

Revisioner

The Newsletter of Appalachian State's University Writing Center

Spring 2010

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What's new in the Writing Center?

Appalachian State University's University Writing Center is always a place for change and discussion on campus, but some of the recent changes have been especially interesting. For the first time, our writing center is piloting a class-based consulting program in coordination with Writing Across the Curriculum. Writing Center Director, Dr. Beth Carroll, is working with writing center staff and classroom instructors in Chemistry, History, and Theater and Dance departments. Through in-class participation and writing center consultations, these individuals provide students with an additional resource for receiving writing instruction in their courses. We anticipate this program to be a great success.



We are also testing a new database this semester, TutorTrac, which allows us to be completely digital with our appointment scheduling – no more writing appointments in a book! The Technology project group is working on an orientation video for future consultants, and the Publicity group has created a pair of brain-themed bulletin boards to advertise how the writing center can help students avoid “brain freeze” this winter. The Research and Handouts group is developing a survey to gauge client satisfaction with our “textual healing.” Eight of our staff had proposals accepted at the Southeastern Writing Centers Association mini-conference. Congratulations!

Group Caf Staff – A Collaborative Miracle

Catherine Talley, Editor and Writing Consultant

I stare at the smart board mounted on the opposite wall of my classroom, humming its familiar hum as my students scramble to assemble the digital portion of their group presentation. They are more nervous than they need to be, constantly glancing in my direction, trying to determine if they are taking too long to set up based on my eyebrow inflections and the way I grasp my pen. I give them no information. I let them play out their narrative. These four students have strengths that vary among them. One is jolly and outspoken. Another is pleasant and agreeable. One has a chiseled jaw and unmistakable confidence. Another has kind eyes and is hesitant but willing. The group members are neither superstars nor wall flowers. They are, in my interpretation at

this point, status quo, and they are about to complete their First Year Seminar course with a group presentation on Appalachian State University subcultures. When the group first approached me with their topic proposal, I was skeptical of their intellectual commitment. They proposed to research AppState cafeteria workers as a subculture, and they grinned and giggled as they expanded on their idea. While I thought the idea was quite interesting, I worried that they would not look at cafeteria workers in an objective light. Visions of Chris Farley dressed as a mole-ridden cafeteria lady bounced in and out of my head. I was compelled to give them a mini-lecture on ethics and ethnographic research,

Collaboration, cont.

to which they responded with half-nods and partial shoulder shrugs. I had faith, however, that the research itself would show this group the way, and that in the end, they would become the great defenders of the App Caf Staff. I was right.

All groups have to find their personality, and each group has its own. Like individuals, group personalities are not always pleasant and inviting. Some group personalities are antagonistic. Others are apathetic. Predicting how a group will evolve is impossible. One can only blindly throw the individuals in a pool and present them with a task. The rest is up to the group. I know this first hand. I've seen it play out in my classrooms many times. As I gaze upon my snickering Caf Staff group, I have no real prediction to make. I think: "50/50. This could be the best group ever. This could be the worst group ever." Given those odds, I begin to guide the group towards the idea of fun: "Presentations don't have to be boring. They don't have to use PowerPoint. They can entertain. They can showcase. There is something inherently funny about cafeteria workers – a feature that is culturally defined. Use that humor to your groups' advantage. Challenge your audience's assumptions about the mole-ridden bearer of square pizza and Salisbury Steak surprise."

The group looks at each other with bewilderment, except for one – the outspoken one. She looks at me, timidly at first, and bursts out with an idea. "Can we shoot a rap video?" Instantly my mind is launched pool-side with women bouncing around in barely-there bikinis, and men draped in gold



"All groups have to find their personality, and each group has its own."

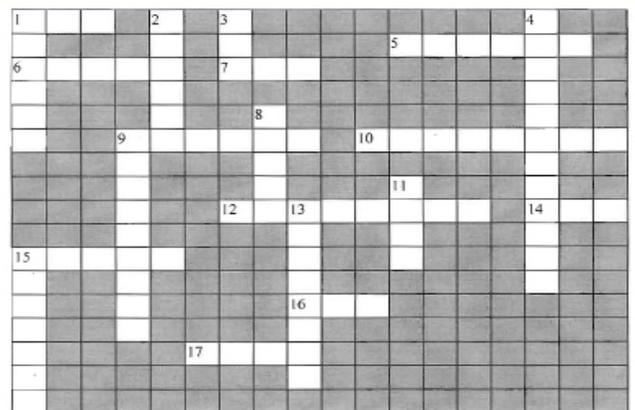
Mistakes To Avoid

- Putting the title of a paper in Ariel 38 pt. font
- Using a 10 line URL hyperlink as a parenthetical citation
- Underlining, "quoting" or putting in boldface your own title
- Citing Wikipedia, Sparknotes, FreeEsays.com, or "The Internet."

holding jeweled goblets. Perhaps my expression gives me away. But I recover. "Yeah! That's a great idea! The Caf Staff Rap! Why the hell not?" Instantly the group dynamic changes and all the members realize that they don't have to do a PowerPoint. They don't have to have a podium and notes. They can shoot a rap video if they want! And without another word of prompting, my group begins to talk to each other instead of me. That's when I knew that this group would be a success.

So I sit, poised to judge the Caf Staff group with my flawed rubric and fading ink pen. They flutter about in front of the class, checking twice and then three times on their sequencing. The tall, kind one snaps off the lights and the group begins its presentation. They start by introducing their subculture while distributing hair nets to all their classmates (and me). They instruct us to wear the hairnets during the presentation. We all blush and mumble; then we all obey. As the class looks at each other in bewilderment, the Caf Staff group begins their music video, posted on YouTube. I watch as the video shows four group members, dressed in their own hair nets and cafeteria aprons, rap about the marginalization and unfair stereotyping of cafeteria workers. The class laughs as they settle into their hair nets. I smile ear-to-ear, amazed at the level of creativity, the level of intellectual interpretation, and the impeccable adherence to ethics displayed before me. And then I laugh my ass off.

The UWC Crossword



ACROSS

1. Writing utensil for the over-confident
5. The graduate student's source of panic
6. A story that is too long
7. Uses publication date in the parenthetical citation
9. The end of the sentence
10. Bottom of the page reference
12. The internet's most consistent distraction
14. Home sweet home
15. A useful joint or a useful theorist
16. Room 008 of the Belk Library and Information Commons
17. The international language

DOWN

1. Writing utensil for the indecisive
2. Most common error in the English language
3. Does not use a comma in the parenthetical citation
4. All things referenced
8. Most common punctuation in the English language
9. Collection of student writing
11. Microsoft _____
13. The typewriter's successor
15. End of essay reference

The Evolution of Virtual Collaboration: Benefits and Challenges

Alanah Mitchell, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems

Collaboration has traditionally taken place in a face-to-face context with two or more people working together on a joint task. Increasingly, collaboration has started taking place online, in a virtual setting through the use of collaboration technologies. This move to virtual collaboration is true for both organizations as well as educational institutions. Organizations rely on virtual collaboration (also referred to as virtual teams) in order to be competitive in the global market, to reach experts regardless of their location, and to save time and money. The process of global offshore development is a great example of this concept. During this process, managers in the US work through the use of technology with system developers in India or other countries to begin, track, revise, and complete system development projects. Educational institutions use virtual collaboration in online classes where students work on group projects and never meet their group members face-to-face. It is technological advancement that have made this virtual collaboration possible.

Traditional collaboration has always been supported by technology. With early face-to-face collaboration, teams would use flip charts, whiteboards, and post-its to support their joint work. Collaboration technologies have evolved over time to include group decision support systems and other technologies which support brainstorming and electronic decision making. Today, group support systems, computer-mediated communication, electronic meeting systems, groupware, digital collaboration tools, and team spaces are all considered to be inclusive of the general concept of collaboration technology. Specific tools that are part of collaboration technologies include e-mail (the most commonly used), videoconferencing, groupware, and instant messengers. New three-dimensional virtual worlds, like SecondLife, have also emerged from the field of collaboration technology.

There are many benefits related to virtual collaboration. As already mentioned, this kind of collaboration allows for teams to be grouped with topic area experts regardless of their location. Teams can actually be made up of the “best” employees. Furthermore, time and money can be saved because these collaborators can meet anytime, anywhere, and do not need to spend time and money traveling; they simply need to be online. The success of virtual collaboration can be illustrated by the fact that Sharepoint, Microsoft’s popular collaboration application, reached over a billion dollars in sales last year, making it the company’s fastest selling software in history. Additionally, the popularity of other collabora-

tion technologies like Facebook and the new Google Wave show that the skill of being able to collaborate virtually is a necessary one.

Given these benefits, there are also challenges that need to be considered. Choice of technology is one of the most important decisions to make. It is critical to make sure that the collaboration technology being used supports the task at hand and is not disruptive to the collaborators. For example, suppose that a team has been assigned the task of writing a document jointly and they have chosen Google Documents as their collaboration technology. Once the team begins working together, the members realize that Google Documents does not have the capability to track their timeline progress, a necessary requirement. The technology choice would then have to be changed. Making changes like this is always difficult when working together online because much of the previous work has to be moved or even redone. Technology training is also a consideration. If a technology has been chosen that team members are unfamiliar with, training will have to take place before the team can successfully use the technology.

In conclusion, virtual collaboration offers a wealth of opportunities for students, teachers, researchers, and practitioners. There are challenges in collaborating in this way. However, technology advances, time, and experience will tell how successful we can be at overcoming the challenges in order to take real advantage of these unique benefits and opportunities.

Writing Center Encryption

Each letter is replaced with another letter to create a quote that applies to writing center work.

“XBR YSBRZI JLGJAF XBRHYJZU FB JEI RG

YBQJKSJHJ IDUUJHJEF UHBQ KSJHJ XBR YFVH

FJI. QJVEDEC DY EBF KSVF XBR YFVHF KDFS,

PRF KSVF XBR JEI RG KDFS” – GJFJH JZPBK.”

The Writing Consultant: A Paradoxical Identity

You might work in a writing center if you see dangling participles instead of sheep when you drift off to sleep.

You might work in a writing center if you answer all questions rhetorically, regardless of their wording.

You might work in a writing center if it takes you four drafts to pen a birthday card.

You might work in a writing center if you are an expert on cloud computing.

You might work in a writing center if you cannot read a book without a pen in hand.

You might work in a writing center if people apologize for using incorrect grammar or vocabulary in your presence.

You might work in a writing center if you double check spelling on Facebook because you do not want to be a hypocrite.

You might work in a writing center if you know the difference between shine and shone and lie and lay without thinking.

You might work in a writing center if you bother to capitalize and add punctuation to text messages.

You might work in a writing center if you become incapable of revising your own papers without reading them aloud.

You might work in a writing center if you deliberately use poor grammar as a form of rebellion.

You might work in a writing center if your email box becomes flooded with papers from friends looking for free editing services.

You might work in a writing center if someone is genuinely shocked that you used inappropriate grammar

You know you work at the writing center when you have an on hand example of how to use every punctuation mark.

Obituary for Plagiarism

Meg McSwain, Writing Center Consultant



W. C. Plagiarism, age 80, of Academia passed away on December 9, 2009. Plagiarism will meet her longtime partner in the Land of Knowledges in the Sky, A. Romantic Author. She was a consistent and dominant force within academic institutions. W. C. was of the highly influential Plagiarism family, whose roots are traced back to a conflict between Roman poet Martial and Fidentinus. Martial accused Fidentinus of passing Martial's words as his own poetry. Her families presence was requested because the term plagiarism comes from the Latin plagarius, meaning a person who owns slaves. Martial stated that Fidentinus had stolen the "servants of his imagination." W. C.'s life was a life spent dedicated to capitalism and writing. She is credited with upholding the academic law carrying her last name, meant to protect knowledge ownership and authorship. Her health started weakening with the spread of Collaboration, a disease that would prove terminal for Plagiarism. Plagiarism and Collaboration battled for many years within the academic realm, with the traditional conservatives of Plagiarism's followers hoping for a cure until the moment of her final breath. The combination of Collaboration and change were her ultimate defeaters, but her death is continuing to be investigated. The main suspects are all writing center consultants from numerous universities. Suspicion first emerged when it was discovered that the work in many writing centers threatened Plagiarism's life. It is believed that writing centers—in the help they offer and the ways they offer it—challenge the relationship between authorship and ownership. Plagiarism was the punisher of those whom disrespect both A. Romantic Author and the academic institution with the violation of intellectual theft. A new movement however, hoping to replace the loss of Plagiarism, is working to investigate not her death but the ideology that allowed her to live as long as she did. W. C. is survived by her offspring and followers who will continue to promote her philosophy and punish all those who transgress her academic law. May she rest in peace.

Re-Visioning of Academic Collaboration: Guiding Principles from the East & West

Dr. Stephen R. White, Associate Professor, Educational Studies and John Janowiak, Ph.D., Professor, Health Education

A major challenge for educators today is to construct visionary and novel ideas necessary to understand the complexity of evolving new personal and social realities. Educational philosopher James Moffett (1994) observed: Evolution seems to press forward with a will of its own that gives history a direction no government ever planned. We must now become conscious of this direction and try to interpret its import for the future society.... The more we take evolution into our own hands, the less destructive it needs to be. By basing education on the past we fight evolution and force it to force us, through extremity (p.15).

Our belief is that this problem can be partially addressed by looking to the East into the philosophy of Paramahansa Yogananda and to the West into the philosophy of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

A Vision from the East: Yogananda's Self-Realization

Yogananda (1997) defined self-realization as, "The knowing, in body, mind, and soul, that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing" (p. 434).

Yogananda introduced meditation techniques whereby the mind withdraws from sensory information and con-

nects to centers (charkas) in the central nervous system encouraging the development of heightened consciousness. Central to Yogananda's teachings are scientific techniques of concentration and meditation that lead to the direct personal experience of mind and consciousness. In the clarity of that inner stillness, one comes to experience a deepening interior awareness of thought and a sense of presence.

In ordinary consciousness humankind experiences three states: waking consciousness, sleeping consciousness, and dreaming consciousness. But, according to experience, the super consciousness of the soul is experienced in meditation. As a consequence of development one attains "a state wherein the fixed consciousness generated from contact with matter vanishes. Finite objects are seen as naught but imprisoned consciousness;

and the formerly rigid differentiations of matter are experienced as relativities of thought" (Yogananda, 2004, p. 224).

Max Planck, a forefather of quantum physics observed: "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness" (Planck, M., 1937).

American scientist Luther Burbank states that "the idea of right education is plain commonsense, free from all mysticism and non-practicality." Burbank endorsed seeking heightened consciousness for all educators seeking knowledge: "It is ideal for training and harmonizing man's physical, mental, and spiritual natures ... schools throughout the world, wherein education will not confine itself to intellectual development alone, but also training of the body, will, and feelings. Through a system of physical, mental, and spiritual unfoldment by simple and scientific methods of concentration and meditation, most of the complex problems of life may be solved" (Yogananda, 1997, p. 413).

According to Yogananda (1997), "true education is not pumped and crammed in from outward sources, but aids in bringing to the surface the



The Haiku of the Non-Consulting Hour

If I could haiku
I'd haiku on wings aloft
But I can't haiku

My creative muse
Is consistently muzzled
By this damn winter



So it's not so good
But it's all I got right now
Quit pressuring me!

Buzzing mournfully
The fly mocks me as I try
Cohesive writing

Re-Visioning, cont. from pg 5
infinite hoard of wisdom within” (p.303).

A Vision from the West: Evolutionary Philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin

Teilhard declared to have discovered the Law of Complexity and consciousness (Complexity-consciousness). The theory states that an increase in the complexity of matter without (physical or social) organization produces a higher degree of consciousness within.

For us this is the essence of collaboration, the complexity of consciousness and thought through collaboration. Through the Law of Complexity-consciousness process, evolution produced Homo sapiens who possess a physically large brain and neurologically complex cerebral system (the without), capable of reflective thought – consciousness (the within). Consciousness is the essential characteristic of the human phenomenon and is now the development of reflective consciousness, our current stage of evolution. Future human progress is dependent on greater social collaboration producing higher levels of collective consciousness.

Relevance of Yogananda and Teilhard's Thought as Core Principles for Academic Collaboration

Yogananda's philosophy is an attempt to rationally and systematically re-vision the art and science of collaboration as consciousness within Eastern perspectives of metaphysics synthesized with science. Teilhard's philosophy is an attempt to rationally and systematically explain conscious evolution within the Western cultural perspective of mysticism synthesized with science. Both men's vision of constructivist consciousness is remarkable in scope.

The suggestion here is that a synthesis of Yogananda's Eastern thought and Teilhard's Western thought provides these common core principles:

- The expansion of consciousness, on both the individual and collective level, has now empowered humankind to discover and acquire deeper knowledge.
- The next stage of social evolution demands cooperative action and solidarity on the part of humankind, at all levels.

Both individuals argue that in the past humankind has sought perfecting its environment through social institutions. But it is only by the involution of our individual consciousness, shared in collaboration as collective consciousness and mind, that genuine social transformation can be attained. Education is in the midst of this transformative process. The challenge for all educators today is to more fully participate in this transformation by fostering collective academic collaboration and integrative intellectual cooperation.

Accepting Yogananda and Teilhard's postulation, educating to a positive future inherently requires academic collaboration. Humankind must become aware of its own conscious transformation and social evolution. We in higher education are the agents and models of such a level of collaboration. In doing so, we can potentially overcome the barriers that fragment humankind today, specifically a stale evolutionary movement. We must educate toward the future with a new vision. We are responsible for rational political, social and economic growth through deeply reflecting on the process of collaboration in academia.

For us academic collaboration is the new frontier of higher learning. It is the cooperative sharing of minds and thoughts resulting in higher levels of knowledge. We do seek to be objective and pragmatic yet being subjectively aware of others, being rational yet emotive as we become conscious that there is not one best way to address problems while still espousing our own thoughts. Thus academic collaboration is an awareness of our need for others thoughts, insights and the act of integrative minds regardless of the problem or issue under assessment.

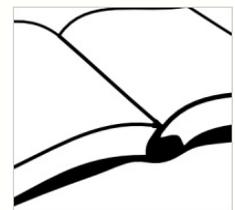
Bibliographic Information on page 8

Haiku of the Non-Consulting Hour: Part Deux

The consultation
takes a cathartic turn South
when my client snorts

The words will not come
Though the winter is leaving
My eyes still see white

Pencil--resharpened.
Oh the papers it will see,
And minds sharpen



Writers and readers
The material of texts
Like gods, we create

There is no way that
you can fit all these ideas
in two-fifty words

If my pencil speaks
I will throw it down quickly
Pencils should not speak

The Leaders, the Loners, and the Lazy: When Collaboration Goes South

Laura Tabor and Catherine Talley, Writing Center Consultants

I grew up hating group work, scowling at my teacher as she or he had us number off into groups of three or four. I think that I resented having to talk to other kids about class work (it is hard enough being a nerd without having to talk about school stuff with other kids) but I also disliked that environment because I never really knew what was supposed to be accomplished. How did group work improve our results?

I discovered, once I consigned myself to a group, that attitude was definitely altitude. If everyone was bossy, nothing got done; if everyone was isolated and refused to talk, nothing got done; if everyone was bored and unmotivated... well, you can guess. Nothing.

What it really took, was the perfect mix of interest, leadership, followership, and social openness. What a complex thing to achieve when putting together a presentation about honeybees for a fifth grade class!

The thing to look for in groups, tends to be the bad egg, the person who threatens the integrity of an otherwise positive group. Keep an eye out for this “kind” of people, but also keep an eye on yourself, to make sure you don’t become this person.

- Saboteur #1 - the Silent Submarine - this is the group member who is clearly mentally elsewhere. She sits with eyes fixed on painted concrete walls, breathes heavily during awkward pauses, and never offers a word to the group. She is despondent, isolated and poisonous to the group. She creates a void in the circle and has the power to suck everyone else into the silent vacuum.

- Saboteur #2 - the Legend in His Own Mind - Your instinct is to trust this guy. I mean, if someone is THAT vocal, surely he has some grand ideas that I am lacking. But what sounds ambitious and exciting in the first meeting can turn poisonous and bitter after the opening curtain. This is the one that always speaks but never says anything, the one that finishes your thoughts for you but doesn’t make your point. He might be the most dangerous of all saboteurs as his presence can create chasms between other members, setting the stage for mutiny.

- Saboteur #3 - the No “Me” in this “Team” - This person could be super-smart, but they don’t want to work with you so don’t even think about it. They make it clear, via sighs and scowls, that they wanted to do individual work, and that they are planning on punishing the group for the teacher’s mistake. This person needs to be set straight early on; don’t let them mumble answers and work on homework for other classes. They have to

be in the group, so they should resign themselves to that fact.

- Saboteur #4 - the No-Way, No-Alternative - This person has contributed nothing throughout the entire project except for criticism; he or she is completely brilliant at finding ways to shoot down all the other ideas. This saboteur can’t actually replace the “bad” ideas, and he or she is eventually left with a resentful group full of people who don’t want to think of ideas just to be immediately ridiculed.

Yes, these saboteurs can be daunting, but the results of truly good group work are rather astounding. If we can focus on preventing the many problems in collaboration, and learn the delicate balance that was simply too much for me in elementary school, then we stand a fair chance of producing dynamite projects with insights in them that no one could have achieved by themselves.

The UWC Word Search

D	I	N	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	N	I	Y
G	I	O	G	A	C	I	H	C	D	M	R	N
N	O	I	T	A	T	N	E	M	U	C	O	D
L	T	T	I	A	E	W	E	D	L	I	I	I
A	I	A	D	E	O	M	R	I	S	O	E	E
C	R	T	A	N	V	A	E	I	D	O	M	E
I	E	L	A	E	F	N	V	M	T	U	R	I
D	R	U	S	T	T	E	R	O	S	I	A	S
A	A	S	I	P	R	O	C	E	S	S	N	D
R	A	N	V	L	N	D	R	T	A	S	G	G
Y	G	O	G	A	D	E	P	C	N	D	N	G
I	N	C	E	D	E	T	A	E	T	N	E	W
R	I	O	S	L	A	T	T	I	I	I	N	R

pedagogy	consultation	writing
essay	resume	documentation
chicago	invention	revision
drafting	process	radical
client	reader	audience

Meet the Writing Center

Revision (failure)

Believe newcomer's logic saying
new growth should replace the settled.
Believe the land exists to be owned.
Dig from the garden the four foot blueberry
and transplant before jewel weed can swarm.
By mid-summer, morning glories, touch me nots,
dandelions choke the skinny new.
When the phlox crowds in, the stunted
blueberry waits to feel the sun.

Believe in discovering layered soil
in texture and moistness, in digging
to blend the aged with the surface.
Believe in facing the unmanageable slope,
the jungle impossible to control. Meditate
on heat and blinding light baking perfection.
Accept wind and rain having their sensuous way
stubbornly listening to no one.

-Dr. Mark Vogel, Professor of English, Appalachian State University

Writing Consultant Chilly Heinz shares his thoughts on collaboration and its benefits/challenges:

What is the role of the Writing Center in collaboration? Do we have a role?

Yes, we definitely have a role because any kind of dialogue about ideas informs the participants processing of ideas. The consultants in the Writing Center collaborate with the writer in the creation of knowledge and ideas in the writer's paper. It's not plagiarism or anything like that because we avoid telling the writer what to write; instead just offer a place to talk and share.

What are some characteristics of both good and bad collaboration, in your opinion?

In my Advanced Folklore class that I'm taking right now, I've had some of the best in-class collaborative sessions ever. People offered helpful reader response comments as opposed to really strict editorial responses. It's generally been assumed that group work will automatically produce helpful dialogue, but there is the element of language acquisition. Professors know how to talk about papers, but many students don't understand how to do it. Because of that, students could benefit from some modeling of the process.

Bad collaborative situations, in my experience, happen when participants can't control or curb social interactions. Sometimes there is too much talking or people telling stories. That's pretty common in group work scenarios. Also, people complaining about instructors or other things just ends up derailing productive conversations.

Come and Visit us!

The University Writing Center,
Appalachian State University
Room 008, Belk Library and Information
Commons

Open Monday thru Thursday from
9:00am til 9:00pm and Fridays from
9:00am til 1:00pm

Call us! Make an appointment!

Or simply walk-in!

Phone: (828)-262-3144

email us: writingctr@appstate.edu

follow us on twitter: @writingctr

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