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Greetings

WORD WORKS is a newsletter devoted to two main goals: we want to encourage the use of writing in all disciplines and to acquaint BSU faculty with the services of the Writing Center and the BSU Writing Program.

We hope that WORD WORKS will become a forum in which faculty from departments across campus can share ideas and questions about writing.

In recent summers 36 Boise State faculty members have taken part in summer institutes on writing for learning. Since then they have spread the word to colleagues that writing is a powerful and enjoyable learning tool. We hope this newsletter will help carry on the work already begun. We hope, too, that you will take advantage of the Writing Center as a resource for your teaching.

"Designer" Workshops Offered

If you would like to have someone from the Writing Center visit your classes to give a workshop on writing, call 385-1298. We will meet with you to determine what you would like your students to learn about writing. We will then design a workshop to fit their needs.

Writing Center offers tutoring for all

Everyone at BSU -- undergraduates, graduates, faculty, staff -- is invited to come to the Writing Center for help with their writing.

Anyone coming to the center for help should bring a work in progress, either rough notes or a draft. Writer and tutor then sit down together to discuss how the writer has gone about the task and what should be done next. The tutor is interested not so much in changing the piece of writing as in changing the writer. The writer is given new strategies for finding a focus, gathering information, developing a structure, revising, editing, and proofreading.

The tutors will not actually give students ideas for topics or do any writing or proofreading for them. The students must do their own work.

The Writing Center is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 to 5 on Friday. Appointments preferred, but drop-ins welcome. LA-220, Phone 385-1298.

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"If I write what you know, I bore you; if I write what I know, I bore myself; therefore I write what I don't know."

-- Robert Duncan

Minimal competency exam

The E-101/E-102 competency exam will be given on Wednesday and Thursday, February 12 and 13. Students who took the English composition sequence at another school, or who took it here before 1981, must pass the exam before they graduate. Anyone needing information about the exam should call the Writing Center at 385-1298.

Tutoring on Microwriter

ASCALC (the Arts and Sciences Computer-Assisted Learning Center) has placed one of its Apple II's in the Writing Center for the year. Anyone (student or

faculty) wishing to learn how to use the MICROWRITER word processing program is welcome to come in and try it out. The Writing Center staff will be happy to offer individual tutoring.

MICROWRITER is a convenient program, a good one to learn on and inexpensive.

The Writing Center also has a Sensible Speller spelling-checker program that works well with Microwriter and with most other word processors used on Apple II's.

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"I always have new things that will be taught me by my own words appearing on the page. As long as I write I will continue to learn.

"But I will not know how to write. The great crafts are never learned. I take great comfort in that. I continue to learn to write each morning at my writing desk."

-- Donald M. Murray

"Writing for Learning" -- What Is It?

"Writing for learning" and "writing across the curriculum" have become buzz words in academic circles, and they're often misunderstood. They do not mean that instructors should assign more term papers and formal reports. They mean, rather, that writing is a powerful tool for thinking and remembering.

There are many ways in which writing can be used in a class to aid learning. Students may be asked to keep journals in which they maintain a running dialogue with the subject matter, working out difficult ideas for themselves. They may be asked to do five-minute freewritings at the beginning or end of class, or even in the middle. These short writings help clarify questions and help the students "own" the ideas they are trying to learn. The possibilities are endless.

The act of writing translates potential, shapeless ideas into words and sentences -- gives them a structure, nails them down. Once they're on paper they can be examined, modified, rejected, or related to other ideas. Writing is a unique way of exploring what we know and what we think, and of finding new connections.

In future issues we will explore writing for learning in greater detail. In the meantime, if you have ideas or questions about the use of writing in your classes, please call or send them to us so that they can be shared with the rest of the faculty.

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WORD WORKS is published monthly during the school year by the BSU English Department and the Writing Center.
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