

# Computer program helps students with the write stuff

By CHARLA PRICE  
Staff Writer

Writing may become easier for students with a new computer program designed by UNC computer specialists to organize and revise writing material.

Although the program, called "Writing Environment" or "WE," can't do the actual writing, it can help writers organize material into a coherent pattern.

UNC computer scientists say WE is one of the most advanced programs ever created to aid the writing

process. "There are lots of tools that help in the post-writing stage," said Stephen Weiss, UNC professor of computer science and WE project leader. "But there is very little that helps you get things down first — the prewriting work — so that's what we have focused on."

Through the use of clusters of computer squares, ideas are grouped together and later transformed into an outline. Changes in ideas, paragraphs or chapters can be made at

any time. The computer records all the changes that are made throughout the writing process.

UNC scientists call the program "intelligence amplification software," because it can enhance a person's ability to think and organize.

The program, which supports the entire writing process from the brainstorming stage to final editing, will also allow UNC professors to study the cognitive aspects of writing.

UNC psychologist Marcy Lansman, who helped design experiments

to test the program, will study these writing processes through the use of the program recordings. She will look at the cognitive sequences that writers use when organizing thoughts and transferring them to the computer.

"The steps that professional writers make are quite different from those of the novice writer, and we want to study designs like these," Lansman said.

The program will help writers concentrate on organizing their work, Lansman said, and it should benefit

students, faculty and professionals.

Jay Bolter, an assistant professor of classics, said he considers the program a "revolutionary new kind of writing tool." It's as different from the word processor as the word processor is from pen and paper, he said.

"It is important to remember that writing is the activity that bridges all the disciplines," Bolter said. "And this program is an embodiment of that bridging process."

Bolter, who as a classics professor represents the humanities' approach

to writing, said the new program's broad range will structure writing in new ways.

Although scientists are still working to perfect WE, the program is already being used by UNC graduate students. The research team hopes to iron out remaining problems by January and distribute the program to other interested scientists around the country.

Because WE is a complex program, it can't be used on personal computers.

## Spangler leads class discussion

By SANDY DIMSDALE  
Staff Writer

"There are 32 of you," he said, "and you are the Board of Governors."

UNC-system President C.D. Spangler instructed the board — actually an English 58 class taught by Darryl Gless, an associate English professor — to choose a new president for the UNC system last week.

"There are three candidates, and they are, of course, Julius Caesar, Cassius and Brutus," Spangler told the class, which he had joined for its study of William Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar.

Spangler said he attended the class for two reasons. "First, I enjoy Shakespeare very much, and second, I had a strong interest in this play. I'm in a position of leadership, and see people trying to stab me in the back sometimes, too."

Spangler, who said he sits in on classes periodically, led a class discussion on the three candidates' leadership qualities and qualifications for a job. The class was to elect the best leader. Spangler seemed comfortable in front of the class, playing

devil's advocate to the ideas expressed by the students, who took their role of electing a system president seriously.

He compared Caesar to former U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, applying what he learned last semester in a class on presidents. "He did more for the poor and underprivileged people in recent years than any other president, I think, yet he was very self-serving, it seems now."

Spangler said Caesar was a superb general, but he failed to stay in touch with the people.

Cassius, he said, was not a successful general, but he had a gift for strategy and foresight.

"He knew they'd have to do away with Mark Antony, and my gosh, that would've changed the outcome of the whole play," Spangler said.

One student said Cassius was the best man for the job because of his lack of charisma, which forced him to bend to the will of the people in the republic. "Like Jimmy Carter!" yelled someone from the back of the room.

The class decided Brutus was a

good general with a terrible strategy. He was too easily flattered and swayed, and no one wanted a wishy-washy leader, they said.

When Spangler called for the vote, he cautioned the voters to follow their own instincts and impressions. "I warn you not to take into consideration what your friend beside you has said, because he may have been promised a position or offered a bribe."

Caesar edged Cassius out by two votes. Caesar garnered 15 votes, Cassius 13, and Brutus only four. Spangler and Gless also endorsed Caesar.

"I'd vote for Caesar," Spangler said. "Because if you make one person chancellor, you leave five others who forever remember that. But I have an empirical approach to the matter."

Spangler said nearly every action is an act of power for someone in a position of leadership.

"People make you do things," he said. "They invite you to parties, and then you have to stand at the door and shake 100 people's hands. Why am I shaking their hands? My qualifications probably aren't any better than anyone else's."

"I don't think I'm qualified to be president of this great university, and I've told the Board of Governors that. After I'd been here six months, I revised that statement. I don't think anybody is qualified."

Spangler said Caesar was probably "short" with characters in the play because he was tired of being watched and scrutinized, an occupational hazard for emperors and university presidents.

"I'd ask you to be generous in your assessment of your leaders," he said. "They're only human."

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## Art department celebrates birthday

By MICHAEL JACKSON  
Staff Writer

UNC's Department of Art will celebrate its 50th birthday this weekend with a host of activities for artists, art historians and anyone who's interested in art.

The celebration will begin with an opening reception and exhibition of works by members of the department's studio faculty. The reception is scheduled to take place today from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and the works will be displayed in the Hanes Art Center Gallery Oct. 23 to Nov. 12.

Six panel discussions — three on studio art and three on art history — will highlight the weekend's activities.

The studio art panels — to focus on design, teaching and use of space in architecture — will be

conducted by 14 alumni, including art instructors, interior designers and sculptors.

Other panel participants will come from various fields, including architecture and design of products and advertising.

The art history panels will focus on the place of art museums in universities, and their role in training students for museum careers. The panelists also will discuss the teaching of art history at UNC, including its style and impact. The panels will also allow alumni to discuss their various research interests.

The panel discussions are scheduled for Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

A registration fee of \$60 is required for all birthday weekend

activities, which include a dinner and dance at the Carolina Inn. The registration fee for panel discussions is \$10.

The art department was founded in 1937 by UNC President Frank Porter Graham, at the suggestion of former chancellor Robert House, then an administrative dean.

When it first opened, the department offered two classes. One course, taught by an archaeology professor, was on Greek architecture and paintings. The other was a sketching class taught by visiting artists to education majors.

Today, 18 faculty members teach nearly 1,200 students each year. About 75 art history and 30 studio art classes are offered each semester, ranging from ancient architecture to advanced painting.

## Computer software smugglers arrested

From Associated Press reports

SAN JOSE, Calif. — An alleged plot to sell supercomputer technology with military applications to the Soviet Union was broken up Thursday when U.S. Customs officials arrested three men and recovered stolen computer designs.

"It makes us feel good we stopped this stuff from leaving the United States," said Rollin Klink, special agent in charge for the Customs Service in San Francisco. "It would have severely damaged our military."

The designs stolen from Sunnyvale-based Saxpy Computer Corp. and recovered by the FBI could be used to build one of the most powerful supercomputers in the world, capable of one billion computations per second, company

officials said.

Ivan Batinic, 29, of Fremont, a former Saxpy engineer; his brother, Steven; and Kevin Anderson, 36, a software designer also from Fremont, were arrested in the alleged plot to illegally export the stolen computer technology. A bail hearing was scheduled for late Thursday.

The three are believed to have conspired with Charles McVey, 57, a former fugitive who was indicted in 1984 for export violations and is being held in a Vancouver jail.

Saxpy spokesman Sandy Towle said Batinic illegally copied the operating system of the computer, which the two-year-old company sells for \$896,000 to \$1.9 million, depending on its configuration.

"He stole the soul of the machine,"

Towle said. "With the information you could reconstruct the computer."

Batinic also allegedly stole tapes, floppy disks and operating manuals, which the FBI said were found in a storage locker rented by Anderson in Fremont.

FBI spokesman Charles Latting said the technology was not classified, although it is illegal to export. The computer has many non-military applications for industry.

The investigation began in August, when a search of Anderson and Ivan Batinic as they returned to the United States from Vancouver, B.C., found \$10,000 in \$100 bills that were traced to McVey. Federal officials said Saxpy cooperated fully with the investigation.

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