

— From the Center —

The Newsletter of the William L. Adams Writing Center

Volume 3 Issue 1

September 1999

On-line Writing Lab: The OWL Flies High

The fall semester of 1999 marks the second full semester in which the Writing Center has operated an OWL: an on-line writing lab. The OWL saw tremendous growth in usage during the spring of 1999, and the Writing Center staff expects the OWL to become increasingly popular as more students discover the resource this fall.

The OWL allows students to electronically submit up to five pages of writing to a consultant at the Writing Center. Students can access the OWL by going to the Writing Center web page at <http://gamma.is.tcu.edu/wrt>, where they will find specific instructions for using the OWL under the link titled "On-line Writing Help."

Upon accessing the OWL by selecting "On-line Writing Help" from the web page, students view a form that asks them for their name, e-mail address, and classification. Next students are asked to suggest a focus for the on-line tutorial (organization, documentation, grammar, usage, etc.) so the consultant can better assist the writer with specific concerns. Students can then cut and paste up to five pages of text onto the OWL.

Writing Center staff members examine the submissions each business day and attach comments and suggestions to the file before sending the submission back to the author via e-mail.

Please inform your students of the Writing Center's on-line tutorial service and encourage them to make use of this resource. However, students should be aware that writing consultants will not respond instantly to submissions; responses will follow as soon as possible from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the first business day after the submission has been posted.

Center Announces Workshops

The Writing Center has scheduled dates for three workshops in the coming year. The first workshop—a program focusing on issues of grammar and style—will take place on Wednesday, September 15. At this meeting, Ms. Margaret-Rose Marek, writing consultant and technologies coordinator for the Writing Center, will offer suggestions designed to help students, faculty, and staff avoid problems with grammar and usage and write concise, well-crafted sentences, paragraphs, and essays.

The second workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, November 10. At this meeting, Dave Kuhne, Associate Director of the Writing Center, will discuss the American Psychological Association (APA) style of documentation. Kuhne has designed handouts that provide examples of correct APA documentation and that assist students in finding information quickly in the *APA Publication Manual*. Copies of this quick guide to APA style are available upon request.

Dr. Jeanette Harris, Director of the Writing Center, will conduct a third workshop on Wednesday, February 2, 2000. Dr. Harris's session will take up the issue of résumé writing. Harris has designed a number of résumé templates that serve as examples for students to follow when they compose their own résumés.

Additional workshops that have yet to be scheduled include sessions on collaborative writing and peer response, grant writing, MLA documentation, and writing and publishing dissertations.

Please encourage your students and colleagues to attend these workshops, all of which will be held in the Writing Center, Room 100 of the Rickle building, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

What the Writing Center Can Do

- Provide one-on-one writing instruction
- Discuss assignments with

students, helping them to clarify and organize ideas

- Read a draft of what a student has written and offer suggestions for revisions
- Help students expand and develop a paper
- Assist students with matters of style and correctness
- Explain specific rules of usage
- Answer questions about research and documentation of sources
- Help students increase confidence in themselves as writers



What the Center Cannot Do

- Edit or proofread what a student has written
- Guarantee a particular grade or even suggest what grade a student is likely to receive on an assignment
- Read multiple assignments or extremely long assignments in a single conference
- Assist students with take-home exams or final portfolios



Faculty Members Can Help the Center

Faculty members can assist the Writing Center staff by

- Encouraging (but not requiring) students to use the Writing Center
- Sending copies of writing assignments to the center
- Understanding that our goal is not to edit students' papers but to improve their writing skills
- Referring outstanding student writers to the center for possible employment as peer tutors

Scheduling Class Visitations

Staff members are always happy to address classes and inform students about the services of the Writing Center. The presentations are about ten minutes in length.

