

July 13, 1983

TO: John Ruszkiewicz  
FROM: David A. McMurrey, Director of the Writing Lab  
SUBJ: Student Evaluation of the Lab, First Summer Session 1983

Here are the results of the students' evaluation of the Writing Lab, which we ran at the end of the first summer session (1983). I had expected a good deal more negative comment, considering how tough the session seemed to be on the students, so these totals are quite surprising. Attached is a collection of choice written comments. Of the total 325 students who responded (representing about 16 of the 37 sections of freshman composition in the first semester) to this evaluation, we got the following results:

1) Use of the Writing Lab

135 did not use the Lab at all;  
113 visited the Lab one to two times;  
50 three to four times;  
11 five to six times;  
15 more than six times.

2) Kinds of Study in the Lab (students often circled more than one item in this area)

100 worked on sentence-level grammar;  
27 on paragraph-level skills;  
24 on essay-level skills;  
6 on spelling;  
6 on vocabulary;  
115 on writing assignments and rough drafts with staff members.

3) Effectiveness of the Lab

99 believed the Lab helped them get a better grade and/or improve their writing;  
73 could not tell whether the Lab had helped them in either way;  
18 believed that the Lab did not help them get a better grade and/or improve their writing.

4) Teachers' Requirements on Lab Attendance

62 were required to attend the Lab;  
151 were strongly urged to attend;  
70 said that their teachers briefly mentioned the Lab to them;  
6 said that their teachers made no mention of the Lab.

5) Willingness to Recommend the Lab

203 would recommend the Lab to other students;  
14 would not recommend the Lab to other students;

Ruszkiewicz--2

I should add that we were quite late in getting the evaluation forms back from Central Duplicating and could not get them to all the teachers. Use of the Lab was heavy in the first session, however: on peak days, we had just under one hundred student visits per day during the seven hours we were open each day.

On the attached summary of the comments from the student evaluations, you'll notice that 20 students complained about the crowdedness of the Lab, 9 complained of the noise, 32 called for more Lab staff, 27 called for night hours, and 25 urged that the Lab be enlarged. A couple of students comment that they appreciated the proofreading help: this they most emphatically did not get! I was happy to notice that a number of the students complained that Lab staff members would not proofread their papers or point out or correct their errors in their papers; this reflects what we really do with rough drafts.

## SELECTED COMMENTS

### I. Positive Comments

The things I like most about the Writing Lab include

✓ the attention that they give you and the way they determine which area you have trouble with and focus in on that area.

I liked how they narrowed it to a special area that I needed help in.

The people there know what they are doing--it's very professional & they are willing to help you over time.

✓ people didn't look at you as if they thought you were stupid; they simply help you on anything you need.

the people in there are people who want to teach you and help you, and are not there to fool around.

✓ the way that the instructors don't "write" the paper for you, but give you help on strengthening your paper.

free help right at my fingertips, strong criticism of my papers which helped me to improve.

their objectiveness in critiquing papers. They offer an outside, educated opinion that you might not see.

The people that work there really want to help you. They want you to learn.

that they are willing to help and that they really seem to care.

you could go in on your own time and work at your own pace.

✓ diagnostic test, I found out my weak points in grammar.

## II. Negative Comments

The thing(s) I do not like about the Writing Lab include

when my helper rushed through my material w/me & I didn't feel like I was learning a lot.

✓ They don't help you with too much. They seem to think if they help you too much, it's cheating.

✓ difference of opinions, one man said my paper was good and another lady said I should do it over.

The staff was rude/Like the (sic) knew it all!

some workers there do not really assist you. They are very vague.

they didn't go into enough detail, meaning they stated the mistake but didn't go into a fuller explanation of them.

under staffed, too small. Had to wait several hours sometimes to get help.

NOT enough room to do good work (20 students made this comment).

✓ sometimes too noisy (9 made this comment).

✓ the lab needs a larger room to accommodate students (25 students made this comment).

the distractions! There are too many people all side by side, and all are making noise.

Sometimes it is confusing because each instructor has a different style-- may contradict each other.

✓ They do not proofread papers.

Did not improve my grades at all. I spent 2 hours working on a rough draft. Yet my grade remained the same.

### III. Suggestions for Improvement

The Writing Lab could be improved if

✓ they would help you instead of pointing out your mistakes. One needs to be shown how to correct them and not told, "I can't write the paper for you." That a bunch of bullshit!

✓ stayed open later and pointed out where the mistakes were.

✓ they would get together with the teachers. The Writing Lab would like my paper and the teacher wouldn't.

they would be more specific in reference to your writing and in correcting sentence and grammar help sheets.

everyone in there knew what he/she was doing.

it had longer hours (maybe even early in the evening): 27 students made this comment.

nothing--I feel it is an excellent service with both talented and educated people running it.

there were more people and a wider variety of exercises on each particular subject in grammar.