sophisticated "center." His article is indeed a neat, progressive march and a call to action. The text is sprinkled with exclamations ("the idea of a writing center has arrived. We have arrived!") and specific advice for how to manage funding for this more sophisticated, academically legitimate center. This article does uncritically assume the best way for writing centers to establish their stake in the future. The vision is broad, and it is notable that Wallace ends with a call to professionalization:

If we in the writing center world want to be taken seriously in academics, to be seen as professional peers and not just a service branch of the English department, then we will have to start acting like professionals. Professionals, by their very definition, get paid for the services they offer. (100)

This statement echoes calls to "act like professionals" compositionists have made in the past. Wallace, as an integrationist, wants to be taken seriously as a peer and to be paid accordingly, and he is here encouraging writing center people to know their history, theorize their practice, publish it, attend conferences, and make the traditional moves that others before them have made. If we do these professional things, we can be compensated accordingly. The problem with his argument is that it lacks a critical examination of the process by which we become professionals.

Using History to Galvanize Writing Center People

Another example of progressive/evolutionary historical account of writing center work is Andrea Lunsford's well known and received essay, "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center," which delineates three models of writing center work. First, there is the "Storehouse" model that replicates the top-down transfer of knowledge of early writing centers. Second, the "Garret" mirrors the romantic notion of the solitary writer who relies on inner knowledge (presumably following the expressionistic school of thought). Third, and the one Lunsford advocates, is the "Burkean Parlor." This contemporary model represents socially constructed knowledge and advances collaboration as the theoretically sophisticated approach at which current centers have (or should have) arrived. "Only in doing so can we, I believe, enable a student body and citizenry to meet the demands of the twenty-first century" (113). Collaboration places authority in the negotiating group: "The idea of a center informed by a theory of knowledge as socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and

shared ...challenges our way of organizing our centers" (114). Although her *version* of history is evolutionary and progressive, her *vision* is dialogic. Her purpose, clearly, is to galvanize the writing center community by "...reinforc[ing] centers' self-styled image as radical innovators, inspiring new initiates into the fold and heartening old hands" (Carino 39). Lunsford celebrates the challenge this kind of writing center brings to the status quo of the institution, to marginalization, and to silence. It's a challenge she has long practiced in her collaboration with Lisa Ede on collaboration. The article evokes evangelism as she talks about her "student collaborators" as "converts," and praises the already converted: "So, as if you didn't already know it, you're a subversive group, and I'm delighted to have been invited to participate in this collaboration" (114). The article serves the purpose of solidifying and encouraging the writing center community, but it does not provide a complex picture of writing center history. Carino's important point in all of this is that there have been "Burkean Parlor" centers even in the early years, and it's misleading to represent it as something new and original.

Like Lunsford, Christina Murphy leaves us with evangelical sense of radical possibility when she says, "The potential writing centers have to transform the rhetorical communities of college and university campuses by extending and redefining the dialogue on literacy education represents their most significant power and makes them agencies for change within academics" (285). Murphy argues that because they are born of the tradition of the top-down transfer of knowledge and the tradition of collaborative learning, writing centers have the greatest potential for bridging disciplines. Their strength, in other words, lies in their hybridity, which makes their approach to teaching,

learning, and talking about writing universally applicable. Murphy begins by asserting that writing centers "are constructs of a postmodern world" and reflect the contending political/educational philosophies vying for dominance (276). The three philosophical positions she works with here--originally from Giroux and Aronowitz--are the conservative, liberal, and radical. The essay presents these positions in neat packages. The conservative view is (thankfully) outnumbered. Conservatives see education's purpose as preparation for roles in society. Schooling should be regimented and utilitarian, and should embrace "a hegemony of educational standards and objectives" (280). The liberal agenda is based on the idea that education should "free" the individual and broadly prepare her for the best life she can live within the western humanist tradition. The radical view critiques the above two positions by observing that the schooling experience is a microcosm of larger oppressive political practices. The radical view does share with the liberal that education should be liberatory, but the ability to critique the system expands and more overtly politicizes this vision. It is counterhegemonic.

Murphy writes that with open enrollment in the 70s, writing centers were influenced by the conservative need to make students "measure up." Many were sites of remedial instruction. Murphy, like Lunsford, begins her history at a popular point in time, moving from remediation to theoretical sophistication. Murphy notes that the "strength of this [back-to-basics] demand was intensified in the 60's and 70's by the emergence of the computer as a technological tool for writing instruction" (280). She quotes Aronowitz and Giroux at length because they argue that the introduction of

computers and the conservative push combined to displace the nurturing, "surrogate family" ambiance of schooling for a "Market orientation" that focuses on unselfconscious production and consumption. The unexamined assumption here is that schooling was always a nurturing place before the advent of computers. Carino, again, would argue that it is misleading to represent the history of schooling in this way. It is more likely that some school systems were just as utilitarian before computers and that some schools became more "nurturing" after the incorporation of computers.

Murphy breaks with the evolutionary line of thought she pursues in the beginning of the essay and moves into a more dialogic vision of writing centers. First, she argues that early writing centers attracted feminists and Marxists who valued multiple approaches to writing and empathized with the new group of nontraditional students entering the university. Second, this left-leaning group tended to organize around a Burkean Parlor-type of approach, which means that some centers were already pedagogically and organizationally similar to contemporary centers. Her main argument is that writing centers can productively and constructively be a part of the tension created between conservative empiricism and "technicization" (Murphy's coinage) and liberal/radical "conscientization." She doesn't mention Burke here, but she suggests that it is this site of contention that creates the space for transcendence. Rather than a conflict, it is a "joining of languages of critique and possibility" (283). Murphy begins to talk about the writing center as a hybrid entity, and I'm reminded here of Donna Haraway's celebration of a cyborg, the hybrid a being part human, part machine, part animal. This is a "power in the margins" argument, but Murphy's vision doesn't include

staying in the margins. She pushes for a radical change of the institution via the writing center, "power in the center":

On most college and university campuses, writing centers are instructional hybrids composed of a balance between administrative aims and the traditional practices of writing instruction that reflect writing centers' early alliance with English departments directly and indirectly with the humanities. From different perspectives, this hybridism represents, at once, the limitations of writing centers in educational settings and their transformative possibilities . . . This dispute however, is not so easily dichotomized, for what also needs to be considered is the enormous power writing centers possess, by virtue of their very hybridism, to bridge administrative and instructional aims through what Toby Fulwiler describes as a 'comprehensive long-term program to develop more fully all the interrelated learning and communication skills of the whole campus community'. (284)

This passage points up that writing centers are best conceived as a bridge between disciplines--Or better, a center in which disciplines can meet and discuss writing issues--placing the writing center *at* the center of the university. Her argument weaves together the integrationist and separatist philosophies about professionalization in that she claims that the writing center is both unique and all encompassing. The vision is inspiring, but what about individual writing centers and their particular institutional contexts? What are the local circumstances that modify this larger vision, and perhaps even contradict it? Arguments that provide overarching theories about the work of writing centers--such as those made by Lunsford and Murphy--are valuable for galvanizing the writing center community and for helping us think about ways to approach our local situations. However, more needs to be done in terms of testing these larger visions against local circumstances, which is the purpose of this dissertation.

As a corrective to these larger meta-disciplinary visions, David Healy offers the church as an historically valuable analog to the complex issues and forces that shape writing centers. Healy claims that "like churches, writing centers develop particular styles, strategies, and missions based on many influences, the majority of which are more situational and demographic than ideological" (17). The particular usefulness of the church as a metaphor lies in the fact that "Almost any discussion of American religious institutions must fairly quickly acknowledge our religious pluralism. Yet despite our diversity, the term church continues to have a common resonance in the culture at large" (13). Healy points out that there is tension between the "idea of a writing center, " recalling North, and the particular material conditions of a writing center. Healy supports Carino's earlier critique about how writing center history is represented as a progressive evolution from theoretically naïve to sophisticated. When we think this way, Healy reminds us, we tend to assume that contemporary writing centers "have come a long way, baby" and look similar to each other. Healy uses the church metaphor to disrupt this assumption. I would add that another reason this metaphor is appropriate is the evidence of the often evangelical rhetoric in writing center articles and listserv conversations. Healy, like Carino, finds problems with Andrea Lunsford's three writing center models: Storehouse, Garret, and Burkean Parlor. These are theoretical abstractions that do not take into account the material conditions, institutional location and mission, and student population of particular writing centers, and local histories tend not so rigidly to taxonomize. The usefulness of this taxonomy, however, is in testing it out against local conditions.

Healy addresses the issue of the "dangers" of professionalization by citing Terrence Riley's recent article in *The Writing Center Journal*, in which he warns that professionalization will force writing centers to give up what is most important: teaching. Riley's warning resonates with Susan Miller's observation that "composition professionals inevitably recreate the conditions that first established their identities. Persistent attempts to change these conditions without changing the basic structure of high and low that sustain them leave composition in new versions of traditional values" (141). Healy agrees, but he points out that there is room for resistance to accommodation by pointing to the sect-to-church hypothesis: sects eventually evolve into churches using the same professionalization process as academic fields. However, Healy points out that even though the sect-to-church hypothesis has explanatory power, it does not account for all religious groups: the Amish, the Plymouth Brethren, Mennonites, and Hutterites, who have all persisted over time in their sects. Ultimately, though, Healy sides with the majority of writing center scholars who favor professionalization. He writes, "in order for religious groups to persist over time, some degree of institutionalization is necessary . . . in order to produce the kind of stability necessary for long-term survival" (23).

The degree of institutionalization writing centers are already encountering warrants, in Nancy Grimm's mind, an uncomfortable examination of how we are already implicated in the exclusionary practices of the institution. In "The regulatory Role of the Writing Center: Coming to Terms with a Loss of Innocence," Grimm argues that writing centers have distanced themselves from their remedial beginnings and aligned themselves with mainstream practices of literacy and the technological support of that literacy. The

tension existing between the demands of conformity to standard literacy practices and the demand for individual, critical thinking make writing center work difficult. Like Susan Miller, Grimm believes that the focus on students as individuals--so foundational to our American sense of ourselves--blinds us to the larger structures and forces at work that create standards of "high" and "low" and reinforces the belief that the individual must change rather than the institution. Consequently, writing centers are complicit in the regulatory power of the institution; however, conformity to regulatory power isn't inherently bad, Grimm asserts. Rather, it is the tendency to view this regulatory power as politically and culturally neutral that inhibits the possibilities for imaging alternative practices (8). Both Miller and Grimm also call for more complicated representations of students; it is students that occupy the central concern of both scholars, a good sign that students will remain the reason we do what we do and not the reason to retreat into careerism.

The argument this chapter attempts to make is that our disciplinary histories tend to downplay similarities in literature, composition, and writing centers, particularly as they discuss their own histories and issues of professionalization. What is similar, however, is the way in which professionalization in these histories is largely an alienating process. How professionalization constructs students is often touched upon, but we don't hear from the students themselves. With this in mind, I will shortly turn to student tutors' perceptions of professionalism in the writing center. But before I turn to two local writing centers and their tutors, the next chapter will map the landscape of calls for

professionalization in composition studies and writing centers so that the larger national assumptions and arguments can then be tested out in local situations.

CHAPTER THREE

"MANAGING THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE": WRITING CENTERS, COMPOSITION, AND THE QUEST FOR RESPECTABILITY

Because we are a new group and a group that considers itself uniquely marginalized, we write a history of ourselves that stresses our outsider status and overlooks our similarity to other, once excluded groups.

--Terence Riley, "The Unpromising Future of Writing Centers"

There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.

--Willa Cather, *O Pioneers*

As I established in the historical overview of literature, composition studies, and writing centers, their intertwined histories show that these fields are more connected than perhaps we like to admit, and yet as Cather notes above, we tell our stories as if they are original. Having established this wide context, I will now attend to how arguments for the professionalization of writing centers are made by looking to similar arguments made in composition studies fourteen years ago. It is these arguments and how they construct teachers, students, and tutors that will be tested against my local interviews with tutors about their sense of professionalism in chapters 4 and 5.

Some writing center people have profound doubts about the benefits of professional status, such as Terrence Riley, who advises us to "manage the possibility of

failure" by *not* professionalizing. In other words, Riley is arguing that professionalization will not benefit the work of writing centers because it is ultimately an alienating practice. Others, such as Jeanne Simpson, insist that the only way for writing centers to move beyond mere survival is to professionalize. Fifteen years ago, Maxine Hairston urged people working in composition to professionalize the field. Her "Breaking the Bonds" Chair address at CCCC argues along the same lines that if composition remains subordinated to literature, it will always survive on "staffing composition courses with underpaid, low status, part-timers" (273). Stephen North's 1984 call for professional recognition for writing centers also follows this pattern. Juxtaposing these authors reveals much about their sense of history, their assumptions about professionalization, and their strategies for arguing from those assumptions. I have chosen these particular authors because they have played prominent roles in pivotal developments of composition studies and writing centers. Although the issue of professionalization has been widely theorized outside of academia, it has not been thoroughly addressed in composition studies, and these authors can help us to see how the discourse surrounding professionalization creates certain kinds of relationships with both promise and limitation.

To review, a definition of "professionalization" as it is represented in such articles follows. As I interpret these authors, there is there is a regular set of procedures academics follow to achieve professional status. First, it's important to publish theory specifically. Theoretical sophistication indicates a deeper level of engagement with some issue or object of study. In both composition studies and in writing centers the call to

theorize is strong, but there is insistence that theory and practice be connected. Second, in order to produce theory, one must conduct research. Quantitative research provides numerical weight and worth for a field, and qualitative research "humanizes" the research and assures an ethical approach. Third, in order to support research and time for theorizing, a group must form professional organizations to generate funding, facilitate the dissemination of information, and protect its members from exploitation. Fourth, service in terms of membership in the professional organizations, administrative duties, or committee work shows the academic world that there is enough interest in the field of study to require service. Finally, there is teaching, which is usually considered an onerous task, but one that people in composition and writing center work claim to value highly. Undergirding this set of procedures, then, is the assumption that following the traditional trajectory will build job security, ensure funding, and develop the intellectual camaraderie important for reproducing disciplinary knowledge.

However, postmodernist critiques of how institutional hierarchy and power work in the professionalization process have provided a more "heightened experience of our bodily life" as Terry Eagleton has put it (4). For example, the emphasis on theoretical sophistication can create theory drift, a phenomenon in which a field becomes so theory driven that the scope of its audience reduces to its own members, teaching becomes a highly disdainful duty, and service is merely tolerated. In this scenario, the concern for professional status distracts from helping students (121). In other words, professional discourse becomes "utterly separable from the human being who delivers it" (Neel 166) and can only be spoken inside the charmed circle. The overvaluing of objectivity has, for

Richard Ohmann, created "peculiarities of English departments that can only be understood as the result of a clash between the professional claims of the faculty and the externally imposed conditions of our working lives" (234). Susan Miller develops this idea in *Textual Carnivals*, in which she analyzes the devaluing of composition studies through "feminization," even as the field makes claims of academic legitimacy. Our every day experience tells us that where we actually are in the hierarchy of academic status, Miller argues, is quite different from where we imagine we are. Others, such as Thomas Miller, demonstrate how the process of professionalization means practicing exclusion. He writes, "as literature became institutionalized as a profession, rhetoric was reduced to the teaching of basic literacy" (6).

The two perspectives I provide above--one that sees professionalization as a "natural" move to secure one's status and funding and one that focuses on professionalization as a process of exclusion and alienation--more realistically co-exist rather than exist against each other. Nevertheless, it is rare that discussions about professionalization encompass or address both. Can there be a middle ground? I believe one way to find a workable middle ground is to look closely to how our narratives/arguments work to construct us, and how we construct others through our narratives.

Dealing with Impurity

How a field "Manag[es] the possibility of failure" is by redefining the criteria for success. Riley laments that writing centers no longer seem to be measuring success by how they relate to students. Instead, writing centers are "redefining success" by buying

into the traditional trajectory established academic fields have followed. Riley traces the pattern of that process of redefinition—or professionalization—in three closely related fields that began as "excluded groups:" Literature, Literary Theory, and Composition. As each of these groups staked out territory and persuaded others of their expertise, they came to name themselves differently.

Burke reminds us that when one attempts redefinition one risks being rejected by one's audience. Riley's argument is that each of the fields mentioned above practiced strategies of redefinition that excluded other fields. For example, as literature became a body of scholarship and theory, the teaching of composition became the newly excluded group, as Thomas Miller observes:

As professors of literature got serious about scholarship, composition ended up being taught by about the only instructors left without a claim to a research base—former journalists, ministers, teachers of oratory, and men and women of letters doing a job that was highly gendered from the outset. (6)

To Riley, these stories should serve as a warning to writing centers as they distinguish themselves from composition to secure academic legitimacy and respectability.

Riley claims that writing centers are already drawing on the same rhetorical strategies that composition has used and literature used before them. These strategies help pave the way to increased status through increased hierarchical division: as rhetoric is subordinated to literature, composition is subordinated to rhetoric; so writing centers are subordinated to composition. Each is subordinated according to the traditional hierarchy

of research, teaching, and service. Riley points out that the process by which this subordination occurs has become an unquestioned process:

[These fields] modeled their activities on disciplines already mainstream; they demonstrated that what they were doing was not being done by any other department or discipline; they evolved theories and discourses that highlighted their differences from other areas, and increasingly wrote only for members of their network; they amassed a body of scholarship which looked a good deal like what everyone else was producing; and on these bases they claimed a professional status often and loudly enough that they were listened to. (28)

Riley admits himself that he has "inevitably misrepresented the history of these subdisciplines by reducing them so and by picking and choosing points of emphasis" (27). His emphases serve the purpose of his argument, which is that writing centers can only retain "libratory and contrarian" values if they remain marginalized. Riley assumes here that all writing centers are "libratory and contrarian," whatever those terms mean, and he does so in the face of much writing center literature documenting their wide variability.

Yet if we look at the national scene, the above list of strategies are hard to refute.

Writing Centers have modeled their activities on their "older" sibling, Composition, and claim that what they are doing can't be done in a writing classroom. They have increasingly written "for members of their network": The presence of a professional journal devoted strictly to writing center pedagogy and research (*The Writing Center Journal* est. 1980), a national organization called the National Writing Center Association (NWCA est. 1980), a national listserv and web site--a rather new mark of

professional status--and national conferences all indicate that writing centers mean serious business. Riley takes a particularly dim view of what most of the rest of the writing center world sees as "progress," but the argument that remaining marginal and "stay[ing] impure" highlights the either/or thinking about professionalization and "progress" many people hold. In Riley's scheme, chaos is purifying; stability is stultifying, even polluting. Most important here perhaps is Riley's assumption that the borders between chaos and stability are so rigid. Yet this rigidity breaks down when Riley ends up defining writing center work as both different from and like the three fields he discusses.

Riley seems to locate himself with compositionists from the way he represents literature and literary theory as "they" and composition as "we." Included in the "we" are writing centers, and Riley aims to highlight the similar ways in which composition and writing centers pursue professionalization; yet writing centers are different from composition in that they are "impermanent," "impure," of "mixed descent" and "cross purposes." (31-32). Furthermore, we must acknowledge "that directing a writing center does not involve the kinds of difficulties for which advanced degree preparation is necessary" (32). The same argument has been made about composition: anyone can teach writing.

Riley's article elicited heated responses both on the WCENTER listserv and in the "letters" section of the Writing Center Journal. In one response letter, Bobbie Silk objects to Riley's "absolutist's definitions of 'good' and 'bad,'" which "presume a paradigm of professionalism in which we bargain our souls for 'authority'" (186). Byron Stay, too,

critiques Riley's tendency to generalize and dichotomize. Both Silk and Stay assert in their responses that writing centers are indeed unique in the university. Silk believes that writing center professional authority is unlike American Literature specialists, critical theorists, or compositionists (186), and Stay argues that "because writing centers are already so heterogeneous and interdisciplinary, there is little danger of their ever being confused with academic departments, much less academic disciplines" (187). Both these responses construct writing centers as "hardly a place that threatens" in the way that Riley constructs them. Both Stay and Silk are pro-professionalization, but imagine the writing center as "non-threatening" when indeed it must become a kind of "threat" in terms of offering a valuable service unachievable by composition or literature.

But how are writing centers to be heard? Must they become "threatening"? In what way? Jeanne Simpson advocates the traditional trajectory for professionalization, and argues that to do otherwise would be impractical. Simpson was formerly a writing center director who became frustrated with the lack of recognition and support she got. She now holds the position of Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. She is quite active on the WCENTER listserv and has published widely about writing center professionalization. As an administrator herself, she brings a crucial perspective to writing center work. In a published email conversation with Steve Braye, and Beth Boquet, Simpson is pragmatic about professionalization. She argues that "it is impossible to sustain revolution" (154) and that "eventually, revolutionaries become the establishment until a new gang of revolutionaries comes along to trash the joint" (155).

Contrarily, Riley indicates that he perhaps does believe that revolutions can be sustained if only the group could be kept from going mainstream. He sets up an either/or proposition and cannot find a way to see the both/and. Riley sees the revolutionaries, driven by "high idealism and frustration," slowly but surely making the predictable compromises "in which the original packet of revolutionary energy is tapped off into academic business as usual" (21). Simpson seems to fit this description: she moved into her current administrative position out of frustration. However, she breaks from the description of "academic business as usual" by using her position to educate writing center directors about how to communicate with administration to assure the survival and development of writing centers. She works within the system to change it.

Simpson explains that administration is concerned with retention, space, assessment, funding. If writing center directors are to be successful, they need to be savvy about the way in which writing centers fit into the larger picture. I believe she would accuse Riley of the kind of idealism that is blind to the very real situations in which directors must balance the theoretical and managerial, the budgetary and pedagogical. Simpson astutely points out that directors are well trained in theory and pedagogy, but lack the crucial training in management and budgeting, and this weakens writing centers more than anything else (52). This lack of practical training sometimes leads to identity formations that are both positive and limiting for writing centers.

Writing center identity is often self-portrayed as "subversive," "revolutionary," "self-sacrificing" and hence holy. Throughout the writing center literature people talk about how they are misperceived and discuss ways to negotiate and correct those

misperceptions. Simpson, however, rejects what she calls the "pious victimhood" of much WCENTER discussion (156). Steve Braye, in his response, is reminded of similar observations made about the WPA (Writing Program Administration) list. Riley, however, sees victimhood in professionalization: he argues that writing centers will lose their vibrancy, their "interdisciplinarity," their subversive edge, and particularly their relationships with students if they achieve academic respectability.

Although respondents to Riley's argument accurately point out that he is warning writing centers of a very real danger, they also see that he constructs his arguments around equally limiting and (therefore dangerous) dualisms. This discussion about the dangers and benefits of professionalism echoes discussions in the early 80's among a few of Composition's well-established scholars: Stephen North and Maxine Hairston. What we learn from the connection between the 80's and the 90's discussions of professionalization is that we are telling the same stories in the same way, and in my view, doing so reinforces Riley's argument.

Passing the Buck

In 1982 Stephen North wrote an essay that remains the philosophical manifesto for contemporary writing centers. In "The Idea of a Writing Center" North attempts to overturn the idea of "lab" where "broken" students come to get "fixed" by redefining (and he might say "reiterating") what writing centers do and whom they serve. North is frustrated in the article by the misperceptions of writing centers as fix-it shops. He cites Hairston's "Winds of Change" article, which characterized writing centers as having

"sprung up" over the past ten years as a "Band-Aid" response to the literacy "crisis."

Although North is bothered by this version of writing center history, he is more bothered by Hairston's tendency to talk about writing centers in terms of "we" and "they:"

According to her 'sprang up' historical sketch, these places simply appeared-like so many mushrooms?-to do battle with illiteracy. 'They' are still with 'us,' but 'they' haven't solved the problem. What is missing here is a doer, an agent, a creator-someone to take responsibility. The implication is that 'they' done it-'they' being, apparently, the places themselves. (75)

Yet Hairston *aligns* writing centers with composition in her "Breaking the Bonds" speech, written a year after North's article:

... We often find ourselves confronting the literature faculty who dominate so many departments, and we feel that we are fighting losing battles...to get hard money to staff the writing center, battles to establish programs for training writing teachers, or battles against staffing composition courses with underpaid, low status, part-timers. (273)

In this speech, writing centers are clearly a part of the "we" of composition. It could be that Hairston read and acknowledged North's criticism and genuinely attempted to include writing centers in the royal "we." It could also be that such inclusion--writing centers were briefly mentioned once without commentary--was a strategy to redefine the adversary and galvanize the community of compositionists. Perhaps both are true. At any rate, this construction of a "we" and "they" is reminiscent of the contemporary argument Riley makes about how disciplines practice exclusion.

North, too, falls victim to such dichotomies of "we" and "they." "They" are the old writing centers and the "we" is the "new" writing center. For example, North explains

that the "new" writing center has a somewhat shorter history: "it is the result of documentable resurgence, a renaissance if you will, that began in the 1970's (76). This "new" center rejects the metaphors of sickness Hairston and others use to (mis)describe writing center work. Training in these new centers is based on the philosophy of changing the student writer rather than the writing. North allows that not everyone is interested in writing, but when someone becomes interested and seeks out conversation and feedback, the writing center is there for them in a way that classrooms cannot be.

Throughout this important article-one that has motivated a generation of writing center scholarship-North tries to define this "new" writing center over and against the old by demonizing grammar instruction. The "new" writing center attracts motivated students:

A writing center's advantage in motivation is a function of the same phenomenon. Writers come looking for us because, more often than not, they are genuinely, deeply engaged with their material, anxious to wrestle it into the best form they can: they are motivated to write . . . These opportunities to talk with excited writers at the height of their engagement with their work are the lifeblood of a writing center. ("Idea" 81)

Students with "problems" are not the lifeblood of the new writing center. The writing center portrait North paints attracts the "good" students, "good" because they are motivated and engaged and excited, and attracting "good" students increases the status of the writing center because it no longer has to deal strictly with "remedial" students who have "grammar issues" or have been compelled by other forces (teachers or time crunches) to visit. So who now is expected to "take care" of the "problem" students?

I believe that the sickness and disease metaphors demonstrate a general and historical attitude toward grammar instruction, and many teachers of composition despair to "teach" grammar because it is now beneath their expertise, especially if one is trying to promote one's expertise in a field that in many ways is still struggling for institutional recognition. So here we are at crucial aspect of the professionalization process: one of the ways we manage the possibility of failure is by disassociating ourselves from "problem" students, students who have "grammar issues" that should have been dealt with in high school. As Nancy Grimm observes, "Our culture teaches us to locate the problem of literacy in individuals (e.g. lack of preparedness, carelessness, 'poor' family background, first language 'interference')" (222). And the way the institution sets agendas for composition and writing centers based on a service ethic, as Sharon Crowley has argued, keeps us firmly connected to the "underprepared" and the "uninitiated."

Frustrated with the low status of compositionists, Crowley argues that we should raise the field of Rhetoric/Composition to the level of theory by "speak[ing] a more disciplined language by firmly distinguishing composition from writing" thereby getting the recognition and academic respect we deserve (237). Crowley argues that "composition" is equated with grammar, punctuation, and correctness. "Writing, on the other hand, names the practice that we study and teach" (237). In rejecting the term "composition" Crowley rejects the status attached to teaching basic skills, because teaching basic skills is associated with remediation.

Composition has long been associated with teaching formal correctness. Thomas Miller notes that as literature became a discipline, teaching basic skills was shunted onto

composition, and in this way literature alienated itself from the work of literacy (5). The essay became the technology of that alienation: essay writing becomes the polarized "other" of literature. Writing centers, for all their idealism about helping writers talk about ideas (North's good student emphasized), deal much of the time with basic grammatical issues and editing. In the move toward the pedagogy of process, the teaching of grammar became a purely editing issue, which is the very last step of the process according to much of the literature. Now, in our "post-process" age, we ought to reconsider the place of grammar as not something to be "fixed" but something to study as a matter of style.

How has this conflict--the call for separation, the devaluing of grammar, and emphasis on theor--played out? Composition by and large is still a subordinated field in English departments, as evidenced by Crowley's recent call for abolishing the universal requirement as a means toward respectability and reducing the numbers of exploited teachers. And literature, along with fields such as anthropology, sociology, and history, is experiencing a crisis in identity borne by the close examination of representation. Can people working in writing centers do things differently from these fields? They seem to be making the same kinds of arguments, the same claims to legitimacy that composition and others before them have made.

I believe there is a middle ground writing centers can choose to take that balances the negative and positive aspects of professionalization, and it has to do with rethinking the politics of location and making sure that when the "experts" begin talking about professionalization, the tutors in writing centers are involved. The current conversation

about accreditation concerns the welfare of directors. As with WPAs, The logic seems to be that if the work of writing center directors is thought of as legitimate research, then everything else follows: facilities will improve, tutor training will improve, student writing will improve. We must be very conscious about where we locate tutors in this process, and very self-aware about how we expect institutional change to occur, as well as how we represent ourselves, our work, and the students who come to the center. As I hope to demonstrate in the next two chapters, tutors often operate under different epistemologies than directors and teachers, even as they share some common ground. This difference in epistemology can be a source of conflict or a source of investigation that can provide all of us with a fresh perspective and perhaps an alternative attitude to take as we professionalize.

Lisa Ede makes a similar argument in her response to Terrence Riley in an essay titled "Writing Centers and the Politics of Location." She argues that in paying attention to the ways in which we set up categories-and how those categories tend to diminish gaps rather than attend to them-we might be able to find ways to change classroom practice. Citing Jennifer Gore, Ede asserts, "there are no inherently liberating practices or discourses" (Gore 58, Ede 126). In other words, it is not helpful to decide which discourses are "liberating" and which are not. All discourse is situated in complex social relations and it is "what happens in the narrative, and in that classroom, that matters: who speaks and why, to what effect, and with what sensitivity (or absence thereof) to both speakers' and auditors' rhetorical situations...the question of whether a particular practice is enabling or oppressive, enlightening or limiting, is a situated question" (126).

The discourse surrounding professionalization that I have analyzed above has more to do with the fate of directors than it does with how professionalization affects tutors: the next two chapters will deal with the rhetorical situations of writing center tutors in two southwestern universities: the University of Arizona and Arizona State University.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFINING PROFESSIONALISM: THE UA WRITING CENTER AND TUTORS

It is a commonplace in writing center literature to acknowledge how differently writing centers are structured depending on institutional needs and perceptions. Even as we agree that writing centers rarely look alike in terms of structure, training, emphasis, and support, we do generally agree that writing centers serve as sites for individualized instruction without the perceived threat of grades. We believe in the humanitarian intent embedded in a writing center approach to student writing. We tend to promote peer collaboration and often downplay difference. And in using "we" as an indicator of membership in the writing center community, I mean specifically directors and scholars of writing center work. These beliefs and actions, I will argue, often blind us to the much more complicated way in which writing centers are positioned and how they operate, and looking to tutors' perceptions of professionalism and their understanding of the missions and philosophies of writing centers can help us to see that complexity with more clarity. Tutors, although they may be attracted to our approach and philosophy, more often learn to do as we do without a sense of disciplinarity, reflecting both the good and harm of how we are attempting to legitimize. These tutors' class affiliations, aspirations, genders, and educational histories also shape their versions of what it means to be "professional." In other words, along with the training we provide, these tutors' differences affect how they see themselves and writing center work. Analyzing these differences may help us learn a

language of interdependence so necessary to understanding how to be a member of a group or community that at once promotes egalitarianism and yet exists in the social reality of a dominant class and competitive social arrangement. Critical self-reflection on how the relations between difference, dominance, and competition work in writing centers *does* reveal ways to counteract the dangers Terrence Riley warns us of as we professionalize: orthodoxy, dogma, loss of advocacy, and loss of vitality.

Based on my research at two local southwest university writing centers as well as recent scholarship on the roles writing centers play in literacy education, I argue that the two local writing centers I studied reveal that tutors' sense of professionalism is grounded in a professional code of conduct rather than a disciplinary sense of professionalism. As I hope to show in my analysis, tutors lack a sense of writing center history and how their writing centers are situated in tutors' institutions, and this too affects their definitions. Furthermore, the fact that writing centers are still in the process of distinguishing themselves as a discipline lends to tutors' perceptions of professionalism as a behavioral and appearance-based issue. This chapter will focus on the analysis of U of A writing center tutors' responses to my interview questions, and chapter five will deal with ASU tutors and their contexts.

Generally, my research revealed that our tutors were largely unaware of the wider contexts in which they work, even though several of them worked in other academic support units. They tended to experience a clear gap between our ideals of writing center work and their daily experiences. And finally, their definitions of professionalism are grounded in the notion of a "club" or "student government" rather than a sense of

membership in a field or discipline, so their definitions focused on a code of conduct and appearances. One reason for this may be the fact that tutors in writing centers are not all English majors, and many come from disciplines where writing is valued but unexamined. Tutors see their work as practice for "real world" professionalism; for when they finally become lawyers, architects, teachers, biologists, nurses, engineers, and famous fiction writers. They join the writing center community as club members rather than initiates into a discipline, unlike those who direct writing centers. Directors or Coordinators are usually degreed English people or graduate students in some English major. This difference indicates that theoretical grounding is more important to directors than tutors, even when the tutors are majors in some aspect of English Studies or education. They favor pragmatic knowledge that will help them with the very immediate needs of the students they see, just as graduate student teachers want to know how to deal with plagiarism, designing assignments, stimulating discussion, and commenting on writing. Paying close attention to how these different orientations toward work in the writing center shape attitudes can help us to reflect on what it is we value and why. In order to get a succinct snapshot of the context in which the tutors in my study are set, I will provide a brief look at the larger institutional scene and how the writing center is situated among other academic support units within that landscape.

The UA Writing Center within the Land Grant Institutional Context

The Morrill Act of 1862 allocated federal funding to build colleges dedicated to teaching agricultural science and the mechanical arts along with the humanities. In 1885,

\$25,000 was approved for building the University of Arizona at Tucson. Arizona was not yet a state, and would not be for the next three decades (UA Division of Planning and Support). "Old Main"-the original building that still stands in the center of the present-day campus--first opened its doors in October of 1891. 33 students met with 6 professors of "world-class" status. At the time, there were only two public schools--one in Tucson and one in Phoenix--and they went through the ninth grade. Instead of working from within their specialties, Faculty unhappily discovered that they needed to spend most of their energies and expertise in preparing students for the rigors of college writing and thinking. In response to this "crisis," faculty created the preparatory school, which remained in place until 1905 when the Regents voted that students could only be admitted if they (1) passed the ninth grade and (2) came from towns larger than 5,000.

The circumstances that created the need for the Morrill act are relevant to the present picture of the University of Arizona. The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 was created to meet the demands for agricultural science and education. Michael Parsons, a sociologist at the State University of New York, reminds us that "by the 1850's, America's farms were being replaced by an agricultural industry and manufacturing was becoming the leading industrial sector" (28). Parsons points out that the Morrill Act allowed the government to use the higher education system to meet national needs for specialized training or when higher education could be an instrument to achieve some policy objective, which was sometimes produced out of interest group pressure. For example, interest group pressure resulted in the Morrill act of 1890, which mandated that funds would be withheld from states that denied black students admission unless the

states provided a separate but equal institution; hence the creation of black land grant universities (29). An example for the need to achieve some policy objective is the well-documented fact that funding is poured into the sciences when war is imminent or to keep the US in competition with technological advances in other countries (the now-defunct USSR's space program and the Cold War, for example). The disparity remains and affects composition programs, located as they are in the Humanities. Joyce Kinkead cites the Morrill act mandate that states the general purpose of a land grant institution: "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." Although Kinkead is speaking of her own institution, Utah State University, her observations about the university mission is applicable to the U of A as well. She writes, "Although educating students in the liberal arts is a concern for land grant institutions, the emphasis resides in the sciences. For instance, the largest college on the USU campus, the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) is considered primarily a "service" unit of the university" (192). Composition, we've long known, has been considered a "service" area, and since our U of A writing center is closely tied to the Composition Program, it too is seen by many faculty across disciplines as primarily a service unit dedicated to drills for skills. Nevertheless, writing is required for all entering first-year students, and reflects the University's dedication to undergraduate liberal education. U of A also requires at least one upper-division writing course and an exam at mid-career to assess writing ability. And as Kincaid notes, the mission of a writing center parallels the mission of the Morrill Act. The Act targets the "industrial classes" (students who had not traditionally sought higher education) and the

writing center came about in response to the admission of non-traditional students. The UAWC, however, is a recent arrival and operates apart from other tutoring centers on the campus.

Situating the Center Among Other Academic Support Units

The UAWC is quite young in comparison to other academic support units on the campus. Begun in 1992, the UAWC is now 8 years old. The first "writing center"-that is, a center that provides one-on-one help with writing--is the Writing Skills Improvement Program (WSIP), founded in 1980 by Roseann Gonzalez, who was is a faculty member of the English Department, though she has not taught in the department since founding WSIP. Through a presidential initiative, Gonzalez identified the need for a support program for minority students, whose attrition rates were high. A five-year accountability study was published in 1985 and revealed that the WSIP program contributed significantly to retention(see Rabuck). The 20-year-old program is funded by state allocated funds and funds from the provost's office, and serves minority and financially disadvantaged students exclusively. It is located off-campus in a small adobe house, and the tutors have either an MA or Ph.D. WSIP's services have grown considerably over the years, and the program now offers weekly writing workshops for all students taking the first year composition sequence.

Unconnected with WSIP but parallel in objective is the centrally located Multicultural Programs and Services, which provides general education advising, mentoring and tutoring for the same student population. The University Learning Center (ULC), located in the original campus building, "Old Main" (which stands in the center

of the campus), is more truly at the physical center of the university. The ULC also provides advising, mentoring, tutoring, and a small computer lab for all U of A students. This program reports to the Vice President of Undergraduate Education and is funded with money from the provost's office. The First-Year Center (FYC), which is a division of the ULC, recruits upper-division students to tutor in math, science. Most recently, the UA Writing Center provides the First-Year Center with tutors for writing. The FYC's mission is to "support freshmen as they transition from the high school environment to the university. The FYC enhances academic, social and personal development through programs and services that foster student success." It's a small operation located near the dorms in the Park Student Center. With 5000 incoming first-year students, however, it's more efficient to keep the advertising for such available help minimal.

The SALT program (Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques), created in 1981, is a student fee-based program that provides special tutoring help for students with learning disabilities. One of the reasons some students choose the U of A is because of this program. SALT has an OWL, 100 peer tutors, a testing facility, and a computer lab with special software to assist LD students.

CATS (Committed to Total Academic Success) is a program for UA athletes. According to one of the UA consultants who tutored for CATS, the program assigns a group of tutors to an athlete for the entire semester. Tutors produce progress reports for the Athletic Department. In 1994-5 the UAWC attempted to establish a satellite in the McKale recreational center, which houses the Athletic Department, but it soon failed

because the departments and the athletes expected consultants to be responsible for much more of the work than consultants thought was ethical.

The U of A Writing Center

With all of this support available to students, what need would a writing center fill? First, the other academic support units are either specialized, targeting first-year students, minority and financially disadvantaged students, athletes, or LD students, or fee-based. There was no place on campus before 1992 that was open to all students doing all levels of writing work. Tilly Warnock, then Composition Program Director, recognized this need. Warnock's vision was of a writing center based on the "liberatory" model of peer tutoring. This vision was informed by her experiences with the writing center at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, her dedication to liberatory pedagogy, and her scholarly work on Kenneth Burke. In 1984, Tilly and her husband John Warnock wrote an article that lays out how this approach. They write:

The commitment to individuation rather than to mass production, to growth from within rather than to packaging from without, results in the practical advantage that students learn to conceive ideally, to play with 'as if' and the future tenses, to imagine how they might 'rewrite' themselves and their worlds. Students learn the practical skills of learning to live in the face of determinate and indeterminate meaning; they learn to revise. (56)

The UAWC motto, "a place to talk about ideas," resulted from this approach. This conception of the purpose of the writing center is closest to Lunsford's promotion of a Burkean Parlor writing center in which "the notion of knowledge is always contextually bound, always socially constructed" (113). And, as both Lunsford and the Warnocks observe, collaboration is quite a challenge. Collaboration, as Trimbur has asserted, can

masquerade as consensus while squelching the important role disensus plays in the negotiation of meaning ("Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning"). Especially important in his reconfiguration of collaboration is that idea that consensus "will be based not so much on collective agreements as on collective explanations of how people differ, where their differences come from, and whether they can live and work together with these differences" (610). Bruffee's idea of collaboration assumes peership, but as Trimbur and Vandenberg have shown, tutors are not peers but already inscribed with institutionally sanctioned authority. In the course of my interviews, tutors critiqued the UAWC motto, "A place to talk about ideas," in interesting ways. And while this approach is optimistic, the "indeterminacy" of meaning for the tutors, themselves learning to live in the space between determinate and indeterminate, is frustrating and often downright discouraging. Tutors are savvy and resilient people, however, and their sense of what needs to be done to make the writing center a more efficient and effective space for both the tutors and the students is valuable.

The UAWC began in 1992 with one graduate student director and five consultants (the preferred title) who met at first under the mesquite trees close to the Department of English. The director at that time, a graduate student, designed a training manual based on Harvard's writing center, where he was formerly a tutor. The manual relied heavily on "scenarios" to be acted out by consultants and lots of discussion about tutoring practices. The consultants were recruited from upper-division English courses. Each year a few more consultants were added and trained, and the writing center obtained a more permanent location: the Little Chapel of All Nations courtyard. Like the Little Chapel--

which also housed teaching advisors' offices--the writing center consultants welcomed all writers at any stage of the process. In 1993, the University Learning Center invited the writing center to relocate to an on-campus 1920's adobe-style house complete with Spanish tile on the roof, which the ULC owned. Although the carpet was stained, the walls peeled paint, and the rooms were small, the French doors leading onto a dirt courtyard and the fireplace made the atmosphere comfortable and homey. The fireplace was the perfect size for a small stereo system with speakers on the mantle. Built-in bookshelves on either side of a large east-facing window held donated books of all flavors, many out-of-date. Under the large window was a couch that became so emblematic of writing center "laid-back" style that it became the logo, designed by consultant, on the official UA Writing Center t-shirt. The couch is a dirty beige with brown and maroon stripes, sagging but thick cushions, wood veneer accents down the arms, and inviting sink spots perfect for a curled-up nap. The recessed, heavy, dark wood front door often stuck and was usually left open during business hours. Upon entering, to the immediate right is a narrow kitchen with a deep and scarred porcelain sink and tall wood cabinets painted many times white. Ahead and to the left is the couch, and around the corner of the curved entryway to the living room is a large gray desk with a phone and answering machine. Movie posters decorate the walls and notes, flyers, and various campus phone numbers are taped to a blackboard above the desk. Toward the back of the room is a table with an out-of-date computer, used for email and record keeping. Consultants gathered on the couch during their tutoring hours or sat at the desk to do homework or huddled on the floor and scattered chairs around the living room. Meetings

were comfortably held in the afternoons in this room for several years until the consultant population got so big that directors split them into two meetings. More consultants meant more directors, so two graduate students were appointed the position. In 1995, when I began my co-directorship, there were thirty consultants and three co-directors (later known as coordinators). We recruited and trained consultants, mentored ten each, designed publicity, wrote year-end reports, managed workshops for faculty and students, established new satellite centers in various colleges, and took turns running staff meetings. We spent the week before classes training new recruits using the same manual from 1992 and supplemental articles, and provided on-going training through staff meetings. New consultants spent the first three weeks observing experienced consultants meet with students, although when we got busy some of them dove right in. Consultants write a one-page description of each consultation on a form called a "conference note," which stays in the writing center. The conference note exchange in the middle of the semester helps them to see strategies and problems other consultants use and encounter as a way to build knowledge.

Today, three coordinators manage thirty-five consultants-four of whom are graduate students not teaching yet--in a new location off-campus. Just in the past two years the UAWC acquired enough funding to pay a receptionist, and coordinators have formalized training by creating a one-semester course. The house the UAWC is currently occupying is bigger and cleaner while still retaining the 1920's adobe design and feel. It too has a fireplace and a large front window with our couch just beneath it. The added benefit of a porch and more rooms outweighs the block-farther trek students must now

make to see a consultant. The conference note exchange is still an important part of their work. The UAWC has seen a growth in ESL students over the years as word as spread. First-year composition students still make up the bulk of the clientele, and consultants continue to hold hours in satellite centers across the campus, including dorms, The First-Year Center, and engineering. We still only have one computer.

Professionalism defined, or "It Looks Better if You have a Secretary"

The impressions I have gathered from my one-hour interviews with UAWC consultants in April of 1999 are that their sense of professionalism is grounded in a code of conduct. Mike, for example, directly tied professionalism to appearances and behavior:

Well, I think if you're gonna define it in general, you probably have to compare it to other professional things like going to the doctor or dentist. They have to be there on time [and] well dressed. It looks better if you have a secretary. Being on time, well dressed, smile [Mike smiles]. I think the secretary makes a difference, too. Appearance makes a big difference. I think that the appearance of the writing center itself makes a big difference in professionalism. (A 156)

Mike is Hawaiian from Kauai and plans on attending law school. He wants to "make a lot of money" and return to Kauai so that he might work in an economically depressed state comfortably. He can switch easily from island creole to Standard English modes. Mike strikes me as a person who, with no regrets, has had to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers to become the accomplished student and writer he is today. He easily detects when and how to play the roles expected of him in different situations, such as

artist. It was his realistic drawing of the writing center couch that was chosen as the logo for consultant t-shirts. He characterizes himself as practical and cynical, two characteristics that lead me to read the t-shirt logo as a double message: as an advertisement for the non-threatening atmosphere of the writing center as well as a comment on the laxity of structure and few if any consequences for unacceptable behavior. He believes that the writing center should be more "business like" if we want to be taken seriously, and comments that

It seems like we are in this middle ground between a business or a club or something. There's no system of order. I mean people do things and they screw up or they do things they aren't supposed to do. If it gets really extreme, someone is pulled aside and perhaps there's just this little cautious whisper, 'hey, you know you're not supposed to do this.' We don't really have a system so people abuse it. And I know this is kind of cynical, but there's no incentive beside our own human worth to make us want to do the best work possible. (A 159)

Mike's comment reflects the student expectation of reward and punishment as it has been meted out by their educational experience. During the time of my interviews the current coordinators had designed an actual credit-bearing course. The presence of the course, with its performance-evaluation schema, reinforced for Mike the need for some kind of evaluation beyond the conference note exchange to encourage more professional behavior. Amy agrees. Self-motivation to observe conferences and practice scenarios was difficult without the structure of a course (A 133).

Like Mike, Grace defines professionalism generally as something that is manifested in a code of conduct so naturalized as to be invisible. Good manners and being well dressed is simply a given:

I guess it's kind of an unexplained culture where you just know how to act and to treat people with respect. But you should always do that but somehow it's different. I never thought about this before. (A 141)

Most of the consultants had not thought about the concept of professionalism before, which is understandable within the context of their training. The emphasis has been on co-learning rather than a mastery of a body of knowledge. At the time I interviewed Grace, she was senior majoring in Education and in the Honors College. She is from Prescott, Arizona, a small historic town in the mountains. I recruited her from my honors composition course. She is an excellent writer whose parents are both teachers. The essay she wrote for my course was a reconsideration of the issue in Arizona about dual language courses in primary schools. Arizona at the time was considering abolishing these courses because of the perception that too many students whose first language was Spanish graduated without thoroughly knowing how to write and speak Standard English. She began with the conservative view that the courses should be abolished and Spanish speaking students should take English only. Her thorough research influenced her to reconsider this stance and her eloquence and persuasiveness won her essay a place in the Composition program's in-house publication, *A First-Year Student's guide to Composition as a model*. Grace struggled to name specific criteria for what a professional was, but she finally came up with three: a professional is "well spoke and

neat in appearance," paid well, and trained (A 141). Her definition of professionalism above--it is an "unexplained culture"--is perhaps more accurate than any especially in light of how ill defined it is in published scholarship. Grace reinforces a scholarly observation that professionalism "is a source of ambiguity, an ethical and political problem" (Robbins 36). Within the writing center, consultants drew on their general knowledge about what it means to be a professional in this culture--someone trained, credentialed, distanced from the layperson and perhaps somehow deceptive because of the rhetorical force of appearances and behavior--and their "practice" of professionalism within the writing center, which emphasized connection and learning over expertise and appearance.

For Grace and several other consultants, being a student overrides any "real" sense of professionalism. She believes that she and others are expected to act professionally--"pretend" is the implication--but she doesn't think of herself as professional. She comments,

I think it's the whole part time job while you're a student kind of thing. Like no matter what you do, you're a student...You fill out taxes and you're a student--you know, you do anything and you're a student. (A 142)

Consultant training allows them to earn pay and helps them to be informed rather than specialized. Mike feels like anyone with a humanities background can learn to tutor just as anyone who can count can work at McDonald's. Of course, things are more complicated than this. What I think Mike is getting at is that consultants are not invested in disciplinary in the same way that directors and scholars are.

The lack of a review process is an issue every consultant I spoke with mentioned, particularly when I asked about professionalism in the writing center. During the time of the interviews in particular, but not a new phenomenon, was the fact that several consultants had been entering hours into their time sheets for which they hadn't shown up. This problem, consultants asserted, was due to the idea that "once you're in, you're in"-the equivalent of tenure to the professoriate. Amy, for example, has strong opinions about what should be done:

I don't think it's hard to find an answer. I think you can just say if you're an intern, and you have not fulfilled the obligations of your internship then you will not be asked back as a paid consultant. Or 'we won't pass you.' Or 'if you've been writing hours on your time sheet that you haven't shown up for, we're going to dock you those hours on your next check. (A 140)

Amy's answer constructs her writing center work more like a job or business rather than an intellectual endeavor. Amy also aspires to be a teacher. She is currently a graduate student in the Literature program. Her father is a political science professor at Arizona State University and she "grew up on that campus." Amy articulates above three other consultants' opinions on the issue. All of them desire an evaluation process that goes beyond the conference not exchange, the purpose of which is not so much evaluation but an information exchange. It is a process consultants groan about at first and then consistently find valuable. The conference note exchange has supported collegiality among consultants, who find renewed respect for the creativity, humor, and compassion of their peers.

Collegiality was also an important criterion that came up when I asked about professionalism in the writing center. Collegiality was also connected to the "clubish" feel of the writing center. Brandon, an art history graduate student who also plans to teach, tells me that "one of the things that makes this place great is that we all like each other and we all like being here. We take pride in being like a student government" (A 155). Vlad, a Russian graduate student in the Department of Education, points out that sharing information is part of professionalism. Even as consultants' were disturbed by some of their peers' behavior, all talked about the wonderful conversations they have had, and that they rely on their peers in the UAWC for stimulating discussion over a broad range of topics. All consultants felt collegial toward the coordinators as well, who worked hard to mentor the consultants as peers.

To summarize, the consultants' version of professionalism is based on correct conduct, collegiality, and a standardized review and evaluation process. In this scheme, the intellectual is separate from the professional, which to consultants means a code of conduct. There is no sense of mastery, but rather a sense of learning-in-process, of experience. It seems that tutoring is a job for which one is trained but not credentialed, and it is a step on the way to a career. I believe what these consultants are trying to tell us is that the kind of knowledge generated in the writing center is what academics have historically called "unauthorized," the knowledge of students; of lore. Their message as I read it supports Trimbur's observation that tutors are at once labeled unqualified to pass on knowledge and yet they have been rewarded by the institution as good students. Still, the ways "student" is constructed here is yet again the unprivileged, naïve person. This is

not to say that these students do not care about tutoring; most of them are quite passionate about working with students and writing. This particular group I interviewed were mostly future teachers who find this work valuable, but their mastery will come from their specific disciplines in the form of a degree. What is important to note here is that the expectations for professionalism by directors and published scholars are quite different from tutors' expectations, and the professional literature does not address this gap.

Invisible Contexts

One of the aspects of professionalization Jasper Neel points out is a sense of history, albeit he is ambivalent about the merits of adhering to one particular history. In the UAWC in 1999, there was no sense of shared larger history beyond what consultants created for themselves in their time at the writing center. One explanation for why writing center history isn't explicitly included in the training might be that the coordinators were themselves largely unaware of the national scene and motivated by local circumstances to pay attention to local history for the purpose of showing growth and progress in annual reports. I remember that my colleagues and I went unaware of some of the vital resources around us, such as the Wcenter listserv. Because we were taking classes, teaching classes, and running the center, we had very little time to thoughtfully read *The Writing Center Journal*. We did help a group of consultants prepare a presentation for a national conference, but other than this our attention to writing center scholarship was minimal. I really knew nothing of the national history of

writing centers until I began work on this dissertation. A sense of history is an essential part of becoming professionalized even as we must question the versions of history told to us. Knowing our histories provides common ground for members as much as theoretical and practical grounding does. Because of this lack in the writing center, consultants are insulated and cannot measure their work against others who are doing similar work around campus. If providing a sense of disciplinarity is what we want, then history must be included in training. Even we do not want to gesture to disciplinarity, a sense of history provides common ground and has explanatory power when tutors bump up against outsiders' perceptions of their work.

All UAWC consultants were largely unaware of how their writing center fit into the context of other academic support units or the university. Grace isn't sure what the writing center role is among the various academic support units. Brandon answers my question with a question:

Well, how does it fit? I've always kind of wondered that because I'm not really aware. Are we attached to the comp department? Are we our own little unit? Where are we? Where are we supposed to go?

This was not an unusual answer. Our relationship with the original writing center, WSIP, is still a mystery to these consultants. Grace relays that students often are directed to go to WISP, especially if the UAWC is busy, and WISP sends them back to the UAWC. Receptionists now take care of scheduling appointments and have been well informed about WISP and who might be eligible for that program.

Utopian Visions counter Material Conditions?

Consultants talked readily about how their experiences rarely fit the UAWC motto, "a place to talk about ideas." Nevertheless, they felt it was important to aspire to that vision. Grace says that she "checks grammar 85% of the time." (10). Brandon asserts that "the mission is a utopian world" and he wouldn't change it, although he wishes it were "more realized." He connects the mission to what it implies about consulting with writers rather than tutoring them. He says, "I see tutors as having all the answers. [a tutor] has more authority. A consultant is more of a writer in progress" (22). Brandon believes that although other graduate students in his major, Art History, come to him for help because he has strong writing skills, he is still developing as a writer. He insists that he is in no way an authority on writing:

I think every time we have a conference we have a little relationship. At least that's the way I view it, it's not like me being the boss and someone else being the employer, it's sorta like a relationship where I consider myself to behave in a certain manner with the person I'm helping and hoping they reciprocate in a similar way. (19)

Brandon voices above what the other interviewees consider important: establishing a nonhierarchical relationship-which I take to mean rapport-with students so that they are treated with the same kind of respect the consultant would wish to be treated with. In his practice for professionalism, then, Brandon enacts a more egalitarian approach to learning based in an ethics of respect and mutual understanding. The "golden rule," like the writing center motto, are important to his sense of professionalism even as they seem utopian. Theoretical understanding of practice, for these consultants, is not as important as experience. But is this pragmatic orientation limiting or legitimate?

Eric Hobson's article, "Writing Center Practice often Counters its Theory. So What?" sheds some light on the theory vs. practice construct in writing center work. As in composition studies, practice based on "lore" or "mere experience" is still suspect. As Hobson points out, "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" (3). Hobson argues that writing centers have a singular opportunity to assert the power of accepting contradiction and in valuing the kind of knowledge making that does not strictly adhere to the way that disciplines paradigmatically produce knowledge. Writing centers have no centralized theory but draw upon many theories to apply to particular needs in the particular historically located situations. In terms of professionalization for writing centers, the lack of a centralizing theory and the valuing of lore both limits the potential for academic legitimacy as it still exists, but the current climate of disciplinary critique may help pave the way for writing centers to redefine professionalization.

Peter Vandenberg's experiences in introducing his tutors to the professional discourse support Hobson's assertion. Vandenberg took a "professional approach" rather than an experiential one in his tutor training course. What was made explicit to him was how easily his tutors were disciplined by that discourse and how it created competition over collaboration among them. All of his students in this particular course produced papers accepted at national conferences, but the process to get there troubled them and Vandenberg. One student's essay concerned how the collaborative process of peer review became competitive especially in the beginning because she had not yet mastered the

disciplinary language the group needed to share to truly be peers. Vandenberg observes that

Constructed as professionals in the conventional academic sense, tutors are implicitly identified as authorities separated from clients by their awareness of and participation in a specialized discourse that helps shape appropriate (professional) interaction with clients. While the professional approach clarifies the hierarchized difference between tutors and tutees based on familiarity with a specialized discourse, tutors remain oddly suspended in this economy of production as the informed rather than the informers. (64)

With Vandenberg, my concern is that as we conceptualize directions for writing center work in ways that attend closely to how tutors--the largest contingent among us--are imbricated in the web of values deeply imbedded in the institution. The UAWC consultant responses to defining professionalism reveal a gap between the scholarly construction of the term and their own. This is not to promote reformatting the training to include more of the scholarly discussion to bring "them" more in line with "us," but to point to ways we might imagine a professionalization process that accepts that not all tutors are going to be teachers, and that they are not necessarily dedicated to our sense of disciplinarity. We must remember that the value of the tutoring experience lies in practicing a way of learning and a way of communicating with people that they can carry with them. It is not important to make them experts; it is important to provide the informal learning environments conducive to exploration and critical self-reflection as they do their work with student clients.

So far, UAWC consultants provide ideas for an alternative professionalism that focuses less on expertise and authority and more on learning and establishing relationships conducive to supporting writers. To do these things better, they believe more structure and a clearer sense of consequences for actions need to be established. In other words, they desire a clearer sense of hierarchy, which is not unreasonable. What they seem to be unaware of, or at least unwilling to articulate, is how that hierarchy is already in place. ASU writing center tutors, on the other hand, are aware of their organizational hierarchy and promote it as a stabilizing foundation upon which they can carry out their work, and this affects their responses to the issue of professionalism in their writing center.

CHAPTER FIVE

ASU TUTORS: THE VALUE OF STRUCTURE

As in the previous chapter, it is important to gain a sense of the institutional context in which the ASUWC is located, as well as its relationship to other academic support programs.

Teacher College Beginnings: Arizona State University

ASU began as a territorial Normal School with thirty-one students and one teacher inhabited a simple four-room building near a thinly populated river crossing (Oetting). The school opened its doors on February 8, 1886 to meet the demand for trained teachers in a growing Arizona public school system (Hopkins and Thomas, viii). The legislature approved funds for the university at Tucson and the Normal School in Tempe in 1885. It took only a year for construction of the Normal School, whereas the U of A didn't open its doors until October 1891.

While The University of Arizona had offered PH.Ds and a wide range of graduate programs for thirty years, The Normal school only developed into a Teacher's College in 1925 at which time it finally offered a four-year course load, and conferred its first bachelor's degree in 1927 (Sabine 8). It expanded into Arizona State Teacher's College in 1929, and, "after a battle," became in 1945 Arizona State College (Hopkins and Thomas ix). Between 1945 and 1960, the student population rose from 553 to 11,128, and in 1958, Arizona State College achieved university status (x).

The time line above would not be possible if it had not been for the first territorial governor, Anson P.K. Safford, at least according to the romantic, idealized account of it by Hopkins and Thomas. Their version depicted the pioneers versus the Indians in a cracked-open, arid, wild land where a few good men single handedly lassoed up some education for the new settlers in the territory. Safford, a short man with a big beard, big ideas, and a big box of textbooks stepped from the stagecoach in Tucson. He became known as the "little governor," and he spent his tenure traveling around to all the Arizona territory settlements successfully persuading them to build schools. His motto was "books, not bullets!" and he spread this gospel via mule-drawn wagon fighting the elements like a good pioneer and charming pioneers like a good politician. His motto, more truthfully, would more accurately be "bullets, then books," for he spent much time building a militia to deal with "the Indian problem." Hopkins and Thomas cite accounts of Safford's adventures that almost always include a shotgun. One account by Governor Alexander O. Brodie (1902-05) is particularly telling:

Many of the older citizens of Arizona will recall that courageous little man as he rode into their settlements, a rifle stock protruding from a holster strapped to the side of his saddle and a six-shooter stuck in his cartridge belt. He was the advance guard of education...(qtd. in Hopkins and Thomas 18).

Building an educational system in frontier conditions where nature and Native American people had not yet been "domesticated" is a romantically heroic act that even histories written 75 years later cannot resist. And it is the romanticizing of our pasts and the sense of manifest destiny that sometimes appears in writing center history and tutor training.

Part of the rivalry between the two schools comes from the sense that ASU has come to being through many years of good old fashioned pioneer spirit; this is not something the UA has experienced because it was a university from its inception. ASU competes with size, and it's getting bigger. As a largely commuter campus, ASU currently has 45,000 students a West campus, an East Campus and an Extended Campus featuring distance learning. ASU exceeds U of A's current student enrollment by about 10,000. The largest enrollment is in liberal arts, reflecting a tradition of teaching over research. Within such a sprawling structure, the writing center is the "frontier" of the university, and its tutors and director embody positive aspects of the pioneer spirit: they are confident in their training and ability to help writers, they believe in the value of order and structure, and they are passionate about their work.

The Writing Center in the Network of Academic Support Programs

As a large university, ASU has plentiful support for students. Housed within the department of Student Affairs, The Learning Resources Center on the main campus provides tutoring in all subject areas. The LRC is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association, an academic organization that sets minimum standards for tutoring programs. Tutors are ASU students with a 3.0 cumulative GPA and a minimum 3.5 GPA in their tutoring areas. They also undergo training in tutoring strategies, study skills, and learning styles. Tutors' skills are updated regularly to help them offer students the best strategies for achieving academic success. Tutors help students with varied academic goals and with learning effective study skills. The service is free for an hour a week. If

a student desires more hours, they pay \$25 a week. The College Reading and Learning Association, in its own words, "certifies programs, not individual tutors. In other words, CRLA certifies that a particular tutor training program is qualified to issue CRLA certificates to individual tutors at certain levels." CRLA's tutoring manuals are a set of how-to guidelines and involve little theorizing. Student Affairs also supervises the Disability Resources Center and the First-Year Experience program, which parallels in services and goals the U of A's First-Year Center.

The ASUWC is funded and supervised by the Division of Undergraduate Academic Support (DUAS), which is housed in the Dean of Students office. DUAS's primary concern is with retention. To accomplish this, DUAS provides four areas of support: advising services, a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, and educational services and programs. The ASUWC and WAC are in this last category. The ASUWC is also the only support services that overtly introduces their tutors to theory.

The ASU Writing Center

Even as ASU itself is the youngest university in the state, its writing center is the oldest. Currently, the ASUWC has thirty tutors who work in the main center as well as in four dorm satellites and an engineering satellite. The ASUWC was established in 1970 as a room on the 5th floor of the Language and Literature building. It began with a couple of graduate student tutors, and as it grew, three faculty coordinated the training and publicity. The center eventually moved to the third floor and a larger room filled with computers. Adjacent to the computer lab was the coordinators' office, a renovated

janitor's closet. The ten years in the computer lab was a time when standard procedures and operations were developed and data was generated and preserved.

Before 1996, the coordinators of the writing center also managed the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) program. The head of the division of academic affairs decided that WAC needed to full-time faculty to develop the program to its fullest potential, and he asked the three coordinators to do it. Jana, the current director, was asked to run the center full time in June 1998. Jana came to ASU with an MFA and began her work as a faculty associate in the English Department, and when one of her courses didn't make, she tutored in the Writing Center for twenty hours a week. When the three faculty members left to direct WAC, Jana was hired and given a half-time assistant. Because the computer lab was being underutilized, the writing center moved across the hall and the lab became an open access lab. The new space is a labyrinth of cubbyholes created with leftover office furniture. Tutors use these spaces for their one-hour sessions. Two of the cubbyholes are equipped with computers so tutors can check email or work with a student. In the middle of the room is a rectangular table. Tutors have access to Jana's office from two directions. Currently there are 30 tutors. Jana told me that the tutors have had many different labels, including "writing specialists," "writing consultants," "peer tutors," and finally "tutors." Jana prefers the last title because she doesn't want to risk alienating people who don't understand what a title like "writing consultant" means. She also feels that "tutoring" best describes what happens in her center.

No funding comes from the English Department, and the writing center is considered a stand-alone unit even as it is housed in English and Jana is a member of the Composition Board. As with most campuses, ASU is anxious to develop its computer technology, and the head of DUAS is pressuring the writing center to get on board. Jana is an accomplished webmaster, but she is very aware of the limits of online tutoring. She feels like the Division of Academic Services wants her to develop online tutoring without providing the funds or equipment necessary for the project. Jana strikes me as an extremely well organized person who likes to solve problems, find the most efficient way to arrange things, and doesn't shy away from taking responsibility for managing her tutors. She inspires respect in them and I believe they see her as a mentor as well as the authority figure who takes care of all the behind-the-scenes issues. As she says herself,

Writing center directors need to be jacks of all trades, willing to hand out cough drops, food, and be ready to listen at the drop of a hat to someone who's crying and needs assistance. That person needs to be comfortable working with all different types of personalities, not just really really smart people but all ranges of intellect and personality...you have to have a mind that understands numbers and can put together reports. (B 177)

Even though the writing center receives no funding from the English Department, Jana has a warm rapport with the composition program and is a member of the Composition Board. She believes that Undergraduate Academic Support Services is the most logical place for the writing center to be housed because it serves the entire academic community. The writing center is also considered a part of the newly developed WAC program, and students who wish to apply to the writing center as tutors

must take a WAC 294 course, which does not guarantee them a position. They still must apply and be interviewed. The course is taught conjointly by the writing center director and a WAC faculty member. Some extremely bright tutors have come out of this course: they are dedicated and passionate about their work and confident in their director and training. Their sense of professionalism within the writing center has been influenced by their director and training in that they focused on what I would call a "compassionate efficiency." Authority, to these tutors, is necessary to instill confidence in tutees.

Professionalism Defined, or "We Have Good Hierarchy Here"

Mark, a senior and religious studies major, was fresh from the WAC course and April of 1999 was his second semester working in the writing center. Both his parents are teachers. He plans to attend graduate school in Latin American studies. When asked to define professionalism in general, his answer echoed the UAWC consultants:

That's a hard one because of the business culture in the country has sort of set the stage for professionalism in general. It would have to do a lot with appearance...even more important is your style of speaking. Trying to avoid colloquialisms and slang and formal terms. (B 175)

In this comment we see evidence of Mark's alignment with the humanities, which has historically been politically leftist and considered-at least to itself-to be the domain where the preservation, interpretation, and transmission of "culture" takes place. At the same time, the aspect of speaking well implies that his definition includes extensive education, particularly in reading and writing. A professional will not use colloquialisms and slang, marks of people without formal education. There is an edge of criticism in his comment

as well as an awareness of the literacy standards an education enforces. The wider context of the scholarly discussion of writing center theory does not seem to be a part of Mark's conception of tutoring. As with the UAWC consultants, his conception of professionalism is unconnected to a sense of disciplinary professionalism.

Mark's comments about his approach to students also reflect a sensitivity to balance:

What I've been trained to do is act as a peer, not only a tutor. But through joint inquiry the assumption is that we are going through similar struggles and that we share certain approaches, and so I can't be some type of authority over a student, but at the same time I'm not going to lapse into small talk the entire time. I guess [the small talk] would be more contextual and getting the job done, so to speak. But small talk helps put the student at ease. You want to make someone comfortable. You ask them about their day and go after that. (B 175)

Implied in his statement about not being an authority over a student does not override his sense of being expert enough to help the student "get the job done." The balance between making students comfortable by identifying with them-"we are going through similar struggles"-and providing enough structure to get the job done reflects an approach that values compassion within a stable structure. The idea of joint inquiry, of learning through dialogue, though, is challenging when working with students from cultures that instill high respect for teachers, which is how some students think of tutors. He says, "they'll want to listen to you, but the point is that you want to do the listening and empower the student so it's a tough line" (B 176), but this is nevertheless doable because Mark has thoroughly accepted the idea of dialogue to promote "joint inquiry." The term

is one all the tutors I spoke with used and reflects their training. A discussion at this point about the text used in the WAC course will help clarify these tutors' responses.

Jana and her co-instructor use Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood's *St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*. Peter Vandenberg observes that this text offers a situated awareness of the wider context of writing center theories lacking in other commonly used training texts such as *The Practical Tutor* and *Teaching One-to-One*. However, Vandenberg observes, Murphy and Sherwood establish tutors as professionals in the way one would expect in the academy:

'Informed tutors,' they declare are those 'aware of the ongoing professional conversation that contributes to defining writing center practice' (21). Unlike the newly practical manuals [named above], this claim clearly yokes student tutors' competence to their awareness of published scholarship; further, it establishes a hierarchical relationship between 'writing center practice' and the authoritative discourse that 'contributes' to it by separating the 'informed' from their opposites. (63)

Mark's comments about how he approaches the tutoring situation do not reveal an engagement with the professional conversation. Rather, what he has learned is a set of strategies useful for helping students with writing. In fact, it was the practical aspect of the WAC course that appealed to Mark, who aspires to be a professor. He commented that the course "was one of the few classes I've taken that has that practical accompaniment to your theoretical work."

John's definition of professionalism is interesting because although it adheres to the code of conduct emphasis in all other tutor definitions, he believes in having a good deal of control:

You go around and make sure everything is able to run and you know how to run [it]. So if anything ever goes wrong, you can handle it. Make it a smooth transition for students' eyes-no hustle and bustle. Don't let them see you sweat. It's just a matter of treating it like a job, I suppose. You do it right and you do it well. (B 179)

Later, he reiterated that he thinks "it boils down to doing the job without any noticeable bumps" (B 179). John didn't use the term "joint inquiry" or talk about working with students in a way that was peer-like, which is not to say that he didn't let the student guide the session. His confidence and sense of authority derives from his four years of experience tutoring in the writing center and in the First-Year Experience program, which is a parallel for the First-Year Center at The University of Arizona. A chain-of-command set up for Jack makes the most sense if students are really to be helped. In a way, clear hierarchical relations free the tutors to focus solely on the students they see. He says, "we have excellent hierarchy here" (50).

Confidence, proficiency, and doing what is necessary to assist student writers is also consistent theme with these ASU tutors. Kara's observations about professionalism and writing center work were insightful as well as critical. She is double-major in biology and literature-a fascinating combination-and has worked as a literacy volunteer outside of ASU for a couple of years. Her mother is the former director of the writing center at Washburn University in Kansas. Kara believes that beyond the superficial aspects of professionalism, it means expertise:

Professionalism means specialized knowledge. You should be very proficient at something and have a professional attitude rather than look. At the writing center, this translates into confidence. Think about it when tutoring-I

listen to the people around me. Students come to see the 'professional.' (B 183)

Kara believes that the ASUWC has the elements necessary to at least appear professional, such as an office, paperwork, secretaries. But what her sense of professionalism really comes down to is quality tutoring:

Are you providing tutors who can manipulate and maneuver through any situation, and not come unglued? Are you providing a service where the tutor knows a whole lot more than the tutee, but is willing to listen to what the tutee has to say? Are you providing a service where the tutors are confident in a professional way that is not condescending that is not patronizing or bored? That's what professionalism really is. (B 183)

Her statements reinforce for me that tutors *do* have expertise that goes unrecognized outside of the context of their writing centers. The characteristics listed above might also apply to graduate student instructors. In fact, Kara comments that ASUWC tutors are "like watered down TAs" (B 184). She also demonstrates that she is familiar with the professional conversation when she mentions Trimbur's "Peer Tutor: A Contradiction in Terms?" article, which she enjoyed. However, the training manual in the WAC course was not a hit with Kara. She described the authors as "full-of-themselves rhetoricians who were so removed from the actual experience of tutoring that the idealism was unrealistic" (B 183), especially in their depiction of students who visit the writing center as largely uninformed about their own assimilation. Kara asserts that "students come to the writing center to buy into the system" (B 183) and they know it. Kim wants the WAC

course to be even more rigorous, too. She tells me that discipline and authority should be established at the outset (B 183).

These tutors' emphases on authority (which equals confidence), discipline (in terms of reprimand for unacceptable behavior) and self-control may give the impression that the ASUWC is a militaristic operation. I did not perceive it this way. Much of what I have written about these tutors does not include the humor and liveliness of the group. There seemed to be a much greater sense of order from these tutors, and at least with two of them, a sense of history. John and Mark both called my attention to the records tutors have kept on students that go back to the 70s. Tutors fill out a form on students who come in, checking off items like major, assignment, course, whether the student is ESL, and what they worked on. Copies of these sheets are sent to instructors, who can then write comments back to the tutor to communicate what the instructor sees the student needs to work on. In the national scene, forms like these are controversial because while they are a mode of communication between teacher and tutor, they are also seen as a way to further relegate students to silence about their own writing process and progress.

For the ASUWC tutors, authority is a distinct and recognizable power structure that makes it possible to downplay authority in actual conferences. "Good hierarchy" is for these tutors not so much to guide or discipline but to provide "comfort"-the presence of a structure and "chain of command" helps tutors to more clearly define their roles. The ASUWC tutors are still included in decision making but are not perhaps given so much choice. Expectations and procedure are clear, although tutors both at ASU and U of A are still largely unaware of the larger contexts in which their writing centers operate. In

chapter six, I will discuss the implications of these observations of the two writing centers. Next, I will suggest some ways we might proceed that keeps the important work of the tutor at the center of writing center work, and at the center of our decisions to professionalize. Critical self-reflection is the first step.

CHAPTER SIX

PROFESSIONALIZATION AS CONNECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

I have examined the ways in which the larger conversation in the professional journals construct writing center work and argues for legitimacy: the conversation closely follows the conventions other fields in English Studies have followed. Publication, the development of writing center theories (all of which are borrowed and applied), and the creation of national organizations all attest to the rising academic prominence of writing centers. Central to these arguments is the apparent conflict between the goals of “liberatory pedagogy” and professionalization. Implied is that liberatory pedagogy is an ethical practice because it acknowledges the experience and expertise students bring with them into the classroom and combats inequality by doing so. This pedagogical approach has an overtly leftist political goal: to empower students across socioeconomic levels to become agents of the kind of educational and social change that will transform oppressive practices. Professionalization, on the other hand, has been construed as unethical because it is self-interested and perpetuates oppressive hegemonic arrangements that lead to constraining dichotomies such as high/low, theory/practice, male/female. In this scheme, professionalization means distance from the political and the material. I would argue that these constructs are more fluid, like Burke’s term *the people*, which can be defined differently depending on the situation yet capacious enough to be recognized as an encompassing term. In other words, professionalization and the

liberatory aims of writing center pedagogy are not necessarily at odds, as I hope to show through my discussion of tutors' conceptions of professionalism.

I have also examined how two sets of local writing center tutors construct themselves through the idea of "professionalism" in the writing center. In the UAWC, "authority" and "expertise" are downplayed; "collaboration" and "conversation" are central. Consultants' sense of professionalism is tied more closely to a code of conduct or what political theorist Walter Sullivan identifies as an ethics of rules and principles that govern behavior (202). For example, consultants thought that a more formal evaluation system would discourage "bad behavior" as well as provide a more systematic way to gage their effectiveness as tutors. In the ASUWC, tutors also defined professionalism in terms of a code of conduct: being organized, on time, and "getting the job done" and doing it well were criteria they frequently named. Unlike their counterparts in Tucson, tutors at ASU emphasized their authority to guide less-experienced writers confidently through "joint inquiry." The relationship between professionalism and pedagogy in these writing centers is that an overt set of rules and principles that govern behavior allow tutors to enact their pedagogical approach, which is obviously the liberatory one they have in part absorbed from their training. Missing is the sense of *disciplinary* professionalism: the dedication to the mastery of a body of specialized knowledge. One of the reasons for this is that writing centers, although they have amassed a great deal of theory, are not considered a "discipline." At the very least, what this means is that we must recognize the different epistemologies tutors and directors/coordinators bring to the situation. In this chapter, I will develop the argument

that professionalization does not cancel out our political goals of working for a more equitable social arrangement. To do this, I will show how the tutors I interviewed reveal an alternative professionalization process through their practice. Then I will turn to the critical political theory of Chantal Mouffe, Mary Dietz, and Walter Sullivan because their work enriches the concept of professionalization to include connection and responsibility. Finally, I will provide an alternative way of envisioning the direction writing centers might make.

Tutor Identity and the Disciplining of Writing Center Work

My interviews with tutors reveal a difference in a sense of power and responsibility within the different structures of their writing centers. However, both sets of tutors share some common characteristics. First, they favor the pragmatic knowledge that will help them work with the students they see. Second, they are largely unaware of how they are situated within the university and among other academic support units. Third, they experience a gap between the philosophy and mission of the writing center and their everyday experience. Finally, all tutors narrowly defined professionalism as a code of conduct and named superficial features such as dress and efficiency as characteristics of professionalism. Most important in this list of similarities is the tutors' practical-mindedness and the gap between philosophy and practice because I believe they identify some underlying assumptions that keep us from imagining alternatives to traditional professionalization.

One way to read tutor interest in pragmatism is to compare them to overextended teachers who feel they are too busy for theorizing or reading theory. Speaking for her WAC class, one ASUWC tutor declares that the handbook used in the WAC course used a language “so far removed from the actual experience of tutoring” that it was “ridiculous” (B 52). Other tutors talked about wanting more grammar instruction. In reading these calls for practical language and training as anti-intellectual, we imply that there is something wrong with these tutors concerns and attitudes and reinforce the idea that dealing with grammar is drudgery. We reinforce the idea that “lore” is not legitimate knowledge.

Another way to read these tutors’ dedication to practical issues is through Russell Durst’s work on the differing epistemologies of students and teachers. Students’ views and approaches to writing reflect a firmly rooted, pragmatic, careerist, hands-on philosophy deeply embedded in the American psyche. They long for simple, formulaic strategies to get them through a course. Teachers, on the other hand, tend to be dedicated to critical self-awareness, to thinking and writing as critical literacy and intellectual development, and to complicating the world-views of students. Pragmatism is something to be overcome in students. In so doing, teachers sometimes come off as pessimistic, accusatory, and negative. However, Durst astutely points out that, like students, we teachers have desires for financial advancement and stability as well as a desire to contribute to a socially just world. We all benefit from the work that our students will eventually do in architecture, engineering, law, medicine, and computer science. We will enjoy their work as writers, publishers, and editors. We too are concerned about practical

ways to accomplish our course goals. It is important, therefore, to both recognize and value our students' and our own pragmatic goals, and add a reflective dimension to cultivate the critical aspect we teachers also find valuable. Durst calls this practice "reflective instrumentalism," and this is something writing centers are already practicing.

Writing centers have always emphasized the practical. In North's taxonomy, writing centers would be the Practitioners whose dependence on "lore" has kept them from academic legitimacy. The current push to legitimize that practicality by relating it to a theory or by applying others' theories to that practice has led us to believe that we must initiate our tutors into the professional conversation. It is good, we think, for tutors to have some theory to back up what they practice, but I think we have not been diligent in putting their practical needs first. As Trimbur has pointed out, we need to help tutors produce an *experiential* knowledge of the process of peer critiquing and co-learning to write. This experiential knowledge grounds tutors in *student culture* rather than *professional culture*. Professional culture values expertise and assumes training as an apprenticeship that reinforces dependence on faculty as authorities. Vandenberg supports Trimbur's cautiousness of a professional approach because it reinscribes institutional work as exclusionary and competitive (78). This is not to say that theory isn't valuable for tutors to learn. Rather, to Vandenberg, tutors need two ways to think about theorizing: *theory* as a way to explain and predict and *Theory* as a privileged discourse that will help them define teaching and tutoring expertise in institutional terms (66). A more effective approach to tutor-training, then, would foreground tutors' need for experiential knowledge and use theory "as a way of explaining and predicting." I would

also argue that we ask our students to theorize their practice not by applying outside theories of language and writing to what they do, but to theorize directly from their practice, as Freire has long advocated. In his work with Brazilian peasants, instead of bringing in content for his students to absorb and then regurgitate, Freire began with their lives and experiences as examples of discourse. The peasants learned to read and write more proactively because the subject was lived. The teacher-researcher movement also models this approach to theory. Teacher-research looks to the classroom situation to identify problems or issues and theorizes locally to find answers. The National Writing Project is another example of an excellent model for enacting the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, and aligns teachers from all levels and areas of specialty. Because tutors usually come from a variety of backgrounds and majors, they would need to come up with a common language that communicates that theory in terms that a wider constituency can use. In this way, tutors would gain experiential knowledge that is also reflective. I believe that tutors are in an ideal position to answer the question, “is it possible that theory is translatable into a common language, and a common language that is also a critical language?” (Robbins 96).

This is already happening among tutors in the writing centers I studied. One UAWC consultant has observed that the increase in ESL students who visit the center warrants a reconsideration of the writing center’s stance on directive tutoring and grammar instruction. By “directive tutoring,” I mean tutoring that intervenes in the student’s text in a way that acts more like editing when the situation calls for it. Writing center orthodoxy posits that nondirective tutoring—an approach that prohibits writing on

students' papers and maintaining a questioning posture without giving answers—protects tutors from accusations of plagiarism and helps students be solely responsible for their texts. However, the UAWC tutors have complained for years that a purely nondirective approach frustrates both parties because in many cases, especially with ESL students, the student is simply not experienced enough with various cultural and disciplinary conventions of language. Irene Clark and Dave Healy support what these tutors say:

In refusing to write on a student's paper or supply occasional phrasing or suggest specific lines of inquiry, writing center personnel are withholding from clients precisely that kind of directive, appropriative intervention that is routinely offered to publishing academics by colleagues and editors. (11)

Brandon and Amy both wish to further explore what it might mean to add “editing” to their work with ESL students, and they do this without having read Clark and Healy's article. My point is that much good can come out of valuing the tutors' experiences and reflections, rather than having them strictly read a manual and scholarly articles about writing center work. Such a reconsideration of nondirective tutoring would make an excellent tutor-research project that would provide a window into student needs as defined *by the student* as well as provide the critical reflection on practice we value as academics.

As we have seen, a major concern in writing center scholarship is its implication in the regulatory role of education. However, as Nancy Grimm has pointed out, issues of hierarchy and regulatory practices are not necessarily negative if they are made explicit and not represented as politically or culturally neutral. In the two writing centers I have studied, the ASUWC tutors have a stronger sense of where they fit in the structure of

their center. On the whole, ASUWC tutors seemed more confident and less willing to talk about the complexities of their positions, which may be in part because I represented a rival institution. Nevertheless, my general impression for both centers is that incorporating a stronger sense of writing center history and more explicitly situating the writing center with respect to other academic support units would give tutors a clearer sense of their mission and may invest them in writing center work more solidly.

Writing Centers as Participatory Democracies

A truism in writing center work is that it attracts people who are interested in working for justice and equity. Writing centers are sites where grading is absent and the student is central. Classrooms cannot serve (or haven't yet served as) as this site. Most writing centers are places where student volunteer to come for help, which is not to say that students are not compelled by professors and other outside pressures. All the same, writing center work is often represented as particularly humanitarian, community oriented, and collaborative places that ease the rigidly hierarchical categories defining students and student work. We are also very aware that writing centers *do* have hierarchies and are embedded in a competitive marketplace culture. In order to gain a more holistic sense of the relationship between professionalization and liberatory political goals, I will turn to critical political theory because I believe it suggests a viable model that can contain both.

The writing center community has offered many metaphors over the years to encapsulate their work: clinics, labs, garrets, storehouses, Burkean parlors, even

churches. I propose that we think of the writing center as a “participatory democracy.” Mary Dietz, a feminist political theorist, explains that the term *democracy* as we know it is more tied to representative government and the right to vote than to the idea of the collective, participatory activity of citizens in the public realm (67). The tradition of the democratic process in the Western world, as we know, has also been a practice of exclusion. Compartmentalization of our educational systems has increased the sense of fragmentation and disconnection that is the general cultural malaise pervading our lives. It is also tied to what is happening in the marketplace. Both Berlin and Faigley have written extensively on this connection. Berlin explains that Henry Ford’s innovation in car manufacturing created an assembly-line system in which people perform specific, specialized tasks to create the whole. Mass production was key (*Rhetoric and Poetics*). Our high schools began to mirror that system, and it has seemed natural to us to treat each subject separately across grade levels. Connections among subjects are not emphatic, although this seems to be changing with the concept of interdisciplinary majors in higher education.

In the current post-Fordist discourse of business management, Faigley explains, the operative word is *flexibility*. Core workers are flexible because they are trained to do varied tasks. Peripheral workers are flexible because their numbers can rise and fall as the market dictates. Entire workforces are geographically flexible as production is dispersed across regional and national boundaries, and production is flexible because it can respond to specific consumer demands. The consequence is the ever-widening gap between rich and poor (11-12). *Flexibility* has also been a key term for writing centers.

Tutors build a repertoire of strategies through experience and training to deal with the wide variety of student writing and their attitudes toward that writing. Directors learn to perform a variety of tasks from marketing and management, to training and budget balancing. Both tutors and directors are core and peripheral. Tutors are transient and their numbers rise and fall as they graduate or cut back on hours, yet they are at the heart of writing center work. Tutors respond to specific student needs. The consequence of *flexibility* in the current economy is that

Besides shifting the workforce away from manufacturing to service occupations in Western nations, thus eliminating many high-paid working-class jobs and creating many low-paid jobs, post-Fordism has also shifted many of the risks of capitalism onto these low-paid contract workers, who have few benefits and little job security. (12)

This consequence also seems to apply to writing centers. Within the overall structure of higher education, writing centers perhaps have the most amount of flexibility because of the nature of their work. Even as they advocate a learning approach that pushes against the status quo of top-down education, they are still marginal in the educational hierarchy. This can be both positive and negative in the way that nonprofit organizations do a great deal of good at the same time they are underfunded, understaffed, and have little pull in the political arena. I believe that writing centers need to look to other movements that enact what political theorists call a “participatory democracy:” one in which men and women actively participate in decisions about the state, economy, and nation as well as locally in churches, neighborhoods, families, unions, political parties, schools, and businesses. We can look to other participatory movements such as civil rights, the women’s movement, labor movements, gay movements. This doesn’t sound new, except

that it is the *act of participation* in the public realm that is emphasized over the end result. Another good example of participatory democracy is Alcoholics Anonymous and other similar support groups. It is the act of participation in such groups that is primary: sharing stories and committing to change is a process that never ends, and never should. AA is unaffiliated with any commercial entity and derives no support from the government. It is strictly volunteer and supported by participant donations—completely self-governed, in other words. The most experienced person in the room is simply considered a guide and not an authority figure. No one is forced to speak; all are invited to simply be in the room. It is simply the dedication to the process and the belief that it works that keeps the organization growing. Dietz explains that this version of democracy embraces two ways of being. One is the material existence of a person as a teacher, truck driver, dentist, athlete. The other is the civic person who consults with peers, and who is guided by mutual respect and the “positive liberty” of democracy as self-government and not the “negative liberty” of non-interference (75). Before the reader gets the impression that this is an overly idealistic metaphor, Deitz warns that this engagement—the act of participation—will never reach closure, just one never really “graduates” from AA. It is an ongoing process and can therefore accommodate change. To achieve closure is to shut down possibilities. In this way I can envision the interdependence of learning to live in indeterminacy and still achieve a sense of security for writing centers.

Bruce Horner’s argument that compositionists need to align with our colleagues in the primary and secondary schools supports this idea of participatory democracy. The National Writing Project has been one successful way of establishing collegiality with

those groups. If writing centers are serious about the importance of academic legitimacy while retaining their more activist, liberatory goals, they might look to local models such as the Writing Project and outreach efforts already in place at their universities. The UAWC has both of these resources. Professional behavior in these efforts counts heavily on collegiality, on connection, and on being responsible for valuing and disseminating knowledge through face-to-face interactions in the forms of teacher demonstrations that apply theory to local classroom situations, through the kind of teacher-research that demonstrates how theory can come from practice, and through publication. As I have argued, writing center tutors have much to teach us about creating a language of interdependence. The idea of a participatory democracy supports the interdependence of theory and practice. We can draw on the best characteristics of the professionalization process and broaden it to include the sharing of knowledge with a wider constituency, the revaluing of local knowledge, and the connections we have opportunity to make beyond our specialties.

I would like to end this dissertation with my vision of what a writing center might look like based on the model of participatory democracy. My purpose in offering this vision is only to provide ideas and stimulate discussion, not to offer a universal standard or model.

The writing center I envision is a place ideologically located on the boundary between the institution and the public, where student/tutors (and potentially public community members) gather to discuss their ideas about writing and find mutual support for their efforts. As a form of service learning, I imagine this involvement as another way

to ground students' education in real, local community issues. For example, bringing together the grant-writing needs of a nonprofit agency with the writing experience of tutors (I imagine tutors both as graduates and undergraduates) could be mutually beneficial. Other public community members might get help with letters concerning products or job application letters. I imagine an experienced business writer from the community sharing her or his expertise with tutors. These situations show tutors/students how they might participate in their communities in ways that connect different writing situations and instill, I would hope, a greater sense of responsibility to continue life-long learning and to take seriously public issues. I would hope tutor/students would pass this experience and attitude to writing center clients. In such a project, I would ask tutor/students to play the role of fieldworker, and prepare to be changed by their interactions with others. As in the writing project, tutors of all experience levels would spend the first part of the weekly meeting simply writing about posted prompts or a subject of their choosing. They would spend time in groups discussing their writing and reading for the week.

This vision enacts what Nancy Grimm advocates: "articulation" in two senses. The first is "articulation" in the British sense means "lorry," a truck that is linked to other vehicles. This translates for me into a writing center that is physically within proximity to a variety of constituencies. Articulation in the American sense means to enunciate language clearly and precisely. To clearly identify needs and goals and link these to other concerns is a rhetorically aware and viable way to construct and maintain a writing center because it takes into consideration both the institutional and community settings.

This approach is also more in line with postmodern theories because it does not seek to locate truth in a single position, but tries to locate it on a horizon that can be approached from multiple positions. I believe the time is right for writing centers to consider the full implications of identifying themselves as a specialty, and argue for the legitimacy of their work by forefronting tutors' valuable contributions.

**APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA WRITING CENTER INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPTS**

Key: CP = principle investigator

*other initials represent the consultant. All names have been changed.

Amy 4/29/99

cp: how would you define professionalism?

ED: Understanding and fulfilling the necessary requirements for your position to the fullest extent.

ED: Knowing when you're supposed to be here and being here and knowing what you're supposed to do and doing the best you can. Establishing a _____ with your students and not going around bashing their teachers. Or, and um, doing your best to help them.

Cp: lots of people mention the same criteria and some people talked about well, one of the things that makes a professional is specialized knowledge or a certain kind of training that certifies you to do whatever. Do you feel like those things apply in this situation?

Ed: yes. Its important to _____ (something about context) and because we see the same assignments over and over again and I think having a thorough knowledge of things like rhetorical analysis is very important, um, and also just knowing the English language and how to work with it.

Cp: yeah.

Ed: smthng about it looks bad when the person helping you doesn't know any more about commas than you do.

Cp: um, but you guys are trained to help people specifically with writing. And um, and the conversations I've been having with you guys and uh the folks at asu, they talked about uh, one guy said, "You know, I'm a good writer, but that's not what makes me a good tutor, it's the training that makes me a good tutor.

Ed: yeah.

Cp: You can be a fabulous writer and not be able to convey anything to a student.

Ed: yeah, absolutely.

Cp: that's why the training makes you *professional*. I guess.

Ed: uh-huh.

Cp: but do you really consider yourself professional in the big scheme of things?

Ed: I didn't used to but when I started getting paid for it I did and also I had to sign an oath of loyalty to the u. of arizona when I changed to salary, so I had to fill this form out saying that I wasn't going to anything in my postion as consultant that would endanger the constitution of the state of arizona or anything like that.

Cp: wow. I don't remember signing anything like that. How long have you been here, emily? 2 years?

Ed: 2 years.

Cp: so that's cool. So you get paid after the first year.

Ed: uh-huh.

Cp: and you get sorta paid with credit

Ed: uh-huh.

Cp: And it's a three units, right?

Ed: three units for two semesters. So six units.

Cp: oh so that works out ok. I'm just thinking about the shift from not feeling professional to feeling professional.

Ed: I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that there is a course that we have to attend for the first ...it's more like almost a lab, than anything else like you go and get your instructions and take the test kind a thing (laughs).

Cp: do you guys meet in here (the house) for this course?

Ed: last year we meet in Psychology in a room, yeah. And then there were meetings that we had a 7am or something awful like that, that we meet in here and were for everyone, but then the interns met Friday mornings in psychology.

Cp: now I haven't yet talked to the coordinators, but do they have a blocked out time that they, you know...

Ed: yeah, they do now.

Cp: yeah, that was a good idea

Ed: I think they just really just in the last year or so shifted to having that established time if it's. I remember the first semester we meet as an entire group but nothing really just for the interns and then the second semester I was here they had everyone sign up for times they could make it and they had to split us into two groups. This year, and they ask at the interview now, that you have to be available Tuesdays and Thursdays for ten to eleven or whatever.

Cp: and do you think that's a good way to do things?

Ed: yeah.

Cp: cuz we used to argue about it. If you make it a formal class, that takes away from the authority of the consultants themselves and it's supposed to be a self-motivated learning situation. I don't know. I always wanted to make it class because I thought it was easier on everybody because there was more structure and we always had the two groups problem.

Ed: also... I just forgot what I was going to say.

Cp: that's because it's three o'clock in the afternoon on a Wednesday.

Ed: yeah (laughs) I was just sleeping like half an hour ago.

Cp: so ok I'll just keep talking and you...

Ed: oh yeah I remember what it was: self-motivated learning. Not having the class the first semester I always felt like I was undertrained. Because we were not supposed to take any appointments for the first three weeks. We were supposed to observe people but we got so over booked that we got sort of thrown to the wolves automatically. So I think it really helps to have that sort of transitional period where you don't have to take appointments if you don't feel ready, and also I think it gives people a lot more of chance to express problems that they're having, things like that.

Cp: yeah I think the class lends a sense of professionalism. For a while there we just really wanted to keep it informal like secret clubbish, and the general move in the wider world of writing centers is towards this disciplinarity that other fields have made. In a way that's great. I think that may mean that we can work under better conditions.

Ed: yeah.

Cp: on the other hand, I'm a little afraid that sense of students helping students in an informal supportive way will get filtered out as the field makes these moves.

Ed: yeah.

Cp: It may become less about the students and more about becoming professional.

Ed: right.

(digression about the writing center directory and how none of the arizona universities are in it).

Cp: which leads to my next question about visibility. what do you see as the relationship between the writing center and the university?

Ed: (laughs). Long pause. Kinda the way I see the honors center or a lot of things that I'm a part of help to shrink this school for a lot of people. Coming here and getting one person to help you with a paper instead of a teacher who has to put up with thirty people twice a day or whatever or knowing that you have your advisor in your discipline or your advisor in the honors center...things that allow you to be more of an individual and less of a number, so I think that this is kind of a "funnel."

Cp: oh yeah yeah yeah. That's cool. It's original.

Ed: oh good! (laughs).

Cp: I was talking to Sally Crisp (dirgression). Basically I tell the story of a conversation that illustrates how different wcs are positioned within different institutions. Crisp sees her wc as firmly in the center; I see ours as peripheral, which is good.

Ed: talks about applying for grad school at ---chicago and she noticed their writing center was quite strong. In fact, it looked *too* integrated.

Cp: oh really?

Ed: I think there was a compulsion to send the freshmen there. This year we've even had some of the general education teachers forcing their students to come here. And if they do come, they bring a slip and get it signed that they do come and then their grade is raised an entire letter. Just for showing that they've been to the writing center.

Cp; somebody else was talking about this.

Ed: it's ridiculous. It should be something that people seek out because they recognize that they need help or want to improve, not smthng that you must go (slaps own hand).

Cp; wow that's really interesting. Tilly warnock once described the writing center as the front porch of the university—or rather it was composition that was the front porch I thought htat was kinda cool. Because that mean the wc is out there on the edge but we can see the front line.

Cp: what kind of prestige do you think is assoc. with the wc?

Ed: with students I think there's a sort of a mysticism to it, like with some students. Some understand that we are pretty much their peers and sometimes those are the best relationships. Others of them I get really afraid that I'm leaving them to much when I ask "what do you think" "what do you think." And they won't always respond to that. With teachers, I think it varies from person to person. Some professors I've talked to about working here tend to see it as a sort of a last resort for the hopeless.

Cp: yes! That's pretty prevalent.

Ed: so I was talking to one of my professors and I said " I think I had a student of yours." And he said "oh I only teach the honors section." And I was like "yeah, I think I had a student of yours!" (laughs)

Cp: oh my god! (story here about talking to marvin about advertising in such a way to combat those myths. He says if we advertise too much, we'll be slammed. So you have to balance those really practical concerns with ideal stuff.

Ed: laughs. (quiet). Again I don't want to make generalizations about students because all kinds of people come here and would come here for all kinds of reasons. Some come because they say "I did really well in high school and I don't know what happened." Or "I just need some feedback" bla bla bla.

Cp: so those are the two major groups—teacher and students—that you deal with. Do you think the writing center has a good relationship with composition?

Ed: as far as I've seen, yeah. I would say composition students make up a good percentage of who comes in. I wouldn't necessarily say the majority. But a lot of them. And I think it helps that a lot composition teachers have us come to talk to their classes about the wc. More in the fall than in the spring , but usually people will say come and talk to the class, and I think that helps, and then we can go in and clarify to the students

and teachers what we we're doing; don't come expecting us to write your paper but if you need help, we're here.

Cp: what's your major?

Ed: british literature. (digression here about her major). Going to grad school in american literature. Wants to teach.

Cp; interssting mix of majors

Ed: I think that helps a lot. I think a lot of people who assume that we are all English majors come and say, "well you've read *Sonny's Blues*, of course," and I we say "well no, acutally." And I think it also helps because we do get a lot of advanced science students and esl, and it helps to have people who can help them. I mean, I can say "I don't know what you're saying here but your are saying very very well." And it really helps to have people who actually knew what collated, protopic, whatever microcosms I don't know (laughs).

Cp; are you guys still keeping records of...?

Ed: yes.

Cp: and is the esl contingent grown?

Ed: I think it has.

Cp: it feels like it has just from the people I've talked to. It always comes up. Like how to deal with the grammar issue, stuff like that.

Ed: sometimes I found it hard to concentrate on anything else. I've had a lot of people who are just great. I have one student who sees my and another consultant regularly and she's just absolutely phenomenal and I'm like "why are you coming here?" (laughs) I'm mean you are great, I don't know anything about archeology and your papers are fine. Others I work with for two years and I just get depressed not seeing any sort of increased understanding of what they are doing wrong.

(digression about grace).

Cp: in what way would you change the writing center mission, or structure, or location.

Ed: I'd patch up the walls! I don't know. If there's anything that needs changing, I think it would be to reevaluate in accordance to the changing student population. Because it's great to say "a place to talk about ideas" and all you're going to get are freshman comp students and you can actually discuss ideas with them, but it's another thing to say "it's a

place to talk about ideas” when you talk to a person who does not know the word “teacher” in English. So.

Cp: interesting answer. A lot of people have talked about “yeah, a place to talk about ideas. Well when do I ever get to do that?”

Ed: right exactly. Very few times in the semester will I actually get somebody where we can actually discuss what they’re talking about in the paper instead of “you need a semi-colon, you need a comma, that word’s wrong.” (pauses, laughs) Or sometimes I’m afraid of talking about ideas because one time I got a girl who had a technically ok paper on *the yellow wallpaper*” but it was WRONG (laughing). It was the only time I’ve seen a piece of literary analysis where I wanted to say “I’m sorry, but you’re wrong.” Because I always think, you know, people have different interpretations of things, but there’s no way she could come up with this interpretation and be correct!

Cp: so I wonder if we should change our motto. I think marvin would say well...

Ed: yeah so we don’t often get a chance to talk about ideas, but should our slogan be about the ideal?

Cp; that’s a good question. But regardless of the slogan, I really like that idea about reevaluating in light of the student population.

(digression about the computer software used to track students and produce the newsletter.)

cp: it would be kinda fun to put together the stats from all the years and see how that population has changed.

Ed: yeah, that’s a really good idea.

(digression about asu. Ed “spend her life on that campus” and we talked about how the campus looks. Asu was just a teachers college. More industrial looking, more resort looking than here. Her dad teaches political science. Minored in english in college. She’s gets a greatly reduced tuition.

Cp: one way you would change the mission is to reevaluation what we do in relations to the changing population. How about the way things are structured.

Ed: I think things need to be tightened up a little bit. Because right now there are things that are too easy to get away with. We have people who are paid consultants who don’t always show up for their hours and still put them on their time sheets.

Cp: yeah I’ve been hearing about this.

Ed: and we have interns who aren't showing up for hours, who aren't showing up for the intern meetings and I really don't think they ought to be asked back, but there seems to be no way to go about that. There seems to be no clause for letting people go. Its just the sort of thing that you stay until you want to leave. I don't think that's the right attitude to have especially as it becomes a more professional environment. Like people have to respect that this is an obligation and they have to fulfill it. This is a responsibility. It shouldn't be just something you do because it looks good on your transcript.

Cp: this has been a problem since the very beginning. I wonder why it's so hard to find an answer.

Ed: I don't think it's hard to find an answer. I think you can just say if you're an intern, and you have not fulfilled the obligations for your internship then you will not be asked back as a paid consultant. Or we won't pass you. Or if you've been writing hours on your time sheet that you haven't shown up for, we're going to dock you those hours on your next check.

Cp: those are really great suggestions. Have you told the coordinators this?

Ed: (laughs) a couple times.

Cp: I think there's a sense from the coordinators that it would somehow detract from the informal atmosphere if the GATs became disciplinarians. I really think it's necessary to give the person in charge the authority to say, you screwed up.

(digression about the WAC course the ASUWC has).

ED: also works at Dillard's, and the store has 'secret shoppers' who are really there to evaluate customer service. She said that the wc really has no idea about how effective their consultants are and we might try a "secret shopper" approach.

On evaluation: no real formal way to gage effectiveness. Comparison to gats' precpetorship. Same thing. Have students fill out a form that evaluates their experiences and the consultant. Randomly have students do this. Q: who would read them?

Ed: I think we should read the evals of ourselves. Or perhaps the consultant and the coordinator should read them and talk about them.

Cp: I think we are just really afraid of too much structure. You have really good ideas.

Grace 4/27/99

CP: (explaining my diss by way of intro). I really want to see what you guy's perception of professionalism is. How would you define professionalism in general?

Lm: professionalism. Hmm. How you act to convey a setting that is professional instead of not, instead of social, but you can be social within that, so I don't know. I guess it's kind of an unexplained culture where you just know how to act and to treat people with respect. But you should always do that but it's somehow different. I never thought about this before. I'm not doing it very well.

Cp: Do you have a specific image in your head of someone who is professional?

Lm; kind of . yes. I have an image, yes, but I think its more of a stereotype that doesn't have to be true. Like I conjure an image of being well spoken and neat in appearance and I think you can actually be a professional and not necessarily be well spoken. Or, but I mean you should be but maybe not *as* well spoken, but yeah. Someone who's just really organized and well put together; presents themselves well.

Cp: what's the difference between—what I want to do is hit on some specifics of professionalism—think about, say for example, a doctor is a professional in this culture and I want you to think about why.

Lm; well they are a professional because they are getting paid to do their profession. But they are acting professionally. If you are a doctor you are professional but you can act prof. Or not. Like if you diaginosed someone with something and then laughed, that would not be professional (smiles).

Cp; right.

Lm; but you would still technically be professional because you'd have to be licenced.

Cp; that is probably a major characteristic. Usually a professional is a licensed or certified or special schooling . those are the characteristics I'm trying to get at.

Lm; however you could be a professional ...wrestler and not be certified. But trained, I suppose. I don't know. You can be a professional waitress... well you can be trained in almost any job.

Cp; yeah. Ok um so based on those things in terms of appearance, being licensed or certified or trained or something—some kind of credential, do you feel like what you do here in the writing center is professional in that way ?

Lm; I don't think so. I think we're expected to act professional. But I don't think I am a professional writing consultant.

Cp; even with that title?

Lm; no, because I'm a student, basically. Like I think that's all of our emphasis and this is something else we do. I think it's the whole part time job while you're a student kind of thing, like no matter what you do you're a student it's not your profession. You're a student. You fill out your taxes and you're a student—you know, you do anything and you're a student. So I think that 's it. But I guess you could look at it that way. We've been trained and we get paid. So technically I guess so. But I don't think if it that way.

Cp; and what about in terms of demeanor—professional ethos. How does that work in here? Or does it?

Lm; well I think that technically it's supposed to but I don't think it always does (laughs)like there's no evaluation or review process here –I know other people think that when you're in your in here. And that's bad because a lot of people slack once they're in and um like this semester we've had a lot of problems with people just not showing up for their hours people that needed help just get completely turned away and that is just not professional at all. So I think that in theory we should be treating people professionally like that but it doesn't always happen.

Cp; have you guys talked about that evaluation and review in a major meeting.

Lm; just sort of informally on the couch. We talked about having one of the gats come and sit in on one of your conferences during the semester and keep sepcific track of when you're skipping, and have your time sheets checked more accurately so people don't claim to be working more than they have. More ...I think it would hurt the -----if things were too strict but it's kind of red. That people can get away with so much. Yeah. If they had someone sit in on their conferences like once and write a little evaluation and then have a talk. You know, like rich comes to my conference, sits in on it, we talk about it later, he fills out a review like in any job.

Cp; yeah. It sounds like the way we have it set up for the gats because we have a TEAD who comes in once a semester and writes a letter of recommendation. Not necessarily as a policing or disciplinary action but rather to get feedback from another person. And they understand when things don't go well; it could be a student, it could be the day—or maybe you don't feel well. This disciplinary thing has always been a problem and we never figured out a way to “discipline.”

Lm; but like you can be at this level—a college student—and still not have a sense of duty toward your job or your internship or whatever. I don't get it but I think that if you

have a kind of review process like that there are people who look at it like you do, “oh that was so helpful. Oh my peers gave me such great feedback.” And the people that are off track will look at it like, a ‘get your but in gear’ kinda thing.

Cp; we’ve always been concerned about that. Many people have commented on the lack of review and evaluation. Perhaps such things would not only decrease the amount of people who cheat on their time cards, but also increase a sense of professionalism and duty to what the job entails. This mirrors the the big picture trend, too. But what do writing centers pride themselves on? It seems to me that it’s that informality, that sort of reliance of tutors or consultants to be there because they want to be there, because that’s the kind of students they are, the kind of people they are. They are also students and they also have 5 million other things they are doing. (I blabber on about how I see the professionalization move).

Have you ever experienced with a student a conversation about the critique of the institution?

Lm; not often. I check grammar 85% of the time. It’s so rare to talk to them at all beyond how to use plural forms. Sometimes within the context of their paper [we’ll talk about institutional critique]. Not like ‘hey, what do think about the university these days.’ But that’s in the context of papers. It’s really exciting to be able to talk about some things, anything. Like paula jones...people who come in rarely have an attitude of like, fix it.

Cp; a lot of consultants are saying that. In the literature the wc is often depicted as this majical place where radical things happen.

Lm; I think that...part of the reason I like working here so much is because when I’m not meeting with the students, the other people that work here have wonderful conversations, you know? And that’s great. You can come in here with anything and suddenly there’s this huge discussion on it. It’s awesome I love it. However, in the actual conference, that doesn’t happen. And like when people walk in, we’re all having a discussion on politics or something, people never join in. they just sit there.

Cp; that’s interesting because the next question I want to ask is what kind of prestige do you associate with being a consultant? Do you feel afforded a certain prestige from people that walk in the door? Like I would think that people who walk in the door and hear you talking about politics would be intimidated because you all are writing center people and supposed to be the “smart ones.”

Lm; maybe. The other thing I think is the “fung shway” of the writing center, because when you first walk in you don’t see the desk, you see the couch, you don’t know who’s supposed to be helping you. I think that’s a kind of not professional thing. And that’s fine, that’s good for us, but the first time you walk in here I think it would be so overwhelming. Like I know I would never come here for help if I were a freshman.

Cp; why?

Lm: well, I'm not one to go for help anyway, but I would also have been intimidated. Even though now we go to the classrooms and explain how it works, they're like not really sure how it works. You walk in the door and you see eight people in the room and their like "who do I talk to?" and 'Do you work here?' and sometimes there's not. The desk is around the corner when you walk in. hard to find the building. I think you have to really be brave to come here for the first time. But I think a lot of us try to make people comfortable when they first walk in. I think we attempt ...someone walks in and we stop and offer people seats but I can see how it would be really intimidating with students. And then when you'r actually in the conference...well it depends on the person, but like I don't see many people, like I haven't sat in on many other people's stuff which is also kinda sad that I've seen other people, or that I hear them, but I know we each have our own individual style. I just personally help people feel like really comfortable right away.

Cp; this reminds me that about how the gats after that first year of preceptorship they get together and swap stories . after that, no one has the time to sit in on each other's classes. I just assume my colleagues are fabulous teachers.

Lm; mmm mmm. And like we do that here, to start. And then we just never do it again. And it probably helps like after you've had your 97th esl conference to just check grammar and you're like burnt out, it might really help. To go to somebody else's and see like 'oh that's how they handled that.' It probably could work for me.

Cp; it's a good idea. Do you ever run workshops or anything like that outside of the writing center?

Lm; I only work at the mountain center. I worked at fine arts last year for three hours a week last semester and it was horrible. I had maybe two students. I think some people have a lot of conferences.

Cp; I remember interviewing you, but I don't remember when. How long have you been here?

Lm; two years.

[Cp is amazed...ten years has gone by since I started graduate school.]
how about this question: what do you see as the relationship between the writing center and the university at large?

Lm; well, for the university students at large, our service, it should be to service them and not for our own benefit. As far as where we fit in to the administration, I don't know

it seems unclear. Like I think it goes along with, what is “writing skills,” and there’s all these different things and I don’t think there are defined boundaries between any of them, which can be confusing for students who come here. When they ask, well where can I go, and we say ‘well you can go to writing skills,’ but writing skills just sends them back here. And I’m sure there’s other things, too; there’s like SALT and CeDAR, so I don’t know what our role is.

Cp; this is one of the things I’m trying to do in my dissertation.

Lm; do most universities have writing centers?

Cp; yeah. But you know, I ordered the national writing center directory and none of the arizona universities are in it. There’s a little high school in apache junction listed. Bla bla about comparing writing centers. I talk about how asu’s is set up. I tell her about our funding set up. I tell her about the fellowship set up under the soldwedels. This house is owned by the learning center. We get a little bit from everybody. I think we are really sort of attached at the hip with composition department.

Lm; that’s my impression. Even though we help people from all departments and I guess I’ve gotten that impression because marvin seems to be the high guy in the english department, and that’s where we pick up our paychecks. I think it’s also a misconception among the students that it’s for english papers.

Cp; yeah, I think that’s a common misperception on lots of campuses. Writing centers, whether this is true or not, have that legacy of being places of remediation. And it’s still, and after however many years writing centers have been around, 30 years, which isn’t long, this perception exists. Bla bla about how long our wc has been around. Story of the beginning.

Lm; I just think there are a lot of misconceptions among the student population. Like even though we all give talks in 101 classes and stuff, people must not do a thing or their class got skipped because just a million people I know say “where do you work? I’ve never heard of that. What is that?” isn’t that for freshmen? A guy said this to me a couple weeks ago. He was in the ‘I failed the UDWPE class’ and I never met with a person in that class before. And [what he said] confused me, because if you had failed the UDWPE, shouldn’t you be using our resources? It’s such a good resource and he was like so happy like “this is so great, I can’t believe I’ve never come here before, you’ve helped me so much, I wouldn’t have failed the UDWPE in the first place if I just come here, bla bla bla,’ and it’s kinda weird to me that the teacher of the class wouldn’t tell them about this resources. It’s so weird when people say, like, ‘no one every told me to put the thesis here,’ and you’re just like wow. Or were they just not listening... (laughs)

Cp; THAT is true. Because I remember when I was a first-year student, I guess I just walked around in a cloud. It was swirling around me, and I remember my dad really

encouraging me to seek out some kind of ... they offered a class way back when in 1983 for how to make choices for your major and where to go for help. I thought I was above it, and students tend to block out what teachers say because it's from teachers.

Lm; yeah. People come in with comments on their drafts that are so clear, so perfectly done by the teacher—like specific instructions for how to fix their paper and still they say “I don't get it.” And they I read it out loud to them and they're like “oooooh.” (we laugh). Hearing things from a peer is really helpful.

Cp; yeah I really think its just physically being in a classroom. You try to get students together to talk to each other do that peer review thing. And they just roll their eyes. And I remember not liking doing that. I remember wanting to be in the student union, trading papers, talking about the teacher. I'm not saying it doesn't work but in my experience it just hasn't been helpful. If you had the time money and inclination to change the mission, structure, or location of the writing center, what would you change? Let's just begin with the mission. What's the mission of the writing center?

Lm; to try to be a little clearer, I guess. Like I don't know if I could tell you. It's just to provide a service to any student, and help people with whatever we need. I think we have sort of vague mission, which is good because we can help people with whatever they need. For example, writing skills. I don't anything about them. I know they help people with their writing but they only take minorities and they take and you know it's like we don't *care* what color you are, we'll help you with your writing. However, it'd probably be better if we had more of a sense like, someone came in last week and said ‘here's my dissertation, and I'll just drop it off so you can check it and I'll pick it up next week. And we're like we don't do that. But where do we draw the line on ‘we don't do that.’ Can someone make an appointment and come in every Friday for three hours if it's something like their dissertation. What's the limit? I think that if it was just a little more clear. I guess if it's a more informal organization, it would be more up to the individual, like ‘yeah, I have Fridays free, I can look at your dissertation.’ But because we have a schedule, and we have all this formality and now it's more of an issue, of like can we serve everyone before spending three hours with you, that's three hours a week we can't do that with other people, so, I don't know if that's good or bad. I think it would be good to have more standards of what do and do not work on. We need a clearer mission. Like we have a rule now that is you can only come in two hours a week if you're a student but no one's really sure about that.

Cp; same sorts of issues are going as when I was here. We tried to be specific enough to provide concrete guidelines and general enough to say we work with everybody. But you know what I decided [about the grammar issue] is that if we are going to, as you said, serve students with whatever they need, then if all they need is a grammar check, then we should be able to do that.

Lm; and also when I started , a lot of things have changed. We didn't sit in on each other's conferences, and now we do. We talk about how we are here to talk about ideas and structure and not do grammar, but there needs to be somebody here to do that because my personal believe is unless you can construct a sentence that makes sense, there's no point in working on anything else. Unless you have correct grammar, your thoughts don't mean anything anyway. Plus the foundation.

Cp; yeah it's balancing act.

Lm; you can't have a strong thesis and back it up unless you can construct a sentence. And people come in that are like 'fix it' and you want to say 'I'm not your spell check.' But then a lot of people come in just very frustrated, don't know where to turn, or haven't been speaking English for very long, or speaking English all their lives and just have never had any grammar instruction.

Cp; I think some of this is due to the whole lang. Movement.

Lm; my family was very insistent about grammar and I remember diagraming sentence.

Cp; they don't have the vocabulary to talk about grammatical structure. [side bar on business writing].

Lm; I didn't even know all the words for the different verb tenses until I took spanish; you know, like the subjunctive. I feel bad. And don't even get me on 'whole language.' I'm an education major so I like college of ed class [they debate about things like phonics vs whole language].

Cp; same kinds of debates are going on in the wc world about what kind of language theory approach do you use, and I say all of them. Whatever works for this person. We need to draw on all the strategies and if people need proof readers then that should be ok.

Lm; and I think to it's important to think on a long term scale. People are here for four years and you see them over and over again. And it's kind of exciting that last year I was helping [a student] with a paper and finally this year he's getting it and you see major improvement.

Cp; that would be such a great research project—track the regulars to find out about how much progress they made. But it's hard to identify from the outset who's a regular. So you really feel like you've seen great improvement

Lm; even like grace, I've grown with her. She's come so far herself. People who come here regularly and see several of us really grow. Especially esl people—those conferences are harder because you have to explain why to use a comma there and sometimes you really don't know. You say 'well that's just how we do it.' Or simply

'that just a phrase we use.' Like that's just how it is. You don't have to explain it. You don't say, "hard working as a verb." "I spent the day hard working." And I say no, and they say well why, because it means the same thing, and I say well, we just wouldn't say it that way. Don't do that. I just don't think there's a specific explainable reason for everything.

Cp; that's one of the problems of articulating a super clear mission statement because writing centers see such a variety of people with varying needs and I think that's why the debate on the national scene is so intense.

Lm; a general sum up. I think on the whole professional thing, I like how writing centers have like the—I think they still do—have the liberal relaxed feel to that, even it might not be that way with each conference, like some stunning, thought provoking thing. But I think they do have a liberal view, but I think with any organization, regardless of professionalism, any organization worth having requires a clear mission and clear directives or it's no use having it and it won't survive.

Vlad 4/22/99

Vlad is a graduate student (recently graduating in May 99 with a Master's in education).

History: Vlad is from Russia and was a simultaneous interpreter for international conferences where the government is involved. This was his 3rd semester at the WC.

Cp; how do you define professionalism?

V; I have very very strict demands on professionalism. This comes from my life as a simultaneous interpreter which is very demanding. Generally professionalism there could be the reason I identify because people that are not prof. Cannot stay and translate. And what is interesting is that sometimes people knowing two languages believe they can do it but when they try their hand they find they can't; they just have to give it up. what is interesting, what makes this field unique is that you don't have to set actually the criteria for professionalism because life itself determines who's gonna survive and will do poorly. As an interpreter, there are things that you can do, and then he's sees that he can't do it. I've seen people being unable to interpret and it was terrible. My job never stopped. But that's the rule. it's more difficult to determine professionalism in the writing center. I think it's the ability to perform at the req'd level in the particular field. The req'd level is set by the functioning of this particular center or part. Field you know. Like in every day world, the standards for professionalism are set by the center, by the trade, by the activities. It's very much varied. You cannot have a journal definition of professionalism.

Cp; some people do have a very distinct set of criteria that they think professionalism encompasses. And they question it, you know, it's kind of interesting to hear people's definitions and the thing I've been finding in these interviews is that people first start talking about appearances. Professional ethos and appearance is important.

V; sure sure. Right. Appearances are important. But let's take the situation of the international conference where we have a set of interpreters. Suppose this one looks really nice, an impressive man: well dressed, nice haircut. But what they discover that he does not understand completely what is going on. Now here they have a person that you know they aren't quite happy about what is happening. You are interpreting in a cabinet. So nobody cares actually [about what you look like]. Of course it would be rude to be part of the uh, whole thing. When you translate, you are isolated. The audience wants to forget about you. They want to know who was there—who was it they heard, sometimes. And sometimes you feel like not showing yourself because then you feel like you don't have a job in a very good way.

Cp; and what is simultaneous interpretation? Is it where I would talk to you and you would tell this other person over here what I said?

V; no. you sit in a cabinet. Nobody sees you. Then you have headphones. The speaker speaks to the audience. Suppose he's an American banker. He makes a presentation of an audience in France. So he addresses them in English and speaks as if they could understand him. They don't. As they have headphones and they listen to the interpreter. The gap ... is around two to three seconds. Some take longer. It's very individual. I'm not comfortable with longer gaps because I get lost. My style is to just be very very close, like a fraction of a second to go out. But what I'm saying is that this particular field the professionalism is determined by being invisible.

Cp; that's really interesting.

V; yeah, yeah. You are invisible and you don't want to be visible. In other translation—this is called consecutive translation—you are the _____ audience, and you represent the speaker and the speaker addresses his audience and you are by his side. And then when he makes a pause you trans. What he said and everyone looks at you. To tell you frankly, I have gone between both. And simultaneous translation requires an immediate switch, while consecutive translation requires more keeping in your memory what has been said and then getting it out. And there's an acute difference. I've noticed myself that if I translate for quite a long time in a simultaneous mode, and then I switch to consecutive, I have some sort of a problem of remembering. Because my mind already works immediately.

Cp; when you do a simult. Interp, do you do more literal kinds of translation and then consecutive is more idiomatic?

V; yes consecutive is considered more quality translation and is more quality and is judged to be more adequate than simultaneous because simult. Is immediate—very quick. And you do make mistakes. I've made quite a few mistakes and some are pretty bad.

Cp; (laughs) wow.

V; so what I'm saying is that appearances are important of consecutive interpreters and not for simultaneous because they are hidden. Generally they do tell you what they want at an international conference. Like when you are told as a kid when you need to conform to tradition. Generally people are very good to interpreters. They understand that it's very hard work. We are well appreciated.

Cp; so how does that compare with what you do here?

V; here...well first of all professionalism also includes satisfaction of what you are doing. That's one of the qualities of a 'real' professional is that he is capable of assessing himself and his work and for him the satisfactions of what he's doing is very important. That defines a professional. A lot of us don't understand the difference between good performance and performance that is not very good. But the professional is aware gains the satisfaction that he can help, and that he *has* helped. And at the same time the professional may have dissatisfaction that he cannot help. What I'm saying is that a professional is not afraid to say he can't help. So sometimes professional may say that he just can't help, and he feels like someone else might do a better job. This feeling of satisfaction is what's visible.

Cp; well I'm thinking about invisibility in the writing center now. It seems to me that when I was working here for a couple of years, there was this idea of putting the student at the center so the student was in charge and [the consultant] weren't so visible. So the student is directing the conference. So there is this sort of element—you want to be a little invisible. And there is this active interpretation that goes on. You're trying to help the student interp. Comments and d assignment sheets and all kinds of ...

V; yeah, you're right. That makes, uh, wc's unique because it just works differently. Sometimes being invisible there is important. Sometimes it does not help very much. So what is happening here is that writing consultants should be able to be able to determine what is needed in this particular situation. It comes with experience. Even with my experience when I just studied doing tutoring I was not yet had experience in doing it in concrete circumstances. That's very important. Generally when you just get into it this understanding that people are different and different strategies are needed . and then the ability to see that when it happens...I'm not that fast to understand this language. Sometimes it's like "ok, now I understand what I should have done'. That's why for me I could never finish a conference in 10 minutes, 20 minutes, because I'm trying to figure out what's going on, what kind of help this person needs. Like does he need more help. It's like is it working. This is harder.

Cp; you need to tell me how to help you. I like the idea of students coming back to see you a lot. When I was here we talked about ‘weaning’ the students. The goal was to get them not to come back.

V; this also fits in well with what you are talking about professionalism. Recently I did my internship with CESL . students first go to an economics lecture and then they go to an English class. But what was happening—it’s difficult because you should understand economics to be able to speak in english about the issues. And what I discovered was that when you know the issues very well, what you are doing is bring all this to the students. Now because you are in control you know what’s gonna happen.

Cp; so would you say that the work you do here at the writing center is professional?

V; well yeah I think so. I’m very happy with this writing center because I’ve been in several programs where they are trying to do things professionally. And you do look like professionals. This center is very unique in terms of there’s a lot of good relationships build and mutual help. People try to be professional.

Cp; in what way?

V; really helping. Then sometimes knowing what’s going to happen from experience and that’s why building a strategy from knowing what’s going to happen sometimes you are like invisible because you know It’s like ‘this student is going to use me to do his grammar and I’m not going to accept it. I try to do something to shift the ground and the ball has to be in his court. You identify the problem and let him or her solve the problem. Sometimes that you see that it’s not a good game because this person is in real trouble. He’s unable because of his emotional situation or his orientation. He’s in that state where there are too many things in his world and he’s completely incapable to demonstrate his ability to generalize and just doing this is an exercise in futility. It would be good to shift the ground and let the student do the job but he is not capable for a variety of reasons. You can see it in their eyes. It just depends. Part of professionalism is that you can assess what the person is able to do. Sharing with each other is part of professionalism; ‘how would you handle this?’ or ‘what would you do in this situation?’ real professionalism is saying that I don’t have expertise in everything. Professionalism is being able to say he doesn’t know everything but still he is worth something.

Cp; these are really interesting characteristics you’re talking about. Really attempting to help a student or a colleague. Knowing what’s going to happen from experience and using the appropriate strategies based on that knowledge. You have a sort of repertoire of strategies. Sharing information among consultants.

V; conference notes are helpful. They show that students are learning something; they are making progress. [grad student in second language acquisition].

Cp; how did you end up here?

V; it's a long story.

Cp; do you think there is a certain amount of prestige attached to being a wc consultant.

V; when discussing my program, when we discuss how we teach writing, I always argue that I have an insider's pov. And it's a strong argument. And I have used my experience here which I apply to teaching composition and literature to esl students. It was very good because I felt much more confident in class. My experience was in many ways unique because I could see what students see.

Cp; what are going to do with your degree? Do you want to teach.

V; I don't know right now. I might work for an exchange program. But definitely teaching is a part.

Cp; changing the mission etc.

V; provide more feedback for teachers about their assignments.

Brandon 4/22/99

Cp; how do you define professionalism?

B; [showed surprise at the idea of accrediting wcs. Impressed, I think.] I guess behaving in a manner that is conducive to a certain environment, for example here, it has to do with the relationship I'm developing with the student I'm helping. And not only that relationship, but the relationship amongst the people who work here as a whole.

Cp; you said behaving in a manner. What kind of manner?

B; behaving in an ethical...that's a really good question because "ethical" makes it sound like [behaving ethically is unusual] I guess just in an 'appropriate manner' sounds better.

Cp; what would be appropriate in terms of uh...ok so professionalism in the writing center then. How does your definition of professionalism fit into the wc context?

B; I think every time we have a conference we have a little relationship. At least that's the way I view it, it's not like me being the boss and someone else being the employer, it's sorta like a relationship where I consider myself to behave in a certain manner with

the person I'm helping and hoping that they reciprocate in a similar way. That would be how I would expect it to be applied here, is that there's some kind of relationship between the two of us.

Cp; uh huh. Where you don't take an authoritative stance.

B; I never tried too. I don't see my role here in any way as an authority. In a way I tell people I don't see myself as equipped to teach english; I am a good writer and that enables me to help people out but I don't know if I could really teach it. But I certainly don't think I have an authoritative position over anyone I see here.

Cp; so building a relationship is an important part of your professionalism.

B; yeah.

Cp; people sort of generally define professionalism as these certain characteristics, and then when they think about what they do in the wc as a professional, they come up with very different characteristics.

B; really.

Cp;yeah. I mean that's what I've been seeing as a general pattern.

B; huh. May it's like this isn't the 'real world' and I don't know I like it. It's just like a group of people who have a general idea how to write helping people who lack that general idea or don't have it quite as well as we do and so I would never consider myself ad teacher but someone who is a better writer than someone just walking in for help. Sometimes that 's not the case and usually those are the more fun ones. It's happened but it's rare.

Cp; [digression about visiting the sociology class with marvin, then reiterate what b just said about students lacking knowledge of the strategies].

B; you know I think that's one of the best things about this place is that I don't think there's any kind of implied relationship like that—like we are authority figures. Lst sem. As a grader for an art history class, I found that once I gave the speil about the writing center at the professor's request, that a lot more students were willing to come and talke to me. Not only about their writing but about the exams and stuff for the first half of the class I was only the grader but after I gave the wc shtick, it was interesting to see the response I got because people started coming up to me for help not just with the writing but with course specific stuff.

Cp; that's a great segway into my next question, which is what kind of prestige do you think is attached to being a wcc?

B; huh. It's kind of unusual being a first semester graduate student and having a group of ten people in a class with me—they all know I work here and so they a lot of them come and see me and the teacher has figured it out now. I don't know about prestige but they know my writing is good and so they're a lot more tough on me, and that's not a bad thing, it helps me improve my writing. I don't know if I would say it's prestige, but certainly a higher standard is set for me. I think my students look up to me, but I don't think my professors think 'oh wow what a cool guy'

Cp; I think that happens a lot. So not so much prestige but respect from the students.

B; that's probably a better way to put it. Instead of people sort of being in awe of it..

Cp; have you done some workshops or anything outside of hours in the wc?

B; I help mb with a couple things. An outlining workshop and how to deal with citations. Basic stuff. I didn't play a big role in that. I was just sort of the representative there and she'd ask me questions and stuff.

Cp; what do you use as the relationship between the wc and the larger university.

B; well how does it fit? I've always kind of wondered that because I'm not really aware. Are we attached to the comp department? Are we our own little unit? It seems like we are sort of used campus wide I would say. A lot of our papers are composition papers but certainly we see a lot of work from other disciplines. Where are we, where are we supposed to go?

Cp; that's hard to answer. How long have you been in the wc?

B; this is my 4th semester.

Cp; digression. Talk about asu

B; if you look at who works here you see that we aren't all in english and I took the 101 and 102 stuff, and one upper division lit course when I was a sophomore, but other than that all my writing has been outside the english department. Comp provides as sort of basic framework. It seems that if we were really attached to the comp department we should be staffed by english people. I don't know why.

Cp; what are you going to do with your degree?

B; teach. That's about all you can do with my degree [art history]. [french digression].

One of the fun things about the wc is the way it's run. We have a free reign. It doesn't feel like we have three bosses really. It's definitely a consultant run business which is kind of funny. I feel like this is sort of my writing center as much as anyone else's.

Cp; we had problems with building community.

B; if my incoming class weren't here, I don't think I'd be here. One of the things that makes this place great is that we all like each other and we all like being here. We all take pride in being like in student government.

Cp; how would you change the mission etc.

B; one of the things that is frustrating for me is that I'm not a trained grammar consultant. I mean I know correct grammar when I see it, but a lot of times I don't have the words to understand how to explain it to people who don't. a lot of times they need explanations further than I can take it. studying french has help this. But I just don't know how to explain it. Better grammar training. Also emphasizing our role as *not* editors. Editors make real money and it's sort of frustrating because I don't feel I can really add anything other than grammar to someone who is working on a dissertation I can't help them with content, they're far beyond me. A lot of times the structure of the diss is set and they don't want to change it so we just concentrate of editing the surface.

Cp; ok so you're saying that some people come in here wanting their work edited, and your are saying we ought to be able to help them in that way because sometimes that's all we can do.

B; [repeats what he said above] I always wondered if that's what we are supposed to be doing—just editing for some people. Because doing that doesn't make this 'a place to talk about ideas' that's a place for me to fix your article.

B tells a story about a woman in a 400 level art history class who came to him for help on her essay. They spend three hours on it. It was terrible in every way and he was trying to figure out the best approach: should he help her with the grammar and simply make it mechanically clean essay with terrible content etc, or should he tell her to scrap it altogether so they could work on the content. He went for the content. Then he went to the prof after the fact and found out that the prof prefers readability—do the grammar so I can read it. Cares less about idea development. Another prof whom b respects said she was more interested in how the student fulfilled the requirements. If it's hard to read, ok, but it better be In the correct format with correct citations and specific organization.

Cp; what do you think the misson of the wc is?

B; I think it is a place where people can come to talk about ideas, to become a better writer, to learn habits and techniques of being better writers. I don't think that always

happen. The mission is a utopian world. I wouldn't change it but I wish it were more realized. I think it's a good mission. I see tutors as having all the answers—has more authority. A consultant is more of a writer in progress. [b has done both].

Cp; what's the term that you guys throw around

B; it's a conversation.

Mike 4/26/99

Cp; how do you define professionalism? In general?

G; well, I think if you're gonna define it in general, probably have to compare it to other prof. things like going to the doctor or dentist. They have to be there on time well dressed. It looks better if you have a secretary. Being on time, well dressed, smile. I think the secretary makes a difference, too. Appearance makes a big difference. I think that the appearance of the writing center itself makes a big difference in professionalism. I mean this is basically a house. Not that im complaining but I used do hours in old main and that was really prof. I mean I made sure I was wearing at least a collared shirt while I was there. There was air conditioning so the air was a great temperature and there was a secretary, a sign up sheet. I mean like you were off to the side there working in a little cubicle on a computer and then you do this kind of -----prof. Interview. And I think that's what we're going to end up like when we move into that underground basement thing.

Cp; oh yeah!

G; yeah, I mean I don't see that there's any way it can ever be the same if it's not in this house.

Cp; do you think [moving into a new place] will change things for the better or not?

G; well, it will definitely be better for the students. Some of the people I know who work here aren't gonna like that atmosphere. I know I would appreciate it. It depends on the person, too. Like some days I come in here and be a bum and talk to everyone. But I mean some people have friends that come by in between classes to just talk. And that just seems kind of odd to me. I mean we are supposed to be working here. If you work here and you drop by in between your classes to drop something off or do some reading—it's a great place to do homework—that's ok but I don't think you should have your friends come by just to talk.

Cp; well you've moved right into my second question, which is do you think the work you do here is professional in light of your general definition? Or would you redefine prof/

G; hmmm. I think in one sense the work we do here is professional and I think if you went to a professional agency like bright star tutoring I think we probably do just a good work as they do if we are motivated. I know a lot of times we just don't have the time or inclination [to do a prof. Job]. But if you put us up against bright star and compare the qual. I don't see that theirs is better than ours.

Cp; is that something here? [bright star]

G; yeah, they are always advertising in the wildcat they're always looking for new tutors and it's like 10 an hour to get tutored, but if your tutor you get like six. I think you have to be a student here to work too.

Cp; you mean you have to be a student to work in the wc/

G; yeah.

Cp; and you don't have to be a student for bright star/

G; I don't know. Probably get a lot of undergrads (laughs) like people in women's studies who can't find a job work for bright star.

Cp; can you image tutoring back to back for hours and hours/ it's an intense job.

G; wait what was the original question/ if I think the work we do here is prof/ ok I think besides the quality of the writing we do a lot of it isn't that professional. But [students] don't sign on for anything, they don't pay, they don't evaluate what we do. Sometimes they complain to the teachers and the teachers relay to us. And of course they complain about their teachers . anyways um it's a real laid back atmosphere. If you think of professionalism as a white shirt and tie, air conditioning full blast, shiny black shoes.

Cp; it's so interesting that most of the people I've talked to about prof. Focus on prof. Appearance.

G; three weeks ago on a Monday I had to tap somebody into the mortar board senior's honor's society, and because I had to do that after work hours I had to wear a suit and tie. So I came to school in my full black suit and I felt like such an anomaly. So [I came to the writing center for my hours] and I'm standing at the desk looking at my appointments and someone comes into the door and comes straight to me for information. It was interesting how people reacted.

Cp; so how did students you helped react to you that day/ was it different/

G; I don't think it was that different once we sat down and got into it and each student is different and you can't just say 'oh you react different cuz I'm in suit. So I'm not sure. It just felt different.

Cp; one of the things I'm worried about as wcs become prof. Is losing that casualness and informality that I think makes students feel comfortable. And I don't think we're all going to be having to wear suits but I think the process might become overly formalized. I'm interested in the arguments people are making about things like accreditation.

G; like a writing center bar association

Cp yeah yeah yeah! It's hard to get funding and we're a service unit. So the perception is that we don't do intellectual scholarly work, we don't do research we merely serve. And that scholarly work is the most highly valued in the institution.

G; it seems like in the past couldn't you push these techniques of tutoring—I mean we go to national conferences, we have meetings, and these tutoring strategies get passed down and even you are doing your dissertation on writing centers so...

Cp; yeah wc is legitimate something—worthy of research worthy of studying and I think that's why so many are arguing for prof. The thing I'm worried about is losing that sense of radical possibility.

G; get a variety of phd's from lots of different fields to come in [and analyze a consultation] I'm sure there's a lot of interesting stuff going on.

Cp; major digression on difference between the "radical" sense of professional that defies convention and a very practical sense of professionalism based on specialized knowledge and being credentialed.

G; you could also look at it from the mindset of the workers—how they see themselves. [in the wc] there's a lot of people who don't really care about the work they don't have in pride in it and then there's people here who are proud to be a tutor.

Cp; how do you feel/

G; I know I should but I don't feel especially proud to work here. Because I think maybe anyone with a humanities background, if they put their mind to it, can be a good tutor. Of course you have to be a good student, too. I guess I should be proud to work here. But I think there is a certain prestige that goes with the job.

Cp; I was just going to ask you about prestige.

G; id had a job interview with this prosecuting attorney back home in hawaii and she was impressed by my resume she says 'so tell me about this writing center work' and we talked about that for a long time. So there is a certain amount of prestige that goes along with [wc work]. Getting a little off topic, in a lot of ways it might be better if writing centers were more like a business. It seems like we are in this middle ground between a business and a club or something. There's not system of order—I mean people do things and they screw up or they do things they're not supposed to. If it get's really extreme, someone is pulled aside and perhaps there's just this little cautious whisper 'hey you know you're not supposed to do this'. We don't really have any system so people abuse it. And I know this is kind of cynical but there's no incentive besides our own human worth to make us want to do the best work possible.

Cp; there's certainly very small monetary incentive.

G; yeah maybe that's cynical but if you're gonna look at it like a business you want to get the most out of your workers.

Cp; so moving toward a more business-like setup ...

G; yeah. I think maybe with a more structured, predictable, consistent background it might work better. You could have disciplined structure but the workers would still have their individuality and be informal. And students could develop a relationship were they work with one person and they request that person. You get a feel for who you like and who you don't like. Somehow they know that they [the tutors] should not abuse the system or they don't want to.

Cp; it's always been a problem. we talked about maybe the problem is due to the fact that we are a wc run by grad students instead of a full time faculty member.

G; personally for me I don't think that makes a difference. I don't think of them as my 'bosses' but I respect them tremendously I mean I respect their authority but I also respect them as peers. At least for me, I don't see that having a full time phd 'boss' would make a difference.

Cp; well the discipline thing is still a problem.

G; yeah I sat down with carol the other day and she said 'why do people put down hours when they call in sick/' just things like that. I think that comes out of the informal—like the club feel.

Cp; so how do you strike a balance.

G; I think if it was more like a business—a legitimate workplace. I like this little house, though. I think the quality—as long as you are getting good tutors and they know what they are doing and they know what to look for you can even go out on the mall for a session or you could be dressed in a suit and be a good tutor.

Cp; digression about comparing our interview process and asu's class setup.

G; here it's like once you're in your in. I remember um last year this one student that would always come in here. She needed help during finals so I would go to the library with her at night and she was giving me \$10 an hour and I remember working really hard, going over every word. She's a grad student and usually when you get grad students here you don't even think about what they are talking about you just want to make sure you could read it in public without any errors. But that \$10 bucks and hour makes me say 'what does that mean, I gotta know what this means!' how do you pronounce this! It's makes a lot of difference.

When we get students here—and I don't think there's a way to solve this—w're getting paid or we're getting credit, and when they come in it's almost like we're doing them a favor cuz the students don't have to give up anything for what they're getting. It's cynical again but we don't have this ssense that we owe them anything. I just remember that when that grad student was giving me 10 bucks an hour I would just think I couldn't pay anyone 10 an hour. She gave me over \$100 that week. You just get a strong sense that you owe this person so much.

Cp; this is a realistic part of being here and I appreciate how honest you are. I see the wc as the sort of non-profit agency of the university. So my next question is what do you see as the relationship between the u and the wc/

G; I'm not sure what you mean by 'university' admin/ faculty/ students/

Cp; I mean generally in the larger picture. [comparison to little rock] I guess maybe what I'm asking is about visibility

G; um alright. We're not in the center of this school (laughs). We have a lot more science majors here than hum. Or english and they will never come here. It won't make any difference to them except that maybe that a tiny smidgen of tuition funds us. Excpet maybe the science majors who have to take 101, 102 . so they just are treating us like it's a chore. I think we make the most difference with esl students. It may feel irritating sometimes but we are central to them. They have a sense of dependancy on us. Even the grad students that are esl. But I think for the u. at large we may or may not matter to the average student.

G; [is an english major and is going to go to law school. He's from kauai. Wants the best job possible on the west coast and then when he's 'comfortable' and can live on

subsistence then he'll go home. They don't make much money on kauai. When I raise a family I want to be in kauai. It's a spiritual thing. Feels less of a minority there.]

Cp; how would you change the writing center mission.

G; what is the wc mission/ hmmm. The wc mission is...oh my god. The wc mission is the change c papers to a papers by whatever means necessary (laughs). I think it's just helping students get the best out of their assignments and papers with a bright smile and enthusiasm. More help in improving their writing and then send them off to writing skills. I don't even know what they do there—it's this mysterious place. Cuz we are qualified to look at papers and we're qualified to assess why their a paper says what it needs to say or to improve it or whether it will be effective in a particular genre but I don't think we're qualified to help people become better writers. I mean we can give them techniques—I guess I'm talking about esl students who don't have those techniques or don't know how to think critically. Science people come here and expect us to turn them into ernest hemingway. I think we just have to be very practical. In helping students with their papers individually and giving them suggestions I think they're gonna learn more. But we're talking about an english 102 english speaker. I think what we teach them can help them to be better writers. But the esl students come in and all they want is grammar instruction we can't really make them better writers. We might teach them a rule or two.

Cp; wisp tutors have master's degrees. Much more structured. It's free as well, but it's for minority and financially disadvantaged students only. [digression on pigeon].

A lot of people have emphasized the practical. They've talked about what's really possible in an hour.

G; let's say you get a 102 student writing a text-in-context essay. You don't even really have an hour. With an essay like that, you cover the surface stuff and clarity, emphasis, development. Maybe in an hour you can give him one sterling page. Ohterwise you're just putting make-up on a paper that's already there.

Nadia 4/21/99

Cp; how do you define professionalism in general/ do you have an image of what a professional looks like/

K; it may be a difficult question. We discuss it in our english classes. And very often people say an english teacher is not a professional because everybody speaks english so it's so easy how can it be professional/ as I understand professionalism, a professional is person with a high education, makes use of in his career, in his profession.

Cp; so would you say the work you do here is professional, or is there a contradiction/

K; yeah, there may be a little contradiction. For some people it can be prof. Work, for example I am a grad. Student majoring in english and I used to be a teacher and I'm just continuing with my work. But for many other students here it might not be prof. Work because they are majoring in biology or something. In a way, the work might lead them to becoming more prof. As they get to know this work much better they become more knowledgeable, more helpful, and they further on choose that as a career, but actually to be precise it's not professional. It's interesting. I never thought about it. But we're not supposed to be professional here anyway.

Cp; that's the point, sort of isn't it?

K; I have doubts about it because when I came here first and learned about this center giving so much hope to the students it seems to be an absurd idea to me. One is supposed to do his own work. Work with the teacher maybe but here peer assistance is very emphasized. I still think we do help too much. I don't think we really have enough time to really teach students to meet their urgent needs. This paper needs to be corrected and the deadline is now (laughs). I feel sorry that we can't really offer the help that we may be requested or required to offer here. I just try to make a summary of mistakes and what you need to work on. On the one hand it is really good help if a composition teacher faces thirty students some individual work is helpful I'm sure. Some students come here fully confident that their work is great and it was the teacher's requirement to come here.

Cp; how long have you been a teacher/

K; I was a teacher for twelve years at university level. Teaching english in russia. Master's degree. I'm going to teach here probably in the community college. She's in the ELL depart.

Cp; what kind of prestige would you say goes along with being a peer consultant/

K; I haven't had much different reactions . some people would say that my writing is very good. And one of my fellow students came to see me here. He's a japanese fellow and he has lots of problems. He keeps me in awe and all the time says how much better in english I am compared to him. But on the whole I talked to some american students and they said 'are you teaching' and I said 'I'm not teaching but I work in the writing center' and they say 'oh ok.' It's sort of prestigious; it's better than working in mcdonald's I'd say (laughs). Not really much prestige.

Cp; do you do any of the workshops or special presentations.

K; we don't do any workshops but I heard of another writing center that does presentations here on campus---I think it's the learning center—and I myself during this orientation got some advertisement about these workshops.

Cp; yes that's wisp.

K; people here have gone to national conferences. I heard about it on the listserv. That's very good work—very excited to exchange ideas. And I like to talk to people about issues and problems. We have a conference note exchange that's very helpful. The meetings are very helpful indeed about special needs and things.

Cp; do you feel like the issues you have are addressed/

K; some of them are. They may be addressed but you don't get all the answers and new issues come up all the time. And we have just discussed them here when we have time to and our supervisors who are doctoral students have good ideas.

I just came from a conference where the student has this problem all over her paper of how to make up sentences. Her syntax is very bad. She mixes up participles, gerunds, infinitives and everything is mixed up. They were all over her paper and I had to work so hard. I wrote in my notes, 'what's a poor consultant to do/' because there's only one hour and a big paper. Consultants complain because esl students are especially difficult but to me they are easier. I learned the english the same way and I can identify the problems easier. Another problem is like when my friend in composition says something like 'there are those geek-nerds who just resent any composition from day one' (laughs) and I saw a couple of them last week. They come and they think their paper is perfect, and i try to give them some ideas and tell them "this doesn't make sense" and he's looking at the ceiling not paying attention.

Cp; so based on what you're saying about how it would be more beneficial to spend more time with students, how would you change the mission structure, etc.

K; you know, I am getting more professional this year. This year it's so much easier for me to work than last year. I can see the mistakes right away. I would pay consultants a little more. Interns are always complaining and that's why it undermines their responsibility when they just don't show up. I would maybe, if the student asks for it, increase the time of the conference maybe to an hour and ½ or two hours. Let him choose. I'd have more consultants because this is kind of tiring really. A paid ½ an hour break.

Cp; if that were to happen

K; I sometimes can't make it to the meetings because they are in the afternoon and I'm already far away from here. But the meetings are so helpful.

Cp; that's always been a problem. well what to do see as the relationship between the writing center and composition.

K; wee seem to have a good relationship and the teachers advertise the wc to their students, which is a good idea, they hand out these small slips with our address and telephone. I'm not sure why they do it here—they required that a student shows up here.

I'm not saying it's a bad idea [to offer things like extra credit if they come to the wc], and there is a group a students who do require that, somebody opening their eyes to their writing style and everything. My fellow student was complaining. She was hispanic, and that's why she was having some problems with those white greek nerds so it would be good for them to hear another perspective that somethings wrong with their work, some things they still need to work on. But this individual work does help

Cp; do you see the writing center as more central or peripheral to composition/

K; I don't see it as central because many of the students don't come here. Many are good writers. It's a supplement. And it's the UCB who decides about the writing tasks. But we are important because do provide this individual help. So they don't tackle those issues of writing issue. They speak about events, they have discussions it's kind of a trend in modern english teaching. They used to teach grammar and mechanics and now they've switched over to this modern wholistic approach. I think it should be combined with teaching mechanics too. It's so amazing to me. I was a little concerned about me bieng a non-native speaker how can I advise something to a native speaker and then he says 'I don't know that' and we look it up in the dictionary. It's amazing how they don't study their own language. We had russian every year. But here, americans don't know about english. It's sad. That's why the secretary in a congressman's office asks "how do you spell view'. (laughs).

Cp; they don't have the terminology to talk about grammar and mechanics.

K; well I'm not saying we need to teach them a lot of terminology but at least some helps you write. I'm not sure, it needs to come from needs assessment. I don't know how much americans need that. Because the education level doesn't always allow everybody to learn that.

Cp; what about the relationship between the wc and the larger university/

K; well it's one of problems. Of course I would like the university to be more considerate of our needs (laughs). We facetiously, jokingly made out our wish lists. At least if the university could give us a bigger building. But in general we are just one in a list of programs and the u seems to take care of students.

Cp; tell me about the wish lists.

K; we had all kinds of crazy things, but there was also a grain of truth. Like better payment, a lunch break, heating. It was freezing last week. Computers. I just once used a computer with my student last week. We have to share one.

Digression about computer access. MOOs bla blaaa blaaa.

K; technology is overwhelming us and we are losing touch with each other. I recall that a while ago we had some hours at the learning center. It's such a fancy place! Spacious, nice computers, a nice receptionist. They keep restructuring things over there so we don't have hours. But I don't understand how one unit could be so well supported and others are not—we are on the outskirts.

C; [digression, wc beginngs, how various units are funded].

K; these conference notes are proof of our justification, of our usefulness. They can be used to solicit more money. It's a great idea not to charge students. It's available to any student.

C; [non profit agency—like habitat for humanity. New space underground].

K; I think it's a good trend to make wc's more professional. This semester, quite a few new consultants were hired, and immediately we started having some problems that show up on the listserv. The teacher complained that a consultant told a student that the teacher is 'just picking on you' so we talked about if you have the right to say that orc consultants not showing up or like somebody wouldn't give any help. I think it's good to have experience before they start. And professionalism in this sense wouldn't mean just knowing your subject matter, the writing stuff, but professional ethics.

Cp; what are the ethics of peer consultants? It's a big debate on the national scene.

K; that's all a part of the wholistic approach. But I think what works best is the combination. [in meetings where we talked about how to deal with grammar,] we didn't really talk about it in those terms. Some indicate that, for example, a student comes and says 'I only want my grammar checked'. I don't think they are saying we should stick with one or the other. Esl students often have good content and problems with grammar.

Janice 4/14/99

Cp; how do you define 'professionalism' in general?

J; that's a tough question. Behaving in a manner that's appropriate for the situation.

Cp; do you have a particular image in your mind of a professional person?

J; well my mom is a secretary so I was raised in that 'you answer the phone with a certain tone of voice' kind of thing. And there's consultants who just pick up of the phone just say 'writing center' (in a flat, slurred way). I don't really have an image, but I have certain characteristics in mind like a friendly tone of voice and politeness, and a certain degree of formality.

Cp; where does your mom work?

J; she works for the salt river project. She's an executive secretary. The salt river project is a major utility in the phoenix area. Like tep would be for us. I worked for them over the summer.

Cp; so based on your general definition, do you see the work you do in the writing center as professional/

J; the formality doesn't apply because we are peer based consultants and there's a certain standard about behaving appropriately. We joke about how you have to use humor to get someone to open up but you don't want to use the wrong kind of humor. I noticed that some people are complaining that when consultants are just hanging out between sessions by the couch, some consultants aren't acting professionally. When you're in a consultation there's a certain kind of behavior and when you're not you should be quiet and things like that and we're not very good at being quiet. (laughing).

Cp; do you ever talk about what 'acting professionally' means in your staff meetings/

J; we've actually have a discussion about it on the listserv lately. We don't get to meet often as a whole because we're so big. It came up because a lot of people—well some people haven't been showing up for their shifts, and someone brought in some liquid that they should not have brought in. and I don't know I wasn't there but that is not professional.

Cp; same things are happening as when I was there in 95-97. Talking about first tutors and their sense of radical revolutionary possibility.

J; I think a lot of it is we don't have supervision. I know when ah the coordinators are there—and we still have some really interesting conversations regardless of whether the coords. Are there or not—I think I see certain things like the answering the phone thing, but the volume seems to go down when the coordinators are there, and I know no one

would bring any ‘unnecessary liquids’ in when the coords. Are there. It also might have something to do with the satellite centers. Like last semester I didn’t even work at the mountain center so I didn’t even know what was going on or what it was like. I only worked at the freshman year center. Now I just work at mountain and I do an hour at the online writing center. We thought it would be totally dead, but there were two people the first night. But it’s been pretty dead. I’ve heard from rich that the quieter students really come out online and that makes me think that it’s got a lot of potential.

Cp; do you think the technology adds to your sense of professionalism/

J; ‘adds to’ I don’t know; changes it maybe because I’m so busy—I’m usually trying to cram down lunch between consultants and sometimes I have to like finish my bagel while I’m with a student and that’s not very professional (laughs). But you have to be very careful about what you say to students in the moo because they aren’t used to the medium and they have no idea what it means if you phrase things a certain way. Another consultant and I were having a conversation in a room on the moo and this student entered. We both greeted her, and then did like two lines to finish up the conversation and before she could even say ‘hi’ she said ‘oh I see you are having a conversation. Bye!’ and we’re both like wait! Come back!’ there was no way to physically greet her and say ‘hey come on in—hold on a second.’ You don’t have that ability. She did come back like five minutes later. I’m doing an undergraduate research grant to study how the tutoring works on the moo. I have a pretty good chance of doing it. Is tutoring viable? It’s much more like a conversation than a lecture.

Cp; talks about business writing class and the moo failure/usability test.

J; a have friend who was trying to help her boyfriend on the moo with the paper and it just didn’t work. So it wasn’t a social problem because they knew each other. It was logistical. But my couple of sessions with students have gone pretty well. There are also two salt tutors online, and they are by appointment only, and there are a couple of walk-in hours. (j tells a story about a first-year honors student taking a traditions in culture class. The instructor offered extra credit if she would help three others, but provided no training).

Cp; so the assumptions about honor’s students is that you already know how to help someone else with their writing. but that’s not something that people automatically know.

J; most people we get are in freshman comp. (talked about how honors students never come to the writing center). I think if someone had told me about the wc as a place I could come to collaborate and learn about what ‘intensive analysis’ was I would have come. It’s rare for an honor’s student to come in. I worked with one 103 student once on audience and citation format. But I think what you said about elitism and writing centers is correct. But I do think that a lot of people have the assumption that if you work in the writing center you never have to worry about writing a paper. But I was having trouble

last week so I made an appointment! And it's helpful. I worked with Dan. But it was kinda strange to be on the other side of the table. Kind of like the doctor who is suddenly the patient. Our training was more like peer reviews for a regular class. I don't think any one has made an appointment for their own work. It's too hard to admit you are having problems.

Cp; what kind of prestige would you say goes along with being a wc consultant?

J; (tells the story of how people in her dorm got word that she was a wc consultant—like that honor's student who came for advice about how to help people with their writing—and even the RA and her brother bring j papers all the time). I do think people a lot of people assume that when you tutor that makes you an authority, even an expert they can come to. I think a lot people who come in here realize that what we do is collaborative and they don't seem surprised. I've had ESL students who've had much better knowledge of grammatical terms. I can tell you that the sentence doesn't sound right, but I can't tell you why. I don't think this takes away from our authority, but we aren't the experts that sometimes people think we are. I think some outsiders also think that 'consultant' is much more flighty or 'uppity' than tutor. But I think that consultant better describes what we do. I mean I feel more like a 'tutor' with an ESL student, when I say things like "the article goes here." But if someone asks me about audience or 'flow' then it's more like I'm consulting with them about those issues. (j works with deaf students; has taken sign language).

Cp; tells story about the french translation course. Finds out J is an architecture student. What do you see as the relationship between the ua and the writing center/

J; the student body or the faculty and staff body/

Cp; student

J; I know from living the honors' dorm for the past three years that those students don't know about the writing center as a resource. (implied—it's someplace you work, not go to for help). I don't have a good image of what the student body outside of that does. I have seen two papers that say 'go to the writing lab' from the professor. I don't really know how the faculty see us. I mean I know some think we are a fix-it shop. But I know others—like the comp teachers—who let us come talk to their classes about how we can really help them with their writing and not just their grammar. And teachers don't have time to explain everything, and sometimes I see upper division students who have problems that should have kept them from getting to this level. So I guess there are faculty out there who don't know about us or just don't care but at the same time we are so busy! We had ten new people this semester...

Cp; you indicated that the wc has a much better, much stronger relationship with the comp program. Better comm. Would you say that that the wc is more central or more peripheral to the comp prog?

J; I think it is more peripheral but it shouldn't be. It's there for everybody. I think maybe if we were thought of as a more typical type of thing ...it's not that you are going to get remediation, it's not that you have a problem, it's more like you are going to extend your experience with further, not even assistance, but further discussion about your writing then that we would be more central and help a larger amount of people.

I do think the coordinators do tend to subdue behavior when they are there in the wc, but they don't impose a 'I'm your supervisor and I have great control over your fate.' We are still pretty much in control and there is a sense of community in the wc that I don't think is present in other tutoring services. I worked for SALT and CATS (commitment to total academic success). CATS is appointment only. I think they are trying to get this regularization going where a tutor works with a student throughout the semester. And the athletes—I hate to stereotype them—but they do have this kind of last minute mentality. They do miss a lot of class time for games and they call and say 'I have this test at 11 and I need to see you before then so you can teach me all the vocab I've missed for weeks.' We are going to have staff meeting in the middle of the day on a Sunday and all we do is talk about what the common problems are and it's an interesting environment because at the wc we do get the occasional student whose professor said they had to come and I get the occasional 'I have to get a signature from you' and the TA will automatically give them an extra letter grade if they came to the writing center. Whereas at CATS you'll never get a teacher referral, but because the athletics department expects..gets progress reports from the instructors themselves then they will process them and go, 'ok, mark you need to get a tutor,' and if the student doesn't do it, they will do it for the student. I've gotten calls from coaches' secretaries saying 'I need you to call this student and set up a time with him because he hasn't done it.' To me I don't like that environment. I much prefer SALT and the WC. At the same time I don't want to leave because the couple students that I do have I particularly like. But some it's like 'if you don't want my help, get the coach to call someone else.'

(j works at SALT, CATS, the WC, and the front desk of her dorm. She's an interdisciplinary major, emphasizing english, architecture, and psychology. Wants to go to grad school for architecture, historical preservation. Taking a grad seminar).

Cp; talks about 307. In what ways would you change the wc mission, location or structure. Let's start with the mission.

J; I would like to see our mission more publicized. We make ourselves known in flyers and student research manuals. Perhaps the name should be change—I don't know if writing lab would better explain what we really do, but we are listed under tutoring centers and that's not quite what we do. As for location. I think the house has a nice little

community feel. We need another room or two or rearrange the space somehow. The back left hand room is really crumbling. It weird when you are trying to help a student and they keep looking at the hole in the wall where the paint is bubbling and peeling from water damage. Structure: I think the 3 gat coords. Work well. We need that many. The internship is for two semesters, so you don't get paid for a year and I have friends that are seniors who'd like to apply but they'll graduate before they paid. I haven't been able to sit in on the internship class this semester because my grad seminar conflicts. And I think that if we get bigger and move to a bigger place we'll have to restructure. I think if we get bigger things might become a little more hierarchical. There is a certain heirarchy in place because we have the first and second semester interns, then the 'real' consultants, then the coordinators. Experience and superiority will always create heirarchy.

Cp; perhaps heirarchy isn't such a bad thing. You've got the authoritarian heirarchy—the pecking order. You're describing something closer to a mentorship.

J; It's interesting. I've noticed the grad students don't put us down, but I do feel young. But I didn't know that two other consultants were grad students for a long time because we just treat each other as colleagues.

(discussion about gender balance. There more girls than guys). All the SALT and CATS tutors were girls. In the first year center all the science and math tutors were guys. Lots of digression about working with deaf students and practicing sign language. The end.

**APPENDIX B: ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER TUTOR
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

Key: Cp = principle investigator

***other initials indicate tutors. All names have been changed.**

Jana, asu wc director 4/16/99

Cp: tell about your history.

K: History of the ASU WC. Began 1970 as a room on the 5th floor. Couple grad students waited up there for students to come for help with their papers. It wasn't marketed widely it wasn't professional—not org. in the way as it is now.

Now on third floor. Used to be in a bigger room, using a file cabinet, generating paperwork. Kate's office is a renovated janitor's closet. Three people occupied the small office. At that point, the WC was in the adjacent room, which was stocked with computers, really started doing paperwork—keeping data, having procedures, standard operations. Went on for many years—several years, maybe up to ten years. Because the wc system was not working as efficiently as it could, the head of the division started to restructure the wac program. The wac prg. Was begun several years ago. It was mainly an idea that never really got enforced. Idea to connect discp. And help instructors with their assignments. But there were no 'waccers'. It fell to the way side, but when the wc got revitalized, the four people who were running the wc got reassigned to the wac program—facilitating workshops, etc.

I then became full time in the writing center. I had been half-time. I became wc coordinator a year ago in jan. but I didn't do it full time until june 1. I like to think that the systems and procedures that we have in place are very good, very efficient. Especially because I'm full time and I have a half-time assistant. Most of the work is done by the students. I do a lot of the behind the scenes stuff like advancing the wc, marketing the wc, and problem solving and thinking about new ways to offer the service to students—on line tutoring. I mean I 'm the idea person in lots of ways. The assistants take care of payroll, deal with the data, do mail runs. They are the spine of this whole thing and it would crumble without them. I would never be able to do all of those things by myself. And I tell that to my supervisors as well. Let's remember that there's only one of me. My supervisors are, steve rapon, who is the coordinator of student success programs and then he has other supervisors who run graduate academic services. We are not connected to the english department in any way. I think the division of undergrad.

Aca. Services is the most logical place for the wc to be housed because the wc does not serve just english students. Nursing engineering law everyone.

of consultants: ranges between 25-30. We call them tutors. David schwalm was talking about the issue of naming. He was questioning whether we should stick to the old name that has lots of particular meaning and baggage attached to it, or should we go with the new name and risk alienating people who don't know what it is.

We have named our tutors lots of things. Writing specialists, writing consultants, peer tutors, writing tutors. But I prefer to call them tutors to the point everyone wants to call them tutors. When I first came on, it was second semester after I earned my master's. I was teaching as a faculty associate, which is pretty low on the totem pole. I was hired in the spring of 95 by the four directors because I only got three classes to teach instead of the four I needed. It created a budget crunch for me. (master's in CW). I tutored 10 hours a week as instructional specialists. Finally I was up to half time. Tutoring up to 20 hours a week is pretty intense.

So the mfa thing---I have colleagues who encourage me to go get a phd. Because they say that eventually ASU will want a phd to advance the theory and the practice of the wc. And sure I've thought about it, I still think about it but I'm not desirous of my phd. If I got my phd, it would probably be in rhetcomp. With a computer emphasis. But I don't intend to be the writng center lady for the rest of my career. But I can see my friend's point of the value of having the phd and I could probably do better things for the wc. But I just don't see myself getting a phd just for that reason. For my mfa, I took lit classes—more classes in fact than the ma person. And running the wc, that person has to be a sort of jack of all trades. That person has to be ready to hand out cough drops, food, be ready to listen at the drop of a hat to someone who's crying and needs assistance, that person needs to be comfortable working with all different types of personalities, not just really really really smart people but all range of intelllect and personality. yOu have to be very open minded, a really really had worker if you are to run it by yourself, the more employees you have the more complicated it gets, you have to have a mind that understands numbers, and can put together reports. I don't believe that a phd would help me in those respects. What a phd would do for me is help to advance to the next level as far as if I got another job, it might help me get that job. But again I'm not looking to be the writing center lady for the rest of my life.

Q: how long are you going to be here?

K: I'm very happy running the wc. I make decent money, my schedule is flexible, I can meet with you, I can go to this meeting, I get mental stimulation all day long, I work with so many great people (colleagues are also friends, tutors are smart). Out in the "real world" if I were doing something like this I would probably be making twice as much money. I love being here. I have benefits. How long will I do this? I don't know. Probably until some life change makes me want to move or make a lot more money.

Getting married, parents falling ill. I don't see myself leaving this job for another writing center job at another university. I see myself writing the great american novel and leaving to go teach creative writing.

C: do you have time to work on your writing?

K: certainly not during the day! Sure, I have time. But one of the great things about this job is that I can leave it here when I go home. Back in the old days when I was grading—grading, grading grading, teaching all these classes, you know, I'd go home, have dinner, and sit down and grade some more. On sat nite, if I had to grade until 10 pm, so I don't have to grade on Sunday, then that's what I did. That's no way to live. I could have time to write if I wanted to, but I haven't chosen to pursue it much lately.

What I'm finding frustrating is that the wc has always been treated as the 'stepchild' in whatever department it belongs to. It starts to eat away at you after a while. Some people rise to the occasion. I think all wc people kinda fall into the position. It's not like we go to school to learn how to become a wc director, I mean you don't major in writing center, or take wc coordination courses, you know? It's something that you fall into. Just like any administrative job. You get your phd in whatever it might be and you end up running the division of undergrad. Aca. Services because you're a numbers guy. But I could move into another program that needs someone to straighten it out. I'm a problem solver by nature. Something that needs a lot of fixing is attractive to me. Lotta unknowns.

C: relationship between comp and wc?

K: I just got back from a meeting with the comp board—I'm a member—and sometimes I wonder why I go or why I belong because I never have much to add. Like today we were talking about getting new texts books for the fall. And the only thing that that has to do with me is that the tutors need copies so we can know what the assignments are. But it was very nice to be there because I learned about the changes in the composition program and it's a place I wanna be but I don't nec. Have to be, and perhaps even shouldn't be. Because the wc is part of wac, and I don't serve on the nursing board, or engineering board, even tho' they have writing intensive course. My relationship with the comp board is good maybe because I'm just down the hall. And so much of our clientele is first-year students and we are physically housed in Lang. And Lit.—in the English dept. and I like it that way because this is where I get a lot of my customers.

C; does engineering pay at all?

K; they pay half--\$7000 a year. Our numbers are consistently low over there. I'm just crossing my fingers that this collaboration will continue and that the dean will continue to give us that money. Because I certainly rarely have anything to show him to make him jump out of his socks.

C; how does your funding work?

K; wac is all in the d. of undergrad. Svs. That's where we get all our money. No money from the english dept.

C: how are you setting up the online writing center?

K; we definitely want to go on line. I've already set up a web site. I collaborated with greg glau, who runs the stretch program, and his students would go to this site and send in their papers and then they would...(interruption).

K is showing me her site. The student must fill out all the information requested. If anything is missing, the paper won't go through. They have to tell what the assignment is, what class it's for, and exactly what kind of help they want. What's happening right now is that the paper goes to a designated email address for the wc, and I go in there and I set one tutor up on a computer and does online tutoring, addressing the concerns of the paper. They work for about two hours. That person leaves and the other person comes in. The problem is that it's a slow process. I mean one class who sends in papers, you have 25 papers right there. And it takes a longer time to do it online than it does in real life. But really what's happening is that it costs more to do online tutoring. It's less efficient. And I don't want to require anybody to send in their papers online. It means that they're REALLY not gonna look at it when it comes back. And who's doing all the work? And who's benefiting? Nobody. But that's what we were doing with greg's class. It was a stretch class, it was small, and greg incorporated it into his class. But as you know there aren't many gregs in the teaching world. It's a lot of work. This is a real issue. I'm feeling a lot of pressure from the division to get this online thing going. 'we want online tutoring. We want online tutoring.' But I feel like they aren't understanding. They won't give me any more money for this and as you see I don't have any computers in here.

C; yeah, I noticed that you don't have but one computer in here. Where would you farm out those online papers?

K; well, the tutors would have to work at home, or they'd have to work at one of the computing centers on campus but this campus doesn't have enough computer sites, and students wait in line every day at the computing lab and it gets even more inefficient because I'm paying tutors to wait in line to get to these email addresses or I'm paying them to work at home, and I guess that's fine, but I think that we need a computer or two in the writing center. So that there are people in the writing center when the space police come around. That's why we lost that room over there. We call them the space police because they come around and check out how you are using the space and they discovered that we weren't using that room very efficiently. And so now we're in this room. Nad if I don't get any more money to pay consultants to stay here, then they have

to go away to do it and what does the wc look like then? It looks empty. And not only that, but we're not able to serve the real students who come to the door.

****here I commented that our comp director treats the whole online thing like it's a great thing and we must do it quickly because we have to compete with asu. Kate commented that asu hasn't got their technological stuff together, either.**

Mark 4/16/99

Cp; how do you define professionalism in general?

M; that's a hard one because of the buisness culture in the country it's sort of set the stage for professionalism in general. It would have to do a lot with appearance in general. How people dress—suits or shoes, hygenic standards, and then probably even more important than that is your style of speaking. Trying to avoid colloquialisms and slang and formal terms. That's my impression.

Cp; ok, compared to that, do you think the work you do here is professional/

M; maybe my definition for here is a bit different. Similar to the dicitonary's definition which I would guess would be more a set of procedures and ethics that you use to that type of work. I think it would differ for the wc in that...what I've been trained to do is act as a peer. Not only a tutor but throught joint inquiry the assumption is that we are going through similar struggles and that we share certain approaches and so I can't be some type of authority over a student but at the same time I'm not going to lapse into small talk the entire time. I guess it would be maybe more contextual and getting the job done, so to speak. So it would be like talking with the student if you have small talk it's not to manipulate the student, but small talk seems to put the student at ease. You want to make someone comfortable. You ask them about their day and go after that. (matt is a religious studies major). There are a lot of english majors but I came recommended and rel. studies is writing intensive so...I think the assumption is that while we haven't memorized the MLA handbook like some people, but we go by the same book. This is my first semester. I'll graduate next year. Then I will hopefully go to grad school that has a strong latin american studies program and right after graduation me and my fiancee are getting married. She's an art history major and interested in latin american studies as well. (both interested in Mexico).

Cp; I like the way you talked about your training. That you see this venture—tutor and tutee—as a joint inquiry. That's it's an assmption. Do you find that it's true?

M; yeah, but dealing with the students' perception of what a tutor is and then it becomes even more complex when you tutor students from other cultures and you find that they have a different set of cultural responses so where teachers are intensley respected. They have different models of authority, and you have a hard time creating a dialogue about writing, which is they way I've been trained to approach it as a dialogue. And I have trouble with that because they're gonna want to defer to you. They'll listen to you, but the point is that you want to do the listening and empower the student so it's a tough line. It should be joint inquiry.

Cp; what kind of prestige do you think goes along with being a tutor?

M; that's hard to say. It's interesting. I'll be talking to some one and it comes up that I'm a wc tutor and they're like 'oh wow.' As if my status has suddenly change when they find out I'm a tutor. It's assumed that you have more knowledge, and you generally do, but I think it's the training more than anything else

that suits us for the job. Anyone can help someone with their homework. And it's not that your knowledge base increases about a particular subject area. That's going to be empowering yourself if you pursue that. As much as approaching people and finding out how to help people, how to elicit questions about their own writing. how to get them to improve their own writing. and that all sounds theoretical, but you can get it work on a day-to-day basis. Half hourly to half hourly, and it's interesting to watch that.

Cp; what do you see as the relationship between the wc and the larger university/

M; I think it depends just because...again you've got all these opinions that are conflicted. So you've got your students, and they come in and they get helped. Sometimes they are frustrating sessions but for most people that's a distinct minority. The relationship between student and tutor is closest. And then when you come to a prof, whom you give your communication form to, that's a little more difficult because like students, they have differing expectations of a tutor, but they don't have the same intimacy of communication. I talk to a student and get their input. You get a communication form back and it's gonna be either , 'oh that was wonderful' or 'oh they still need help on these points' and sometimes you get comm. Forms that say 'no you should have concentrated on this, or why didn't you cover all thirty pages of their doctoral diss' in 25 minutes. I don't think we have a strong relationship, but I'd like to amend that comment with a mention of the tutor links program. In which you work with a part. Instructor who provide you with clientele. And they are tough teachers who have certain criteria that must be met. So you have that link with that professor and you can actually talk about the curriculum, talk about the prob.s the students are facing and dialogue about that and have a close relationship, a close prof. Relationship because you're working on improving which is what the prof. Is working on as well.

Cp; are you one?

M; yeah, I work with ken morrison in the religious studies program. I don't know if it's formal. And he has really hard papers. Lots of grief, tears, blood as a result of writing his papers. I've been through two of his classes, and I did well, so I help some of his students. And the ones who come in, it's good. And I also go in there and talk with them. Sometimes I'll try with the instructor or some other people helping with this class, try and initiate workshops for writing.

Cp; do those get good showings?

M; sometimes. It depends. I think there are class personas and when you are dealing with such an involved class. And it doesn't depend on honors affiliation, which some people think, and they'll be totally invovled and there will be thirty people in a session. But a lot of the time that's not the case. I think you'll hear this, but there's a general current of apathy on this campus, but it's not a given, because why would I be here, and why would a lot of other people be here. People just have a lot of things to do. I'm not sure what other segment we would have a relationship to.

Cp; what about the english dept/

M; I think it's really close because kate and some of the tutors who have been here for a while... I think it's a function of your years of experience as well. Because you get more chances to interact if you've had say 20 students from a part. English class. And a lot of times the prof. Will want to talk to you. It hasn't happened with me, but from what I've heard, it's good. And then I think it's an individual realltionship but kate talks to the english dept and some people are in the english dept (tutors). It's not totally hand in glove, but I think it's fairly close. Especially than other depts. Like engineering. But that's changing. The trend seems to be towards greater integration with different academic depts. We've been talking with engineering and english, rel. studies, and others. You also get references from teachers for not explicitly academic writing, disses, applications, resumes, lab reports etc.

Cp; so you went through this WAC 294. How did you hear about it/

M; I heard about it through my rel.studies prof. He recommended that I go through it. And so I just talked to Quinn and met Kate and talked to them. After the fact—and this happens a lot on this campus—you'll hear about something from some prof, and then you'll realize there's a WAC 294 class going on, and you'll see flyers for it. They were there before, but you just weren't attuned to it.

Cp; once you found out that this was training to be a tutor. Have you ever tutored before?

M; not formally. I think a lot of students have informally helped somebody in class. Maybe over coffee or you go to the library. WAC 294 was attractive because I was afraid about that tutor/student relationship. And I finally got rid of that by the middle of class when I got experience with how the process unfolded. But I thought I'm not qualified to do this. Even if I know the knowledge, what if I forget/ am I gonna be able to convey it to the student am I gonna be thought not to be credible, because I am a student/ etc. what different theoretical aspects do I have to consider/ what different situations are going to come up/ I want to be a good tutor because I want to become a prof. It was attractive that I know that people who have had a number of years of experience were going to be working with us on that. And knowing that the practical aspect was enclosed with the class. And the few classes I've take that have that practical accompaniment to your theoretical work.

Cp; it really allows you to see how the theory works out in every day practice.

M; right. Or how it doesn't, you know?

Cp; in what ways would you change the mission /structure/location of the wc/

M; I see it as collaboarating with students to work on their writing. working on the practical day to day grammar problems. And what's nice is when students come back to see you. So it can become an real investigation, a real evaluation of improvement of writing. as far as location goes. I wish more students knew about it. I think we have 46 thousand. Except the problem is that only 2,000 live on campus. No actually maybe it's 6,000.. in any case it's very much commuter campus. So it's hard keeping them on campus. I wish more teachers took us seriously. And the ones that don't think we do enough would come to us and talk to us/ and that we would have more progs. Like tutor links. If there were more tutors.. and better hours, too. Like really late hours. Because you know a lot of people do it last minute. I don't do that (last minute writing) but when I do, it's not good. I guess we would need more traffic to justify more tutors. But it gets pretty busy. I've not come up with a rhythm for this place. This is much more sporadic. Sometimes it's just chaos, and other times there's an ebb in the flow. I would think that people who have more hours than I have and also more expe. I used to be a zoology major, and replication of experiments is important to establish a pattern.

Cp; which is what I'm trying to do with these interviews. In some of the wc literature I've been reading, there's this evangelical tone—like writing centers will save the world. And that they are these sites for radical critique of the oppressive university structures. But in my experience, and from talking to consultants, there's not time to do this. there is more concern with the practical daily business of the consultant than institutional critique. And I suppose it could be argued that what we do in wcs is subversive in that we help students to become independent thinkers, but from what I've seen there is only time for the practical concerns students bring in.

M; uh huh.

Cp; (I'm asking about the 'liberatory' wc...per quinn's comment. What does m think of that/)

M; I think maybe...that's hard because that's a political aspect. I mean that stuff is exciting but...maybe that's where location...like on the periphery, not on campus...maybe that's were that stuff can happen.

Cp; because you're already in the system...

M; I mean people come to us to ask where the english offices are, and maybe that's metaphorical in that we are situated within a system that...and if we get a few comments criticizing our 'why didn't you catch the five misused commas in johnny's paper'...the 'why didn't you catch a single grammar mistake'...I really like the metaphorical language but...and also that would have to be combined with other liberatory aspects of ed. which are out there, but not enough. But this is just my take on it.

Cp; sure. Well this has really made me consider something. I've always sort of thought of wcs as places on the periphery and they turn it into a positive thing—power on the margins—but I think you've just hit on a reality that a lot of people in the lit. forget about. We are already in the system. We are ensconced in the system, not nec. Marginal; supplemental might be a better word. But that's a really good point you made.

M; yeah. If we were both places at once that would be great. You know, 'in your face' but also practical. It would have to be a change toward university education in general. My RS teacher is one of those who says 'you're being fed all this stuff. Now is the time to..' you know, he's radical in his methods of epistemology, you know, etc etc. His writing is so rigid though, it's interesting. It would have to be an attitude change in general and I don't think unfortunately, I mean as much as I try to argue against this to students, it's not an argument per se, writing is not respected enough. And in half an hour it's hard to convey to someone that it's important to convey what they mean in this particular assignment but in general. B/c if you don't want to be just another ant running around, then you need to make a point about the world. Take your place in the world through your writing. when I have my instructor's students, it's easy to say this stuff because I'm not taking from him I'm backing him up. But in general, we are in the trenches, we aren't waving the banners over there in no man's land, we gotta take care of the wounded over here.

Cp; well, in a way, that is sort of radical, what we're doing.

M; yeah, that someone cares about your writing. you know. And that fact that we're not just working on grammar, and when we're asking q's, and talking about clarity, it is not just 'you are n't making sense here' but ...I like the idea of liberatory. But I also like changing the context of the term around so that what seemed like drudgery or what some people might classify is made meaningful. I wish it was maybe more like ah, there would have to be other changes elsewhere.

Cp; there are some people I've talked to who argue that wc practice is the wave of the future. Sharon crowley, who is here, I think, she's arguing that we need to get rid of fresh. Comp. Which means that the wc would potentially play a much larger role in helping students learn the academic conventions and negotiate their ways through wi courses. But FC is exploitative of grad students and wastes students' time. Bla bla bla bla bla. Wc's are making the same moves as r and c.

M; RS made this move as well pretty recently. So yeah I think that there are ways to do it better. It's stepped away from theology and attempts to really look at things in a cross cultural way. It's a wonderful field. Incorporating and reaching out to different ethnicities and classes, so religion doesn't become an elite, privileged...a lot of the time people would go to divinity schools and they were fairly well to do preachers or business men. But now we're going to have a latin american chair, and you actually bring more people to the table because it's not some white episcopalian saying 'ok let's talk about god today.' Wow. It's important to a lot of people. But as far as the wc goes, I think it is good that we are...and I also have been reading just a little bit about R and Writing being institutionalize. The ways that people are pushing for legitimacy, saying 'ok, now we can actually get things done.' Not as it is nec. Achieved in a lifetime. It becomes coopted or watered down. Beauracratized, commercialized.

M; maybe someone who was having grammatical problems and their teacher writes them off. You help them, and it's not as explicit that you're talking about their writing per se, but it has to be done by the student. Because they're not nec. Liberatory in the theoretical sense of the word. Uh, but they do become empowered and who knows who they'll influence. But again it's not as explicit as saying 'do you know where you can go with your life/' 'do you know how many mountains you can move through a good piece of writing. do you know how you can stimulate thoughts through writing.' it's a lot harder to say that and be convincing and not some one just handing out literature on the mall. And of course it's a thirty minute session. You have to consider the pluses and minuses.

Cp; one last question. How do you think your work in the wc has added to your personal prof. Devel. I know it will look good on a resume.

M; it maybe informs me more about that gray area. It's not that sort of thing...and maybe.. though it sounds perverted...that you can actually engage people in a personal way through professionalism. The fact that someone can come in and see that you are a prof, not nec. An authority, you're prof. About a certain pedagogy or method, you're are more credible but not nec. More 'powerful', then maybe they'll be more willing to listen to you and maybe they'll think that you will be more willing to listen to them. It's also personal. It's also for me about efficiency. I don't know if those two things are directly correlated. But getting certain things done, and that doesn't mean that you are skipping out on essentials. But I think aside from that, anything else would be too hazy for me to elaborate in a coherent way.

Cp; so your theme seems to be that prof. Is an efficient way to get things done, it has to do with your demeanor, your ethos as you are communicating, and particularly I liked the thing about how you said your training has a lot to do with how well you do your job. Not nec. Because you are brilliant or you are a part. Good writer...

M; oh but those things help, but your success is not contingent upon nec. On your experience. If you have knowledge and you can't convey it, or you make people uncomfortable, then there's not use to that knowledge or interaction. You have to be ready for it. And the training opens you up to all these situations. It can be frustrating but it enables real interpersonal interaction. Both my parents are teachers. And they both are constantly adapting...so they don't inflict tedium on their students and a lack of passion. Students are not going to be interested if a teacher isn't passionate.

Interview Notes

John, ASU 4/16/99

Cp; how do you define prof. In gen/ when you think of a professional person who do you see/ what kind of characteristics does this person have/

J; I don't know if I could nec. Come up with a person in that sense of the word, but prof, you show up on time, you put in the work that needs to get done as well as the work that doesn't need to get done. You go around and make sure that everything is able to run and you know how to run them. So if anything ever does go wrong you can handle it. Make it a smooth transition for the students' eyes; no hustle and bustle. Don't let them see you sweat. It's just a matter of treating like a job, I suppose. You do it right and you do it well.

Cp; anything else that makes someone prof/

J; in my mind/ um, I'd like to just say 'common sense' but 'common sense' is not very common at all. I work in two different places. Here, I see a lot of professionalism and I work in a hall on campus where I see very little and I can go about it but it's like not putting your feet up on the table or not coming into work at all. Stuff like that where you're not treating it as a job or something that you respect at all. It pretty much boils down to you come in on time, know what you are supposed to do, you know how to do it and

you can maintain a friendly environment—I'm not going to say too much on that myself—maybe later—um, I don't know.

Cp; do you tutor in the dorm/

J; yes. There are three sats. In the dorms. There was originally one, four years ago. This big 1970's monstrosity and there were great tutors there. Exceptionally great tutors, exceptional professionals. You came on time you did your job you got up and took care of things, you picked up slack for other people if they were late or couldn't get in on time. My fav. Time to tutor. Then they integrated us into a program called FYE, and broke us up into the learning center, which is another tutoring center on campus, which has a very good reputation for math and languages, um. Then we went to their sub centers which gave us three more sites and they came to ours.

J; I think my paycheck comes from the wc. I've been here for four years. I've graduated but I'm just scared of the real world.

Cp; me too. so you've had a lot of experience.

J; not as much as you think because the wc inside the dorms get very little business. Here, I have appointments back to back so I get plenty of experience. But I've only worked in this environment for the past two years with any frequency. Before that it was a lot of working in the halls where you get one person a week or thirty people at once the day before a paper is due.

Cp; do you consider that what you do here is professional/

J; I'd like to think that anything I do is professional. I'm not exactly certain, I guess I could get a dictionary to see if I'm following every precept of it. I think it boils down to doing the job without any noticeable bumps of that nature.

Cp; that's great. Here's a related question. What kind of prestige goes along with being a consultant;

J; in terms of getting discounts at the book store/ (laughs). I've had a couple different instances. I was on very good terms with a teacher who knew I was a writing tutor and I happened to finish a paper early one day when it was sort of a free day to come in and work on your paper with a peer. And I got done early and went up and said 'I'm finished, I'm tired, can I go home' and he said 'oh you're finished, that's great. Hey everyone, here's an opportunity to get some help from a wc tutor' and I got a whole bunch of students coming down saying 'I need help with this, I need help with that.' This didn't make me so thrilled with the teacher but still... it happens every now and then. There is some prestige that goes along especially in the large classes. Teachers, sometimes they like it and sometimes they just don't care. As for perks, not many.

Cp; what are you going to do/

J; beg for money on the side walk I don't know.

Cp; are you an english major/ and you've graduated/

J; yes. I'm not in grad school but I am still a student. I'm taking a class through the humanities dept. because they allow up to nine credits of post graduate work. Which kind of covers the time between grad school and taking the gre. This is the gray area. There's no little scantron sheet for me, which is kind of irritating. (hours?) about 20 for both centers. 8 here, always packed. 12 in the dorms. Some in the new computer commons. (the wc has one tiny cubicle with a computer in the commons.)

(Digression about the computer commons).

Cp; what do you see as the relationship between the wc and the university/

J; like how does the u see us, how do we see the u, how do we fit into the beauracracy/

Cp; both. Let's start with how the wc fits into the beauracracy.

J; that's an odd q for me because I answer to..at one time I had more bosses than co-workers. So it seems like a lot of different programs have some stock in us but I'm not sure how that works. The sense I get is that since they don't see what we do they don't have any concept of why it's important that we continually have funds. I don't think I understand how we fit into the B. because I understand them as totally different things. Like there's the one thing that runs the school and then there's us who kinda help with the students, then there's the beauracracy and then the teachers and the reg. Teaching staff, which I don't consider myself a part of, but supplement to. And there's a few unlucky people who have to span the gap with paychecks.

Cp; what do you think the relationship is between the wc and the comp program.

J; I think it's very. Teachers seem to be thrilled with us. Sometimes they'll request students come here or they'll require them. I don't care much for the requiring because then you'll get a student who doesn't want to be there. I know there's a few teachers on campus who will offer students extra credit if they come to the wc, have us go through it with them, they will give the opportunity for a rewrite if you have wc help, which I think is a cool idea, a little bit hard to explain but still kinda cool. The comp prog in gen seems to like us and there's a couple of teachers in part. Who send all of their students to one tutor and it's called a 'tutor link' and I'm not one of them. Basically one teacher contacts one tutor and everyone in that class knows the tutor and they go to that tutor.

Cp; would you say then that the wc is central to the comp prog or peripheral.

J; I think it's peripheral because it's not req. for the completion of the class. We are links or supplements, but I don't have an overinflated sense of our importance/impact. I'm sure I could walk up to a number of seniors and they would have never heard of the wc. We have 5 sats. Engineering has been around forever. It's one of the busier sites, and also one of the more autonomous sites. The FYE sites in the dorms are almost all freshmen who are more interested in finding out what kind of freedoms they have.

Cp; ua and asu got together a few years ago, but I thought that this wc was in a computer lab.

J; we've gone through some huge renovations recently. That room was a computer lab. This room used to be Quinn Myer's desk. (bla bla). These were offices. We used to have a computer lab and now we don't. but we don't often do tutoring across a computer screen. I've heard some talk of getting us on line, but I can't really think about how that would come across.

Cp; bla bla about the moo...

J; I think that real time chat would take a long time to type it out correctly, coherently, a bit block of something you'd want to tell them about. It's easier to point with your finger.

Cp; forced to pay atten. To the text. Bla bla.

J; I'm almost computer illiterate...I think we do have a website. It has a mission statement and phone numbers. And our mission statement, like all mission statements, is shooting a little too high.

Cp; do you have a little slogan/

J; I don't know if we do. I think it's just the writing center. A long time ago we had t shirts. The group that I came in with weren't into that whole 'team spirit' thing. They didn't weld themselves together and push for a common goal. That's isn't to say they weren't prof. Plus the colors weren't that great....

Cp; could you articulate what the mission is in your own words/

J; boldly go...the reason I come here and tutor is that I like to help people become better writers and overall the things that I cover most are the intro and conclusion and focus on the organization. I'd like to see them become a clearer more org. writer.

Cp; bla bla about the evangelical zeal, radical critique, revolutionaries, empowerment.
Does any of this ever come up/

J; I don't nec. Believe people think we're here to critique asu at all because they come in to get interps. Of what their teachers want. We not attack it or support it really we just interpret it. The students who come in who have problems with specific teachers, we're gen. Advised to let them vent and not pass judgement on the teacher. Strike a balance.

As for how the students percieve us, it can be very very different. I had somebody come in and say 'I'll go to lunch and pick up this paper when I'm done' so I said, 'it'll be here when you get back.' And he came back and he wasn't terribly happy because the paper just sat there. You get that, and you'll get students who come in kinda skittish and confused and you can sit down with them and discuss. And sometimes they'll get this really frustrated look on their face because you're not editing their paper or going through and marking it with red it. In a sense grading it before it's really graded.

Cp; do you actually see some honor's students?

J; oh yeah. I see most of them from the freshman class. Some honors students aren't honors in literature or history, and all freshmen have to take these two sort of world history courses, hon 171 and 172. so they'll come in and they are pretty bright students and it's pretty cool to go through it with them. Those students often come back again and again.

Cp; do you keep records of who you see and how often/

J; (shows me a sheet. They keep sheets on students for about a semester. They have some from the 70's).

Cp; (conf. Note exchange bla bla. J says they have notes that go to the teachers that sound like the wisp forms. J explains about how he tutored straight out of the wac 294 course in the dorms and wishes he had some training in answering questions about math and stuff, too).

J; we have excellent hierarchy here, and we have to have two meetings too because we are so big. There is no sense of hierarchy in the FYE program. There's no continuity, no reprimand system, there's no sense of power other than the beauracracy who sees only our numbers and the tutor who is working out of sight. 'as in all things' (j's stock phrase). I'd like to consider myself a professional; I'm not sure I'd be given that label by a stern faced, autocratic business man, but hum, it's your job to be here to help the student, and if that job is more readily accomplished by NOT wearing a suit, then great. If it's easier to talk to them in more casual language, then do it. If it works, do it; but at the same time keep some reserve.

Interview Notes

Kara, ASU 4/16/99

Cp; what's your def. Of prof. In gen/

K; I have a hard time w/ that word. It's usually based on appearances and other superficial aspects—clothing, nameplate, atmosphere, not ever wanting to wear a suit myself. Prof means specialized knowledge—you should be very proficient at something and have a prof. Attitude rather than look. At the WC, this translates into confidence. Think about it when tutoring—I listen to the people around me. Students come to see the 'prof.'

I was in the college of Ed before I switched to biology and lit.(interested in chaos theory. Senior). This professor sent all her student to the wc. To me, this meant that she hadn't read the students' essays. I went to her and asked, 'why are you sending all your students to me?'. She said it sounded like a good idea. This is typical of faculty, who don't see tutors as professionals. ESL students especially see us as professionals. I definitely have a professional attitude toward my work. Students ask, 'do you get A's on all your papers?'.
 I worked at literacy volunteers. My mother used to run the wc at washburn u. in kansas. I transferred from the u. of kansas.

Conv. W/ another prof: writing center is terrible! Good teachers have a repertoire to communicate with students.

Conv. W/ another prof: writing center is terrible! Good teachers have a repertoire to communicate with students.

You won't be a good tutor b/c you're a good writer. Good tutors have a 'zeal' or calling to the work which helps the training—supplements it.

Prestige: mostly our help is appreciated—more prestige working for the U rather than for the WC. U sanctioning is prized. Students DO want to know what you think.

Cp; so we were just talking about, students do want to know what you think, because your opinion is somehow closer to an instructors.

K; authority on the subject moreso than any 'real' authority.

Cp; what about the relationship between the wc and the larger u.

K; yeah. I think that the u. needs to recognize the place of the wc a whole lot more. I could say lots and lots of nasty things about the u. and I don't want to but I think that some of the problems of the u is not recognizing the quality of students they are accepting (and this is terrible). Not that the students are nec. 'low quality' but they come in with such high specialized skills or b/c the u needs to up it's numbers, or three, they have no real desire to be here, which I think are the major problems with the u. and four, in these entry-level classes, these young grad students have hordes of students who don't care, don't really know what they're doing don't want to know what they're doing, and don't have the skills nec. To meet what the u., in it's kind of arrogance, thinks they should be needing. So the wc serves as the kind of buffer so that the admin. Can't really see what's going on because we catch them first. And we can say 'whoa, hold on there.' And that's where I think the joint inquiry is involved instead of editing. B/c editing is perpetuating the same problems instead of looking to solve it. And it's so much harder! I find myself tutoring my friends instead of simply pointing out that they need a comma here. Instead I say 'now read this sentence, can you hear a natural break/ so what kind of punct. Could you include here to signify...(laughs).

Cp; that issue of student apathy has come up a couple of times. I observe that students in the wc are the naturally curious type and are a small minority.

K; well the way I've always looked at it is if I'm paying a gourmet price for this education then I better be getting the gourmet edu. And they won't serve it to you; you have to ask for it. It's such a big u. and I

sound horrible anti-asu and I'm not anti-asu, I'm not anti-prof. I've have wonderful profs. But they're victims of it too because they see this student apathy and become disenchanted. So you have to go to them and say, 'give me what you would have given me when you first came to the u.'

Cp; uawc and gats have similar feelings. You can get a harvard ed at ua you just have to pursue it.

K; and pursuing at this u doesn't mean just going to class every day. It means working on your own research projects, it means going to your profs and saying 'I'm interested in this, can I do this extra research, can I do independent study,' I mean whereas at harvard you might be spoon fed an education. Here you have to go and find where they're even hiding it. And I don't think that makes the university bad.

Cp; wc relationship to comp/

K; some of the gta's are very enthusiastic about the wc, and unfortunately, some say 'well what do you do in the wc, or this student went to the wc and their paper isn't perfect, so what are you doing for them.' It needs to be less tenuous than it is. And I think it needs to stop being formulated through the students. That's the problem I see with the wc relationship here. Just only through the studetns and not through... I would argue that the wc tutors need to meet with the gas and go the the seminar (and profs too) so that they hear what the tutors themselves say and this is what we do.

Cp; remembering how we used to do stuff. Wc reps would bring consultants to first gen. Meeting, and gats signed up to have tutors come to the classes to talk to students.

K; I wanted the competition in the class (wac) to be high...they need the top people. One bad tutor will go through the student to the instructor and that's really bad. It's hard to take the class, and should be. It's elective credit. I think the course could be more rigorous. Quinn is so generous and loving and kind. And he needs to be so mean. (laughs). He needs to be more brutal. Discipline needs to be established first— authority needs to be established at the outset.

Cp; talks about discipline problems perhaps as symptomatic of wcs. How do you be a mentor and disciplinarian at the same time? I wonder why it's so hard in wcs. Nobody seems to talk about this in the national lit.

K; we had the st. martin's guide to tutors as a hndbk, it was so full of rhetoric it was ridiculous. It was these—and I'm just being honest--full of themselves rhetoricians that were so removed form the actual experience of tutoring that the idealism was unrealistic. And all of us commented on that when we were reading the book. Quinn would say 'what do you think about this particular essay,' and we said 'give us one circumstance when this would come up. it won't. (LAUGHS). Now this is the purpose of a writing center it's as a workshop, and you know,

Cp; evangelical speil. The wc is where the students can really talk to each other.

K; if anything, students come to the wc to buy into the system (laughs).

Cp; what should the tutor's role be, then/ should the tutor engage the student in critiques of the institution.

K; we should all be beat poets. Yeah. That's what we should be. They aren't thinking beyond the grade on the next paper. What they might go home with and over a beer, or hanging out and complaining about the university with their friends, they might address the greater issues. But in the wc, they wanna know why that comma doesn't belong there.

Cp; tutor's job not to take on that political mantle of I'm gonna help this student to broaden her horizons.

K; in addition being limited by the fact that we can't say anything about the professor's work. I mean there have been times when I have wanted to say 'the demands that this teacher is placing on you is ridiculous. And here's how I think you can get around or work with them or go directly back to your professor and ask for what you need.' I can't say that.

Cp; you can't say that/

K; you can say it to a certain degree. You can say 'go back to your prof. And have them explain this to you so you can trans. It to me and I can trans. It for you.

Cp; article about trimbur's contradiction in terms.

K; yeah it's a brilliant article. And I've often thought 'oh I can't wait to be a teacher because I'll finally have the authority to say, this is why you do this.' instead of saying, 'hypothetically.' B/c we have the responsibility w/out the authority. And that needs to be communicated to the instructors. They need to know exactly what's going on in the wc.

Cp; uawc feel that resp. w/out the auth.

K; we are like watered down ta's.

Cp; asks about k's work as a literacy volunteer.

K; I'm still doing it technically. I still get their newsletter I probably won't get another student until summer. I worked primarily in esl, as I find myself doing again. You go through a training, 9-4 every sat. for a month. You learn how to tutor someone who has never spoken an english word in their life. And it's primarily for basic readers both native speakers who can't read too. You get certified, submit your name with your preference, and they assign you one student and it's unpaid. You work one on one, and you completely structure your course work, administer your own tests, and work with them in whatever way you can. I worked a student from mexico and she tutored me in spanish and I tutored her in english. It made her a lot more comfortable. It was wonderful. It had an unfortunate end. You had to learn a lot about cultural differences. And that taught me a lot about teaching esl. The impression I got was that her husband was feeling threatened by the fact that she was getting more proficient in the language than he; therefore that made her the dominant figure in an American household and he couldn't handle it. I understand that it's a cultural difference. It taught me a lot about over stepping boundaries. I wouldn't let it be know that I was quite as relaxed. I listen a lot more to what they say about their culture and how it influences their writing. I have a french girl who comes to see me twice a week. (kaplan's doodles). That's rare. It just happens to be that we are doing what's in all those books. We are talking about the u. she's brilliant, she still has the standard esl problems.

(k is working closely with one prof. Has all syll, talks to students, they have her email. She loves it). If my relationship with julia angelica and all her students could be the way the whole wc operated, it would be fab. B/c I'm so sanctioned by julia for her students, and she believes in the wc, then I have that professionalism. If other profs could just say, I can't deal with the mechanical things, go see someone who is.

Cp; uawc grammar issue. More likely to be directive with esl. Repertoire of strategies. Consultants feel uncomfortable often.

K; in my opinion, a wc should have esl specific tutors, and those tutors should only become tutors if their requirement is learning another language. I know so many more terms just from taking those classes.

Cp; misson structure location q

K; I could go on for days.

Cp; specialized esl tutors, the course more rigorous, what about the mission.

K; I'm not sure what the mission is. I'm not sure what the official statement is. The unstated mission right now seems to be to correct the unsolved problems students developed in high school. To pick up where he left off. Unfortunately. If the high schools were doing a better job, the wc would be more concerned with the joint inquiry work. And students would come in and say 'I wanna just brainstorm about the abstractions against the concrete images in this work of literature.' (laughs). I mean that's an ideal tutorial. Instead it's, 'what's a thesis?' 'who's my audience?' I feel like all I've said here is all negative.

Cp; you and another student from the ua are the only two who venture to go beyond prof. As nice appearance and names on the door. Which tells me that in the lit. when they talk about this radical critique, this rad. Possibility, avail. Just in the wc as a special site, that not only do very few students engage in that in a wc, but not a whole lot of consultants do either. But there seems to be a lot more of 'us' in a wc than there are outside. I always thought about the wc as the non-profit org. at the un. It's sort of the handmaiden of the u and comp.

K; it needs to be treated more even as the handmaiden than as a sort of side mention.

The problem is, ok, we have an office, we have paperwork, we have secretaries, we have all the guise—the whole appearance of prof. Worked out. Are you providing quality tutoring, are you providing tutors who can manipulate and maneuver through any situation, and not come unglued. Are you providing a service where the tutors know a whole lot more than the tutee, but are willing to listen to what the tutee has to say. Are you providing a service where the tutors are competent in a professional way that is not condescending that is not patronizing or bored. That's what prof. Really is. But you can get so overshadowed by the bells and whistles that you can get people who walk the walk but can't talk the talk.

Cp; I think because we offer a service we aren't considered as engaged in an intellectual enterprise.

K; what's implicit in all this is that, in legitimating the wc, you have the need for....

Writing is at the center of every discipline. If I had my way, I would have a writing center in every single department.

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