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Center Will Hold

Michael Pemberton

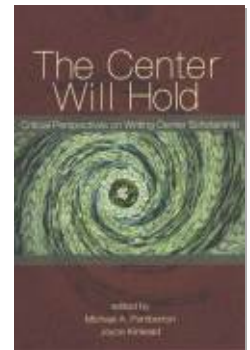
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NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION (Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead)

1. This essay draws on a previously published article in *The Writing Center Journal*, "The National Writing Centers Association as Mooring: A Personal History of the First Decade," 16.2 (spring 1996):131–141.
2. In fact, Harris has sometimes described herself as "the writing center *yenta*."

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1 (Michael A. Pemberton)

1. The next issue (May 1977, 1.2:1) included an announcement that "a list of established writing labs" would be compiled by Helen Naugle, but this data was maintained and distributed separately from the list of *WLN* subscribers that appeared in subsequent issues. Naugle reported in October 1977 (2.2) that she had compiled a list of 283 lab addresses.
2. Of necessity, the *Newsletter* had to defer this function to a separate *Writing Lab Directory*, first compiled from the results of a survey printed in the February 1984 (8.6) issue. An announcement for the *Directory*'s publication appeared in the September 1984 (9.1) issue, and by April 1985 it was already in its third printing.
3. In Gary Olson's report on the first Southeastern WCA conference (June 1981, 5.10), he also makes a public call for the creation of a national writing center association and says he has contacted representatives of the East Central WCA to pursue this goal (6).
4. Meaning, the last seven years covered by the *Index*, volume 18.1 (September 1993) through volume 24.9 (May 2000). This statistic may be slightly misleading, since the *Newsletter* has had more pages (16) since May 1988 (12.9) than it did previously, but the articles published in recent times have been lengthier, overall, than earlier ones, so I suspect matters balance out.
5. The May 1988 (12.9) and June 1988 (12.10) issues were the first to reach 16 pages in length, though these issues were stapled in the corner like

the ones that preceded them. The move to a 16-page booklet format (which has been maintained to the present time) was prompted, in part, by the need to fill a standard printing “signature.”

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3 (Neal Lerner)

1. McCracken (1979) tells us that it is the tutor who is making that initial “diagnosis” of student error, for one of the benefits of her system is that “lab staff members who are trained in careful diagnosis of writing problems become superior tutors” (2).
2. While published studies are few, the number conducted is likely quite large. When I gave a talk on this subject at the 2000 International Writing Centers Association conference in Baltimore and asked my audience how many had conducted such studies, nearly all the hands in the room went up. The fact that so few of these studies see the light of publication is perhaps an indication of our uneasiness with statistical methodologies.
3. FYC average represents a student’s mean grade from the two-semester composition sequence. Students’ grades were fairly consistent from one semester to the next, and the difference between these two grades was not statistically significant for the four years I calculated.
4. For two additional published statistical studies, each with its own set of flaws, see Roberts (1988); Waldo (1987). For a more thorough critique of my own study, see Lerner (2001).
5. Number of faculty surveys returned was 28 or roughly 28% of the total full-time faculty during the 2000–01 academic year.
6. The claim of “writing center as safe house” is a long-standing one as demonstrated by the following comment from a 1951 CCCC workshop on “Organization and Use of a Writing Laboratory”: “The writing laboratory should be what the classroom often is not—natural, realistic, and friendly” (18).
7. For an example of one attempt to describe the writing center environment, see Connolly, DeJarlais, Gillam, and Micciche (1998).
8. I am grateful for the help of my colleagues Lila Foye and Xiangqian Chang in performing these statistical analyses.
9. My test of statistical significance indicates that there was a five percent or less probability that the differences between these mean scores were due to chance alone. That is the usual accepted level of “error” in studies such as these (Johanek 2000, 107).

10. To account for students who made a single writing center visit per course requirement, I also ran the analysis for two groups: 1) students who had visited the writing center two or more times and 2) those who had visited once or not at all. The former group's expository writing grades and first-year GPA were significantly higher than the latter. It is also interesting to note that when dividing the two groups up this way, the one-or-no-visits group had a mean SAT Verbal that was significantly larger than the two-or-more-visits group!
11. Regression equation adjusted $R^2 = .29$; P value for each variable: SAT Verbal = .016, SAT Math = 1.15×10^{-10} , High School GPA = 1.42×10^{-12} , Writing Center Visits = 1.12×10^{-8} .
12. For the 2000-01 academic year CIRP results, see Sax, Astin, Korn, and Mahoney (2000).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4 (Harvey Kail)

1. An earlier version of this reading was published in "Narratives of Knowledge: Story and Pedagogy in Four Composition Texts," *Rhetoric Review* 6(2):179-189 (1988).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6 (Michele Eodice)

I am grateful to the editors of this collection, and to Muriel Harris who inspired this volume, for providing the reason to finally write about what I have been doing at my institution and what I believe about collaboration and writing center work. In addition, thanks to my trusted readers, Kami Day, Emily Donnelly, Anne Ellen Geller, and Jon Olson. And just talking with my friends Beth Boquet, Kirk Branch, and Michael Spooner helped me greatly.

1. I take this part of my title from the Muriel Harris (1992a) article title and notion that *Collaboration is not Collaboration is not Collaboration*.
2. From the transcript of a workshop on collaboration and collaborative academic writers, CCCC Minneapolis, 2000.
3. A definition of "alchemy" from Merriam-Webster online, <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>.
4. Ibid.
5. See *(First Person)²: A Study of Co-Authoring in the Academy* by Kami Day and Michele Eodice (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001) for a book-length example of the effort.

6. From a very good exploration by Laura Micciche of disappointment, work, and emotion, see “More than a Feeling: Disappointment and WPA Work,” *College English*, 64(4):432–458 (2002).
7. To promote a move beyond the trope of marginality, I looked at Lil Brannon and Stephen North’s essay, “The Uses of Margins,” *Writing Center Journal* 20(2):7–12 (2000), where they describe a “rhetoric of marginality,” but also ask directors to “find ways to build alliances within the university.” Thanks go to Beth Boquet for pointing me toward a very good essay by Ian Frazier that takes up the value of margins (“A Lovely Sort of Lower Purpose,” *Outside Magazine*, May 1998). See also Wendell Berry on “margins of divergent possibility” in his discussions of agricultural margins for farmers (*The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 1977, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977).
8. Written in my rushed handwriting on a yellow post-it note over my desk is something Sharon Crowley wrote on a WPA listserv message. It is her definition of *kairos*, and describes a quality I see as essential to and essentially found in writing center work: “prepare, wait, and exploit the moment.” When I copied this down years ago I did not take note of the date of her post.
9. I learned the idea of “leaning in” from taking an Aikido class. This martial art asks us to literally “lean in” to the opponent in order to best utilize the energy of both parties, without getting off balance—off center. From: <http://www.aikidoonline.com>:

The essence of all Aikido technique is the use of total body movements to create spherical motion around a stable, energized center. Students train themselves to capture the opponent’s action and redirect it with techniques of martial efficiency and power. At the same time, they become aware of the tendency to overreact to opposition, and learn to remain centered under all conditions.

10. I take this term from a book by Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon called *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (2001).

Doing good work feels good. Few things in life are as enjoyable as when we concentrate on a difficult task . . . ; these highly enjoyable moments occur more often on the job than in leisure time. (5)

11. “We Gotta Get Out Of This Place” by Eric Burdon and the Animals (1965) (Lyrics for Barry Weil and Cynthia Martin):

We gotta get out of this place
If it’s the last thing we ever do.

We gotta get out of this place

'Cause girl, there's a better life for me and you.

12. You might have missed my IWCA 2002 presentation about *memes* in writing center work. ("Of Memes and Themes." 6th. Conference of the International Writing Centers Association, Savannah, GA. April 2002.) This is, so far, an unpublished presentation.
13. I found these thoughts in a review of the book, *The Boundaryless Organization: Breaking the Chains of Organizational Structure* (Ashkenas et al. 1995). One tenet of boundarylessness: "Solutions to problems should encompass everyone, whether inside or outside of the organization." Included in a description of what the engineering school at the University of Georgia has implemented:

This unconventional approach to organizing a major discipline is unique and may be the first of its kind at a research university in the United States. It employs principles of entrepreneurship, boundarylessness, networking and life-long learning to create a learning organization that is responsive to unpredictability and adoptive of opportunity. (*Electronic News* 1996 [www.ebase10.com/glossary.htm#boundary])
14. www.socwel.ku.edu/strengths/index.html. See also: Donald Clifton and Chip Anderson's *Strengths Quest* (2001) for more on working with students from a strengths perspective.
15. Cindy Pierard (at the time, head of instruction for Watson Library at Kansas University) and I wrote "Surfing for Scholarship: Promoting More Effective Student Research," *National Teaching and Learning Forum* 11(3) [www.ctl.mnscu.edu/ntlf/surfing.htm].
16. A post written by Neal Lerner on WCenter listserv 1 Nov 2002 takes up this idea as well:

I'm haunted by Steve North's words from "Idea of a Writing Center" when he proposes that we make "writing centers the centers of consciousness about writing on campuses, a kind of physical locus for the ideas and ideals of college or university or high school commitment to writing." I'd even substitute "teaching and learning" for "writing" in that sentence. The question is how could we achieve that ideal, and one answer is, I believe, through a sustained program of research in which the writing center is the "laboratory" of sorts. And I also think that a clear and consistent methodology would emerge from such a research program, one particular to writing center contexts and one that would be important to any person in the field. We'd learn lots of interesting things about our work, and we'd be trading in the currency that's valued in higher ed. It's not "acceptance" I'm necessarily

looking for here; its resources, capital, and the power to improve the teaching and learning that goes on in our institutions.

17. You won't find me using war metaphors to describe our "struggle" in writing center work, so admittedly the term "smart mob" seems a bit strong to me. But used by Howard Rheingold, the author of *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (2003), it evokes the weight, the press, needed to make my point. Jennifer Lee attributes the exponential growth of antiwar protests across the world to the development and use of "smart mob" organizational strategies:

Military theorists are fond of saying that future warfare will revolve around social and communication networks. Antiwar groups have found that this is true for their work as well. (Week in Review, *New York Times*, 23 February 2003, 3)

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9 (Leslie Hadfield et al.)

1. Wendy Bishop called our attention to this phenomenon in her 2000 call for proposals for CCCC.
2. Physical layouts of writing centers are included in Kinkead and Harris' *Writing Centers in Context* (1993), but they offer designs without much reflection on pedagogical implications.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10 (James A. Inman and Donna N. Sewell)

1. We should define the technologies mentioned.

An *electronic list* (e-list) is a discussion forum wherein participants send messages to a single email address and then those messages are distributed to all subscribers. E-lists are sometimes referenced as listservs, though that term is technology-specific. Listserv and majordomo are two of the most popular technologies that enable e-lists.

A *MOO* is a text-based virtual reality world, in which users can chat with others in real time and design their own objects and places. MOO itself is an acronym for MUD Object-Oriented, and MUD is an acronym for Multi-User Domain, Multi-User Dimension, or Multi-User Dungeon. The "Dungeon" reference hints to the beginning of MOO as a technology; it was created in the late 1970s in Britain by players of fantasy role-playing games like *Dungeons and Dragons*, who wanted to design fantasy

worlds online and to play with others from around the world. MOOs are not all alike. Two prominent technological foundations for MOOs currently are enCore, a Web-based system designed by Cynthia Haynes and Jan Rune Holmevik, and Jay's House Core, a system that requires a telnet or client connection and is designed by Jay Carlson. Popular educational MOOs include Connections (<http://web.nwe.ufl.edu/~tari/connections>), led by Tari Fanderclai, and LinguaMOO (<http://lingua.utdallas.edu>), led by Haynes and Holmevik.

2. For more information about WCenter, visit the e-list's official home page at <http://english.ttu.edu/wcenter>.
3. For more information about PeerCentered, visit the forum's official home page at <http://www.slcc.edu/wc/peercentered>.
4. For more discussion of WCenter as information resource and as community, see Donna N. Sewell, "What's in a Name? Defining Electronic Community" (forthcoming).
5. Nancy K. Baym (2001) notes that low responses rates are typical in electronic mail. Because of this low response rate, we do not offer these responses as representing the views of most WCenter subscribers.
6. Of course, we do not know to what extent the audience will speak up in an electronic list, given the percentages of list subscribers who lurk without ever posting.