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Perceptions of Writing Centers in the Community College
Ways that Students, Tutors, and Instructors Concur and Diverge

DISSERTATION

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in Education

by

Ilona Virginia Missakian

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Carol Booth Olson, Chair
Professor George Farkas
Assistant Professor Rebecca Black

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Curriculum vitae

Ilona V. Missakian

1991	A.A. Liberal Arts, Mt. San Antonio College
1993	B.A. English, California State University, Fullerton
1995	Secondary, single-subject clear credential, English
1997	M.A. English, California State University, Fullerton Emphasis American Literature
2001	SDAIE certification (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English)
2003	UCI Writing Fellowship, University of California, Irvine, Writing Program
2014	M.A. Education, University of California, Irvine
2015	Ph.D. in Education Focus: Language, Literacy, and Technology University of California, Irvine

FIELD OF STUDY

Adult learners
Underprepared Writers

Abstract of the dissertation

Perceptions of Writing Centers in the Community College
Ways that Students, Tutors, and Instructors Concur and Diverge

By

Ilona V. Missakian

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Professor Carol Booth Olson, Chair

This monograph presents the perceptions of Writing Center assistance that three groups at community colleges have: composition students, Writing Center tutors, and English instructors. While the three groups have been highlighted often separately in many studies, this study adds to those that compare how the three groups respond to the same issues about writing and Writing Center assistance. The study examines three questions:

- What are the writing challenges that English instructors, center tutors, and students served in Writing Centers identify and expect the Writing Center to assist students with?
- How do Writing Center models (mandatory or voluntary) provide or deliver the assistance that is needed?
- What are the perceptions of the three groups of the efficacy of Writing Center assistance?

Four community colleges in southern California participated in the study and the three groups included individuals from developmental, college-transfer, and advanced levels. Matching surveys with the same question sequence were used to gather the responses of the three groups, and comparisons of their responses in the form of frequency counts, means, and standard deviation were made. Results reveal:

- The three groups have differing priorities of what is important in writing.
- The three groups have differing perceptions of what Writing Center assistance is focused upon.
- The three groups have a few overlapping recommendations about improvements that Writing Centers might implement.

The majority of the differing priorities in writing involve the writing process and mechanical/proofreading issues vs. analytical approaches. While tutors and instructors agree on a few writing features, students exhibit wide discrepancy in their priorities. The differences in perceptions of Writing Center assistance also reveal wide discrepancies in what students express that they need help with, what they actually take to the Writing Center, and what they believe they received help with. Instructors and tutors also have differing perceptions of what the Writing Center assists students with, or should assist students with. Survey results also suggest a slight preference for Writing Center assistance being mandatory (requiring attendance) as opposed to being voluntary (not requiring attendance), and the participants recommend that Writing Centers have more tutors, expanded hours, and an interesting suggestion of "other" for flexibility in how Writing Centers can assist students. The implications for that recommendation for flexibility indicate that additional studies of Writing Centers can yield valuable insights for the ongoing development of Writing Centers.

Introduction

Writing Centers occupy a dynamic place in the history of college composition. While some in the academic environment have viewed the Writing Center as a "fix-it" laboratory that offers editing services to correct students' grammatical errors, others see the Writing Center as a conference-driven one-on-one meeting place where tutors offer helpful strategies that lead to revision. Still others are not sure whether Writing Centers are a remedial crutch that delays students' independent decisions about how to improve their writing. In short, the function of Writing Centers has been defined and redefined many times as has their potential contribution to student progress and campus goals in addressing the needs of all writers, not just underprepared ones or those with targeted skill deficiencies. Because Writing Centers frequently serve underprepared students, oftentimes they are accorded marginal status on college campuses. However, Writing Centers function in important ways to promote the integrity of academic discourse and advocate for both institutions and students in negotiating and transacting with each other as well as society at large; in this capacity, they have potential to transform our understanding of learners and writing.

Given the central role that Writing Centers can play in students' academic success, it is important to examine their efficacy. When viewed through the lenses of students, instructors, and tutors, we see that Writing Centers mean different things to different constituents, and that these three groups do not come to clear consensus about Writing Center efficacy. For some in these groups, writers' insecurities may dominate their impressions about what Writing Centers

should focus upon, perpetuating "fix-it" associations that may limit efforts to expand the dialogue that writing can generate for feedback and drafting. For others, language acquisition has complicated students' learning experiences which they believe Writing Centers should somehow remedy with strategies or templates to apply to one's discourse. Additionally, the level of familiarity and facility with college-level writing for each of these groups can influence differing views of what progress and mastery is for a college writer. Some believe Writing Centers should offer training for college writing beyond classroom instruction through computer exercises or workshops, affecting the type of assistance students believe they require from the Writing Center.

While there is agreement among these groups that academic discourse has value and confers advantage to those well-versed in its nuances, the view of the exact role that a Writing Center can have on enhancing one's academic discourse diverges. Should learners who must use unfamiliar academic discourse proficiently experience explicit, directed instruction from tutors, or should they receive assistance via indirect modeling/an approved protocol? Is the goal of Writing Centers to improve correctness, form, or ideas? How do tutors become more aware of what their students' needs actually are to prevent one-size-fits-all feedback from impeding student progress? Such questions involve further complications when one considers the varying learning styles and needs of recent high-school graduates and returning older learners. As community colleges reflect a diversity of learners, Writing Centers likely adopt varied approaches to assisting writers that reflect the needs of their changing population.

Writing Centers can provide vital relief, however, to both the emotional and educational stress that students can encounter in composition courses. With culturally sensitive strategies and well-designed and implemented technology, Writing Centers can facilitate a significant

improvement in student writing. Progress and learning, though, may not always be evident in the artifacts—essays and grades—that students will generate and receive. But the effort is not wasted because demonstrable improvement often takes more than a few visits or even a semester. The Writing Center staffs' commitment to writers and course instructors, as well as campus goals, is evident in the different ways that the Centers have organized their functions and customized their response to student work.

This study looks at how composition students, Writing Center tutors, and English instructors at four southern California community colleges perceive the work of their Writing Centers. These colleges provided an effective back-drop for looking at the perceptions of both proficient and under-prepared learners, as well as traditional and non-traditional students. The research questions for the study are the following:

- What are the writing challenges that English instructors, center tutors, and students served in Writing Centers identify and expect the Writing Center to assist students with?
- How do Writing Center models (mandatory or voluntary) provide or deliver the assistance that is needed?
- What are the perceptions of the three groups of the efficacy of Writing Center assistance?

Responses to the surveys about writing and Writing Center efficacy are examined from students in developmental, college-transfer, and advanced courses, along with peer and faculty tutors, and a mix of full-time and adjunct faculty. The chapters include the following discussions:

- Chapter I: Writing Center History –An overview of key developments informing Writing Center implementation that traces some significant shifts that have influenced Writing Centers since the 17th and 18th centuries through the 1970s. These developments have contributed to the current dynamic environments that Writing Centers now exist on community college campuses.
- Chapter 2: Profiles of Stakeholders—An identification of the main characteristics of the groups for the study: Student, Tutors and Writing Center Staff, and Instructors,

offering some observations of how these groups work with writing issues and learning challenges. Profiles are focused on the community college environment.

- Chapter 3: College-level Writing and Tutoring Practices/Protocols –A look at some relevant compositional issues and methods generally employed in composition assistance from the perspective of trained individuals. Some student work is also presented to enhance the understanding of the work that tutors do with writing.
- Chapter 4: Details of the Study Design—Four Southern California Campuses—Explanatory background for the study and for how the campuses differ in their Writing Center designs.
- Chapter 5: Writing Challenges that the Groups Expect the Writing Center to Assist Students with –Findings from the study of the groups' perceptions of composition issues. This chapter explores the issues that the three groups concur and diverge on when deciding what is most important in writing.
- Chapter 6: How Assistance is Delivered and Perceptions of Efficacy –Findings from the study of the groups' perceptions of the assistance of their Writing Centers. These findings include several perspectives from students based on their educational goals and their attendance at Writing Centers.
- Chapter 7: Emerging Dialogue –A discussion of the study implications for the three groups and for potential future directions for Writing Centers to move toward.

The three groups—composition students, Writing Center tutors and staff, and instructors—offer valuable insights based upon their experiences with their Writing Centers and how the Centers address composition concerns. The three groups' responses collected in one study reveal areas where their perceptions concur and diverge regarding writing and Writing Center efficacy. Findings contribute to the understanding of student success and the ways that Writing Centers can influence that success. The findings also may encourage evaluation and examination for ongoing Writing Center improvement. Practitioners and theorists can benefit from multiple perspectives presented here that help to articulate what issues are most important to the groups that Writing Centers bring together.

Chapter 1: Writing Center History

Foreground

College Writing Centers have had a long and sometimes controversial history involving many stakeholders and shifting perspectives regarding the role of composition studies in higher education. In fact, as a field of study for research, Writing Centers have often been regarded as a side subject for inquiry into composition studies (Lerner, 2009; Geller & Denny, 2013; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2015), "exciting places to be part of but on the whole shut off from the rest of the academic world" (Lerner, 2014, p.69). Because the history of Writing Centers is frequently tied to the ways that higher education has evolved and changing views about what college writing is, this history helps to create a context for understanding the marginal status that has been associated with the role of the Writing Center and can illuminate the perceptions of Writing Center efficacy of the three groups in this study—students, tutors, and instructors.

Briefly, the establishment of Writing Centers dates back to the 1890s when they were originally conceived of as writing labs. At the turn of the century, debates about the best way to meet the needs of a population that was encountering industrial changes and turning to science laboratory methods (Lerner, 2009) were, indeed, pressing issues as society began facing the rapid changes of the 19th and 20th centuries. Those changes included a response to an increase in diverse student populations that were starting to attend colleges and challenged colleges to address their students' growing needs—including challenges involving academic literacy. Views of writing in higher education as a traditional discipline driven by academic discourse standards prevailed and continue to influence Writing Center development as seen in the more detailed history that follows.

Traditional Foundations Prevailing in Education

In the late 18th century, concerns about students finding employment resulted in a burgeoning interest in secondary schools. In response, the National Education Association's Committee of Ten, which was appointed in 1892, made significant decisions about secondary school curriculum. In particular, they addressed college entrance requirements and college preparatory curriculum, perceiving that more choices than one university-preparatory program needed to be available and dispelling the fallacy of secondary school being a preparation only for college studies (Aulbach, 1994). In essence, this re-evaluation allowed for a non-university bound option for students to be considered. Notably, the Committee re-evaluated the view of Latin as a requisite subject for intellectual achievement, and gave preference to English (Aulbach, 1994), which had a significant impact on writing instruction and indicated that the Committee was making efforts to define other standards that would prepare students—all students—for life, not just the university (Bohan, 2003). Though the Committee devised four kinds of curriculum for high school, "There was precious little evidence that committee members had ever considered seriously the question of how to prepare for life those who did not respond to academic training and mental discipline" (Herbst, 1992, p. 294). The rigors of academia continued to dominate college instruction and appeared to limit the opportunities for members of the student population who were not performing proficiently with the instruction in place. Volatile debate about instructional approaches and writing would continue to impact students who sought alternatives to attending a university. The possibility of alternatives contributed to the complexity that Writing Centers emerged from. Writing labs at this point were places to go to so that students could prepare or polish assignments. Writing Centers as learning environments where staff would coach in writing methods assisted students had not yet become a norm.

20th Century Shifting Needs that Shaped Perspectives

The Industrial Age (1760-1840) and Second Industrial Revolution (1840-1870) ushered in several competing views about how educational institutions were to keep up with a changing world, and paved the way for the development of Writing Centers. In *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (Kliebard, 2004), the term "ferment" is used to characterize developments in the late 1800s from which four forces with differing agendas for education emerged –one traditional and the other three reformational. These four views impacted Writing Center development into the 1930s. These groups are:

- Humanists, with "guardian" frames for traditions and values when faced with social change, who inhabit the intellectual communities and powerfully influence the academic world.
- Developmentalists, with sensitivities to, and romanticized notions about, childhood, who seek scientific data to support learning theories about natural abilities.
- Social efficiency reformers, with humanitiarian motives to run society efficiently for the public good, who see the specialization and control of skills as a means to manage and standardize functionality.
- Social meliorists, with sensitivities to the consequences of social injustice for underprivileged groups, who seek to empower citizens through schooling.

Kliebard documents the dynamic disagreements between these four groups. The humanists were seen as preservers of Western cultural traditions which the other groups regarded as old-fashioned and out of tune with the changing needs of the time and the population.

Developmentalists, especially, saw the humanist tradition as stifling natural tendencies and talents within learners and advocated active and individualized learning. The support for a widely varied and evidently hierarchical solution for addressing learners with different abilities initiated specialization and segregation of study by gender, aptitude, and age, including other subjects than English that would elicit interest and effort. At odds in their educational views still today, humanist and developmentalist disagreements continue to impact the struggle to design appropriate curriculum for the community college, calling attention to the role of remediation in college writing that Writing Centers often referee. As a go-between caught in the cross-fire of academic standards and struggling, underprepared learners, Writing Centers would have to establish a foundation on turbulent grounds.

Additionally, the concern for the social utility of education further influenced Writing Center development. Social efficiency educators emphasize a need for social stability and individual success safe from overbearing levels of a controlled curriculum that limits inquiry or options, envisioning school as helping citizens keep up with the ways of changing industrialization, re-introducing ideas from apprenticeship systems. Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that apprenticeship gives students an identity, a membership in a community as they move from legitimate peripheral participation as an apprentice, to full participation as a master. Schooling in this light is preparation for a rapidly changing industrial world with students needing to practice skills actively, not just receiving instruction passively. Concerns about what student can DO, not just KNOW, are paramount as educators reflect on what the changing relationship of the population to the products it produces might mean to education. Students and their schooling have to keep up with the changing times. But schooling at the secondary level, as Kliebard (2004) presents from the social efficiency perspective, with its curriculum designed for

college preparation, was still out of tune with the contemporary world at that time, and necessitated further differentiation. Secondary schooling was simply inefficient for the future as it clung to traditional views about college-preparatory curriculum and course work, and contributed to a "culture clash" for students entering college where more innovative solutions to the contemporary milieu were taking shape. This concern also contributes to the complexity of how Writing Centers were to assist writers caught at thresholds of new challenges that they may not have been prepared for in prior schooling.

In response to the need for differentiation, tracking students according to their college or work readiness seemed a practical solution to organizing an institution's purpose. As a complement to the occupational benefits of preparing students for their vocations through schooling, tracking students meant that academic and manual curricula merged to give immediate results like job placement and skills acquisition—and this is the success that current trade schools can claim. Differentiation also meant Writing Centers would need to adjust their focus and purposes for the range of students attending college, in effect remediating different needs across the student population.

The foundations for Writing Centers as physical locations for remediation date back to the 1930s, an especially trying time for the nation as a whole but even moreso for students that instructors judged as low-skilled— those regarded as members of ethnic, gender, and racial minorities (Ransom, 1933; Thonus, 2003; Lerner, 2009). For such students, the effects of English becoming a valid subject through the Committee of Ten's determination was pivotal and meant that writing would remain a priority skill, one that made citizens workplace ready. This newer tradition of English instruction connecting to work has prevailed, though not without a nod to the rigors that the term "tradition" connotes. But eventually, the innovative nature of

vocational education was seen as too narrow, too specialized, too commercial. With events leading up to and including the Great Depression, both the developmentalist and social efficiency perspectives were inadequate to address social and economic inequities for ethnic, gender, and racial minorities. The social and economic disadvantages that these groups experienced were part of the challenges to academic success that minorities would endure both then and now. Indeed, the focus on individuals that the developmentalist and social efficiency educators sought to achieve by designing curriculum to reflect student's natural talent or future-profit outlook was perceived as promoting the status quo (and inequality), not delivering answers for the economically and ethnically disenfranchised. In other words, the specialized programs kept students stagnant in their skills, and Writing Centers seemed to struggle along with students in these situations.

Social meliorists, then, sought to meaningfully reform the separate traditions in place to better fit the tenets of civil rights and diversity, and eventually open admissions policies ushered in cultural and political changes (Carino, 1996) and the proliferation of remedial measures to assist the new college-going population. The composition of attendees at colleges through social activism in the 20th century, open admissions policies, and the GI Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944) in the 1940s changed dynamically and meant that minorities and the underprepared who had been considered non-college material in the past now had easier access to higher education. Writing Centers emerged as "war babies" (Carino, 1996) with the goal of bringing underprepared students up to acceptable performance levels, remediating their skills to qualify for more difficult courses (Soliday, 2002; Lerner, 2009; Stanley, 2010). Programs that could facilitate the transition of minorities and veterans into the college culture were in high demand, and the assistance from Writing Centers became a source that championed the new

students' academic journeys to close gaps or deficiencies in their performance. Overall, humanist tendencies toward subject-centered curriculum was the default approach that education systems reverted to repeatedly after World War II and after the Sputnik launch in 1957 because these social and cultural upheavals contributed to worries about student performance keeping up with the demands of global changes.

The details behind social movements in the next decades which affected campuses, such as Civil Rights in the 1960s and 1970s, and basic skills programs in the 1980s and 1990s, provide an additional backdrop for how remediation and social class have been given varying levels of focus (Soliday, 2002; Lerner, 2009). These areas have become a part of the issues that generate sensitive debates about remediation and the role of Writing Centers as a vehicle of remediation. California's role, in particular, as a favored destination for immigrants and refugee groups, continually increases educators' rhetoric about literacy crises (Stanley, 2010) and has generated various levels of debate amongst educators about how academic performance should be identified and characterized. The subject-centered curriculum (English, Literature, etc.) and the academic discourse that the curriculum stresses thrive in spite of social movements, and continue to feature significantly in the belief that university education is at the top of the hierarchy for student achievement, and that academic writing is the preferred discourse that students are to master.

Marginality and Centrality

For over 80 years, Writing Centers have been widely implemented on college campuses to aid students in acquiring academic writing skills, to remediate their needs, and to referee their college access and status (Stanley, 2010). Yet, even though Writing Centers occupy a central role in higher education, they also have become a source of blame for student failure to perform

or assimilate (Soliday, 2002; Denny, 2010), contributing to their marginal status. With community colleges offering an alternative to a university destination, or a more manageable path toward it, Writing Centers are one of the vehicles that make access to higher education or its alternatives more achievable.

Given their clientele and the perceptions emerging since the 1930s that student literacy deficiencies in the changing college population are acute, Writing Centers often have had a very marginal existence and receive little recognition (Geller & Denny, 2013). They are usually funded as supplements to the classroom, with some Centers being called "clinics," "workshops," and "labs," suggesting connotations of illness and disease (Boquet, 2002). The overwhelming perception of Writing Centers in most recent decades appears to be that they are places where students go to be cured of their writing errors. The perspective that the two-year college open admissions structure is lax when compared to the university (Soliday, 2002) also may influence how remediation strategies to help underprepared students may be criticized as the equivalent of funding incompetence (Sullivan, 2003; Stanley, 2010). The Writing Center becomes a target with its students labeled as Clueless, Unfocused, Disorganized, Underdeveloped, Unrevised, or Unpolished (Carroll, et al., 2007, p. 63-4). The criticisms carry over into other unfortunate doubts about what Writing Centers can do for writers.

While images of being "fix it" shops persist, some critics have perceived Writing Centers as contributing to plagiarism (Leahy, 1990) because of the dialogue that tutors and students exchange when discussing student assignments. This lingering suspicion impacts the efforts of Writing Centers to be seen as effective agents to support student growth. Clearly, Writing Centers have not always been appreciated for their ability to help students with the task of

writing. Faculty in English and other disciplines who voice doubts about how tutors interfere with authorship can seriously impact Writing Center responsivity to students.

Despite their potential marginal existence, marginal funding, and marginal recognition because of their clientele, many centers eventually developed their own pedagogy as authorities on writing, addressing declining writing skills and students' needs to succeed not only in academia but as workers (Carino, 1996). Because Writing Centers were influencing access, and understandably retention, especially through the 1940s-1970s, growth in the capacities of Writing Centers was possible; they could move away from the safe, remedial focus of these earlier decades and offer individualized instruction through collaboration and dialogue, essentially offering one-on-one tutoring (Clark & Healy, 1996). Face-to-face conferencing continues to characterize many contemporary Writing Center functions today.

Subscribing to a creed of "no writer ever outgrows the need for feedback" (Leahy, 1990, p. 47; North, 1984), Writing Centers commit to serving **all** writers, not just weak ones (Szpara 1994; Sternglass, 1997; DeCiccio, 2002) seeking to provide feedback that is constructive, individualized, and informative. As Centers build upon their plans to expand their tutoring training (Essid 2000), online writing labs (OWLs), and other technical potentials using online/computerized assistance (Nelson & Wambean, 1995), the evolution of Writing Centers both reflects and reinforces the developments in theories relating to language learning and learning environments. As students in the community college now include English Learners at various levels of proficiency, Generation 1.5 designees, recent high school graduates, and returning adult learners (Soliday, 2002; Babock & Thonus, 2012; Stanley, 2010), ongoing strategizing for effective writing support takes place in Writing Centers, brings centers out of the

margins, and prompts college administrators to give serious consideration to their impact on student success.

Some Political Factors

The politicized context for Writing Centers and their strategies for assisting students is ever present. While a thorough examination of these elements is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth mentioning that the politicized atmosphere, accountability, funding, and efficacy of Writing Centers is under constant scrutiny (Boquet, 2002; Sullivan, 2003; Stanley, 2010; Denny, 2010; Reno, 2011). The administrative interest in what a Writing Center contributes vs. what it costs in light of institutional accreditation, associated legal mandates, and budgetary constraints makes these areas sensitive issues. Indeed, this study took place at a time when colleges were facing a budget crisis (2010-11). These concerns are likely shared not only among community colleges but also among other state colleges and universities. Some institutional suspicion may exist that influences administrators' perceptions of Writing Centers. For example, administrators may view instructors as being too reliant on the Writing Center to produce *correct* writers rather than taking responsibility as instructors themselves for producing *good* writers (Lerner, 2009). The term "correct" makes the efforts of the Writing Center seem perfunctory and simple, whereas the concept of "good" writing seems to suggest the task is beyond Center staff skill and that the classroom instructor should monitor their students' writing skills, exclusively. However, when 58% of college instructors send their students to utilize support services (Addison & McGee, 2010), either by referral or requirement, there seems to be an indication that the support services are very useful, not marginal.

Forming the Physical Center

> *"Our writing center has been managed by the same team for many years and the continuity has paid off. The classified staff has a great rapport with the faculty. The faculty can focus on the writing process without having to manage a lab."*
> *—instructor*

Aside from the deeper inquiry necessary to look at the above issues, another perhaps predictable concern about implementation of a Writing Center is simply *where* it should be located and *what* it should look like. In their inceptions, various locations like those close to libraries or remotely housed on the fringes of campuses may have reflected somewhat on the value that the Writing Center has had. Some are located in what might be a "spare" room somewhere on campus with remnants of donated residential and/or academic furniture; others take on the appearance of a fully-equipped, full-size computer classrooms, if not fully-appointed floors of a library. To what degree the space contributes to the function of the Writing Center or presents an obstacle to that function is a very individual determination, often guided by budget. As a result, Writing Centers have an identity that is, indeed, customized to the needs of its hosting institution, division, or department. Rarely are Writing Centers identical to each other.

Additionally, each Writing Center, whether at the community college or university level, may likely undergo an examination by a committee formed of various instructors and administrators on campuses to articulate their goals for helping students meet writing expectations. This committee may tackle the logistics of the physical aspects like those mentioned above but may also have significant discussions about who should provide services and what those services should be. They also have to determine such organizational issues involving staffing with instructors and/or peer tutors, hours of operation, and whether attendance in the center should be tied to courses or not. They might debate what conferencing protocols, if any, they would employ as well as what tools (computers, handbooks, workshops, online writing

guides, etc.) would be available. Significantly, they might also need to discuss whether certain groups of students should be designated to receive assistance or if open access to all students would apply.

For Centers that are equipped to move forward with technology-support, online feedback and synchronous (real-time) online conferencing may be options (Nelson & Wambean, 1995), increasing the opportunities for students to receive feedback. Essential to the successful impact of technology, however, are teachers and tutors who implement the materials effectively for student experience. Since the workplace necessitates technology literacy for the rapidly changing world that increasingly uses, and achieves, collaboration (Stapleton & Radia, 2010), Writing Centers would have to meet this demand. Multi-literacy is a highly regarded literacy in contemporary society with many entry and exit points (Stein, 2000), and Writing Centers afford students such an entry point. The role of the Writing Center and its tutors is not simple.

Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) describe an assessment used to evaluate Writing Center effectiveness using some of the following questions:

- Who should be in charge of assessment at an institution? This debate could threaten the funding of the Writing Center if the entity is not favorable to the Writing Center.
- What kinds of challenges does the Writing Center face? This question allows for an exploration of perceptions, misconceptions, and biases for or against the Writing Center.
- In light of these challenges, what are the goals for the assessment? Who is the real audience? These questions invite looking at the Writing Center as it relates to partnerships across the campus.
- What is the mission of the Writing Center? This question asks if the center goals directly address student needs.

- What kinds of data are already collected, and how is it useful for measuring the defined outcomes? This question invites scrutiny about how causal relationships are suggested about the Writing Center, higher GPAs, graduation rates, better paper scores. Feedback from stakeholders is essential to collect for better data and improvement.
- How can the center partner with the institution's Office of Assessment and Institutional Research to establish a plan, collect needed data, and analyze results? This question reminds us of the larger context we have seen mentioned earlier about student success in writing.
- How can the assessment results be published to help others and to be rewarded for the center's work? How can the assessment process be used to mentor graduate students or junior faculty on campus? These questions bring up the importance of recognizing the work of the center as well as how it can play a role in supporting staff further.

The authors offer this pilot assessment as a way for other institutions to measure their own success, lending the work of the Writing Center further significance in accreditation and ongoing improvement. Forming and sustaining a Writing Center necessitates careful consideration of many factors.

Summary

Writing Centers emerged from a history that encompassed various approaches to curriculum with the ultimate emphasis being made on subject-centered curriculum and academic discourse. Writing Center history parallels the many changes that fueled debates in secondary schooling and college curriculums since the early 1900s. From the Committee of Ten's determination about college preparatory programs to the four forces of humanists, developmentalists, social efficiency reformers, and social meliorists, many groups have made

efforts to shape educational approaches to best serve the needs of changing populations of students. Such approaches include those adhering to traditional, college-preparatory tracks and those accommodating work/career alternatives to university options. Writing Centers have attempted to respond to the approaches in various ways as clinics, labs, computerized environments, and coaches. Overall, they share a goal of helping students with their academic writing skills. Often placed in marginalized locations as well as regarded as offering remedial/questionable services, Writing Centers have emerged from criticized backgrounds, but today, Centers may hold very central roles as authorities to assist struggling writers.

Observations about four specific Writing Centers are offered in this study (described in detail in Chapter 4) in an effort to yield insight into how some campuses have realized their goals for students with the above-mentioned issues in mind. In Chapter 2 the primary stakeholders for those centers (i.e. students, tutors, and instructors) are profiled to help characterize each one's particular perspectives related to writing and learning concerns that have factored into Writing Center development. The types of learners served and their learning styles are important to understand in order to examine how Writing Centers assist them in crucial ways and become influential forces for change on campuses. Chapter 3 presents an overview of college writing and the methods that Writing Centers may use.

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Chapter 2: Profiles of Stakeholders

Overview

The history of Writing Centers, which involves the developments in higher education discussed in Chapter 1, encourages us to take a closer look at the individuals who meet there. Specifically, in the Writing Center, students, tutors, and instructors interact to negotiate an academic language that is filled with complexity (Denny, 2010). While these three groups at both university and community college level likely have some different characteristics in aspects like degree pursued (students), populations served (freshman vs. graduate), and some career activities like research or publication (instructors), the groups also share some traits regarding their relationship to composition courses. This chapter offers profiles of students, tutors, and instructors in an effort to identify key traits of these groups from the community college perspective, so most of the material discussed here relates to the community college context and the diversity of student ability that may be encountered when examining community college Writing Centers. Since students are a major focus of this report, their profile comes first. A profile of tutors follows the student section, and the profile of instructors is covered last.

Briefly, with students in the role of apprentices, tutors and instructors are the masters in the learning environment who give their adult learners control of their own learning (Knowles, 2011). Furthermore, tutors have been regarded as gatekeepers who have multiple methods for assisting students. The relationship that students and tutors establish in the Writing Center can be a strong one if they "meet" one-on-one for a specific purpose which may or may not stem from either a deficit or apprentice perspective. But for instructors, mixed reactions about the role

of the Writing Center are evident (Addison & McGee, 2010). Some factors may influence either favorably or negatively the way that instructors look at the Writing Center's work with students. As instructors identify their students as novices or experts (Denny, 2010), the range of learner identities influences the decisions of the Writing Center staff who provide scaffolding for *apprenticeship learning*, the term most frequently used to address the relationship of adult learners to the Writing Center. The profiles of these three groups help us understand some important background that informs each group's perceptions about Writing Center efficacy.

Student population: different needs, abilities, and goals
Who Are Writing Center Clientele?

"Even the best students can improve."—college transfer student

Of major significance to the topic of who attends Writing Centers is that community college students are a diverse group. In the literature, community college students are often portrayed as adult learners with specific learning needs who are being apprenticed into acceptable writing practices. Adult learners are frequently perceived ambivalently in the literature: on one hand they may be regarded as deficit learners because of disadvantages in their early schooling, and on the other hand they are seen as superior learners because of their motivation and desire for enrichment (Knowles, 2011; Sternglass, 1997), which allows them to work effectively as apprentices in a learning environment. As apprentices, students work with "masters" whom their tutors and instructors represent. But there are more descriptors that apply to students.

The group also includes native speakers, Generation 1.5 students (possessing non-standard language characteristics though they are native or long-time residents), English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, international students, adult beginners, adult learners, digital natives (having grown up with video games,

social networking, etc.), digital immigrants (unfamiliar/unpracticed with various technology tools), and recent high school graduates. The community college learner is also both a traditional (i.e. full-time, 18-25 years old) and non-traditional student (i.e. part-time, employed, with family, or a business owner, etc.) who has various learning styles that Writing Center staff may or may not address successfully. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2010), over 70% of college students are over the age of 25. These older students differ from the stereotypical recent, 18-year-old high school graduate that most college systems embrace--full-time, younger learners who are on campus during traditional 9am-5pm hours--rather than the part-time, employed students (Sissel, et al., 2001; Shaughnessy, 1977) who attend during evenings or on weekends. These students are not all attending community college for the same reasons; some may be transfer, certificate, or enrichment students; some are recent graduates, reentry students, or retirees. They may be repeat visitors since the system does not mandate the earning of a degree or require one for transfer (Reno, 2011). Their college identities are informed by various reasons for attending community college in the first place and their prior preparation to do so. Such factors also shape their experiences with, and reactions to, the help they receive in the Writing Center, a place that they may be mandated to attend when linked to one of their courses or that may be an option when they seek assistance on their own. The differences in Writing Center design will play an important role in perceptions, too, which Chapter 4 will examine further.

College Readiness and Influence on why Students Seek Writing Center Assistance

Early schooling and potential relationships to Writing Center assistance

> *Please describe what you think may be an obstacle to your using the tutor's feedback: "perspective, and stubbornness in old age."—college–transfer student*

Readiness, or lack of readiness, for college level work is a result of many factors in community college student experience, and can often be a reason for a student visiting the Writing Center in the first place. In some cases, being older and given the time constraints for completing programs, unprepared adult college learners must learn quickly what they have missed in earlier schooling and apply the new/reviewed concepts immediately. This adaptation is possible with the help of Writing Center strategies though this solution is not as ideal as might be possible if students had successfully learned requirements in secondary school. Even earlier than secondary school, observations that children internalize habits that determine the rules that they will follow (Anyon, 1980; Horvat and Davis, 2010) suggests that they will form certain expectations of how to handle tasks like writing. These observations about childhood can perhaps influence how college students will relate to Writing Center assistance and how college students assess their own skills, progress, or need for improvement.

Anyon (1980) describes unequal social consequences resulting from a hidden curriculum in working class, middle class, affluent, and elite schools. She notes that a hidden curriculum is economically and demographically confined and shows the existence of stratified and discrepant opportunities that 1) penalize lower classes by focusing on tasks that demonstrate obedience (e.g. worksheets for working class students), 2) expedite middle class efficiency (e.g. validation for finding the right answer), and 3) reward more affluent classes with challenging and substantive projects (e.g. "teaching" concepts in presentations or developing collaborative projects). Anyon

(1980) notes that lower and working classes, for instance, typically receive an education that emphasizes following mechanical drills to ensure docility and obedience, which reduces experiences with valuable dialogue and creative expression. Students from this economic level may experience an entrenched academic poverty throughout elementary and secondary education (Smagorinsky, 2013); well-designed alternatives, on the other hand, in college can change these students' trajectories (Horvat and Davis, 2010) by helping them build self-esteem and furthering their academic pursuits. Students with a history of limited economic opportunities may become more and more motivated to accept help from tutors that enables them to align their writing with campus goals—or they may resist, seeing themselves permanently outside of academic membership. The Writing Center, then, may be a welcome sanctuary that helps some students realize how to fill gaps in their understanding, or it may be an unwelcome reminder that early neglect remains an obstacle to their future.

In Anyon's observations, students from the middle or managerial classes have experienced an emphasis on finding correct answers, avoiding controversy and analytical tasks, and seeing creative self-expression as enriching but not critical or useful. These characteristics are "both symbolic and practical advantages" (Herbst, 1992, p. 286) that are socially efficient for the middle class and gives them access to "cultural property in the form of speech patterns, tastes, manners, style, and academic credentials" (p. 282). These patterns of expression and styles of learning translate to the middle class/managerial class students' college experiences containing a kind of built-in training to help students meet expectations of college-level work through consistent attendance, studying, completing tasks per directions, and being efficient. Students may be business or academic-oriented, having a plan for what they want to do with their writing training. Yeakey (1990) identifies a consumptive culture that embraces fierce

competition and dependency on patterns, stressing self-preservation rather than self-improvement, an opportunistic outlook about higher learning that also includes fear of failure. For such students, "getting it right" can influence their interaction with the Writing Center, either in their active, regular participation in seeking assistance from the Writing Center or in their expectation that the Writing Center will solve their writing dilemmas with a quick, formulaic solution. The Writing Center for such students may be a hub of advice that they rely on to expedite the completion of their academic experience. Anyon further observes that students from affluent and elite social classes are involved in active questioning, independent inquiry, and leadership roles with value placed on individual participation. Because these students have likely already acquired the academic discourse that university experiences will build upon, they might not be convinced Writing Center assistance applies to them.

Any of these educational experiences may contribute negatively or positively to habits that students will transfer to the college level. Economic discrepancies in society have influenced the performance standards that students are accountable for, in effect the performance standards from instructors in shaping classroom activities, for instance, that have been adjusted for students' learning environments (Bloome, 1989; Knowles, 1980; New London Group, 1996). While a thorough discussion of educational inequities is beyond the scope of this paper as well as a thorough discussion of current performance standards that may contribute to changes in college student performance (i.e. Common Core adopted, not adopted, or withdrawn among U.S. states and territories), at least an acknowledgment can be made that many Writing Center tutors offer non-graded feedback which may combat some of the complications students face in writing if they feel their prior schooling did not prepare them adequately. Non-graded feedback will be

further discussed in Chapter 3 to show how it can present students with options for improvement in a non-threatening way.

Language Learner Concerns

> *"They help you but don't give answers; [they] make you figure it out until you get it."—college-transfer student*

Another obstacle for some students in their pursuit of acquiring academic writing skills may involve their experiences as language learners. While many college students may be native English speakers who have recently graduated high school, a significant percentage also are non-native speakers: one in five people age 5 and over in the United States speaks another language other than English (Shin and Bruno, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Anxieties about writing may be heightened even more for this group who frequently are also non-traditional learners who may not have taken academic courses in years, and who are now mature adults attending college while trying to balance job security and family demands in difficult economic times (Sternglass, 1997; Reno, 2011). As one college-transfer student stated in the survey response, "I don't like the idea of having someone look at my paper and tell me what to do, and I don't even understand what they are talking about. I'm not a good writer, and I don't think being there would make me better honestly. It should take time. Knowing [another language] makes me less smarter in English." Despite their heightened anxieties in writing, students who are self-conscious about their spoken English may not see Writing Centers as addressing what they would like help with.

For instance, Generation 1.5 students—who are multilingual—have received the same exposure to spoken language as their peers; however, despite proficient social language skills, these students display non-standard English language features in their writing. Generation 1.5 students likely seek to assimilate the features of a new discourse that college-level writing presents as opposed to giving up their original patterns of expression (Severino, 2006). Their

rhetorical structures and cultural issues are different from native speakers or English language learners; their L1 may also be weakening or disappearing over time (Harklau, 2003). Distinctly different from ESL and international students who are highly literate and aware of language formalities (Harklau, 2003; Powers & Nelson 1995; Thonus, 2003), Generation 1.5 students encounter different frustrations in the Writing Center when tutors assume that they are familiar with certain conventions of written academic discourse that they may, in fact, be unfamiliar with.

Culture shock, indeed, applies to many learners finding themselves in situations that do not match their previous ones. EL students are negotiating cultural and linguistic obstacles, and they may become more aware of their language deficits if their instructors highlight non-proficient expression in graded feedback with added, repetitive, or overwhelming attention to grammar mistakes. Struggling more than native speakers (Zamel, 1995), EL students may request more help in the Writing Center with mechanical and grammatical issues than tutoring protocol allows (Blau, Hall, & Sparks 2002). Furthermore, they may find Western dialogic practices of "questioning, criticizing, refuting, arguing, debating, and persuading" (Major, 2005, p.85) emotionally difficult to adjust to, leading to very awkward participation in conferences or resistance to participation in conferences (Hall, 2001). Some ESL students have added pressure and anxiety when their proficiency prevents them from meeting their educational goals in a timely fashion because extra classes that they need to take before enrolling in college-level courses extend their plan. They have already gained admission to the academic community but are not full participants (Blanton, 1987); their L1, non-American rhetorical styles do not bring them the same success they may have had in their native language schooling, or their L1 inexperience may make American rhetoric more obscure (Hall, 2001; Blau, Hall & Sparks, 2002). Some ESL students may dismiss or misunderstand tutors' advice about fulfilling audience

and reader needs (Ede & Lunsford, 1984) or distrust tutors' suggestions to return to the instructor for clarification which they may construe as challenging authority (Thonus, 1993; Major, 2005). In trying to improve grades by becoming grammatically accurate, which is not a guaranteed outcome of tutoring sessions (Uzawa, 1996; New London Group, 1996), EL students miss the conscious-raising and transformational aspects of writing (Ong, 1986; North, 1984) in exploratory, expository, investigative, and argumentative modes. They may miss an opportunity to work with tutors in a safe middle ground (Ronesi, 1995) where students can experiment and obtain clarification when instructors seem unapproachable or too harsh.

For the struggling students mentioned above, remediation engenders mixed reactions to the assistance provided, an aspect that Chapter 3 will delve into. Not all learners are receptive to Writing Center assistance (Uzawa, 1996), and better grades are, indeed, not guaranteed (Bean, 1996; Williams, 2004). Because they usually receive no credit for Writing Center attendance and because they may be trying to maintain an unrealistic pace for course completion, their stress can cause them to become demoralized (Blanton, 1987; DeCiccio, 2002). With their work under close scrutiny, struggling students may feel dejected when, after completing an assignment with authentic voice and fluency, the non-academic nature of the piece—such as when students address an analytical assignment as they would a personal narrative (i.e. instead of employing objective voice, using subjective "I")—may lead to rejection. Perhaps the requirement to use academic discourse has priority over their own language (Shafer, 1999) and confuses them about the differences between personal and academic writing even more. For example, a student whose writing contains speech which includes non-standard or colloquial markers may be penalized in spite of intelligent perspectives because faulty form dominates his performance. Worries about grades may become the only motivation for struggling students to walk into the

Writing Center. They may not understand the full benefit of Writing Center conferences, small group sessions, or computer supported learning options to make the most out of the social constructions and conflicts they encounter in writing.

Adult Learners and Relationships to Writing Center Assistance

Needs of adult learners

> *"I am a part time student, work full time, and have three children, so I would like to see the hours extended to fit my needs as well as others."—college-transfer student*

Older adult students, whether they are native speakers, Generation 1.5, or English learners, may also have issues with the Writing Center. As a distinct group in the literature, they are characterized as a unique group on college campuses with specific needs. They may have maturity but delayed preparation, having reached plateaus and endured penalties like remedial writers, and though they may handle certain skills better than younger learners, they may not know the discourse rituals of academia (Shaughnessy, 1977). Adults also may not transfer skills easily; they are a different kind of learner as Knowles' (1990, 2011) studies identify. As Knowles points out:

1. Adults need to know why they are learning something; they require reasons.
2. Adults are active, independent learners and feel that experience provides the basis for learning; they see themselves as producers who have a rich past.
3. Adults need to be involved in planning and evaluating their education, responding to a sense of mutuality with teachers rather than passive acceptance.
4. Adults are most interested in real-life, immediately applicable content; they need to maintain or advance their various positions, or change them if they've reached a ceiling.

5. Adult learning is problem and performance centered rather than subject centered; this reflects their active learning style.
6. Adults respond better to internal motivators than external ones (like grades); satisfaction is part of their plan.

Along with job insecurities that adults may face are their needs to negotiate identities as workers, spouses, self-supporters, and parents. These overlapping demands can complicate how they negotiate the college system as non-traditional students. They differ from younger, recently schooled students and may have a functional literacy in non-schooled concepts like running households or businesses, which marginalizes them regarding intellect and competence in academics (Scribner & Cole, 2001) though they "shine" in other environments. Encounters with younger tutors in the Writing Center may make them feel that they are expected to function like 18-22 year olds (Sissel, 2001), and this pressure can distort their sense of self-worth.

Adults as apprentices

> *"We are taught not to say exactly what the answer is. Students might be confused from this method."* --tutor

Lave and Wenger's discussions (1991) about legitimate peripheral participation in examining apprenticeships yields some insight into both adult and language learners mentioned earlier. As apprentices experience power relationships with masters in a situated context, both apprentices and masters are involved in interchange among communities where "the issue of conferring legitimacy is more important than the issue of providing teaching" (p. 92). "Old timers" select an appropriate time to share information. . .but when the apprentice IS also an "old-timer" (i.e. another mature adult), the master needs to offer the apprentice more experiences than those in which a teacher dispenses information to be absorbed passively. The experience

needs to involve more emphatic focus on activities that stress student practice. Gatekeepers/masters manipulate and direct access and practice, helping students progress from legitimate peripheral participation (which might entail more manageable content for the adult or language learner) to full participation (which might entail more difficult content). This negotiation to full participation is an important key, but not guarantee, for adult learner success. Immersion in opportunities to practice needs to be available to learners to enable them to become a part of the community and increase their sense of identity (Young & Miller, 2004). Student inexperience, then, is seen as potentially constructive and an "asset to be exploited" (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 117). When applied to the context of Writing Centers, their collaborations with students on their own work constitutes a productive plan to complement their writing practice. However, adult attitudes about their specific inexperience with academic discourse need further study in terms of:

1. adult learner acceptance of having weak skills,
2. their ability to negotiate/surmount mismatched skills, or
3. their own proficiency to meet their real-world needs.

Understanding adult learner attitudes is also helpful in cases involving community college ESL students who are sometimes painfully aware that their weaker skills will prevent them from their goals of course completion and graduation (Blanton, 1997).

Adults as non-traditional learners

Adults are also marginalized for their non-traditional status because they are frequently commuter and re-entry students already operating in the fiercely competitive labor market that younger students are being prepared for and have to operate under time constraints due to work obligations that their younger classmates may not have. Unfortunately, adults are sometimes

perceived as "cash cows" who display unpredictable attendance and do not merit conveniently available resources (Sissel, 2001; Stein, 2000; Reno, 2011). Their participation in the college experience can seem as disorienting as that of ESL and international students. But adult learners, unlike foreign students, may question their very position as students. Adult learners may or may not feel alienated by or from community college culture, possibly becoming unsure about how the Writing Center might help them if they perceive assistance as a form of being told what to do, or being reminded that they do not know what to do. Adults respond differently to directed instruction; in fact, they sometimes resist it and struggle more with direct instruction than when working independently to navigate requirements.

Frustrated learners and tension

> *"People tend to have different ways to express something in writing. Is hard to use words you're not used to."—developmental student.*

In an apprentice's context, when apprentices do something reasonably well, they increase their sense of identity and independent agency, and become a part of the community (Young & Miller, 2004). Once brought into the writing community through independent practice, adult learners may enjoy seeing how they have played a part in their own progress. However, this optimistic view of the adult learner as a participant with much potential once trained as a college writer may still lead to frustrations. They are practicing new patterns in academic discourse that may challenge the adult learner's frames of reference and familiar ways of writing. As one tutor in the study commented, "Perhaps they don't fully understand the suggestions or their instructor hasn't brought up the problem, which makes it [the assistance] seem irrelevant." Such confusion can contribute ongoing student misunderstanding of how educators are trying to assist them.

The profile of a frustrated learner encountering degrees of tension is a "part of the big picture" that Writing Centers try to address. The frustration that adult learners may experience

when trying to save face and "fix [their] self" (Denny, 2010) can result in more writing shortcomings than progress for some time as their anxiety escalates and as students are disposed to avoid change, withdraw from change, or procrastinate in making a change when they need to acquire skills (Martinez, Kock, & Cass, 2011). Furthermore, student expectations of Writing Center tutor assistance may become distorted and disappoint them. As another tutor in the study notes, "Some students think their work is fine as it is and come for a conference because it is required. Other times, the instructions to the student are confusing—either too specific or too general or the teacher and student don't get along." Many problems occur, for instance, when students adhere to writing habits and are impervious to critique (Ronnell, qtd. in Davis, 2000) because they are confronting evidence that their level of writing is at odds with the style of what they are reading at the college level (Shaughnessy, 1977). Though students would like to become less helpless (Elbow, 1998) by receiving help, they can become intimidated when peer tutors or instructors represent obvious examples of individuals who "do school well" (Carrol, et al., 2007, p. 60). The underprepared writer, perceiving himself or herself as behind, may accept the apprenticeship role or not at this point with certain expectations about the assistance offered.

Adult learners and relationships to technology

> *"I like that the online help refreshes my memory on all the correct writing."—developmental student*

When technology is involved, adults may demonstrate an intensification of some problems when they struggle with their needs for real-world application of their education (Hansman, 2001). Familiarity and facility with technology are not universal (Bennet, Maton, & Kervin, 2008) and distinguish digital immigrants—usually older students and adults who are used to traditional curriculum and sequential thinking—from digital natives—usually younger students who are used to a variety of technology gadgets, social networking, multi-tasking,

parallel thinking, and, yet, possess short attention spans (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives have an advantage that their less technically-savvy peers do not, demonstrating different abilities and relating to a different technologically-infused language that each operates digital tools with. Learners' thinking has been determined in part by presence or absence of digital environments and the assumptions others have about the sophistication of their knowledge (Bennet, Maton, & Kervin, 2008). These environments and assumptions can impact the effectiveness of instruction which may be expressed in the language and style of digital immigrants or digital natives. For example, digital immigrants still require sequencing in their learning (i.e. mapping, outlining), but such a structure could seem crippling to digital natives who switch speedily between various interests with multi-tasking (Blair & Hoy, 2006; Prensky, 2001). As an alternative to texts and workbooks, multimedia applications and tutorials are helpful to adult learners (Sabatini 2001; Kern, 2006) but design for adult learners and implementation in their learning environment are more important factors than their existence or availability to students. Students may become easily frustrated when they are not sure if a technological program is useful to them or, in their perception, shallow play (Prensky, 2001) using some type of video game. Writing Center stakeholders have to be aware of these concerns when selecting technology to support writing instruction.

Student Profile Summary

Community college learners are a diverse group with many different backgrounds and a range of learning needs. When any of the students briefly described in this section perceive Writing Centers and tutors as gatekeepers, they may have mixed reactions. A sense of loss can prevail if they fear that something is being taken away that they valued in their previous or existing experiences or habits. They may also feel the impact of teacher expectations, either

feeling disserved when teacher expectations seem low (Sullivan, 2003), or ironically relieved to feel that they are just "getting by" without an instructor's distressing critique. Conversely, they may feel either inspired or crushed when the expectations are high. Additionally, when services on campuses, like the Writing Center, are more accessible to students during traditional 9am to 5pm hours, adult learners who attend classes outside those hours can feel alienated from the Writing Center. Such issues as access are part of the numerous factors like college readiness, language, habits, and use of technology that are taken into consideration when Writing Centers need to address the needs of a range of learners and the attitudes toward learning that they bring to college.

Tutors and Writing Center function

> *"We emphasize that we do not guarantee that students will receive a higher grade. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to follow suggestion and guidelines." -tutor*

Instructors and tutors in the Writing Center are in positions to diagnose and scaffold appropriate instruction/assistance, to model strategies when necessary without prescribing them, and to encourage students to use the strategies and not passively observe them. As peer tutors or faculty members, Center staff have realized that they could begin moving away from the safe, remedial focus that implied that their role was to "hammer down the nail that sticks out" (Denny, 2010) and offer individualized instruction through collaboration and dialogue, essentially through one-on-one tutoring (Clark & Healy, 1996). Center staff have developed their own pedagogy or tutoring protocol to become authorities on writing, addressing students' needs to succeed not only in academia but also in the world of work (Carino, 1996) and contributing to an understanding of how writing plays a role in achieving the community college student goals beyond their English classes. Embracing the idea of a learning culture (Carroll, et al., 2007),

tutors create an atmosphere for studying writing with multiple methods that take into account the diversity of composition students in terms of student ages, socio-economic class, and language processing.

Tutors, who are highly L1 proficient, are trained in various ways to do much more than would occur in a peer review session that may be used in the classroom (Bean, 1996; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994), where students in the same classroom exchange drafts to provide feedback. Tutors use talk aloud, listening, Socratic questioning, and attention to higher order concerns (HOC), such as the articulation of a thesis, content development, and organization, instead of lower order concerns (LOC), like word choice and sentence structure, to customize their feedback and deliver it in a safe, non-graded, and immediate way. The tutoring protocol (discussed more fully in Chapter 3) is purposefully non-directive and non-prescriptive and offers a non-interventionist guide for the writer to consider. In other words, the tutor attempts to get the student to participate by eliciting his or her spoken, written, or reflective response, a tactic that allows the student to be an active learner with the tutor as a collaborator.

But some students may prefer a more passive experience which makes the above protocol seem too labor-intensive on the students' part when all they ask for is simple proofreading or grammar checks; indeed, some students still perceive the Writing Center as a "grammar mill." Concerns about this student perception of their tutors actually pertain to all students, not just underprepared adult learners. To address the mismatch of goals and expectations for tutors and students, some tutors see past the no-grammar correction policies that some Writing Centers have adopted and provide necessary and direct intervention, so students who crave such help can avoid guessing games about appropriate form in academic discourse (Williams, 2004). This breaking of the "rules" reflects Lev Vygotsky's view of what learners can achieve with the

assistance of others instead of struggling on one's own with academic discourse (Clarke & Healey, 1996). Knowing not only when such intervention is merited but also how to instruct students to deal with writing issues independently are hallmarks of the tutors' talents. Students' status and membership in the dominant cultural group can be influenced by the strategies tutors use to assist students both in their writing, and arguably their reading (Bloome, 1989; Brooks, et al., 2001). In an alternative setting of the Writing Center, tutors clarify the rules, values, and contingencies of the group both in context (Lafford, 2009) of the instruction they receive from their course instructors and in the de-centered practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that students independently complete their work in, transmitting discourse and culture as part of their mission to demystify writing difficulties. Tutors provide valuable resource assistance in a collaborative environment to promote independent success through a student-centered approach.

The student-centered approach, however, can still become complicated by the identity and experience of the tutor and the student's attitudes toward the tutor and his/her response. These factors can impact conference outcomes. For example, peer tutors may have to confront a student's perception that they are less authoritative than the instructor and that their advice may not be consistent with the instructor's directions. Tutors with more experience may have more strategies for modeling, scaffolding, and diagnosing writing tasks, and may or may not be as available as less experienced tutors at certain times. Aside from these issues, the tutor's communication style may be an issue (Hall, 2001). For instance, their explanation of American rhetoric, which is different from other rhetorical styles, may provoke resistance in the student (Blau, Hall, & Sparks, 2002) as tutors struggle to clarify the features of academic discourse that readers expect and writers must supply. The student may ignore or dismiss the advice, leading potentially to dissonance and misunderstanding that can prevent communication, not because of

linguistic miscues but because of cultural frames. As one tutor notes in the survey, "Most students seem satisfied because they are willingly there, and when that doesn't happen, they leave frustrated and unconvinced that they should make another appointment." When tutors feel that face-to-face communication is not helping an EL student understand discourse cues or expectations, or that a students' fixation with grammar and instructor evaluations dominates his/her expectations of the Writing Center tutor's efforts to improve writing skills, the tutor may feel inadequate (Blau, Hall & Sparks, 2002; Szpara, 1994; Ronesi, 1995). Tutor frustration adds to student discomfort, then, when neither of them is addressing the same issues.

In several studies, concerns arise about tutors not having specific EL training or generalizing about what techniques to use with all non-native speakers' needs (Hall, 2001; Blau, Hall, & Sparks, 2002; Harklau, 2003; Harris & Silva, 1993; Clarke & Healey, 1996, Raimes, 2006; Ronesi 1995; Powers & Nelson 1995). Such students are not served well when the culturally specific support is not available (Major, 2005; Thonus, 2003) that is consistent with what students are working within their courses and with their current abilities. Student adjustment of their writing skills is more likely realizable if tutors attend to culturally specific support in this context and reflect on students' academic and emotional realities. Adults' opportunities are limited when "cultural sensitivity" is not extended to them and when material is not applied to real-world applications that they can take readily to their workplaces. Yet, as one tutor notes, The work of Writing Center staff to bridge language and context and encourage self-direction, then, is a way to facilitate learners' skill acquisition and skill application (Young & Miller, 2004).

Tutor Profile Summary

Writing Center tutors' interactions with struggling students highlight their ability to notice, and forward, questions about entrenched practices, about the status quo, and about academic literacy as a creative or conforming force (Yeakey, 1990) in college culture. Because tutors work directly with writing prompts, instructor directions or ambiguities, and students in the writing process, their insight can shape writing approaches for the present and the future. The Writing Center tutor is in a significant position to influence how effectively students navigate writing experiences. There are still concerns about how well tutors can address specific writing demands for certain disciplines; in this case as in the ones mentioned above for EL and other learners, collaborations with instructors and tutors could be useful. Chapter 3 will explore some of the possibilities of that collaboration.

Instructor perspectives

> *"The major obstacle with feedback from the Writing Center is that the instructor's comments do not align with my own."—instructor*

> *"Certain issues brought up in conferences are made into a formal classroom lesson if the issue is prevalent enough."—instructor*

While English instructors at the community college represent a variety of full-time and adjunct faculty with varying levels of campus involvement in committees and course levels taught, they express both supportive and ambivalent responses about the role of the Writing Center in their students' experiences. Instructors have mixed reactions to the work of the Writing Center and to their students who use the services. In some instances, deficit thinking with which faculty may assess EL and adult learners persists (Addison & McGee, 2010), which makes the students' needs for intervention more urgent. But the deficit thinking with which some faculty may perceive learners is beginning to make institutions realize that such thinking can be unfair

and that it is "unrealistic and counterproductive to expect writing and ESL programs to be responsible for providing students with the language, discourse, and multiple ways of seeing required across courses," (Zamel, 1995, p. 517). Ironically, some instructors also express some dissatisfaction with support services even though they may worry about the limited time they themselves have to work with students and the extent of their needs. Instructors, then, may deem the Writing Center a "fix it" factory or something akin to a cleaning or sanitation service (Boquet, 2002) at the same time that they may hesitate to look into how the Writing Center staff may assist their students. For instance, one instructor in the study mentions, "Most tutors avoid editing/proofreading. I'm not sure how well they teach students these skills."

One perception that some instructors have is that college level writing skills are declining to the level of a literacy crisis, reminding us of the volatile debates about educational reform covered in Chapter 2 regarding humanist, developmentalist, social efficiency, and social meliorist approaches. High school teachers and college instructors, for instance, do not agree on what constitutes proficiency (Addison & McGee, 2010); college instructors rank product higher, and high school teacher rank process higher; additionally, college instructors rate student proficiency lower than high school teachers do (Milewski, et al., 2005; Thompson & Gallagher, 2010). These differences may make college instructors appear to give priority to the surface features of writing (Hall, 2001). Defining college level writing is an ongoing concern; because such concerns are often local, rather than consensus, issues among college instructors (Sullivan, 2003), addressed across institutions that articulate with each other, the potential impacts of defining discourse and establishing preferred patterns in teaching and student performance are going to raise questions about best practices and about how Writing Centers contribute to those practices. For those who believe that remediation measures are the funding of incompetence

(Sullivan, 2003), Writing Centers that serve underprepared students can be a target of instructor suspicion.

Mention was made earlier about the suspicions of plagiarism encouraged through collaboration (Leahy, 1990) when students and tutors work together. This perception can lead to debilitating views of the potentials for dialogic conferencing when students and tutors conference collaboratively on the students' assignments. Clarke & Healy (1996) and Ede (1989) discuss the history that may explain the precedent behind this suspicion of plagiarism. They explain that the view of writing as a traditionally solitary activity dates back to the 18th century which stressed independent authorial choices in the craft of the individual writer who establishes his/her voice and identity through writing. Academic disciplines have exhibited varying responses to the merits of collaborative work and the social exchange in the discussion of one's writing during review and/or conferencing. The varying attitudes may affect students' reactions to the roles that they and their tutors play during a conference, making students unsure of how to use the feedback they receive, or whether they can or should use the feedback when they submit their work to their instructors. Faculty in English and in other disciplines who are suspicious about how tutors interfere with authorship can convey this attitude to their students and impact students' receptivity to Writing Center assistance.

Despite the worries about plagiarism as an outcome of Writing Center intervention, there is not much research confirming that Writing Centers interfere with student authorship as an outcome of conferencing. More frequent are the stereotypes instructors have of Writing Centers being, again, "fix it" proofreading centers that need to help students polish their faulty command of the language, showing that instructors may not understand what tutors do when tutors have to keep in mind instructors' demands, clarify confusing assignments, and address student anxieties

about grades (Leahy, 1990). Instructors may not see how tutors make informed diagnoses and decisions regarding how to help students improve writing ability rather than producing a written product. The tensions between humanists (instructors insisting on content and form mastery) and developmentalists (tutors developing strategies for students to actually master both) resurfaces here, and has impact on the relationships between English and/or other departments and Writing Center services. For instance, observations of campus culture from a Writing Center's view suggests that what ESL students learn in their courses is not valued in a college-level, transferable course (Hall, 2001). This perception can present an obstacle to instructor and tutor perceptions of Writing Center efforts that are targeted to help ESL students to transition. While the Writing Center may be able to articulate these perceptions, neither all instructors, nor all tutors, appear to have enough EL training to completely assist ESL or Generation 1.5 students (Hall, 2001; Harklau, 2003; Powers & Nelson, 1995), a situation that invites a closer look into practices to help all students to develop the writing strategies they need. A deeper discussion of writing practices which follows in the next chapter is needed to understand these concerns more fully.

Instructor Profile Summary

As a group, instructors may be less sure about the role of the Writing Center for a variety of reasons. The potential for a stronger relationship between instructors and Writing Center staff emerges here, especially if instructors' understanding of the Writing Center's role is clouded with suspicions or doubts. These complications invite more clarification of the Writing Center's role and articulation of course goals. There are benefits to students when a strong relationship between instructors and Writing Center staff exists because of coordination and/or alignment of goals. Writing Centers can help effect a positive influence in writing instruction and student

achievement. Instructors are important to the role of Writing Centers in helping students to decide how to respond to Writing Center assistance, in helping tutors to develop how to respond to students' needs, and in helping themselves to shape their students experiences with writing.

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Chapter 3: College-level Writing and Tutoring Practices/Protocols

College-level writing—what IS it?

"What makes a piece of writing 'college-level? Shouldn't a room full of college English teachers be able to come to some kind of consensus about what 'college-level' writing is—even though they teach at a variety of schools around the state? And are variations in standards from teacher to teacher, campus to campus, and state to state something we ought to pay some attention to or worry about?" Patrick Sullivan (2003)

Sullivan's questions point out how difficult it is for college writing instructors to come to consensus on what constitutes college level writing. Given the diversity of students, the various levels of composition taught at college, and the differing standards across teachers and institutions, instructors may see a reason not to arrive at consensus. The difficulty certainly belies the idea that one-size-fits-all practices will meet the needs of all students as "English*es*" (Wilson, 2012, p. 1) abound, and academic discourse evolves into "multiple master discourses" (p. 1). In studying composition, one continues to encounter blended and blurred notions of what written communication is and how it is supposed to be executed. And yet, Writing Centers are charged with developing tutoring protocols to help students become effective college writers who are members of an academic discourse community.

This chapter first explores some of the issues in college writing that demonstrate its problematic nature and looks at how the *Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing* (2011) informs current perspectives about composition. It then explores issues that Writing

Centers contend with as staff decide what assistance to offer students when delivering feedback as well as what training tutors might receive in tutoring practices. It briefly delves, for instance, into the complications that functional beginners in college face and discusses how Writing Centers might work with such students. In the chapter, three sample prompts and a student writing sample in response to one of the prompts are offered to demonstrate how a Writing Center tutor might tailor feedback to a student despite the challenges of defining college writing.

Problematic Nature of College Writing

College professionals acknowledge college composition as problematic, both in teaching its nuances to students and for students to master. Sullivan (2003) notes several inter-related observations about writing that make it difficult for professionals to come to consensus. First, Sullivan notes that the English language is unstable which makes reading, interpreting, and evaluating a "conditional enterprise" (p. 376). Essentially, there is no constant that can be universally applied in college composition when it involves various texts encountered by various readers, and is evaluated by a range of instructors from different backgrounds. How students, many of whom are underprepared, independently apply their reading and interpretation skills to a writing task that is text-based may be a function of their uneven preparation and prior experiences with language which causes them to produce awkward compositions before they proficiently produce the kind of compositions that their institutions recognize as academically sound. Instructors likely evaluate these uneven responses against a standard rubric, generated by their departments and/or themselves, which complicates assessment of uneven writing, i.e. making the instructor decide on the range of responses for what is considered, for example, advanced, proficient, or non-proficient (note: different "grading" may apply such as A-F, or some other system).

Sullivan confirms that applying standards in assessment necessitates accommodating flexible and major differences; in other words, flexibility may be the only constant that instructors apply when writers display a range of abilities. However, it is equally problematic to pinpoint what a flexible approach to standards looks like. More importantly, it seems essential to settle on a definition of college writing in open-admissions colleges offering developmental courses that lead to college-transfer courses and university experiences. To sum up, the awkward reality, and possible contradiction here, is that standards are needed to evaluate uneven writing in order to serve students—to place them in appropriate classes, to indicate when they meet requirements, and to establish the programs at their institutions that confirm their students' abilities when they pass classes and/or transfer to universities. Ultimately, high expectations from instructors have a "demonstrable, quantifiable effect on student outcomes" (p. 382), and maintaining rigorous standards in composition courses is an important priority to keep.

Students who find themselves taking multiple English classes may work with several instructors, or sometimes the same instructor teaching different course levels, immersing themselves in the way an English department's staff approaches writing instruction, and perhaps, by extension, how other disciplines approach writing if the department collaborates with others. This extension may, as Sullivan observes, indicate that shared standards about college-level writing are essential to having a meaningful dialogue among stakeholders. There is an anticipation that English instructors do not work in isolation but share concerns with instructors in other disciplines, too, suggesting they are challenged to adopt or apply similar standards that instructors in other disciplines will use. So, the issues that writers face are not just issues in their English courses. Instructors in other disciplines may rely on English instructors to resolve such issues of writing standards, though, since they may not work with their students the way that

English instructors do in composition classes where the focus is writing.

Furthermore, administrators are concerned about articulation between programs and transfer of students in the "fluid" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 383) backdrop of variable definitions of college-level writing. Knowing how composition is being taught across courses, and especially in transfer-level courses, is very important to administrators who have to support or change programs as they perceive what works or does not work for student progress and transfer. Administrators need to be convinced that the solutions that instructors devise for students will serve them for the long term. Several questions arise, then, for how students, instructors, and administrators understand writing issues before the Writing Center is brought into the picture. In the same way that college instructors differ in their views of what college writing is, college instructors and high school teachers also prioritize different aspects of academic writing. Such a divergence of opinion is presented in "What is College-level Writing?" vol. 2 by Thompson and Gallagher (2010). Thompson (a college instructor) and Gallagher (a high school teacher) present critiques of the same assignments that they both reviewed for three sample, graded papers. The authors note the college instructor's greater latitude when grading the papers while the high school instructor adheres more stringently to a task-specific rubric for the assignments. While the authors appreciate the high school teacher's internalizing of standards and the opportunity to individualize their instruction within their own classrooms, they acknowledge the college instructor's higher number of students and limited office hours available to record feedback/grade student work, and confer with students. Accountability is used in the two environments in different ways, and the authors suggest that students learned one "game" of writing rules and patterns in high school to "play" when they write, and face a whole new culture in college where their classes and coursework are not standardized and abide by the same rules

that they are used to, i.e. do not follow the same patterns and leave students to write "without a net" (Collier, 2014, p. 11). That potential variability suggests that the transition from high school to college can be a disorienting one for composition students because consensus among college instructors is difficult, though the concept is important to all stakeholders. Writing Centers may provide vital clarification of writing assignments and perhaps the way that they are graded, if students are transitioning from a game they once understood to a culture that they are not sure of. One tutor in the study reflects this dilemma, stating, "I attempt to get into the same 'language game' used by a student's instructor so that I can avoid misdirecting a student."

For some additional insight into what the writing culture of college might mean for students, in his closing arguments, Sullivan (2003) advocates that a college-level writer should be a college-level reader, writer, and thinker. He proposes standards that include the importance of students needing to read abstract content and to demonstrate skillful reading and thinking as a fundamental part of defining college level work. These views are important for Writing Center staff to keep in mind as they work with students who have to navigate reading and thinking demands related to their compositions. However, composition students have experienced varied preparations for college-level writing, college-level reading, and college-level thinking, prior experiences that are worth noting as possible complications (note: these concerns have been briefly mentioned in Chapter 2 but are beyond the scope of this study).

Current frames for composition

The most current definition of college composition, the *Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing* (2011), delineates what students need to know and be able to do as college-ready writers. This document attempts to provide a foundation for discussions about writing and rhetorical strategies that are taught at the post-secondary level, and were developed by both two-

year and four-year college faculty. It details intellectual and practical approaches to writing by identifying eight habits of mind: Curiosity, Openness, Engagement, Creativity, Persistence, Responsibility, Flexibility, and Metacognition.

The *Framework* discusses each of these elements separately. First of all is Curiosity – "the desire to know more about the world" (p. 4). This element is not one that suggests "wonder" on the students' part; it is rather a rigorous habit of inquiry that involves awareness of multiple audiences, research for authoritative information and evaluation of its value, and communicating with appropriate conventions within different disciplines. Within the context of writing, curiosity helps a student develop a strong purpose, or habit of mind, in writing. Next is Openness – "the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world" (p. 4). This habit of mind involves students' willingness to examine their own perspectives in comparison to others, to practice expressing themselves in different ways, and to receive feedback from peers and instructors. The concept of openness appears to imply a willingness to change and/or reconsider current habits and ways of writing through others' perspectives.

The *Framework* mentions two other related elements, Engagement and Creativity. Engagement means "a sense of investment and involvement in learning" (p. 4). These elements involve considerable synthesis as the students connect their own and others' thoughts, find new meanings and/or build new ones, and act upon findings. Their written communication should link their motivation and performance (Lesgold & Welch-Ross, 2012). Creativity indicates "the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas" (p. 4-5). The key word is "novel" in that students appear to experiment with the methods they may use to investigate topics, present ideas, and evaluate them. The F*ramework* uses the word "risk" to explain this element, advocating for students to step outside of their comfort zones in their

learning.

The *Framework* next mentions Persistence and Responsibility. Persistence, "the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects" (p. 5), means that students are expected to commit to, "grapple with," and follow-through a demanding task to completion. Additionally, they are expected to "consistently" avail themselves of feedback on their work from both peers and instructors. It may be worth mentioning at this point that the National Council of Teachers of English (2013) resolved that effective and meaningful feedback involves an authentic audience, not automated, online scoring. The advocacy for person-to-person interaction during feedback becomes evident here and relates directly to the activities of Writing Centers. The *Framework* appears to support this position, as well. When addressing Responsibility, "the ability to take ownership of one's actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others" (p. 5), the *Framework* specifies that students are to play a role in their learning, act on learning that is shared, and document properly others' ideas. This suggests that students should incorporate others' knowledge, work collaboratively, and acknowledge others' contributions. It's clear that research methods play an important part in the *Framework*. Notably, these two elements of the *Framework* appear to support the social nature of writing which is also influenced by students' early educational experiences and instructors' backgrounds and traditions (Smagorinsky, 2013).

The last two elements, Flexibility and Metacognition, influence students' choices when they write. Flexibility indicates "the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands" (p.5). Specifically, students are to use multiple approaches to assignments, taking into consideration the task, purpose and audience, while following the required conventions that are dependent on discipline and context. Lastly, Metacognition, defined as "the ability to reflect on

one's own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge" (p. 5), means students will examine, reflect upon, improve, and connect their writing performance, most specifically connecting their "choices in text" to their intended purposes and intended audiences. In other words, they must be able to explain and understand their rhetorical choices. Together, the eight habits contribute to a successful approach to post-secondary writing.

The *Framework* also discusses how post-secondary teachers can foster these habits of mind by designing writing assignments with authentic audiences and purposes in mind, and with some degree of flexibility in how students are to accomplish these writing tasks. In particular, instructors are advised to design assignments that include Rhetorical Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Writing Processes, Knowledge of Conventions, and Abilities to Compose in Multiple Environments.

First, in addressing Rhetorical knowledge, "the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts" (p. 6), composition teachers provide opportunities for students to learn and practice rhetorical concepts (i.e. purpose, genre, etc.) through various texts that they read and compose. The instructor is responsible for guiding students through rhetorical strategies like appeals, reasoning, fallacies, etc. in reading texts and then designing appropriate writing prompts that direct students to incorporate rhetorical variety like exposition, narration, persuasion, etc., something that students may or may not be comfortable doing if the rhetorical strategies are unfamiliar to them. To foster Critical Thinking, teachers help students develop "the ability to analyze a situation or text, and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis, through writing, reading, and research" (p. 7). Instructors need to require that students research, evaluate, synthesize, use multiple perspectives, challenge assumptions, and move past superficial understanding. By having students use Flexible

Writing Processes, using "multiple strategies to approach and undertake writing and research" (p. 8), teachers have students generate writing that evolves through many stages to produce quality assignments that are appropriate to discipline and context.

As teachers help students acquire Knowledge of Conventions, students learn "the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing" (p. 9). This area involves correctness and form, highly relevant issues according to the *Framework*, and ones that students with various levels of proficiency may have difficulty navigating. Tutors in Writing Centers recognize the anxiety students may face regarding correct form and the opportunity they have to assist students to understand how to do so (Kennell, 2015). By also having students Compose in Multiple Environments, instructors give students practice "using traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies" (p. 10). In today's college environment, students are guided to use technology responsibly, strategically, selectively, and analytically. This area might actually challenge some instructors who may not feel as proficient as their students with some technologies.

Clearly, Writing Centers can assist students in acquiring and practicing these habits of mind. Writing Center staff may also refer to these habits to guide their development of strategies for writers. The strategies in the *Framework* develop the requisite knowledge of rhetoric and the writing process. As a foundation for composition, the *Framework* articulates the criteria which teachers need to familiarize their students with and keep in mind when designing their course assignments. These articulated criteria provide valuable guidelines for Writing Center staff to develop their strategies for providing feedback to students on their writing, an element that appears frequently in the *Framework*.

In the Writing Center

Helping writers: Issues with utilizing assistance

> *"The first time I went to the Writing Center, I wasn't sure what to expect. I thought the tutor wasn't going to understand how to help me with my paper, but he did." --college-transfer student*

Writing Center assistance is provided in many ways to help students attain post-secondary success as academic writers, yet students may not understand why they should utilize that assistance. In a summary of "A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success," Gonzalez (2013) highlights this concern because assistance programs are usually not mandatory. Such is the case with many Writing Centers which are not mandated for students to attend (discussed further in Chapter 4). Gonzalez notes that remediation curtails transfer and graduation plans or results in drop-outs. The challenge suggested by the report is for colleges to require participation in learning programs that are not specifically identified as remedial to be more helpful to students who may not seek participation on their own. Writing Centers that have a voluntary attendance model may consider some of these factors in their assessment of their own efficacy. Such issues will be considered in Chapter 6.

Additional findings about student engagement in the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) (2010) reveal that a majority of students are disinclined to ask for help or use resources for help either as part-time (73%) or full-time (61%) students (percentages are from the SENSE, not this study). Student responses in the SENSE indicate that they rely on the instructor to provide activities to elicit participation as students will not initiate these on their own. Instructors in the classroom and in the Writing Center who recognize students' hesitations can plan interventions and collaborations to contribute to student self-confidence, maximizing the impact that the Writing Center can have on student success. This reality makes necessary the

development of tutor protocols to address the issues in the *Framework* to assure student progress.

Helping writers: The nature of Writing Center assistance

> *"Training is a vital instrument that is orchestrated during weekly meetings or on one-on-one basis. Such crucial time allows for necessary self-reflection that ultimately is key in providing overall tutoring improvement." --tutor*

With an understanding that college composition is complex, interdisciplinary, and flexible while it is still governed by rules of academic discourse that may be unfamiliar to students, Writing Center staff have to decide what their assistance will entail. Lipsky (2011) and Chilbert (2008) examine the assumptions that the instructor is the assessor while the tutor performs as a consultant in composition issues. Lipsky explores the role of the tutor as an assessor of student learning, too, who can provide valuable insight regarding student work. Tutors are exposed to ways of identifying what is and is not adequate evidence of learning, using dialogue, student reflection, notes, and questioning. For instance, as one tutor in the study offers as an example:

> "When I am tutoring, if I get an unfamiliar reading or prompt, I ask the student to summarize it for me as I skim it. If they have a hard time doing this, I know there is confusion with it, and I know that's what we should focus on. I also look for possible misunderstandings, so I will ask questions. For example, 'You said _____, but here on page 2 I see _____. What am I missing?'"

Designing courses that are linked to a proactive tutoring model helps students remove the association of tutoring with "remediation or failure" (p. 70). A hallmark, then, of Writing Center assistance is the affordance of feedback from an expert. In many instances, staff have implemented a protocol for feedback that is usually exchanged in a face-to-face conference with a tutor. One-on-one, face to face tutoring with all students who participate, both strong and weak

writers, at a location separate from the classroom is a common feature of many Writing Centers. Lipsky (2011) describes an information processing model which shows learning progressing through three stages: taking in information; sorting and modifying the information; and storing the information into long-term memory for retrieval. The tutor is in a position to interact with students and encourage them to rehearse the strategies that they discuss at each of these stages.

Johnson, Garza, and Ballmer (2009) demonstrate the impact of well-designed workshops and effective collaborations of Writing Center staff and faculty to minimize students' encounters with "Assignments from Hell" (Harris, 1999). This label highlights the importance of developing appropriate prompts and reading selections (Bunn, 2013). Johnson, Garza, and Ballmer (2009) argue for better pathways for transition to mainstream classes with the use of contracts and collaborations with the Writing Center that can help stigmatized students emerge from a crippling culture that they may perceive their college composition courses to represent. The Writing Center plays an essential role in helping underprepared students win the "game" that they play alone when working on their writing independently. But how effective can the Writing Center tutor be? There are still some questions about the services they provide—we will take a closer look at conferencing protocol later in this chapter to see what some questions about a service might entail.

Tutor training for peer tutors (Babcock & Thonus, 2012) frequently involves a recommendation by an instructor to the program and a several-weeks-long training commitment. The Writing Center coordinator may hold orientation sessions for tutors where the group trains with various writing prompts, written responses, and student scenarios (Lipsky, 2011; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2015). First, training involves working with different prompts for different courses to understand the different levels of student

performance and types of writing assignments that they'll be offering feedback upon. Understanding the prompts and what instructors require is an important initial step in the tutoring process. This stage will allow tutors to see how prompts may include very detailed directions for students as well as some vague ones. These discussions will entail very frank and thorough explorations of how the tutor needs to pick up on what the prompt reveals about the instructors' values and identify what a writer will need to produce to satisfy requirements. If rubrics are in place for a department, tutors will also look at their criteria and how the prompts relate to the rubrics, as well as how students are prompted to fulfill the criteria in the rubrics. This process of gaining an overview of a department's writing program can take some time.

Additional differentiation in training may occur if tutors are being designated to assist writers for a certain level (i.e. developmental, college-transfer, or advanced) (Rafoth, 2005). At this point, tutors will start working with student responses that present a range of proficiencies for various levels or for a targeted level in their training. A tutor will read an assignment (a draft, an outline) with a student and offer feedback. How the tutor addresses this opportunity and establishes a certain kind of environment for students influences the students' acceptance or resistance to that assistance. In training to do so, the coordinator will help the tutors to make observations about the papers for higher order concerns (i.e. HOCs like thesis, organization, and development) and lower order concerns (i.e. LOCs like sentence structure and grammar). Tutors will discuss how to prioritize these concerns for student papers, and then explore the strategies to work with students by providing feedback. This area may involve establishing the protocols to follow that will be used to respond to students.

One kind of protocol may involve having students fill out a questionnaire before they meet with a tutor. This questionnaire may help students focus on particular issues and/or

identify certain areas to start a conference with so that tutors do not have to guess where to begin. If students do not have such a document, the protocol may involve the tutor starting the conference session with questions to focus the student's attention. On the other hand, the protocol may specify that students are to generate their own questions for a conference. One tutor in the study notes this can become difficult: "Typically students will say they understand, but may be hesitant to ask follow up questions." Once a conference starts, the tutor may either read through the paper silently and determine what areas to explore for discussion, or the student may have to read the paper aloud while the tutor pauses at certain places to ask the student to clarify an issue or to offer feedback. Lipsky (2011) cautions that tutors need to be aware of how much they are talking during a session so that they do not dominate the session and discourage the student's participation. Lipsky also notes how important it is to assist students with reading, which is relevant in helping students who are intimidated by, bored with, or unprepared to engage in complex reading. This concern highlights the need for questioning skills and think time on the tutor's part to prod students into more active participation. Additionally, either the tutor or the student may write directly on the document; usually the students are required to put the discussion points into their own paper to engage their participation in the conference.

Throughout the conference, the tutor needs to maintain flexibility in offering feedback (Babcock & Thonus, 2012), suggesting that tutors also need to know how to direct students to use resources beyond the conference, such as physical handbooks and online materials. This recommendation about resources brings up a valuable point: how are tutors prepared to help their students locate and consult assistance? As professionals, they are in an important position that greatly complements instruction and gives students additional tools beyond the conference and

their classrooms. When the conference is completed, the students may then be required to summarize the conference and the strategies that they are to consider for revision, and may or may not have to provide proof to the tutor before they leave the Writing Center that they understand a recommendation by either starting the revision process or filling out an exit-questionnaire.

In addition to working with student papers in this way, the training might also involve discussions and modeling of scenarios with specific types of students, i.e. reluctant, disengaged, high-anxiety, language learner, passive, hostile, in search of proof-reading only, older, or unfamiliar with assignment topics, and demanding, etc. In such cases, a variety of learning strategies are needed for the diverse needs of learners including empathy, demeanor, directness, and silence. Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) caution tutors from allowing students to become dependent on certain kinds of tutoring assistance. The authors present student "characters" including those who appear to have plagiarized and those who have "perfect" papers that do not need the tutor's help in scenarios that invite evaluation. The goal of the training through scenarios is to help tutors shape their delivery of feedback for students and recognize the features of successful feedback. The tutor's feedback can still benefit from additional input; as some tutors in the study mentioned, "Often the students don't return the corrected paper and don't keep it so I can view it," and "When I see a student that I have helped, I will ask them the grade and feedback they received on the assignment we worked on." The dialogue these tutors would like to see extends beyond the conference with the student and into the classroom, also.

What should feedback look like?

> *"Sometimes students don't get the kind of help they want, usually extensive grammar help."* --instructor
>
> *"Students hear an idea explained in a new way. Students watch an academic reader read. Students are forced to analyze their own processes."*--instructor

Feedback has various forms for college composition students. Underwood and Tregidgo (2006) review the subject of feedback from several perspectives. A key concept they emphasize is how feedback can control student writing whether students feel compelled to change their writing after feedback or are not receptive to the feedback. One of their findings is that feedback and grading appear to be more effective if kept separate because students see the feedback as "grade justification" (p. 75), meaning that the resulting comments/advice are perceived as an assessment rather than assistance. Ketter and Hunter (1997) have also explored this distinction of graded and non-graded feedback in influencing student attitudes toward writing. Teachers are split on whether to attend to mechanics more or to more global issues; students are broadly spread in their preferences for mechanical or global commentary, finding one type useful if they happen to want that type of feedback and dismissing the other. Effects of feedback on revision are mixed, too, though content-feedback results in slightly more changes, not necessarily improvement. The writer's stage of writing when feedback is offered can be important, but moreso is the amount of emphasis that instructors place on the feedback (i.e. correction of mechanics vs. comment on content) when the students submit assignments that they have taken to the Writing Center. What emerges for the researchers is that the tone of the feedback is more effective if it puts the locus of control in the students' hands, and if it is less directive and more facilitative (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013).

The researchers identify two types of feedback that students prefer—positive and

constructive. Though preferred, some feedback that students want and sometimes receive does not always produce better writing. First, students perceive that specific indications from the instructor about how to improve the paper are most helpful. Additionally, the availability of models for the students to use in measuring their own writing helps them generate their own feedback, indicating that instructors need to consider the substantial effect that their feedback can have on students as well as what model writing samples would support their students' efforts. Writing Center tutors may also explore model papers as they train to work with writers and decide if a model is appropriate to show to a student at a certain point or if it is more relevant to work just with the students' writing.

Samples that illustrate Writing Center Practices

Understanding prompts and how they reflect what instructors value

Sometimes assignments pose a challenge for even the most proficient tutors and students. Departments with several full-time and adjunct faculty teaching multiple course levels with various pedagogical approaches can generate a range of prompts that tutors have to help students address. As one tutor in the study explains in detail how decisions about what to do in a conferencing session, we see the presence of several strategies at work:

> "Prompt: 1) Ask the student to present the prompt for a shared review, if possible, 2) if not, ask the student to explain the requirements and ask follow up questions, 3) if there is still confusion, I survey others in the lab to find if anyone is familiar with the prompt/assignment. 4) failing all of these I would a) address general writing issues and the prompt to the best of our understanding and b) encourage the student to see their instructor and/or return to the Writing Center again, with the prompt. Reading: the familiarity with the reading is often not

necessary. Depending on the writing prompt, the student's writing should provide the necessary information about the reading material."

Tutors clearly have several options to start working with a student on a prompt. Some examples of typical writing prompts include the following, which show increasing demands on writers with specific requirements as the students move from developmental to college-transfer to advanced levels.

Developmental level Sample Prompt

Childhood

Task: In several of our readings from our first unit on childhood, there is a change from childhood innocence to self-discovery. Compare at least three works from this unit as they relate to that change. What similarities or differences do the characters go through?

Be sure to give:

- an informative title;
- an opening with interest;
- consideration of audience;
- a clear thesis that states position;
- well-considered academic word choice and tone;
- avoiding subjective "I" needlessly;
- avoiding "dead" words like "it" or "things";
- transitions between ideas;
- supporting evidence/details/specificity/authority/fact/data, etc.;
- using researched material accurately when referencing;
- commentary as demonstration of your developing skills in using research to forward/prove your thesis;
- a conclusive ending

Be specific and make direct references to the text (quoting " " and giving page number.)

(3-4 pages), researched using class readings, cited in text by page number—include works cited (refer to MLA). Show all drafts, pre-writes, and notes for full credit (papers that show no revision process may not receive full credit).

In order to respond to this prompt**, the student** must understand multi-paragraph essay structure, thesis formation, the readings in the unit, MLA format, and how references to the readings are to be presented in the text. Additionally, the student must understand some compare/contrast techniques in writing to reach observations about "the change from childhood innocence to self-discovery" in the selections and be able to distinguish between summarizing the readings and analyzing them. The student will also need to understand how to write about the similarities and differences in the readings among characters, situations, and actions.

The tutor will notice the instructor's many points in the checklist for students to follow and will need to look for these in the student's writing (sample paper included below). The instructor has included very specific do's and don't's related to language, structure, and rhetorical conventions and strategies which the student may or may not be familiar with (i.e. academic word choice and tone), meaning the tutor may need to not only explain but provide examples. The tutor must be able to discern how references to the readings in the student's writing reflect summary vs. analysis to support the concept of the "self-discovery." The tutor will need to look for the student's understanding of "change." The tutor will need to address how the student includes some comparison/contrast writing strategies. The tutor will also need to identify how the student works with evidence and commentary for the paper. The directions incorporate many of the issues raised in the *Framework* for students to practice such as Curiosity, Engagement, Persistence, Flexibility, Rhetorical Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Writing Process, and Knowledge of Conventions.

College level Prompt

Topic: Unit 1: Learning Power

Context: Our first unit contains several texts exploring many points of view on the theme of "learning power", one of the powerful myths about educational empowerment "surrounded by a rich legacy of cultural stories" (Colombo, Cullen, and Lisle, 7). As our editors continue to observe:

> Americans tend to see schooling as a valuable experience that unites us in a common culture and helps us bring out the best in ourselves; yet at the same time, we suspect that formal classroom instruction stifles creativity and chokes off natural intelligence and enthusiasm. These contradictions infuse our history, literature, and popular culture; they're so much a part of our thinking that we tend to take them for granted, unaware of their inconsistencies. (6)

Cite three essays from our text and at least one outside source that portray treatments of education/learning. Consider consulting:

the media (movies, television, commercials),
magazines,
newspapers,

websites,
internet (articles such as those from Proquest).

Task: Given the recent treatment of education in the 4 sources you select for the paper, what are the contradictions that we take for granted and are unaware of? In light of these inconsistencies, will we likely value education more, or be suspicious about education more? Why?

Notice that you are, indeed, presenting **both** sides of the issue regarding the central question, but that you must decide whether value or suspicion prevails.

- Formulate a strong thesis in your intro (intro identifies the pieces used, too).
- Give each body paragraph a topic sentence that guides the paragraph and its content, connecting the paragraph to the thesis.
- Provide ample examples, specific detail, and clear references to the pieces you are discussing.
- Document (give citations) correctly.
- Bring paper to closure.
- Include works cited of the sources.

Sample use of material:

We are invited to contemplate the relevance of the exact meaning of educational struggle, "But like all strong magic, it exacts a price" (Rose 156).

Other observations call attention to issues claiming that "The ability to conduct research is 'probably the most essential skill [today's students] can have,' says Julie Walker, executive director of the American Association of School Librarians" (Moore 131).

Gatto urges readers to "Challenge your kids with plenty of solitude" (149) for them to learn how to be constructive when alone.

The student must understand the audience for the paper (i.e. who the "we" in the prompt refers to), the readings on the topic, argumentative/persuasive writing to address "both sides" of the issue in the prompt, multi-paragraph essay structure, how to research sources, how to use references to both visual and verbal sources to support an argument, and MLA format (which the instructor has provided multiple models of citations for). The responsibility to select appropriate sources is another *Framework* element the student must be mindful of.

The tutor will notice the instructor's checklist specifies both structural and rhetorical elements and that the research suggestions include a range of verbal and visual genres that the student will have to select effectively. The tutor must be able to discern how the student identifies "inconsistencies" and "contradictions" and is using varied sources to support both sides of the

argument. The tutor will need to observe how the student follows the prompt's checklist and clarifies a position about value or suspicion. The tutor will also need to consider the student's choices of sources for how effectively they address the prompt, and how examples are embedded. Again, a number of elements from the *Framework* have been included in this prompt, such as Curiosity, Engagement, Persistence, Flexibility, Rhetorical Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Writing Process, and Knowledge of Conventions.

Advanced level Prompt

Topic: Rhetorical Analysis Paper 2

For this paper, consult CTRW ch. 5 for the authors' example and a student sample of a written analysis of an argument. Make note of the checklists offered on pages 103, 182, and 191 to help you organize your approach.

Choose ONE of the following pieces from Ch 3 or Ch. 5 for the topic of your analysis:

Fish "When 'Identity Politics' Is Rational 111 Carroll "If Poison Gas Can Go, Why Not Nukes?" 114
Jacoby "Bring Back Flogging" 192 Rogers "Hiding in Plain Sight" 133
Singer "Animal Liberation" 205 Takaki "The Harmful Myth of Asian Superiority" p.122
Wilson "Just Take Away Their Guns" p. 124 Satel "Death's Waiting List" 128
Jimenez "Against the Odds, and Against the Common Good" p. 116
Raya "It's Hard Enough Being Me" p. 119 Jones "Violent Media Is Good for Kids" 195
Taylor and Taylor "Is It Possible to Be a Conscientious Meat Eater?" 199

Task: You will critique how the author

- engages reader (audience) interest
- includes evidence (identify the evidence as example, illustration, anecdote, hypothetical, fact, statistic, authority, etc.) and what effectiveness it has
- includes counterargument and rebuttal
- communicates logos (logic), ethos (ethics), or pathos (emotion)
- uses word choice and tone
- employs assumptions

Ultimately, can a reader have confidence that the author has presented the issue clearly, accurately, and fairly?

5 pgs, researched, cited in text—include works cited (refer to MLA). Include all drafts, pre-writes, and notes for full credit (papers that show no revision process may not receive full credit). Be sure to give:

- A formal outline as cover sheet
- an informative title;
- an opening with interest to orient the reader;
- establish the context of evaluating argument
- consideration of your audience;
- a clear thesis to express the evaluation of the author's strategies
- well-considered academic word choice and tone;
- avoiding subjective "I" needlessly;
- avoiding "dead" words like "it" or "things";
- transitions between ideas;
- supporting evidence/details/specificity/authority/fact/data, etc. (quoting/paraphrasing);
- using researched material accurately when referencing (documenting using MLA);
- commentary as demonstration of your developing skills in using research to forward/prove your thesis;
- counter-arguments;
- response to counter-arguments;
- a conclusive ending about the author's success/shortcomings

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The student must follow two very specific checklists to meet the requirements for the prompt. The student needs to understand the rhetorical requirements in both checklists, especially the nomenclature of the analytical components and how to detect them in the reading. Additionally, the student needs to understand how to formulate an evaluation that follows the rhetorical format of argument, counter-argument, and rebuttal. The student needs to understand MLA format and formal outlining.

The tutor will also notice the two detailed checklists and must also know the nomenclature of analytical components and be able to discern what the student understands, and whether the student has accurately identified the components with clear examples and references to support an evaluation. The tutor needs to observe the student's writing for summary vs. analysis and to what extent the student is using references to the writing to support the evaluation of whether the author has "presented the issue clearly, accurately, and fairly." The tutor may have to gauge how accurately the student has read the piece to write a sustained, critical analysis. The elements of

the *Framework* are applied to this assignment as well such as Rhetorical Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Responsibility, Flexibility, and Knowledge of Conventions.

The challenge given to tutors to manage such a scope of prompts necessitates robust Writing Center staff efforts to meet this demand. Some tutors will find themselves addressing the full range of course levels throughout a session while others may only deal with the same course level throughout a session. Dvorak, Bruce, and Lutkewitte (2012) explore the benefits of pairing of students with one-on-one tutors designated to help them for their first-year composition course "on location," meaning the tutors come to the students' classrooms. Student responses were overwhelmingly positive, and when the researchers looked at student work, the samples suggested the benefit of tutoring that is targeted for a particular course. Targeted tutoring may make the work of the Writing Center, in light of diverse writing prompts, more manageable.

Sample protocol

> *"An obstacle to follow up is that when you meet once a week and are a part time member of staff then you are not as available for students to run by Writing Center instructor ideas with you. It has to be done via the internet, which many students do not do. If a students has worked with an instructor for the rough draft, then we can discuss any issues or questions with their feedback during the peer review session in class."—instructor*

To create a clearer picture of a tutorial session, a student writing sample in response to the developmental prompt about childhood on page 66 is reproduced with notations that illustrate some possible feedback from a tutor. While this example will not explore all potential directions that a one-on-one conference may go in, it presents some helpful illustrations of the complex feedback process that tutors and students engage in. In this example, we see:

- some potential questions that a tutor may pose,
- areas in the writing that the tutor may identify as fulfilling the assignment,

- areas in the writing that the tutor notices are not fulfilling the assignment effectively,
- what the tutor might suggest for the student to address,
- and possible student response.

Additional sample protocols for a college-transfer paper and advanced paper are included in the appendix (Appendix B).

Developmental student writing sample to Childhood prompt

Background: Mandatory attendance in the Writing Center is required for the developmental course students to review each of their essay assignments (a "lab" time equivalent to 2 hours a week is added to the course). The course instructor and tutor are not the same person but are both faculty in the English Department. Students in the course are primarily recent high school graduates or returning adult students—they have tested into developmental writing courses. This course is one level below college-level writing. Conferences are flexible in time intervals lasting 5-30 minutes.

Tutor questions to start the conference: What would you like to look at in your essay?—Where do you think you have some questions/trouble?—What part(s) do you think we need to focus on for our conference today that would be most helpful to you?

Student response at the start of the conference: "I think I did okay. I just need to go over the grammar and stuff to see if it sounds okay. Maybe my examples. I don't know."

The tutor suggests that they review the paper from the beginning with the student reading the paper out loud. They pause after each paragraph and the tutor asks the student to work.

Painful Change

Have you ever noticed several changes in your life? Have you ever wondered how these changes happened? As is known to all, life is a long journey, which is full of changes. The most important change is the change of characters. While Cantwell learns to move on by selling her home where past memories hunt her in "The Burden of a Happy Childhood", Sharon describes her child's birthday where "generals" play war with children's future in "Rites of Passage". While Winn describes a world where children innocence does no longer exist because of technology in "The End of Play", Norris highlights how the world of children becomes invaded by adult affairs in "A Child of Crack". However, characters don't change by themselves. They are changed by the outside factors. **The tutor notices the student is opening informally and will ask the student if this choice is the best way to open a focused analysis on the time of childhood. The tutor notes that the student needs this focus on childhood and might revisit**

the opening statements. While the student's writing mentions changes and characters, these two concepts are not fully explained as important. The student briefly lists four pieces and what they are about, leading to a statement about change and a possible thesis that outside factors change characters. The tutor may engage the student in a conversation to clarify why s/he did not name the outside factors so that s/he can consider revising the thesis as well as clarify how the four choices are connected to influence. The tutor will encourage the student to look back at the prompt and think about the specific change from innocence to self-discovery that the student is to analyze. The student may or may not be able to articulate why s/he started with these approaches and may realize that s/he needs to rework the thesis to be more specific. At this point, the tutor might ask the student to revise the thesis and the intro and return for further conferencing.

Innocence, which is defined as "lack of knowledge and experience of the world, especially of evil or unpleasant things", is a universal treasure in everyone's childhood. Little Mary sit in a "hard cut-velvet-upholstered chair", monitoring the passersby (54). As well, Sharon's little son pretended he was a general with childish voice. Furthermore, the children in Marie's passage followed "certain timeless patterns of manipulation and exploration" (75) when they were infants and toddlers. Besides, little Dooney in Norris's work lived a pure and happy life before his parents got addicted to drugs. It is easy to notice that all those figures had a period of innocence in their early life. **The tutor notices the student's topic sentence includes an unreferenced definition of innocence and states that this idea is "treasured in everyone's childhood." The tutor likely will ask the student how this effectively connects to the student's existing thesis on change and how this relates to the prompt about self-discovery. The following sentences appear to summarize how innocence applied to some of the stories with a few quotes, and the tutor might ask the student to look at the how each is possibly not addressing the central directive of the prompt to talk about self-discovery. The last sentence in the paragraph confirms that innocence exists in the examples but does not analyze them or connect to the prompt/the thesis required. The student may be able to articulate that s/he understands the term innocence as a starting point in the characters' lives, but hasn't exactly established the issue about self-discovery. S/he may realize that the examples at this point are insertions more than illustrations that need further discussions to clarify in the context of self-discovery. The tutor might direct the student to work with some of the possible revisions they just discussed, perhaps providing a review of paragraph structure with topic sentence, development, and closing, and ask the student to return for further conferencing.**

Unfortunately, innocence was invaded by outside factors. Roles in those works changed to self-discovery after going through a passage, which is filled with brambles. Death is the most common factor to push our characters to change. Since nobody will live forever, we will eventually meet a moment when our relatives pass away, leaving a happy childhood behind their death. Mary Cantwell demonstrates that she is once immured in her happy childhood (54). In her memories, her grandmother is still sitting in a rocker, seeing the view out of the window and her grandfather is still sluicing her sister and her with the garden hose (54). However, they die, which forces Mary to face the society straightly by herself. Death pushes her to change. **The tutor notices the student has developed one focused example in this paragraph and has connected the topic sentence to the previous paragraph about innocence with awkward word choice in "invaded." The tutor will ask the student if s/he thinks there are more**

helpful ways to help transition between the paragraphs. Though the student mentions change through a passage of self-discovery, the topic switches drastically to death; the connection is not made clear. The character's end of childhood through another's death and facing "society straightly" is not attached to the prompt about self-discovery. The tutor notes that the student has identified an influential factor but is not analyzing it fully. The student may be able to work on more explanations as s/he talk to the tutor about this example and sees how it relates to what the prompt is asking for. The tutor may encourage the student to work with revisions, perhaps pointing out a page/website that s/he can consult about transitional strategies and return for more conferencing.

Technology can also be a factor to push our characters toward change. Televisions and video games fill normal life. Little boys in "Rites of Passage" are influenced by Hollywood films. They learn the behaviors of the heroes and the plots in the stories and something else related to cruelty of the society. Marie, the author of "The End of Play", believes that owing to technology, "today children's occupations do not differ greatly from adult diversions" (75). In Marie's opinion, "video games are adult-created mechanisms" (77), which means these games are not appropriate to little children. Children cannot distinguish harmful information clearly when they use technology, so they just absorb everything. Bad influences of technology will take part in the formation of children's characters. **The tutor notices the student is adhering to the term "change" but has an abrupt paragraph transition here instead of one that logically flows from the previous one. Two examples the student uses are directly related to the ideas about technology affecting children, yet the ideas are not analyzed fully for either example, instead being generalized. The student ends with the idea that bad technology forms children's characters, but the idea of self-discovery needs further development. The tutor will try to help the student see the need to be more specific. The student may realize that s/he needs to include more information and discussion to express what s/he is thinking. The tutor may encourage the student to revisit the texts before working with revisions in this paragraph, and then return for more conferencing.**

Certainly, social environment can't be missed. Marie says, "Children's greater exposure to adult realities, their knowledge of adult sexuality, for instance, might make them more sophisticated, less likely to play like children" (76). The thickset 6-year-old child, Dooney Waters, in "A child for Crack" can be an example. Drugs, addicted people, helpless police and social workers formed Dooney's unfortunate life. He is just like Liz Murray in "Homeless to Harvard", experiencing the extreme dark childhood and learning to survive. **The tutor notices that this short paragraph might be problematic for the paper. While the student has identified an influential factor, "social environment," the clipped topic sentence does not connect the concept clearly to the prompt or thesis. The examples are including comparison/contrast but are unexplained and unanalyzed. The student may realize that this paragraph will benefit from further exploration and discussion. The tutor may again encourage the student to return to the texts before working on revision, perhaps give a review of compare/contrast writing strategies, and ask the student to return for more conferencing.**

With more and more challenges appear in the society, adults put strong pressure on children's education. "Kindergarten, traditionally a playful port of entry into formal school, is becoming more academic, with children being taught specific skills, taking tests, and occasionally even having homework," mentioned in "The End of Play" (79). Nowadays,

children in kindergarten learn the knowledge which people learnt in primary schools before. This pressure, which is from society, pushes children to leave out real childhood and grow up quickly. **The tutor notices that this paragraph is closer to what the prompt seems to be asking for as the student uses the term "pressure" and identifies a specific factor. The quote illustrates what the topic sentence indicates, and the commentary follows logically. Additional development of both examples and commentary will make the paragraph a stronger one in answer to the prompt in discussion self-discovery. The student may be able to see how this paragraph differs from the others enough to see it a more successful way to go about the writing task. The tutor will ask the student to work with the piece more to pull in specific evidence and commentary that leads up to the closing sentence more effectively.**

Because of all outside factors, the change from innocence to self-discovery happened, but in different ways. Mary realizes that she can't find childhood again because what she is looking for is unconditional love (54). Therefore, she is clever to give up the search early on. She sells her 77-year-old house in order to move forward to her future with confidence and self-discovery. And the boys in "Rites of Passage" are descripted as "Hand in pockets, they stand around jostling, jockeying for place, small fights breaking out and calming" (27). Aggressive characters have been formed. Children in "The End of Play" are involved in adult competitive world too early, which makes them act like tired businessmen. They will think that their only aim is to defeat each other because competitive perception have been rooted in their mind. Dooney, the boy living in a dysfunctional apartment, after experiencing hurtful harm and dark childhood, becomes numb about danger. Marie shows that when Dooney sees his brother blooding, he "watched quietly, sucking his thumb" (48). Moreover, he is mature enough to point out sharply about the helpless police and social workers. "'Everybody knows about the drugs at my house,' he said with a matter-of-fact tone not common to a first-grader. Each sentence was accompanied by an adult-like gesture" (49). Even worse, Dooney feels desperate about his future. "I don't want to sell drugs, but I will probably have to" (52). **The tutor notices the student is attempting to show how all the sources illustrate different ways that the characters change. Absence of transitions between ideas make the paragraph difficult to follow, especially since examples/quotes are highlighted more than discussion. The paragraph's ending with a quote can be problematic, so the student may need to devise a stronger way of ending the paragraph. The student may be able to see the organization of this paragraph is problematic and that s/he needs to break up the material with more discussion of the examples and clearer associations with self-discovery. The tutor may ask the student to consider dividing the paragraph first, reviewing the ideas about paragraph structure, and then revising, then return for further conferencing.**

In sum, everyone will change from childhood innocence to self-discovery by the push of outside factors, such as death, technology and social environment. No matter how the change happens, it has a painful process. All we have to do is to face the factors bravely and find a correct way in the complex vortex.
The tutor sees the effort to sum up the essay with brief mention of the three factors that the student analyzed. The concept of pain has not been mentioned specifically, so the tutor may see an opportunity to encourage the student to revisit the analysis in the paper from this perspective, as well as the next concept of bravery. These issues may offer the student additional ways to organize the paper. The student may recognize the new concepts in the closure and how they might be useful in the body of the paper. The tutor may or may not

ask the student to go back through the paper before proceeding with any revision of the closure to see if s/he can work with the concepts of pain and bravery as vehicles of self-discovery in the examples the student has included in the body.

Overall: The tutor opted to have the student work with one paragraph at a time. There are certainly other ways that the conference could have been structured but making smaller tasks manageable before the conference continued seemed less overwhelming for the student. The tutor hopes the student will see the necessity of expanding the focus on change to one that also includes self-discovery to fully answer the prompt. The tutor will try to help the student formulate a more specific thesis, and will try to help the student push the discussions that identify change to also talking about how they involve/illustrate self-discovery. The tutor will point out the concepts the student brought in about pain and bravery at the end with the possibility of having the student incorporate these into the connections to self-discovery. This kind of feedback is focusing on the substance and content of the essay and not the areas of sentence clarity and quote formatting (which the student is addressing with some accuracy).

Summary

College-level writing is difficult for instructors and tutors to define. While the *Framework* delineates the features that college-level writing should be able to demonstrate, the guidelines reflect the complexity of inter-related skills that students need to work with in their writing: research, reading, critical thinking, collaboration, correctness, and multiple ways of accomplishing each of these. While instructors are charged with creating comprehensive assignments that allow students to practice these rigors, it is clear that writing tasks contain several demands for students to master. The abundance of varied, incomplete, unconventional, or ineffective student writing performances makes it easier to see why support services like Writing Centers can play a central role in student writing success—especially in light of the standards that instructors may apply to assessment of student writing. Tutor training often includes several approaches to address student writing through understanding student learning styles, types of assignments, and how to respond to students in conferences. Tutors help students navigate, understand, and work with the complex writing features that are included in college-level writing

in a variety of ways, perhaps with mixed results but certainly with well-considered care for student learning.

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Chapter 4: Details of the Study Design—Four Southern California Campuses

As has been discussed, community college Writing Centers serve a diverse clientele, and center staff address learner needs using a variety of tutoring protocols to improve their academic writing. To examine the perceptions of Writing Centers that students, tutors, and instructors have, the following questions guided this study:

- What are the writing challenges that English instructors, center tutors, and students served in Writing Centers identify and expect the Writing Center to assist students with? (Chapter 5)
- How do Writing Center models (mandatory or voluntary) provide or deliver the assistance that is needed? (Chapter 6)
- What are the perceptions of these three groups of Writing Center assistance? (Chapter 6)

To allow for all stakeholders--instructors, tutors, and students--to respond to the study's guiding questions, a survey was constructed with language that was customized for each group. After sample questions about writing experiences, activities, and Writing Center use were drafted, collaborative meetings during the summer with department deans, campus and district IRB coordinators, Writing Center coordinators, and composition instructors took place to construct surveys that would capture the interests and concerns that students, tutors, and instructors may have about writing assistance. The discussions involved what kinds of questions would elicit useful information about writing experiences from the three groups' perspectives.

Some questions were particularly of interest to the department dean or the department coordinator, and were retained in all the surveys for consistency (i.e. questions about specific tutor training or preparation). Additionally, after new drafts were ready, further consultations with these individuals and with graduate students and instructors in UCI's School of Education took place, and pilot surveys were made available to student volunteers from different course levels (developmental, college transfer, and advanced) for commentary on clarity and feedback for the final survey product.

The survey included several types of questions (i.e. multiple choice, scales, open response) to allow for a complex portrait of the three groups representing developmental, college transfer, and advanced levels which they indicated that their responses referred to. For example, one question (#8 in the sample surveys included in the appendices: Appendix A) involved several components that asked participants to identify 1) what writing tasks they worked on or assigned, 2) how the participant ranked that tasks' importance on a Likert scale, and 3) whether the participant sought help with the writing feature/ believed students sought help with the writing feature. Other questions included participants' rank of satisfaction (question #13) with their experience of the Writing Center's services and asked them to recommend future steps (question #17) for the Writing Center to take. Open ended questions were also employed so the participant could explain his or her response. A complete survey for each group is attached in Appendix A.

While five southern California community college English departments were approached to participate in the study during the survey construction stage (three of which the researcher had previously taught at), four agreed and one elected not to participate. Two waves of the study were conducted over Fall and Spring of the 2011-2012 school year. Participants in the first wave

included 190 students, 16 tutors, and 33 instructors. Participants in the second wave included 112 students, 4 tutors, and 3 instructors. Total participants in the study are 358.

Different Writing Center models

Before examining stakeholder perceptions of Writing Center efficacy, it is valuable to look at how Writing Centers are organized to deliver services. The four colleges represent different models of Writing Centers. The following chart highlights their similarities and differences:

	Workshop instruction	Mandatory design	Voluntary design	Walk-in conference	Appointment needed	Peer tutor	Instructor	Online component
College E	x		x	x	x	x		x
College F	x		x	x	x	x	x	
College R		x	x	x			x	x
College S	x	x	x	x		x	x	x

FIGURE 1 PROFILE OF THE FOUR PARTICIPANT COLLEGE WRITING CENTERS

The different Writing Center models that this study examines were associated with the institutions' English departments. The emphasis of each varied, focusing on 1) a targeted preparatory college writing program, a.k.a. "basic skills" courses, such as those implementing the Basic Skills Initiative in California (Illowsky, 2008) (like college S), 2) a writing program that supplemented or complemented institutional writing pedagogy across levels/courses (like college R and S), or 3) an open access resource for composition students seeking help. While college instructors and staff may collaborate to coordinate and define Writing Center services (colleges R and S), alternative structures may involve one individual or several people as

coordinator(s) facilitating instruction or tutoring delivered by faculty, by graduate students, or by peer tutors (colleges E and F). Staffing decisions frequently depended on budget and design.

The Writing Centers in this study provide a variety of services that target different student audiences and factors into the models. Some may prioritize services for certain students (e.g. ESL, pre-college writing students) like college S, or only students enrolled in English courses like college R. Some offer services to all students (e.g. undergraduate, any courses, or walk-ins) like colleges E and F. Some Writing Centers are also called labs which contain computers for composing (colleges E, R, and S) or for working on writing modules from digital/online programs like colleges R and S. A few Writing Centers are designated as a mandatory requirement for student attendance and course credit (colleges R and S), while they are also available for voluntary visits for assistance (each of the four at the time of the study). The two mandatory models employed faculty instructors delivering the tutoring conferences or direct instruction, and one of the voluntary models (college F) included faculty as consultants in the Center. The two voluntary models employed peer tutors, and one voluntary model (college E) also had an online tutoring component with a peer tutor offering real time video feedback rather than computer assisted online exercises. These two distinctions—mandatory or voluntary—are especially important in this study for analysis in categorizing the perceptions of the three groups.

Regardless of the model, a common goal for Writing Center staff in each model is creating better writers, not just better writing (North, 1984); therefore, the focus is more on process than prescription (Denny, 2010; Lerner, 2009). To achieve this goal, the Centers in this study each used face-to-face conferencing for non-graded feedback, which is a labor-intensive mode of operation (Boquet, 2002; Lerner, 2009). Various levels of training such as those

mentioned in Chapter 3 were provided along with manuals or agreed-upon tutoring protocols. Additional features such as workshops, group conferencing, and computer-mediated tasks were also employed in these Writing Centers—all tools purported to enhance writer's strategies.

Survey implementation

The plans for survey distribution were spread out over two terms: after the start of the fall semester and toward the end of spring semester of the 2011-2012 academic year. The coordinators and department leaders selected these two times in particular for the perceived usefulness of the student contributions. An anticipated difference in early participation/experiences and later ones was expected to emerge from this time frame implementation.

First wave of the study (Fall semester 2011)

Writing Center coordinators helped facilitate recruitment for peer tutors in the beginning of the study. Copies of the research information sheet were delivered to the Writing Center and survey materials were delivered to participants. For instructor recruitment, the researcher contacted instructors, part-time and full-time, directly via email and department mail. Student recruitment took place in classrooms via announcements and also by posters in the Writing Center. Compensation for instructors and tutors took place in the form of a gift card, and students could opt to enter into a gift card drawing.

The same surveys for the three groups were used at each campus, with language adjusted, for instance, for whether the Writing Center was called a lab or learning center, or whether the designation of peer tutors, lab instructors, or another term was used. For the first phase, each group's responses were added for totals, and the percentages calculated for the total represented

for each question. For example, the number of instructors who identified certain writing features as priorities (very important, somewhat important, not important, N/A) was compared as a percentage to what peer tutors identified in the same question, and then compared to what students rated for the same question. Tabulations for the first wave (fall semester) were collected for the questions and then inferences made about the most significant similarities and differences. (These tabulations were repeated when data for both semesters was collected and another analysis made of means and standard deviations for the later stages of the study.)

The focus of the first wave in fall semester was to gather information about what each group gave priority to in writing and what they ranked as important to composition instruction and assistance. The researcher anticipated that the perspectives of each group might overlap and/or differ in areas that could yield valuable information about expectations, program and instructional consistency, as well as shed light on what improvements to the process each group thought could be made. A preliminary report was prepared for each campus (available upon request) and sent to the deans and coordinators with the initial results of the highlights (the strongest alignments and misalignments in responses from the groups) along with some possible questions to explore in the second wave.

Second Wave (spring semester 2012)

The second wave of the study, though much smaller in scale, was intended to provide either additional or some different information to help discussions move forward about Writing Center efficacy, assuming that students with more course experience might have changed attitudes or had different insights. However, the second wave yielded more affirmations of first wave findings. Before the second wave of the survey in spring semester, the researcher reviewed the materials from the first distribution to re-check the phrasing of questions for additional

clarity. Another pilot survey was created for student volunteers to review, and minor corrections to sentence structure, margins, or bullet formatting resulted. Recruitment for participants occurred in the same manner at the individual campuses, and electronic surveys were added as a convenience to minimize the class disruption which arose in the physical return of paper surveys. An email link was sent to each participant who agreed to the study and chose that format. Compensation of gift cards for instructors and the option for students to enter a gift card drawing were repeated for the second wave. There were fewer volunteers for the second wave (spring semester) of survey responses. The researcher speculates that more campus activity in second semester with graduation, transfer plans, and summer plans may have competed for survey volunteers' time. With few instructors (n=3) and few tutors (n=4) participating in spring semester, the researcher is highlighting the student responses (n=112) for both semesters in this report at this time.

Results for the second wave were tabulated in the same manner as the first wave regarding the same features that were highlighted for the three groups (students, tutors, and instructors), i.e. what writing components were extremely important and what perceptions of Writing Center services the students had. The spring percentages, means, and standard deviation were compared to the fall results in follow-up examination. Ultimately, the two semesters were compiled to create a single portrait.

Summary: Anticipations for Findings

With the three groups responding to the same questions that several collaborators helped create, an opportunity for robust comparisons became possible. The researcher's experience as an instructor and Writing Center tutor motivated some of the initial investigation into the concepts of match and mismatch of the writing priorities that each group might have and

accompanied some speculation that this area might be a starting point for relevant inquiry about how students, tutors, and instructors perceive the assistance of the Writing Center. Other sections of the survey that yielded information about students' use of services and knowledge of services along with the tutors' and instructors' observations of student use of the services provided valuable comparisons of the participants' perceptions. The design of the Writing Centers as voluntary or mandatory appeared to be another area that would have some influence on the three groups' perceptions about Writing Center assistance and how it was delivered. The opportunity to closely look at the groups and models simultaneously with one instrument offered beneficial insight about Writing Center efficacy.

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Chapter 5: Writing Challenges that the Groups Expect the Writing Center to Assist Students with

The first research question for the study addressed composition challenges:

"What are the writing challenges that English instructors, center tutors, and students served in Writing Centers identify and expect the Writing Center to assist students with?"

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the surveys contained the same questions with customized wording for each group (students, tutors, instructors). To collect information from participants regarding writing challenges, a three-part question (Q #8) asked students, instructors, and tutors to respond to a list of writing features (e.g. introduction, thesis, evidence, summarizing, and critical thinking) with the following areas of focus:

- **Student version: Please indicate whether you believe you could benefit from help with the writing element (agree/disagree) (in the case of instructors and tutors, the question was reworded to "whether you believe your students could benefit")**
- **Rate the importance of the writing element to you on a scale of 0-3**
  0 (unimportant) 1 (somewhat important) 2 (important) 3(extremely important)
- **Students also were additionally asked to Indicate "Yes, No, or not applicable" for whether they actually received help with this element during a conference in the Writing Center.**

The tables that follow display the results in both condensed and extended formats. The first is a table of the mean ranking and standard deviation for a condensed version of the various components into two writing issues: 1) pre-writing features that are part of the process before a composition is submitted as final work, and 2) writing features that are part of the assessment of a finished composition. These figures offer a preliminary look at how the groups perceive writing challenges in the two stages of preparing a composition and completing a composition. The second table contains the data examined by each writing feature, starting with the percentages of the groups who ranked the writing features as *extremely important* (rank of 3 on a

scale of 0-3), followed by the mean ranking that the whole group gave to the particular feature, and the standard deviation. The percentages allow us to see whether a majority or minority of the group chose the feature; the mean offers a closer insight into the importance of the feature to the group; and the standard deviation offers a look at the consistency of the group's rankings. The differences in the three groups' responses provide a foundation for understanding the writing challenges that the three groups identify as concerns. Few of the top rankings are shared across the three groups, and only two writing features of the twenty-eight listed have that distinction. Such discrepancies confirm that writing is a complex issue for all stakeholders and point to difficult tasks of generating, teaching, and tutoring writing.

Condensed Analysis

Condensing the 28 writing features that participants responded to into 2 categories, pre-writing and writing, offers an initial look at which of these two areas the three groups prioritize. While these categorizations simplify the examination of the writing features initially, the result reveals a preference among the three groups for writing more than pre-writing—a preference that may have some impact on the work in Writing Centers if these designations are viewed as having certain, or differing, values than what participants in the study express here. The writing features were categorized as pre-writing if they had a prevalent association with the early stages of the writing process that are not always, or necessarily, assigned a grade. The remaining features were categorized as writing if they had a prevalent association with elements assessed in a final composition that may be measured according to a rubric.

The following features were included in the designations for this analysis:

Pre-writing	Writing
Understanding the prompt	Introduction
Free-writing	Thesis statement
Pre-writing	Idea development
Outlining	Evidence
Invention	Documenting
Clustering	Organization
Mapping	Commentary
Drafting	Analysis
Peer review	Synthesis
Conferencing	Paraphrasing
Proofreading	Summarizing
Editing	Subjective/Objective voice
Web research	Acknowledging point of view
	Critical Thinking
	Conclusion

	Student mean (st. dev.)	**Tutor mean (st. dev.)**	**Instructor mean (st. dev.)**
Pre-writing	2.09 (.8256)	2.08 (.3727)	2.11 (.3855)
Writing	2.21 (.8536)	2.50 (.3526)	2.45 (.4238)

FIGURE 2 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS RANKING PRE-WRITING AND WRITING FEATURES IDENTIFIED ABOVE ON A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT)

The differences in means between the three groups are small in both designations. More consistency is observed in the ranking for pre-writing where the groups do not vary by more than .03 (students 2.09; tutors 2.08; instructors 2.11). Yet, the student group displays a larger standard deviation than either tutors or instructors, indicating more discrepancy in their responses though they appear to align with both tutors and instructors. That tutors have the lowest mean may seem surprising given that tutors may be associated with having the most contact with students during pre-writing stages; however, tutors have the lowest standard deviation of the three groups, meaning that as a group, they are more consistent regarding their ranking of pre-writing features.

There is more variation in means between the three groups for writing, up to .31 (students 2.21; tutors 2.5; instructor 2.45). These figures for writing are higher than for pre-writing, with more agreement between tutors and instructors as well as a little more discrepancy in the standard deviation for instructors. Again, the student group exhibits the largest discrepancy by standard deviation for the three groups, and this figure is larger than the student standard deviation for pre-writing, suggesting that students as a group have more difficulty deciding what is important in writing. Tutors have the highest mean and lowest standard deviation, showing the group's consistency regarding writing features along with their consistency for pre-writing. In broad interpretation, the groups each give writing more priority than pre-writing. The next discussion about the separate writing features may explain the various reasons for why this is the case.

Extended Analysis of Writing Features

The complete table for writing features by percentage, mean, and standard deviation in the next chart displays the three groups' complete responses. For analysis, selected comparisons for discussion focus on the following areas:

- The five top most-important ranked writing features by *highest* percentage in each group are compared to look at what the groups gave the most priority to. The groups share two of the features: thesis construction and understanding the assignment.
- To give additional context for the inquiry into the challenges, where the groups nearly match and the separate features that stood out for each group are examined.

writing feature	Variable identifier in data	%S rank 3 **students**	S avg. rank	st dev.	%I rank 3 **instructors**	I avg. rank	st. dev.	%T rank 3 **tutors**	T avg. rank	st. dev
understand assignment	**120**	**57**	**2.51**	**0.7576**	**66**	**2.72**	**0.5061**	**84**	**2.84**	**0.3666**
freewriting	123	36	2.12	0.9042	7	1.51	0.7565	36	2.04	0.8236
pre-writing	126	47	2.42	0.7458	29	2.17	0.7464	48	2.44	0.5713
outlining	129	46	2.33	0.8381	17	1.85	0.7329	68	2.68	0.4664
invention	132	25	1.83	1	20	2.07	0.6914	12	1.82	0.7158
introduction	135	51	2.47	0.7142	32	2.3	0.5765	60	2.6	0.4899
clustering	138	30	1.97	0.9555	10	1.59	0.785	12	1.92	0.56
mapping	141	25	1.85	0.9748	10	1.74	0.6704	24	1.84	0.88
thesis construction	**144**	**65**	**2.65**	**0.6317**	**88**	**2.94**	**0.2261**	**100**	**3**	**0**
idea development	147	55	2.52	0.7508	66	2.77	0.4199	72	2.72	0.449
drafting	150	53	2.48	0.7455	56	2.72	0.4496	32	2.28	0.5307
evidence	153	53	2.51	2.88	73	2.88	0.3222	88	2.88	0.325
documentation	156	38	2.24	0.8385	46	2.51	0.6659	32	2.28	0.325
organization	159	53	2.49	0.7449	66	2.79	0.4043	88	2.88	0.325
commentary	162	41	2.27	0.8288	29	2.72	0.962	32	2.2	0.6324
analysis	165	49	2.45	0.7011	46	2.64	0.5486	64	2.6	0.5657
synthesis	168	42	2.29	0.8308	39	2.6	0.5656	20	2.04	0.6109
paraphrasing	171	48	2.46	0.7002	29	2.39	0.5567	44	2.2	0.8
summarizing	174	54	2.52	0.6805	29	2.44	0.4969	20	1.84	0.7838
peer editing	177	43	2.26	0.8946	22	1.96	0.9798	16	1.64	0.794
conferencing	180	41	2.19	0.9629	24	2.08	0.8908	24	2.04	0.7348
proofreading	183	55	2.52	0.9629	39	2.36	0.731	28	1.68	1.048
editing	186	60	2.56	0.7408	44	2.45	0.7551	36	1.92	0.9765
web research	189	40	2.25	0.8358	22	2.19	0.6804	24	1.92	0.796
subjective/objective	192	32	2.03	0.949	20	2.04	0.7586	32	2.17	0.6872
acknowledge pov	195	43	2.27	0.8662	27	2.24	0.7631	52	2.52	0.4996
critical thinking	198	59	2.59	0.6774	46	2.63	0.5543	84	2.84	0.3666
conclusion	201	65	2.66	0.643	37	2.41	0.6704	72	2.68	0.5455

yellow--top ranked writing features for the group by highest percentages
green--bottom ranked writing features for the group by lowest percentages—this analysis is included in the appendices (Appendix C)

FIGURE 3 WRITING FEATURES IDENTIFIES WITH THEIR VARIABLE NUMBER RANKED "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" BY PERCENTAGES OF EACH GROUP (STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS, AND TUTORS), WITH MEAN RANKING AND WITH STANDARD DEVIATION

The top "extremely important" writing features that the three groups share: 2 of the 28—Thesis construction and Understanding the assignment

> *"A key to success involves a thorough understanding of what the instructor expects her/his student to accomplish." –tutor*

The complete table on the previous page offers a picture of a scattered response from the groups in identifying writing features as most important by the highest percentages in their groups. Below, the top five for each group are highlighted in yellow and an indication given of whether the three groups share the ranking in their top five or have a close/near sharing of the ranking:

Feature	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)	Shared in top 5
Thesis	**65%**	**88%**	**100%**	**All three**
Conclusion	65%	37%	72%	Near S and T
Editing	60%	44%	36%	Not shared
Critical Thinking	59%	46%	84%	S and T
Understanding assignment	**57%**	**66%**	**84%**	**All three**
Idea Development	55%	66%	72%	Near I and T
Organization	53%	66%	88%	I and T
Evidence	53%	88%	73%	Near I and T

FIGURE 4 TABLE OF THE MOST-IMPORTANT WRITING FEATURES BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE IN EACH GROUP. YELLOW HIGHLIGHTS THE TOP 5 FOR EACH GROUP.

The three groups share two areas that they ranked as most important by the highest percentage in each group: "Thesis Construction" and "Understanding the Assignment". As priorities for each group, these features suggest a consistency in the view that a "big picture" for an assignment is important to notice and express.

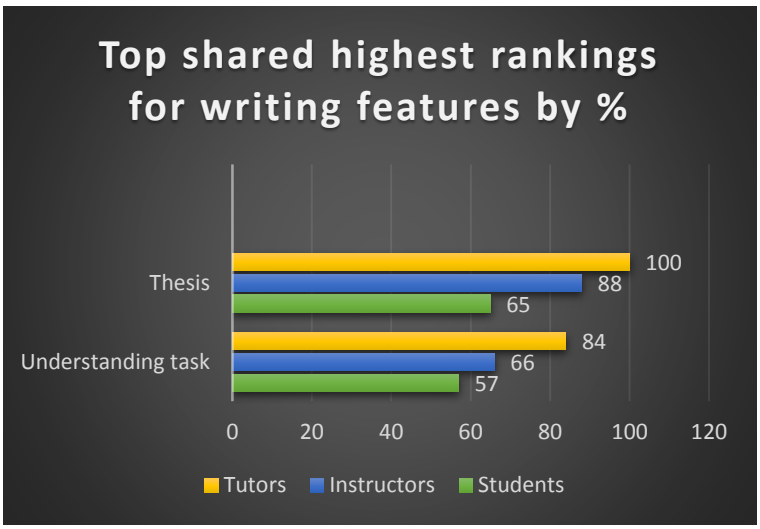


FIGURE 5 MATCHING TOP MOST-IMPORTANT WRITING FEATURES FOR STUDENTS, TUTORS, AND INSTRUCTORS BY PERCENTAGE: "THESIS CONSTRUCTION" AND "UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT"

Thesis Construction: Tutors have given the strongest responses about the importance of the "thesis construction"—100%, for instance, which 88% of instructors share. The work that tutors do with students may explain the magnitude of their ranking for thesis, while the range of courses that instructors characterized their responses by in survey Q3 (developmental, college-transfer, and advanced) may explain why the ranking is lower than the tutors'. For instance, emphasis on "thesis construction" may or may not be highlighted for all developmental levels. Though individual pedagogy was not a focus in the instructor surveys, consideration of this factor is worth mentioning when writing features are in question. For this survey, instructors were asked to indicate what course level their responses were predominately applicable to. They indicated that 11% directed their responses for the ESL level, 54% for developmental, 29% for college transfer, and 6% for advanced composition. With the majority of instructors directing their responses to the developmental levels, there may be a possibility that thesis construction varies in how instructors prioritize it for developmental levels. The figure may also indicate that

there are multiple developmental levels and that thesis construction is addressed more emphatically in one level than another (e.g. paragraph writing with focus on topic sentences is more of an emphasis than essays with thesis statements). In fact, each campus included in this study had at least two levels of developmental English courses prior to college-transfer level composition courses. The response to "thesis construction," then, may be related to curriculum content for various course levels.

While students have included "thesis construction" as one of their top ranked features and have given it the highest percentage in their group, that percentage of 65% as compared to tutors (100%) and to instructors (88%), suggests that thesis construction is a milder concern for students even though this percentage is the group's top rank for any of the writing features. Though the agreement of the three groups suggests that they each identified the same concept as most significant, students ranked the importance of "thesis construction" equally with the importance of "conclusions" (65%). While more tutors (72%) than instructors (37%) see "conclusions" as extremely important, the discrepancies between tutors and instructors, and between instructors and students, on this issue are large. More discussion about "conclusions" will come shortly, but there is more to examine regarding the group responses to "thesis construction."

The mean ranking that the three groups give thesis construction shows some stronger relationships than the percentages do:

Thesis	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.65	2.94	3
Standard deviation	(.6317)	(.2261)	0

FIGURE 6 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT) "THESIS CONSTRUCTION"

Here, the instructors (2.94) and tutors (3) align much more closely with each other, revealing a stronger agreement between them based on their means and the small instructors' standard deviation (.2261) and zero deviation for tutors. The importance of "thesis construction" to students is also evident in their mean (2.65). Nevertheless, variability among students is more noticeable in the standard deviation (.6317) than among instructors, showing less consistency among students regarding this writing issue. Perhaps their course levels may influence the variability about this feature as a priority. Students had identified themselves as taking the following courses at the time of their Writing Center attendance: 2% ESL, 51% developmental, 23% college transfer, and 24% advanced composition. As the majority of student participants attended developmental composition classes, their response may be affected by curriculum content. Additionally, tutors and instructors may influence this student ranking because of the level of focus they give thesis construction. Student experiences with successful or unsuccessful construction of thesis statements may influence their ranking of this feature. Overall, the awareness of all three groups that "thesis construction" is a priority does reflect a different intensity of focus that may be influenced by several factors, but most importantly for students is that their response is the mildest which may suggest they have some misunderstanding of its value in writing.

Revisiting the student ranking of "conclusions" having the same importance as "thesis construction," we notice that the mean student ranking is slightly higher (2.66) than the mean for "thesis construction" (2.65), but the standard deviation of .6430 for "conclusions" is slightly higher than that for "thesis" of .6317, a difference of .0113. A possible explanation for the slight difference may be that students associate their "thesis" with the beginning of their papers where they are making their initial impression on readers, and associate their "closures" with the final

impression on readers where their last, memorable point is being made. These parts of the paper are clearly important to students when seen in contrast to "critical thinking," which 59% of the students ranked as most important, and "evidence," which 53% of the student ranked as most important. While 51% of the students ranked "introductions" separately as most important, their mean ranking for this feature was 2.47 with a standard deviation of .7142, a larger variability, perhaps suggesting the "introduction" does not have the same priority as "conclusions" or "thesis construction" across their course levels. In comparison, 60% of tutors and 30% of instructors ranked "introductions" as a most important writing challenge, showing another contrast to their groups' rankings of "thesis construction" and wider discrepancies from student rankings. There may be some interesting reasons for why instructors appear to rank "introductions" so much lower, perhaps because a writer's main point (i.e. "thesis statement") means more to instructors' assessment of writing than "introductions" overall.

Tutors (72%) ranked "conclusions" more frequently as most important than instructors did (37%), again a large difference. Tutors' mean ranking of 2.68 with a standard deviation of .5455 reflects a stronger response that instructors' mean of 2.41 with a larger standard deviation of .6704. This disagreement suggests that it may be helpful for the groups to explore the importance of conclusions in writing more. If instructors are not giving as much priority to this writing challenge as tutors and students are, there may be some need to revisit tutoring protocols to see why tutors may emphasize this feature as well as a need to examine students' focus on this part of the writing task more closely if they are not giving as much attention to other writing features like their instructors are. Perhaps finishing an assignment by reaching the final paragraph is the most important part of a task to students, which may indicate a simplistic understanding of writing.

Understanding the assignment:

> *"In the past, they have had conflicting advice when they have taken the same piece to different instructors, which frustrates and confuses them."*—instructor

Also in the top 5 for the three groups is "understanding the assignment" which all three groups shared in strong majorities. Tutors at 84% pass both instructors at 66% and students at 57%. Tutors may have a stronger response since looking at a students' task may be the starting point of dialogues that they have with students; as one tutor in the study mentions, "I ask the student to elaborate, if they have a prompt, what their instructor recommended that they do, and then tell them what I interpret they seek help for to see if we're understanding each other." Less clear is why instructors do not rank this writing feature as important as tutors. They may consider, perhaps, that "understanding the assignment" is something that *students do* more than what *instructors teach.* Students, also, may associate "understanding the assignment" with a more personal approach to their learning; while 61% agreed that they would *benefit* from help with this issue, 34% actually *sought help* with the issue. The importance, or the rank that they assign, then, to "understanding the assignment" may vary according to their personal preferences when starting an assignment. Some stigma may exist, for instance, for students about going to the Writing Center and admitting that they do not yet understand what their assignment is, and/or believe they have to have some portion of the assignment completed before seeking help. If they are confused, they may not be completely sure that they can get help before beginning. While still an important writing challenge to students, "understanding the assignment" involves additional issues as reflected in the mean rankings:

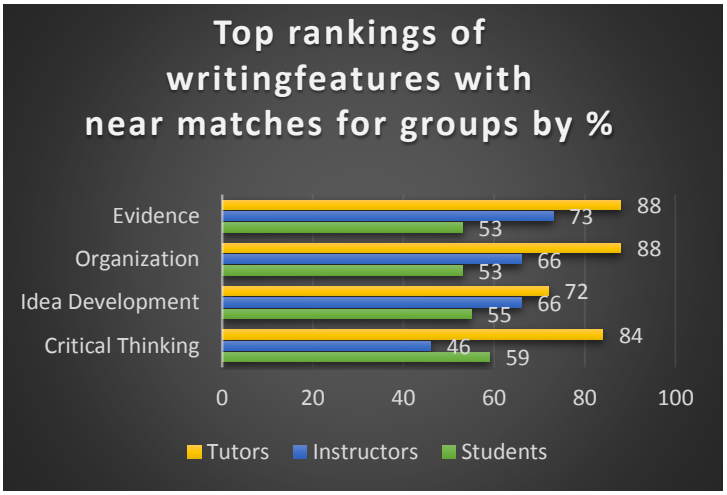
Understanding the task	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.51	2.722	2.84
Standard Deviation	(.7576)	(.5061)	(.3666)

FIGURE 7 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3= MOST IMPORTANT) "UNDERSTANDING THE TASK"

Tutors assign a higher ranking of 2.84 than instructors of 2.72. Tutors have less variability in their standard deviation of .3666 than instructors with .5061. Students assign "understanding the assignment" a mean ranking of 2.51 with a larger standard deviation of .7576. These means may reflect some of the explanations mentioned above about course levels and whether the beginning or end of the assignment is a priority for students, although the groups appear to be closer than the percentages indicate as the differences in mean ranking seem small: .12 difference between tutors and instructors, .33 for tutors and students, and .21 for instructors and students. As a top-ranked, important writing challenge for the three groups, "understanding the assignment" is a potential area for discussions about how the three groups initially address composition assignments so that they recognize its value.

Where the groups nearly concur in the top five most important features: evidence, organization, idea development, and critical thinking

In the top 5 extremely important writing features by the largest percentages, there are some near matches among the groups, meaning that two groups gave top rankings to the same features.



They include "evidence," "organization," "idea development," and "critical thinking". These particular features are mostly observed or evaluated in the body of a composition as it is extended beyond introductory concepts.

FIGURE 8 NEAR MATCHING TOP MOST-IMPORTANT WRITING FEATURES FOR STUDENTS, TUTORS, AND INSTRUCTORS BY PERCENTAGE: "EVIDENCE," "ORGANIZATION," "IDEA DEVELOPMENT," AND "CRITICAL THINKING"

Evidence: Tutors show higher percentages in their rankings for "evidence" (88%) than either teachers (73%) or students (53%). This writing challenge is still in the top 5 for both tutors and instructors by majority percentages, showing again a strong identification of this trait as a priority. But students do not rank this with the same level of priority. While the definition and types of "evidence" that writers use or instructors require can range from personal examples to cited research, the idea of using support in writing stands out here. The student percentage is the lowest, which may be explained again by the course level they may have attended at the time of the survey or may be affected by use of different terminology; for example, instructors may use the term "example" instead of "evidence" which students may or may not see as the same concept being referenced in the survey. The mean rankings for "evidence" show stronger relationships than the percentages:

Evidence	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.51	2.88	2.88
Standard deviation	(.7034)	(.3222)	(.3250)

FIGURE 9 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT) "EVIDENCE"

Instructors (2.88) and tutors (2.88) agree exactly, with standard deviations of .3222 and .3250, respectively. This agreement reinforces how the two groups view writing as needing to be supported with specific types of information. Students, however, rank "evidence" as 2.51 with double the standard deviation of .7034. This disagreement may indicate a need for stronger and/or more consistent instruction in the role of "evidence" in writing to meet instructors' requirements. Another way of looking at student use of "evidence" in writing is considering their reading habits. As mentioned in Chapter 3, reading and writing have a strong connection *(Framework for Success in Post Secondary Writing, 2011).* Students may or may not have sufficient practice in identifying textual "evidence" to use it in their essays to support their key

points. Reading issues are beyond the scope of the study surveys although survey Q6 allowed for participants to indicate the amount of reading assigned; teachers assigned on average about 4-10 pages of reading a day while students indicated that they read a similar amount of pages, but in lengths of time such as 30-40 minutes on average. It may be important to consider how the time students spend on reading may influence their writing, especially if their writing is to be text-based for producing "evidence". Reading habits may well be a concern for the adequate development of a writing task.

Organization: Instructors (66%) and tutors (88%) shared "organization" in their top five writing challenges by percentage, but students (53%) did not. Tutors' interactions with students may influence the frequency with which they rank this feature as extremely important, and instructors' rubrics may influence the frequency of their ranking. Students focused on other areas like "idea development" and "critical thinking" (discussed below) which students rank higher than "organization." Students ranked editing even higher, though, which will be examined in another section of this chapter. Analysis of "organization" by means reveals that the groups' perspectives are consistent with the percentages:

Organization	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.49	2.79	2.88
Standard deviation	(.7449)	(.4043)	(.3250)

FIGURE 10 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT) "ORGANIZATION"

We see that tutors rank "organization" slightly higher than instructors with small variability in both groups. The wider difference is evident in student mean ranking, which their percentage also reflects along with higher variability, suggesting perhaps some differences in their understanding of how both "evidence" and "organization" might work together in composition.

The disagreement in these two areas for students and their tutors and instructors is another potential area for further inquiry.

Critical Thinking and Idea Development: The concepts of "critical thinking" and "idea development" may be "two sides of the same coin" but may also indicate that the groups differ in their distinctions in significant ways that need further exploration. While students include "critical thinking" in their top five ranked features by percentage (59%), tutors include it moreso (84%) in their top five, but instructors (46%) to a lesser degree. A possibility for explanation may be that students may feel compelled to demonstrate "critical thinking" in the activity of preparing their writing while tutors reinforce "critical thinking" as a necessity in development of the actual content in writing. Instructors, though, appear to look at "idea development" as the stronger feature that they focus on rather than "critical thinking." Students rank idea development lower at 55% while their instructors rank "idea development" as extremely important at 66%, tutors again higher at 72%. For students and tutors, however, "idea development" is not in their top five, and for instructors, "critical thinking" is not in their top five.

Distinctions that the groups are making for these two terms may involve a fine line, indeed. Possibilities include the way the terms are defined in the classroom. For instance, an instructor may attach "critical thinking" to analysis in terms of insightful content in statements about a literary character (e.g. "the protagonist is not realistic because of his insecurities about his religious devotion") and may attach "idea development" to structural elements in terms of elaboration of ideas through examples and commentary (e.g. "the protagonist worries that he 'will not survive the elders' scrutiny' because his financial losses have 'challenged his faith' "). The "critical thinking" example demonstrates an inference ("not realistic" derived from unstated

evidence {“insecurities”}) while the example for “idea development” contains quoted evidence (“‘elders’ scrutiny’ “) and a follow-up observation with additional quoted evidence (financial losses have ‘challenged his faith’ ”). Additional clarification in instructors’ rubrics may explain such distinctions or preferences further.

By analyzing the mean rankings for “critical thinking” and “idea development,” we see another picture of these comparisons:

Critical Thinking	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.59	2.63	2.68
Standard Deviation	(.6774)	(.5543)	(.3666)

Idea Development	Students (S)	Instructor (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.52	2.77	2.72
Standard Deviation	(.7508)	(.4199)	(.4490)

FIGURE 11 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT) "CRITICAL THINKING" AND "IDEA DEVELOPMENT"

In these two charts, tutors have less difference in their mean ranking of “critical thinking” (2.68) and “idea development” (2.72) than instructors do in their mean ranking of “critical thinking” (2.63) and “idea development” (2.77), although the instructors’ mean for “idea development” is higher than either of the groups for the two concepts. Students have an even smaller difference between “critical thinking” (2.59) and “idea development” (2.52), suggesting a closer consideration of these two concepts as extremely important in their perspective, yet the standard deviations for both student mean rankings show higher variability, .6774 for “critical thinking” and .7508 for “idea development.” The differences by percentage indicate more disagreement than the mean rankings do, perhaps indicating more variation in classroom practices as demonstrated in the two examples above more than attitudes or expectations in writing.

Where the groups diverge: writing challenges that the groups prioritize differently

Some writing features stood out for the groups separately without a close comparative connection with either of the other two groups. These discussions reveal additional areas of importance that give a deeper understanding of the priorities for the groups.

Students prioritize summary, proofreading, and editing

Students appear to have different priorities than their instructors and tutors. In the top mean rankings, students include "summarizing," "proofreading," and "editing," areas that represent surface and mechanical traits rather than substantive or critical traits. Students may find these areas easier to address or control. Summarizing, as discussed in Chapter 3, may seem to students (54%; mean 2.52, st. dev. .6805) to demonstrate proof of their understanding of their reading instead of analysis, which they rank lower (49% mean 2.45, st. dev. .7011). The distinction between "summary" and "analysis" may not be clear to students in their early college writing experiences, so they may work with the skills that seem more familiar to them like "summarizing."

The emphasis that students give to "proofreading" (55%; mean 2.52, st. dev. .9629) and "editing" (60%; mean 2.56, st. dev. 2.56), may also be a reflection of students prioritizing correction of surface errors above most other writing features. Students may feel correctness is a valid issue for them to worry about if their instructors penalize writing errors regularly or frequently. Correctness may also be something that students feel they can work on alone if tutoring protocols in Writing Centers do not allow tutors to address surface issues. Students may spend much of their energy on such areas at the expense of deeper analysis, sharper synthesis, or more careful research.

When looking at additional features that show high variability in student responses, the highest standard deviations occur for "subjective/objective" issues (mean 2.03, st. dev. .949) and "conferencing" (mean 2.19, st. dev. .9629). Understanding the appropriate use of subjective or objective voice in a writing assignment according to guidelines of formality (i.e. whether students may use the personal pronoun "I" or personal experiences as examples rather than objective address of "he" or "they" and only researched examples) may be a struggle for students, perhaps reflecting some of the same questions students may have about "summarizing" or "analyzing." They may not be sure how academic discourse requires a careful navigation of formal or informal voice for certain writing assignments. High variability in student responses toward "conferencing" (41%; mean 2.19, st. dev. .9629) may also indicate some level of insecurity or doubt about its usefulness. Perhaps students feel they should be independent and are not sure about how conferencing is designed to assist them—a response that causes concern regarding perceptions of Writing Centers that work with students one-on-one.

Instructors prioritize drafting, documentation, commentary, and synthesis

Instructors' responses also reveal different priorities that address substantive, critical, revision-focused, process-oriented, and text-based features--all higher-order concerns. These features include "drafting" (56%; mean 2.72, st. dev. .4496), "commentary" (29%; mean 2.72, st. dev. .962), "analysis" (46%; mean 2.64, st dev. .5486), "synthesis" (39%; mean 2.6, st. dev. .5656), and "documentation" (46%; mean 2.51, st. dev. .6659). Unlike the lower rankings that instructors gave to "invention" and "pre-writing" (reflected on the complete chart on page 95), "drafting" gets more attention from instructors here, perhaps because the term suggests multiple versions of working with a written text. Also, they may award a certain amount of credit to the writing of drafts or see drafting as valuable to students' final products. Students reflected a

consideration of drafts as important (53%; mean 2.48, st. dev. .7455) but with more variability. Additionally, "commentary, analysis, synthesis, and documentation" show instructors' stress on the aspects of writing that deal critically with the development and support of topics, writing challenges that they want to see students improve their skills in. Each of these features involves considerable skills as mentioned in *The Framework for Success in Post Secondary Writing*, and can be observed in the sample prompts included in Chapter 3 which contain some very specific requirements in these areas for each level.

For instructors, their highest standard deviations occur for "peer review" (22%; mean 1.96, st. dev. .9798) and "conferencing" (24%; mean 2.08, st. dev. .8908). Notably, both of these features involve students receiving feedback on their writing from *others,* generally. Instructors may be unconvinced of the effectiveness of either peers or tutors offering students enough helpful advice in either case, expressing a concern that may need to be addressed with better understanding of peer review limitations or better understanding of tutoring potentials. The area of conferencing may be one of special concern given the ways that many Writing Centers are designed to assist students with their writing through feedback protocols.

Tutors prioritize outlining, introductions, analysis, and acknowledging point of view

Tutors also have different emphases, and most of these areas are targeted at higher order concerns in writing. These areas include "outlining" (68%; mean 2.68, st. dev. .4664), "introductions" (60%; mean 2.6, st. dev. .4889), "analysis" (64%; mean 2.6, st. dev. .5657), and "acknowledging point of view" (52%; mean 2.52, st. dev. .4996). "Outlining" as a planning strategy in composition appears to be a stronger one for tutors than the others mentioned in the survey like "clustering, freewriting, mapping, or invention." Perhaps the "organization" or structure implicit in "outlining" seems a more solid place to work from as students develop their

writing. Tutors also rank "introductions" high, perhaps reflecting their stronger highlighting of "thesis construction" generally located in "introductions" discussed earlier. Likely, tutors see students bring an "introduction" with them to a conference if they have started an assignment. "Analysis" is also high on tutors' ranking, perhaps because they perceive this area as needing considerable development or improvement, or because they understand the necessity of this skill. Lastly, a strong ranking for "acknowledging point of view" exists in tutors' responses, perhaps because they see this as missing, or blurred, in student writing and needing attention. Tutors may have noticed that students have trouble with point of view, either in their own writing or in their reading of others' ideas.

For tutors, their highest variability occurs with "proofreading" (28%; mean 1.68, st. dev. 1.048) and "editing" (36%; mean 1.92, st. dev. .9765). These lower-order areas echo some concerns mentioned in Chapter 3 regarding tutoring protocols and the hesitation to address surface issues; tutors at times do try to include these issues in their conferences with students, as one tutor in the study explains, "I attempt to expand a student's knowledge of the mechanics of writing during an institutional or tutoring session." These writing challenges are important to students, but are not what tutors always see as central to what they work on with students. As we saw earlier, though, tutors help students navigate several challenges in their writing, and have developed some key strategies that are sensitive and flexible at times for the particular student—sometimes addressing lower-order grammar issues after all.

Summary of findings

The three groups share some rankings of writing features from multiple measures of percentages, means, and standard deviations that give us insight into what each group values. In percentages, they concur on two features like "thesis construction" and "understanding of

assignment" as most important, demonstrating a consistency for these features which are seen as high stakes for the three groups, though students' mild response suggests they may be unsure about the extent of the value of these features to their writing.

Analysis of means and standard deviations show finer similarities and differences among the groups. In these analyses, some of the differences by percentage are brought into better focus by showing closer agreements or wider disagreements which cover an interesting range of emphases for the three groups. Students rank "summary," "proofreading," and "editing" as more important—surface and mechanical features. Instructors rank "drafting," "analysis," "synthesis," "commentary," and "documentation" as more important—more substantive and critical features of writing. Tutors rank "outlining," "introductions," "analysis," and "acknowledging point of view" as more important—both structural and substantive issues. Additional analysis offered in Appendix C examines what writing features the groups ranked as most important by the lowest frequencies (lowest responses) which reflect pre-writing strategies predominantly: clustering for all groups, peer review according to tutors, freewriting according to tutors, mapping according to students and instructors, and invention according to students and instructors. Clearly, the three groups have differing views about what is important in student writing, which reflects back to the difficulties in Chapter 3 about defining college-level writing and which may influence the groups' perspectives on Writing Center efficacy in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: How Assistance is Delivered and Perceptions of Efficacy

> *"If, during the session, the student and I focus on one aspect of the essay, I let them know where else in the essay they can/should work on before they leave." –tutor*
>
> *"They [the tutors] don't say the same things my teacher does." –developmental student*

The discrepancies in what the three groups focus on in writing discussed in Chapter 5 create a context for the next examination about the groups' perceptions of Writing Center efficacy. The two research questions designed to look at efficacy were:

- What are the perceptions of the three groups of Writing Center assistance?
- How do Writing Center models (mandatory or voluntary) provide or deliver the assistance that is needed?

Because few of the groups' priorities in writing coincide, the three groups likely have varying levels of agreement and disagreement regarding whether the Writing Center fulfills its purpose. In this study, three different questions in the surveys elicited responses that shed light on those agreements and disagreements: questions about writing assignments (survey Q7) that the groups report working with, their ranking of satisfaction with their Writing Center (survey Q 12), and their recommendations for improvement (survey Q 16). These three areas offer a multi-layered look at how the three groups perceive the Writing Center as meeting the needs of students and what gaps in delivery of assistance they see needing improvement in a variety of ways.

The Groups Do not Agree about the Writing Tasks Encountered in the Writing Center

For this study, the three groups were asked a multi-part question about various writing tasks that represent typical/traditional assignments that composition students may be asked to complete.

The question reads as follows (Q7):

The type of tasks that were assigned in my class and that I took to the writing center include:

(circle Y or N for whether you were given the assignment or not, and then check the column that corresponds whether you are aware of students taking that task to the Writing Center, whether you are aware that they do not take the task to the Writing Center, or whether you are not sure).

Task	Assigned Y/N	Yes, I took to WC /	No, not taken /	I am aware I could take this to the WC

Students were asked to report whether the particular task was assigned, whether they took the assignment to the Writing Center, and whether they were aware that they could take the assignment to the Writing Center. Tutors were asked if they assisted with the assignment and if they believed students were aware that they could bring that assignment to the Writing Center. Instructors were also asked to report if they assigned the task, believed their students took the task to the Writing Center, and if they believed their students were aware that they could take the assignment to the Writing Center. The assignments included: pre-writing/planning (i.e. outlining), preparation (i.e. reading, researching), writing types (i.e. essay, short answer, journal, creative writing), and other work (i.e. grammar, presentations, lab work). Responses were calculated according to percentages of yes/no indications. Several differences exist in the responses for each aspect of the questions; the most obvious observation is that tutors believe that students are more aware that they can receive assistance than either students or instructors report, indicating the optimism of the tutors but the ambivalence of instructors and students. The information gathered in this section highlights concerns about students actually getting the assistance they need. A complete chart for the survey question follows:

Writing tasks the three groups work with in the Writing Center

Task	St. assigned	Student took to WC	St. aware could take	Tutor helped	T. believes st. aware	Instructor assigned	Instructor believes st. took to WC	Instructor believes st. aware
Outline	70%	26%	57%	100%	96%	66%	24%	41%
Draft	74%	36%	62%	96%	100%	78%	63%	49%
Reading	67%	18%	42%	60%	72%	61%	17%	17%
Research	60%	25%	55%	96%	100%	54%	37%	32%
Short answer response	53%	10%	39%	64%	72%	34%	4%	12%
Journal response	52%	14%	39%	64%	72%	32%	9%	12%
Previously graded work	41%	17%	38%	80%	88%	46%	32%	22%
Creative writing	51%	18%	48%	64%	76%	12%	10%	12%
Grammar work	56%	23%	49%	100%	88%	53%	22%	14%
Presentation work	50%	15%	40%	80%	68%	22%	7%	34%
Writing prompt help	41%	14%	42%	96%	96%	17%	24%	5%
College application	39%	17%	42%	76%	92%	5%	2%	2%
Lab work	30%	10%	35%	56%	52%	2%	0	0

FIGURE 12 WHAT STUDENTS, TUTORS, AND INSTRUCTORS REPORT ABOUT BEING ASSIGNED, TAKING TO THE WRITING CENTER, BEING AWARE OF TAKING TO THE WRITING CENTER, AND ASSISTING WITH

Starting to identify patterns: The tasks are assigned but students are not seeking help with them

For the first two kinds of assignments on the list, outlines and essay drafts, each group reports the highest "yes" responses (students 70% and 74%; tutors 100% and 96%; and instructors 66% and 78%), meaning a majority of students and instructors both acknowledge these types as assigned, and tutors confirm that they assist students with both. However, only 26% of students report taking outlines to the Writing Center, and their instructors believe 24% of students take outlines to the Writing Center. Furthermore, only 36% of students report taking essay drafts to the Writing Center while their instructors believe 63% of students take essay drafts to the Writing Center. The low percentage of students actually taking these assignments to the Writing Center for help suggests that they do not feel they need the help even though they report being aware that they could take them (57% and 62%, respectively). Instructors are less confident that students are aware that they could take these assignments to the Writing Center for help (41% and 49%, respectively) while tutors are much more confident about student awareness (96% and 100%, respectively).

The patterns that emerge from this table are essentially: 1. Students confirm assignments and their awareness of taking them to the Writing Center but do not report taking the assignments more than 1/3 of the time; 2. Tutors confirm both assistance and student awareness at much higher percentages than either students or intructors; 3. Instructors confirm most assignments at lower percentages than students report (except for essay drafts and previously graded work), believe student awareness is lower, and believe students are taking assignments to the Writing Center at lower percentages than students report (except for essay drafts, research, previously graded work, and writing prompt help which they believe students are taking to the

Writing Center at higher percentages than students report). Some specific observations in brief in light of these patterns include the following:

- Students (30% to 74%) and instructors (2% to 78%) acknowledge that writing tasks are being assigned, with students often reporting at higher percentages of the two groups with the exception of two assignments, essay drafts (74% vs. instructors' 78%) and previously graded work (for review in the Writing Center) (41% vs. instructors' 46%).
- Students report taking the actual assignments to the Writing Center at low percentages (ranging from 10%-36%, or 19% of the time on average), with instructors reporting that they believe students take the assignments to the Writing Center at a much larger range (4%-63%, also 19% of the time on average).
- Tutors report assisting students with these writing assignments at much higher percentages (56%-100%).
- Students report being aware that they could take their assignments to the Writing Center at much higher percentages (35% to 62%) than their instructors believe (0 to 49%) for each task, with tutors expressing much more confidence (52%-100%) than either students or instructors about student awareness that they could take their assignments to the Writing Center.

The "traffic" pattern of student work reaching, or rather <u>not</u> reaching, the Writing Center suggests a complication exists in how students are accessing assistance in the Writing Center. Instructors appear to also be unsure about students accessing assistance though tutors confirm the range of assignments that they help students with.

Students and instructors report discrepancies about assigned work

While students often report assigned tasks at higher percentages than their instructors, there are some notable observations. For instance, some differences are actually small:

Task assigned	Students	Instructor	difference
Outline	70%	66%	4%
Essay Draft	74%	78%	4%
Reading	67%	61%	6%
Research	60%	54%	6%
Grammar work	56%	53%	3%
Previously graded work	41%	46%	5%

FIGURE 13 STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR REPORTS OF ASSIGNMENTS REFLECTING SMALL DIFFERENCES IN PERCENTAGE; YELLOW HIGHLIGHTS THE GROUP WITH THE HIGHER PERCENTAGE

The close percentages suggest that students and instructors agree about these writing assignments being assigned in their courses. Instructors report with slightly higher percentages for essay drafts and previously graded work to be reviewed, while for all other assignments listed above, students report higher percentages.

However, some other percentages show quite large differences:

Task Assigned	Students	Instructors	Difference
Short Answer Response	53%	34%	19%
Journal Response	52%	32%	20%
Creative Writing	51%	12%	39%
Presentation work	50%	22%	28%
Writing prompt help	41%	24%	17%
College Application	39%	5%	34%
Lab work	30%	2%	28%

FIGURE 14 LARGE DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS' AND TUTORS' REPORTING ASSIGNED TASKS; YELLOW HIGHLIGHTS THE GROUP WITH THE LARGER PERCENTAGE REPORTED

In each case, students report higher percentages than instructors do, with the largest difference applying to creative writing (39%). A possible explanation is that students may not be using the same definitions of short answer, journal, or creative writing that their instructors do--or perhaps

students see a majority of their assignments as creative. The last two tasks on the chart, college applications and lab work, may be more related to students, own agendas rather than English assignments. However, students may identify their lab work as the exercises they complete in online computer modules that supplement their text books or complement instruction. Their instructors may not always recognize these exercises outside of the classroom in their assessments of students. Another large percentage difference (28%) exists for presentations, perhaps, again, because of how both groups define this term. Whether students consider a speech or a power-point, or maybe a summary, as a presentation, students may perceive themselves as busier with presentations than their instructors indicate.

Tutors assist with more assignments than students report bringing to the Writing Center

This next section exposes some discrepancies about what tutors report assisting students with when compared to what students report taking to the Writing Center. In the tutors' reports for assisting students with these assignments, large percentages exist in each case (ranging 56%-100%) with the lowest for lab work. Whether the term "lab work" refers to the kind of report due in a biology course or composition lab work was not clarified in the surveys; however, the likelihood that the Writing Centers which supported online composition modules as complements to instruction would factor more into the student and tutor responses. Nevertheless, this explanation does not shed insight on why instructors (2%) acknowledged assigning this writing component as the lowest percentage. A lack of instructors' familiarity with the availability of supportive exercises in the Writing Center may be a reason.

For tutors, the most frequent assignments that they report assisting students with are outlines (100%), grammar (100%), drafts (96%), research (96%), and writing prompt help (96%) reflected in the chart that follows:

Task brought to center	Tutors assisted	Students brought	difference
Outlines	100%	26%	74%
Grammar	100%	23%	77%
Drafts	96%	36%	60%
Research	96%	25%	71%
Writing prompt help	96%	14%	82%

FIGURE 15 TUTOR REPORTS BY HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF ASSISTANCE AND STUDENT REPORTS OF ACTUALLY TAKING THESE TASKS TO THE WRITING CENTER

The tutors' reports for assisting with outlining and drafting may seem predictable and correspond to tutoring protocols discussed in Chapter 3. It is not surprising that tutors report that they assist with grammar 100% of the time since we have observed the concerns about correctness in writing that have prevailed in student anxieties about writing and in the issues raised in the *Framework* that instructors may focus upon. Tutors confirm the grammar intervention they offer. Recalling that students note that they prefer proofreading/editing out of efficiency (Boquet, 2002; Davis, 2000), they see this "assignment" as the most expedient way that they can "fix" their mistakes. Similarly, tutors and instructors focus on correctness because it is easier to mark and assess (Underwood & Tregidgo, 2006).

Also, research assistance (96%) and writing prompt help (96%) figure prominently in tutors' reports for assisting students. These two features may indicate the familiarity that tutors have with students' writing needs and confidence in helping students with these areas. Yet, students do not report having taken these assignments specifically to the Writing Center for assistance to as large a degree (25% and 14%, respectively). They may not realize that these assignments are important to bring to the Writing Center along with their writing prompts and drafts.

Tutors report large percentages for assisting students with previously graded work (80%), presentation work (80%), and college applications (76%):

Task brought to center	Tutors assisted	Students brought	difference
Previously graded work	80%	17%	63%
Presentation work	80%	15%	65%
College applications	76%	17%	59%

FIGURE 16 TUTOR REPORTS OF ASSISTANCE AND STUDENT REPORTS OF ACTUALLY TAKING THE TASKS TO THE WRITING CENTER

Why tutors have the larger percentages may be explained either by the frequency at which they see these assignments or by how often they may discuss these with students in a way that makes tutors feel they are assisting students with them. Students do not report taking these specific tasks to the Writing Center for help to the same extent that tutors report assisting them with—the discrepancy may be a result of students having other assignments that they chose to bring.

Tutors report moderate percentages for assisting students with short answer responses (64%), journal responses (64%), creative writing (64%), and reading (60%). The lowest percentage (56%) is for lab work assistance.

Task brought to center	Tutors assisted	Students brought	difference
Short answer response	64%	10%	54%
Journal response	64%	14%	50%
Creative writing	64%	18%	46%
Reading	64%	18%	46%
Lab work	56%	10%	46%

FIGURE 17 TUTOR LOWEST REPORTS OF ASSISTANCE AND STUDENT REPORTS OF ACTUALLY TAKING THE TASK TO THE WRITING CENTER

The patterns that were noted above with large differences between tutors reporting assistance and students actually bringing tasks to the Writing Center are repeated here. The differences overall may suggest that students are not convinced that they need help or are unsure that the Writing Center staff would help them. Alternatively, discussions explored in Chapter 2 about adult learners preferring to be independent and/or feeling stigmatized by admitting that

they need help may also account for the low percentages of students reporting that they actually take work to the Writing Center.

Instructors seem unsure about what students bring to the Writing Center

One more dimension to this examination of Writing Center services involves how instructors view their students' use of the Writing Center. Instructors report lower percentages than tutors in terms of believing that students take the assignments to the Writing Center. The largest percentages for instructors, which are mostly lower thirds with one exception regarding essay drafts, are reported for students taking essay drafts (63%), research (37%), previously graded work (32%), and writing prompt help (24%):

Task brought to Center	Instructors believe students brought	Students brought	Tutors assisted
Essay Drafts	63%	36%	100%
Research	37%	25%	96%
Previously graded work	32%	17%	80%
Writing prompt help	24%	14%	96%

FIGURE 18 INSTRUCTORS REPORT THEY BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS TAKE ASSIGNMENTS TO THE WC MORE THAN STUDENTS REPORT BRINGING ASSIGNMENTS AND LESS THAN TUTORS REPORT ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH

The disparities between the groups as reflected in the above table are stronger indications of the mismatch in the groups' perceptions of students accessing assistance in the Writing Center, which may suggest that students and instructors are not viewing Writing Center assistance with the same priorities about students' needs. Instructors could also be expressing their expectations that students could benefit from help moreso than students do, or believe they do. Given the strong responses from the tutors, there may be a need for much stronger communication to students and instructors about services in this case, or a better understanding about those services. Students do not seem to avail themselves of assistance when they do not

take their work to the Writing Center even though they confirm their awareness of the available help.

Students' needs—are they getting the help they need?

Analyzing the data for research Q7 through means, median, and standard deviation for all the writing tasks to look at student needs, we notice discrepancies in the comparisons of students who agreed that they needed help, reported that they took their work to the Center for help, and reported that they received help. These figures are large and add to concerns about student perceptions of Writing Center assistance.

Students (full group)	% agreeing that they needed help (v283)	% reporting that they took work for help (v277)	% reporting that they received help (v282)
	Mean 78%	Mean 38%	Mean 54%
	Median 86%	Median 29%	Median 56%
	(st. dev. .2575)	(st. dev. .26)	(st. dev. .3191)

FIGURE 19 MEAN, MEDIAN, AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR STUDENT REPORTS OF NEEDING HELP, TAKING WORK TO THE WRITING CENTER FOR HELP, AND RECEIVING HELP

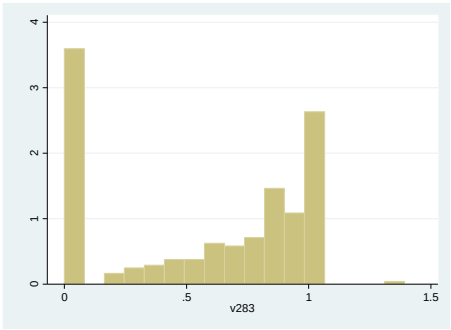


FIGURE 20 HISTOGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS: HELP NEEDED (BASED ON AGREE/DISAGREE THAT THEY COULD BENEFIT FROM HELP) (V283)

While the standard deviations are small for these figures, the percentages differ considerably. First, a majority (78%) of the student group admits that they could benefit from receiving help. The first histogram (fig. 20) to display the distribution indicates a skew to the left (and an outlier to the right). Overall, students tend toward seeing a need for help if they indicated yes for the survey question. A number said they disagreed that they needed help for writing tasks included in this histogram which also included the respondents who did not answer the question (the 0 value).

However, for students who expressed that they need help, they appear to actually take work to the Writing Center half of the time (38%) that they agree that they need help (78%). This discrepancy is even larger when looking at the median figures (86% to 29%) for both of these responses, which raises concerns about whether students recognize, are aware of, or perceive the Writing Center as a useful source of assistance. The histogram (fig. 21) for this information reflects a distribution that skews unevenly somewhat to the right, reflecting some of the earlier observations that students do not report taking work to the Writing Center at very large percentages. Again, some students did not answer the question as reflected in the left column.

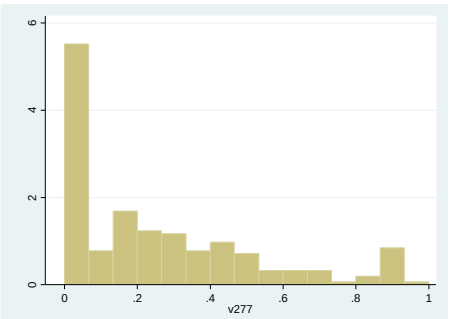


FIGURE 21 HISTOGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS: HELP NEEDED BASED ON ACTUALLY TAKING WORK TO THE WRITING CENTER (V277)

Furthermore, the report that students give of receiving help is also of concern-- 54% report that they received help, roughly half of the time that they seek the help. A similar distribution (fig. 22) to the one based on actually taking work to the Writing Center (fig. 21) appears. The skew appears to be unevenly going to the left though it may also be interpreted as flat since the columns vary less in density. The left column reflects the responses of those not answering the question.

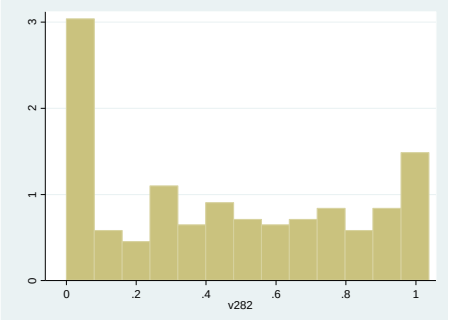


FIGURE 22 HISTOGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS BASED ON REPORTING HELP RECEIVED (V282)

With students reporting this rather low response about receiving help when they seek it—and agree that they need it—we may begin to ask some additional questions:

- Do students seek help for one area but actually get help with another that a tutor recognizes as more important?

- Do students understand or recognize the help that they do receive?
- If students don't believe they received help with a writing issue, do they seek additional help elsewhere or give up?
- Do students report not receiving help if they didn't receive the response that they expected?

Furthermore, looking at the same areas by different groupings of students according to course level (developmental or non-developmental) or according to Writing Center model (voluntary or mandatory) also suggests that students' varying levels of confidence in Writing Center assistance needs further inquiry. More developmental students (55%) participated in the survey study than non-developmental students (45%), and the developmental group included ESL students who participated in the study. The non-developmental group included students both in transferable and advanced courses.

Variable/measure	Developmental students	Non-developmental students	Students attending voluntary model	Students attending mandatory model	All students
Report needing help (v283)					
Mean	73%	80%	78%	76%	78%
Median	86%	86%	86%	89%	86%
Stnd. Dev.	.3131	.2245	.2453	.2888	.2575
Report taking work to Writing Center for help (v277)					
Mean	37%	39%	37%	41%	38%
Median	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%
Stnd. Dev.	.2479	.2763	.2507	.2772	.26
Report receiving help (v282)					
Mean	45%	63%	55%	50%	54%
Median	41%	70%	59%	44%	56%
Stnd. Dev.	.3220	.2958	.2997	.3581	.3191

FIGURE 23 COMPARISON OF STUDENT GROUPS (DEVELOPMENTAL, NON-DEVELOPMENTAL, ATTENDING VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY WRITING CENTERS) REPORTING NEEDING HELP, TAKING WORK TO THE WC FOR HELP, AND RECEIVING HELP. HIGHEST % YELLOW; LOWEST % BLUE

More non-developmental students than developmental students report needing help

The means for each variable for the different groups appear to be close, suggesting some consistency among students as a whole in spite of the four designations. Some possible explanations for the differences that do emerge, however, are worth mentioning. First of all, non-developmental students (i.e. enrolled in college-transfer or advance classes) indicated needing help the most of all groups (80%). Perhaps because they are further along in their education journey, are enrolled in more demanding classes, or have taken other preparatory English courses, non-developmental students appear slightly more willing to admit that they need help with writing. In the histogram (fig. 24) for these non-developmental students based on their agreement or disagreement about needing help with certain writing features, the skew to the left indicates that they tend to see the benefit of assistance. (This particular group is also the one that contains the outlier). Fewer students in this grouping skipped this question.

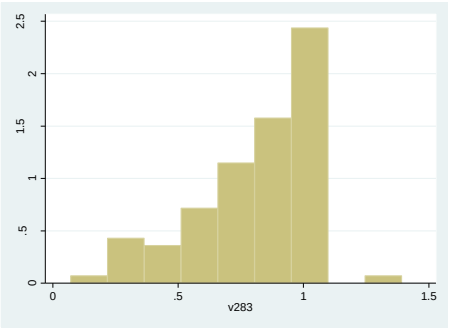


FIGURE 24 HISTOGRAM FOR NON-DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS/COLLEGE TRANSFER: HELP NEEDED BASED ON AGREE/DISAGREE

In contrast, developmental students report the lowest percentage of needing help (73%) which may indicate that they may feel stigmatized by the admission/acknowledgment of needing help or being the group "targeted" by a Writing Center program on their campus, or do not know enough about writing at the college level to recognize the benefit of expressing a need for help. Because this group has to take more

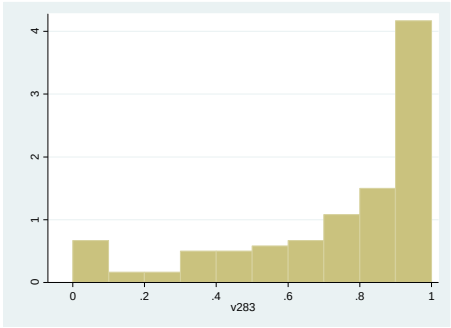


FIGURE 25 HISTOGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS: HELP NEEDED BASED ON AGREE/DISAGREE

composition classes before graduating, their somewhat lower report of needing help may indicate that they are not as aware of their own needs and/or what they might need as writers. The skew to the left in the histogram (fig. 25), however, indicates that they still appear to have a strong tendency in seeing a need for help.

Students hesitate to take work to the Writing Center regardless of designation

When looking at the different student group reports for taking work to the Writing Center (chart fig. 23, p. 122), we notice a drop for each group to roughly half the percentage they reported for needing help: developmental 37%; non-developmental 39%; voluntary model 37%; mandatory 41%; and all 38%). The developmental and voluntary attendance students report the lowest percentages (37%). These figures may indicate that students—especially those who may be said to need help the most and/or have the most flexible options of accessing help when it suits their schedule—have lost an opportunity to use the Writing Center and exhibit an apparent irony: students recognize that they need help, yet do not seek help to meet their needs. For non-developmental students (fig. 26), the histogram nearly goes flat and reflects those participants not answering the question. This group may be exhibiting hesitation to take assignments to the Writing Center, possibly because students in college-level or advanced composition courses may not be required to attend the Writing Center. For developmental students (fig. 27), we see a stronger skew to the right

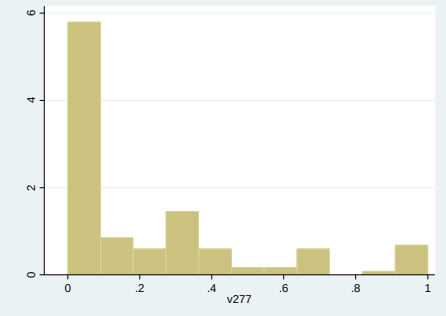


FIGURE 27 HISTOGRAM FOR NON-DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS/COLLEGE TRANSFER: HELP NEEDED BASED ON TAKING WORK TO THE WC

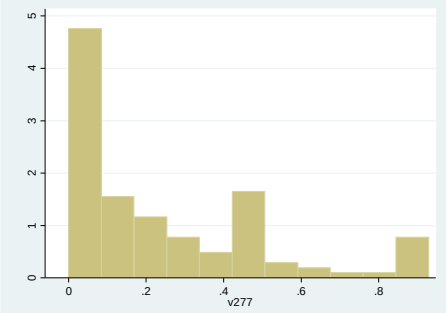


FIGURE 26 HISTOGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS: HELP NEEDED BASED ON TAKING WORK TO THE WRITING CENTER

reflecting more hesitation, also, in taking their work to the Writing Center, perhaps because attendance is not required. A need to be independent and/or feelings of being stigmatized may also explain such patterns.

Though, seeming more likely than the students grouped by developmental and non-developmental distinctions to express a need for help, the students grouped by their requirement to attend the Writing Center, the mandatory designation, are still taking their work to the Writing Center half of the time (41%) that there is an opportunity to do so (since they have to attend the Writing Center). This area of such drastic difference between needing help and seeking help in this designation for students required to attend the Writing Center also leads to additional questions:

- Why do students who admit that they need help not seek help more consistently when they are in the Writing Center?
- What obstacles might exist that prevent students from taking their work to the Writing Center?
- What are the student perceptions of Writing Centers that might account for students not taking their work to the Writing Center?

Furthermore, when students report on receiving assistance, the non-developmental group indicates receiving the most help (63%). Perhaps as more proficient students enrolled in college transfer or advanced course or as students who completed preparatory classes, non-developmental students recognize more readily that they were helped in the way that they anticipated. They may have more knowledge about what expectations are to ask directed questions when they seek help. Non-developmental students show a more even distribution

(fig.28) in their responses with less variation than do their developmental peers (fig. 29). On the other hand, the developmental students report receiving help the least (45%), suggesting that they may feel confused about what tutors say, are uncertain about what to do with their tutor's advice (especially if it is not what they anticipated or believed they needed help with), or do not believe their tutor can help them. The histogram for developmental students (fig. 29), is flatter than the one for all students, and less distinct in densities than the one for non-developmental students (in fig. 28).

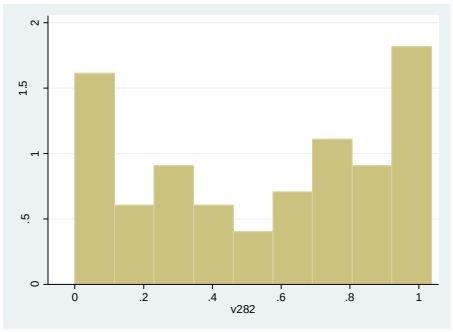


FIGURE 28 HISTOGRAM FOR NON-DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS/COLLEGE TRANSFER: HELP RECEIVED

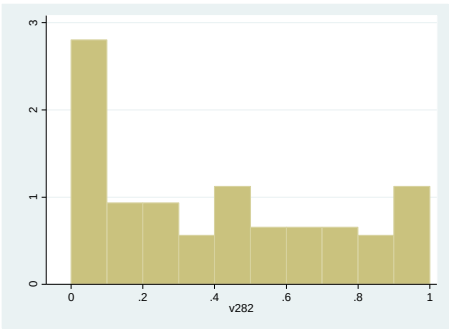


FIGURE 29 HISTOGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS: HELP RECEIVED

Enough differences between developmental and non-developmental students can suggest that the students perceive the Writing Center from either different understandings of the help they believe they could benefit from, from their different habits of taking assignments to the Writing Center, or from their evaluation of the help that they actually received. Both groups may show more consistency in their perceptions about Writing Center assistance when they actually think about their work that they need help with. The more pronounced slopes of distribution appear when students agree or disagree that they could benefit from help. They appear to make sharper distinctions between receiving help on the work that they do versus the act of actually taking work to the Writing Center that they believed that they needed help with, which reveals a flattening of their responses, a hesitation. Student awareness about the availability of assistance, discussed in the next section, may help explain these observations.

Student awareness of assistance is questionable—especially to students and instructors

> *"A session can never fully answer all of the students' concerns. Instead, we try to address the most vital issues in an effort not to overwhelm the student." -tutor*

The groups' varied reports on student awareness that students could take tasks to the Writing Center suggest that students and instructors do not share the tutors' perceptions about Writing Center assistance.

Task	Student aware could take task to Writing Center	Tutor believes students aware	Instructor believes students aware
Outline	57%	96%	41%
Draft	62%	100%	49%
Reading	42%	72%	17%
Research	55%	100%	32%
Short answer response	39%	72%	12%
Journal response	39%	72%	12%
Previously graded work	38%	88%	22%
Creative writing	48%	76%	12%
Grammar work	49%	88%	14%
Presentation work	40%	68%	34%
Writing prompt help	42%	96%	5%
College application	42%	92%	2%
Lab work	35%	52%	0

FIGURE 30 STUDENT, TUTOR, AND INSTRUCTOR REPORTS ABOUT STUDENT AWARENESS OF BRINGING TASKS IN FOR WRITING CENTER ASSISTANCE. HIGHEST PERCENTAGE FOR EACH GROUP HIGHLIGHTED YELLOW.

In every instance, tutors express more optimism about students being aware that they could bring the above mentioned tasks in to the Writing Center. Significantly, instructors express the lowest percentages for student awareness. These low percentages may indicate that instructors are not sure about how the relationship between students and the Writing Center is established, which may be related to the design of the Writing Center as a mandatory or

voluntary one (discussed in Chapter 4). Also, because students' work may not always reflect improvement despite Writing Center attendance, instructors may assume that students did not avail themselves of Writing Center assistance. Students may also be indicating their confusion either about their tasks or about the work of the Writing Center. Student awareness of the potentials of Writing Centers to assist them seems to be a highly uncertain area. Student course levels may help explain the low reports from students of actually taking assignments to the Writing Center and the instructors' apparently low reports of their students actually taking assignments to the Writing Center.

Satisfaction with services

What are the perceptions of the three groups of Writing Center assistance?

> *"Most student seem satisfied because they are willingly there. Other expect the tutor to do all the work, and when that doesn't happen, they leave frustrated and unconvinced that they should make another appointment." –tutor*

> *"Writing Center is good place. I like Writing Center, because it is very important for me and students. Studying English need to help from teacher. Sometimes the English teacher very busy, so students can go Writing Center to get helping. Sometimes students have this or that vary question. For example, I have studied school E. I often have to Writing Center. The tutor is very good. They have helped me to understand grammar and essays. They have transfer to me much knowledge. Everyday I go to Writing Center and study to speak, write, and to much English knowledge. The Writing Center is a wonderful place!!!!" —developmental student*

The three groups were asked to rate their satisfaction with their Writing Centers based on a scale of 1-10. While students and tutors share some optimism in their perceptions of the services, the variability in student responses is considerable:

Rate 1-10 satisfaction with service

	Students	Tutors	Instructors
Mean	8.02	8	6.73
(standard deviation)	(2.38)	(.8098)	(1.6)

FIGURE 31 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR ALL THREE GROUPS RANKING SATISFACTION WITH WRITING CENTER SERVICES BASED ON A SCALE OF 1-10 (10= MOST SATISFIED).

The standard deviation for the students' ranking indicates that the student response had a large range. About 4% of the student participants gave their Writing Centers a rank of 1-3 out of a possible 10. A small majority of students at 51% gave their Writing Centers a rank of 8-10 out of a possible 10. Also, given the strong responses from tutors about the work they assist students with, it may seem surprising that as a group, tutors nearly match the student perceptions. Tutors may be indicating here that they understand the students' perspectives very closely, perhaps indicating that what they observe about needs for improvement reveal that they are aware that changes are necessary before the Writing Center can do a superior job meriting a rank of 9-10. The close match is also surprising given the areas of writing features that these two groups differed in prioritizing (discussed in Chapter 5) and in the sharp discrepancies explored in this chapter regarding the work that students reported taking to the Writing Center and reported being aware of in terms of taking work to the Writing Center. Tutors are much more optimistic about student awareness of Writing Center services.

Instructors appear to be more critical of the Writing Center, ranking it lower than students and tutors with 6.73 out of a possible 10 and exhibiting a large standard deviation of 1.6. Taking into consideration what instructors believe about student habits of taking work to the Writing Center and/or students being aware that they could take work to the Writing Center, we might conclude that instructors perceive the Writing Center could do a better job getting students to improve their writing. The mismatches in priorities and instructors' doubts about students seeking assistance may be compounded by instructors' expectations about student work and

some of the complications of college writing noted in Chapter 3. Simplistically, instructors may be expecting the Writing Center to "fix" student writing issues and are expressing dismay that student writing may not always improve after Writing Center attendance, especially if attendance is mandatory. Alternatively, instructors may also be expressing uncertainty about what the Writing Center does or how their students, ideally, should be able to access help in the Writing Center if attendance is a voluntary option.

Should students be required to access Writing Center support?

> *"Having students use the Writing Center is important in their overall success as a writer. Unfortunately, if it wasn't mandatory I don't know how many students would go to it. It is important that they learn about the process of writing, revision and be able to handle constructive criticism."--instructor*

The satisfaction that the three groups report may be a reflection of the model of their campus Writing Centers. In this study, for fall semester, 70% of the student participants attended campuses that incorporated a voluntary model with 30% attending mandatory programs, and in spring, 77% of the student participants attended campuses that incorporated a voluntary model with 23% attending mandatory programs. The following chart (fig. 32) reflects the percentage of the participants in each model who characterized their experiences of Writing Center services as "very" or "most" satisfactory (indicated by a score of 9 or 10 on a Likert scale).

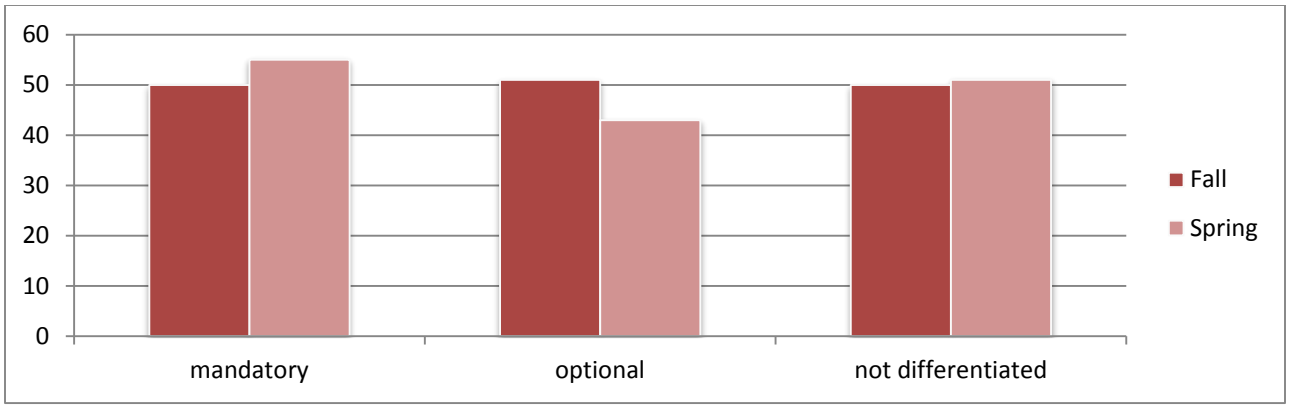


FIGURE 32 CHART COMPARING FALL AND SPRING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF BEING VERY SATISFIED WITH WRITING CENTER SERVICES (RANK OF 9 OR 10 OUT OF 10 ON A LIKERT SCALE) DIFFERENTIATED BY MANDATORY AND OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE AND NOT DIFFERENTIATED.

Nearly the same percentage of students, overall, characterized themselves as very satisfied with the Writing Center services in the spring and in the fall (from 50% to 51% when the model is not specified), suggesting consistency in student perceptions of Writing Centers. While the students in the optional-attendance programs showed a decrease in this area over the semesters (51% to 43%), the students in the mandatory programs indicated a small increase between the semesters (50% to 55%). In fall, a very slight difference (1%) between students in mandatory and voluntary programs suggests that students in the optional program may be more satisfied; but in spring, more students in the mandatory model (55%) were satisfied than those in the optional model (43%). As a possible explanation, perhaps more students in spring realized the potential benefits of Writing Center assistance when they were required to attend, and students with voluntary options were less convinced about the potential benefits. Alternatively, students with voluntary options may also have grown more confident in their skills by spring semester and felt they needed less assistance. There is room for more inquiry in this area as well as a need to listen to more student voices about what does and does not work for students.

Improvements the three groups would like to see implemented

> *"If a student cannot narrow their need to one particular area of writing, they may become bombarded with information and feel overwhelmed or overloaded. . . .The only students I see that are slightly dissatisfied are those who would benefit from more frequent visits with a tutor or instructor. They want to accomplish more than is possible in any given [tutoring] session."—tutor*

> *"The only thing I would love to see more of is more tutors or more space. I cannot get my classes in for training on Inspiration software and/or tutors can't make it to classrooms because they are short staffed. Cut hours have made it impossible for early morning or evening students to use the center. It is geared only for "traditional" students which is really a shame. Many student cannot use it because of their work/class schedules. More online help could be a possibility (IM, Chat, etc)."—instructor*

As another way of measuring the three groups' perceptions of Writing Center services, they were asked to indicate what improvements they would like to see in their Writing Centers. There are some notable matches where the groups agree but there is only one that they all share: having more tutors. Each group clearly values the work of tutors and the need to access their assistance by having more tutors present. This detail reflects a perception that the tutors' help is in demand and difficult to attain when traffic/volume in the Center exceeds the resources the Center can provide. The number of tutors is usually a matter of budget, scheduling, and assessments of departmental needs. Some other factors influencing the number of tutors may include those discussed below. The focus of the discussion for this section will be on the areas that the participants expressed over 50% agreement upon which includes specific tutors, expanded hours of operation, longer duration of conferences, online tutoring, availability to non-composition students, writing samples/models, and a very prominent recommendation for "other" to be implemented. The chart follows:

Area of change	students	tutors	instructors
No change	24%	4%	7%
More tutors	55%	60%	59%
Specific tutors	51%	28%	32%
Self-directed activities	40%	36%	44%
Computer assisted	39%	32%	39%
Online assessment	42%	48%	39%
Expand hours operation	46%	88%	56%
Expand duration of conference	41%	52%	37%
Decrease duration of conf.	17%	0	0
Online/remote tutor	40%	52%	49%
Mandatory	25%	36%	29%
Optional	32%	28%	34%
Available to all, not just Eng.	53%	32%	59%
Tutor samples	52%	48%	59%
Instructor models	54%	48%	59%
Other	58%	60%	44%

FIGURE 33 STUDENTS', TUTORS', AND INSTRUCTORS' RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS (% AGREEING WITH THE RECOMMENDATION)

Each group perceives that more tutors are needed in their Writing Center (students 55%; tutors 60%; and instructors 59%). Yet, for students and tutors, more tutors are not the *highest* priority. For tutors, expanded hours of operation is the preferred improvement (88%), and for students, "other" is the preferred improvement (58%), meaning another location, within the classroom, or group vs. individual conferencing. Students apparently want more options for assistance while

tutors want more time to conference with students. To some extent, instructors also see a need for expanded hours (56%), perhaps because they are concerned that their students may not have easy access to the Writing Center or because the Writing Center cannot accommodate all the student requests for assistance. Interestingly, expanded hours of operation are not as strong a priority for students (46%), perhaps because of perceived time constraints or a desire not to extend the time they spend fulfilling this requirement if it is a mandatory one for their course work.

Instructors give equal preference to increasing the number of tutors, Writing Center availability for all students (not just for English students), tutor models of writing assignments, and instructor models of writing assignments. Instructors may reflect an understanding of how writing skills in English would be relevant to students taking other courses. One instructor in the study explained, "There needs to be more interaction between student and tutor. This can be achieved if more staff were hired and specific tasks are required by the Center to be completed." More importantly, however, instructors appear to emphasize that samples of writing that both they and tutors could provide to students would be a helpful improvement. And students agree with the concept of having writing samples, both from tutors and from instructors. Although most composition text books include model writing samples, it seems important to both students and instructors that the Writing Center make more writing models available to students for both independent inquiry and mentored support (Knowles, 1990, 2011).

Tutors also indicated "other" as a preferred improvement, exploring further flexible options to accomplish conferencing, workshops, and collaborative encounters (Carroll, et al., 2007). They also included a preference for online tutors/tutoring and expanded duration of conferences. Delivery of services in varied ways as well as expansion of the time that they spend with students are the two areas that tutors identified separately from students and instructors.

Such concerns may reflect tutor awareness of the various roles that Writing Centers can fulfill. Interestingly, students are the only group who expressed an interest in having specific tutors, meaning ones designated either for a particular course level (i.e. developmental, college transfer) or type of assignment (i.e. persuasive assignment, research paper). Students may be more aware of their need for targeted assistance than we expect, or they may be more critical of general/global assistance which they may perceive as less helpful.

Summary

The three groups vary considerably in what they report that students are bringing to the Writing Center for help. While they agree that several kinds of assignments are part of students' experiences, instructors and tutors believe students are bringing the assignments to the Writing Center at a stronger rate than they actually are. Students report that they do so at a low percentage—in fact, half of the rate that they admit to needing help. Furthermore, they report receiving help half of the time that they do take work in for help. Despite these discrepant figures, students report being satisfied with services, with large variability. Instructors do not share their students' rate of satisfaction, yet also large variability. The three groups have several recommendations about how to improve Writing Center services, the most prominent being increasing the number of tutors, having access to model writing samples, and "other." This last point has some meaningful, if ambiguous, implications for Writing Center efficacy.

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Chapter 7: Implications and discussion

Before discussing the implications of the study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations to the study.

Limitations to the study

Some limitations to the study do exist that have some influence on the interpretation of the data. These limitations include:

- Self-reporting: A survey asks individuals to respond to questions that they may understand with varying degrees of interest and/or clarity. This particular survey contained several multi-layered questions, and some participants may have been attentive to certain questions more than others, or may have felt a need to respond a certain way. For instance, students had more variability in several responses throughout the surveys, perhaps indicating their familiarity or lack of familiarity with the issues or terms mentioned in the questions. Tutors demonstrated a marked enthusiasm for their practices at all levels, perhaps indicating their investment in Writing Center issues and its being focus of a study. By confining their responses to one course level, instructors may or may not have felt a need to restrict some of their responses, indicating higher levels of critique or sensitivity to perceived issues that the questions raised.
- Course level as marker: The course marker breakdown of the participants is as follows. Students indicated their course level at the time of survey, while tutors and instructors opted in a few cases to indicate all the course levels that they tutored/taught without

strictly confining their responses to one level (i.e. the tutor and instructor totals are more than 100%).

	ESL	Developmental	College Transfer	Advanced	Total
Students	2.4%	51.7%	27.9%	15.8%	97.8%
Tutors (overlap, also)	25%	29.2%	58%	58%	150.2%
Instructors (overlap, also)	13%	55%	28%	7.5%	103.5%

FIGURE 34 COURSE LEVEL INDICATED BY THE STUDENTS, TUTORS, AND INSTRUCTORS AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY.

Students and instructors from developmental composition classes were dominant among the participants while tutors indicated more college transfer and advanced levels when responding to the surveys. The course level that the participants identified themselves, then, could shape the responses a certain way, explaining some of the variability in the responses of the student group, the consistency of the tutor responses, and the stronger critical nature of the instructor responses.

- Enrollment changes: Community colleges frequently reflect enrollment changes that affect class composition, course offerings, staffing, teaching assignments, and budgeting. Fluctuating enrollment can also impact Writing Centers which may require more staffing, scheduling, and resources, also. Such factors may have altered some instructor and tutor assignments which may have factored into responses. Additionally, students may be repeating courses and/or taking a particular composition course that s/he planned to take at another time which may have influenced their responses as well.
- Gender discrepancies—The effects of gender may or may not have been a factor in the study. Gender information was not gathered from the participants so that they wouldn't feel a gender comparison would be made of each group. The demographics of each

campus reflected below may or may not indicate that females participated in surveys more often.

	Students	Tutors and Instructors
Male	Range 42-53%	Range 44-52%
Female	Range 47-58%	Range 48-56%

FIGURE 35 GENDER DISTRIBUTION FOR PARTICIPANTS AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY

- Ethnic minority presence: Community college campuses in Southern California reflect a make-up of communities that have large ethnic groups. Ethnic identity was not asked for on the surveys so that the participants would not feel a comparison of the groups was being made. For the four campuses involved in the study, the range of backgrounds could vary considerably:

Ethnic identity	Students
Asian	Range 1-16%
Hispanic/Latino	Range 42-77%
White, non-Hispanic	Range 2-27%
Other	Range 5-21%

Tutors and Instructors
Minority Range 46-49%
White, non-Hispanic Range 51-64%

FIGURE 36 ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION FOR PARTICIPANTS AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY

Ethnic background may or may not mean that there could be language acquisition issues in students' earlier schooling that could impact on college studies and composition skills. Given the remedial needs of students and their enrollment in ESL/developmental classes, there may be additional challenges for learners and educators on these campuses which the surveys did not specifically capture. The minority presence among faculty does not

match that of the student demographic. While studies exist that explore how the relationship of students and faculty are affected by ethnic identity, this study did not collect that information. The largest group is Hispanic/Latino for all four campuses, while the smallest may be Asian or white populations. "Other" included groups as diverse as African-American, Filipino, and Native American.

- Controls and cross-model comparisons are unavailable: This particular survey study was not conducted on the four campuses previously, so controls were not in place to set a base point for responses regarding writing features, services, or satisfaction. Also, cross-model comparisons were not available, meaning different models of Writing Centers, or control models, for mandatory or voluntary student attendance or conferencing/workshop formats were not looked at.
- Upcoming reform affected responses: Another factor that may have influenced responses was that the participants were responding to the questions with their current Writing Center practices in mind, while each campus was undergoing potential changes in Writing Center design. Some were starting to formally examine their current Writing Center operations and needs for change. The idea of upcoming change may have influenced how instructors and tutors responded to questions about services and recommendations

Implications of study results

What can we do with the information that this study includes? First, the areas of mismatch about writing features (Chapter 5) indicate a need to understand 1) what the three groups do not agree upon as important in writing and 2) why the disagreement may be problematic for student writers. Issues to address from these mismatches would be 1) how to

bring the groups closer in alignment and 2) what that alignment might achieve. Seeing the Writing Center as an important partner in that alignment can help with consistency in composition courses and in campus goals. The ways that the three groups concur and diverge in their perceptions of Writing Center services (Chapter 6) demonstrated by how students use the services suggest that thoughtful consideration needs be given to flexible ways to address student needs so that students can align their own goals with those of their instructors. Tutors and tutor practices are an important part of implementing such flexible strategies. With much at stake as accreditation and funding issues continually require stakeholders to evaluate their programs through lenses of efficiency and accountability, making informed decisions is a priority. Each of these areas will be discussed in detail.

Implications for alignment on writing issues

In what areas does alignment seem to be most needed?

As mentioned in Chapter 5, students are focusing on issues that tutors and instructors deem less important. The mismatch can lead to frustrations and tensions between the three groups if they are giving different priorities to features of writing. To review, students as a group give mild responses (at ranges of 57-65%) to the "extremely" important features that they ranked—"thesis, conclusion, editing, critical thinking, and understanding the assignment" which tutors give stronger responses to (72-100%). Instructors only gave mild to strong rankings (66-88%) for two of these features—"thesis" and "understanding the assignment"--while they gave "conclusions" 37% and "critical thinking" 46%. Instructors preferred "idea development" (66%) and "organization" (88%) more. Students considered "idea development" and "organization" extremely important about half the time (53-55%). In looking at these writing features in the top ranking for each group, the mismatch suggests that students appear less sure about what writing features are important that their tutors and instructors value more.

Issues related to defining college-level writing are important here when addressing writing features. How the participants define and apply the writing features in this study suggest that tutors and instructors show some consistency in looking at formal elements like "thesis" and "evidence" and global ones that compliment these concepts like "idea development" and "organization." The sample prompts in Chapter 3 give a brief look at what instructors value and what tutors have to help students navigate. Students appear to have an incomplete understanding of how these concepts connect in the ways that their tutors and instructors would like to see.

As the discussion in Chapter 5 explores further, the features that the groups diverge on show yet more areas that may need, or that can benefit from, more alignment. Students give strong priorities to "summary, proofreading, and editing," which are mechanical and/or superficial areas of focus. Instructors, meanwhile, are looking at "drafting, documentation, commentary, and synthesis" more closely, and tutors are looking at "outlining, introductions, analysis, and acknowledging point of view" more closely. Such disparity suggests that students are reaching for strategies that are, in their understanding, easier to address, perhaps, and to complete. Instructors and tutors are directing their focus, and their evaluation of writing, to substantive areas that can be difficult for struggling writers. As more developmental students participated in the survey early in both the fall and spring semesters (most likely before midterms), the responses to these areas that tutors and instructors prioritize may not even be on the students' "radars" yet if they are inexperienced or unprepared to work with them. Also, the majority of student participants (70%) in the study attended colleges where the Writing Center was a voluntary option, not a requirement, which could indicate that students were more likely to feel less sure about writing features than they might be if attendance in a Writing Center were a requirement. Instructors and tutors, more versed in the nuances of academic writing, could be

looking ahead at the kinds of features that college writers need to master and, predictably, keeping those writing goals and/or standards in mind. The challenge is to communicate those goals and standards in very clear ways to students.

How can the three groups be brought closer in alignment regarding Writing Center influence on student success?

The Writing Center can be a key partner in bringing the students, tutors, and instructors closer in alignment on their perceptions of writing features that are necessary to student success. There is an assumption underlying this solution that the Writing Center is related in some way to composition courses in the first place. That relationship could either be established via mandatory enrollment in the Writing Center as a lab requirement, or as a course requirement for credit/grade, or it could also be a voluntary relationship which would mean the students would seek assistance on their own. The Writing Center can function as an arbiter/gate-keeper, then, for students who do obtain Writing Center assistance. If that assistance is designed through a coordination of composition instructors and tutors, the communication is likely to be more consistent than if the Writing Center is operating independently of campus writing courses.

Another issue that arises in this discussion is that tutors believe students are much more aware of Writing Center assistance than they actually are (explored in Chapter 6). Instructors appear to believe that students are taking their work to the Writing Center more than they actually are. Students seem to be uncertain about the help, and, once again, more students attending campuses where the Writing Center was a voluntary option participated in this study, which influences the low reports about taking work to the Writing Center for assistance. When the model (mandatory or voluntary) of the Writing Center is taken into consideration (Chapter 6), the students in the mandatory program showed a slight increase in their satisfaction. The

students in the voluntary program experienced a decrease in their satisfaction. This area of difference may be an argument supporting the benefits of implementing a mandatory Writing Center requirement.

Since this study took place, two of the campuses that participated in the study that required Writing Center attendance have maintained the requirement but have revamped their programs, organization, protocols, and accountability reporting. They also eliminated their voluntary options although one campus has launched a second Writing Center precisely designed for walk-in students with writing assignments from all other courses but English, collaborating with instructors from other classes and what they perceive their students' writing needs are. The two campuses that retained the voluntary requirement have experienced an increase in attendance and are working to accommodate the increased demands for delivering assistance and increasing articulation between the Writing Center and classes with classroom visits at the beginning of the semesters and frequent email announcements to instructors.

The question of alignment may be addressed more thoroughly via mandatory Writing Center attendance when coordination between courses and the Center is established. With instructors and tutors exchanging dialogue about their students, there is an optimal opportunity to help students with their composition assignments. While instructors do exhibit less satisfaction with Writing Center services (Chapter 6), more instructors from the campuses where Writing Centers are open to voluntary attendance participated in the study which may influence that figure. Yet, the level of satisfaction may change as Writing Centers undergo change regardless of their mandatory or voluntary model if instructors and tutors work with each other on the issues they perceive students are facing in their composition classes.

What could stronger alignment achieve?

Examining the mismatches in what the participants ranked as important helps potentially in reflecting on the Writing Center's role in establishing consistency and goals in composition courses. If instructors and tutors are able to collaborate more about the areas where they diverge in priorities, they may be able to better address their students' needs. They need time and space to discuss why instructors prioritize "drafting, documentation, commentary, and synthesis" more and why tutors prioritize "outlining, introductions, analysis, and acknowledging point of view" more. It would be important for them to explore why each group sees these features as important and how they communicate these elements to students through assignments and feedback. They might ask if differing priorities challenge their efforts to assist students or not, and to what extent. Do they sense a need to "combat" or "cultivate" certain habits for their students? And how should they go about doing so? With what tools? Such questions can perhaps lead to productive reflection and action.

With stronger articulation between tutors and instructors in this regard, students can benefit and perhaps begin to realign their own notions about writing to better perform on the writing assignments that their instructors are evaluating. Instructors and tutors may need to better understand why students believe "summarizing, editing, and proofreading" are important, perhaps reflecting how students respond to feedback that may make them prioritize these features more than others. A stronger communication to students at early stages in their composition classes, at both developmental and college transfer levels, may need to occur. That communication may mean that tutors and instructors may need to talk about what early course work needs to cover regularly, and assess incoming students accurately for their individual needs. They might also consider what other materials (texts, workshops, online, etc.) they could

use to facilitate these discussions and relate to students/use with student. The task of finding "what works" is an enormous one and may change semester to semester, class to class, and student to student. A significant question is, again, what can be done if alignment of the three groups occurs at community college level? Is the goal better skills, better writing, better literacy, better opportunities? Some or all of these? Likely, each of these groups will differ in the degrees of clarity that they have about the outcomes of looking at writing with the same/similar priorities.

Implications about use of services

> *"The Writing Center and tutoring help students take charge and command of their own learning experience by helping them voice and identify their areas of weakness. Once a problem is identified, we provide the knowledge and tools for them to learn to resolve such problems. By bringing structural problems to the attention of students they can learn how to communicate more effectively in written form." –tutor*

In Chapter 6, we observed that students expressed awareness that they could benefit from help (78%), yet they seem to counter that awareness by their low report of actually taking their work in for help (38%) and by their spare acknowledgement of receiving help on the work they sought help for (54%). While the designations of developmental, non-developmental, mandatory attendance, or voluntary attendance explored in the analyses show small variations, the non-developmental students appear to admit needing more help and receiving more help than the other groupings. This finding may cause some concern if we consider that developmental students are usually the more "targeted" group for assistance programs like Writing Centers which appear, in this study, to be reaching out somewhat better to the students who are already in college-transfer and advanced composition courses.

Non-developmental students may be acknowledging the rigor of college-transfer and advanced courses while their developmental peers are not even fully aware of what their needs

are at that point in their academic journey. That mandatory attendance students reported taking more work into the Writing Center for help appears to be an obvious finding and reinforces the report of satisfaction from the group. These findings suggest that more attention can be given to the needs of learners at all levels of composition, more attention to helping learners define their needs for themselves as they engage in academic writing. Better alignment of the three groups regarding writing features as mentioned above may be one way to achieve that goal as well as considering the potential benefits of mandated Writing Center programs or their expansion/improvement if they are already in place.

Implications about recommendations for improvement

> *"A bigger budget would be the biggest improvement because budget cuts limits training and development time as well as operation time which all affects student satisfaction."—tutor*

There are several implications from the study for each of the stakeholders regarding the recommended improvements the three groups suggest. First, we notice both overlapping needs and diverging needs. The main agreement between the groups is that more tutors are needed in the Writing Center, yet they vary in the degrees of importance this has to the participants (Chapter 6). Expanded hours is another (Chapter 6). These are logistical concerns that arise out of the need to supply students with services because of the volume of demand for these services. Perhaps stakeholders are expressing that the added personnel and added hours will make a positive difference in the ways that students perceive the usefulness of the Writing Center. But most significant is that students prefer "other" as their recommendation. What exactly could that mean?

Students want more independent opportunities AND direct intervention

> *A strong Writing Center can decrease drop out rates over a period of time and put students on a path toward success and graduation. –instructor*

Taking into consideration the characteristics of community college learners (Chapter 2), we notice several dynamics within the group that may account for why "other" is a preferred option. Alternatives to a centrally located Writing Center, to a mandatory requirement or voluntary option, to certain hours, etc., appear to be part of how they would like to see Writing Centers change to accommodate their needs more. Availability of the Writing Center beyond composition course enrollment as well as samples of writing for them to consult are also high on their list. While their responses indicate that they prioritize different writing features and are not sure about obtaining assistance, it appears that students do recognize a need to know, through model writing, what is expected of their compositions. They perhaps crave a chance to make their own independent observations within those samples so that they can seek assistance with specific needs from a more informed perspective. Students appear to want to write well and improve their performance, but on their own terms.

As they navigate their composition courses, students want flexibility as they receive direction at the same time. This may indicate that including students in the dialogue about Writing Centers and writing issues is vital to making the Writing Center truly "work" for students. Students need to be asked about their preferences and made to feel that their responses matter to the educators, both instructors and tutors, who care about their success in the first place. Instructors and tutors fulfill many roles in relation to their students: teaching, facilitating, coaching, evaluating, correcting, guiding, apprenticing, and approving. College students probably know they need their instructors and tutors to help them in each of these capacities as they become more independent masters of their writing abilities.

Tutors are informed by practices that differ from instructors' practices

> *"No one is perfect. Students won't agree with tutors sometimes; we can only hope that they take a majority of our advice." –tutor*

Tutors know that their job is an important one in that they can impact the writers whom they work with. They know that a one-size-fits-all approach to tutoring is insufficient, but that academic discourse has important features that they must help students acquire. As a liaison between students and instructors, tutors have to understand both groups' needs and strategize for both. They may adopt, then, practices that differ from instructors in order to help students. Interestingly, tutors have also designated "other" as a most important recommendation for Writing Centers to develop. They, like students, are aware that more potential exists beyond the protocols in place and are in an important place to shape what "other" could look like.

Tutors might have valuable insight into what "other" may entail. "Other" could range from the amount of time they get to spend with a student in a conference to the opportunity to develop a workshop for a strategic way to write an introduction or incorporate research. "Other" might also include group conferences that take place in a study room with each participant having computer access or directly in an instructor's classroom when students bring drafts for assignments. Furthermore, looking back at what tutors indicated as recommendations for Writing Center improvement, tutors focus less on model writing than instructors, perhaps because they work so closely with individual writers and are more confident about helping students with their own ideas more than with others' ideas. Tutor's questioning techniques and/or abilities to "diagnose" the area of an assignment for a student to focus on (which may not be the same one the student asks for help with!) also has potential to yield insightful suggestions about how to improve what Writing Centers do. The relationships that tutors can establish with students and instructors are integral to the Writing Center's success as well as the students' and instructors'

progress in tackling composition issues. The tutors' role in student success is a valuable asset to explore continually.

Looking forward

> *"The greatest strength of the WC is drawing material out of the students' minds; following that is helping them organize their ideas, and then formulating thesis statements. Ultimately, when the student leaves feeling empowered, the tutors have succeeded wildly." –instructor*

One of the ways that educators can assess their Writing Center programs is based on patterns in the data where most discrepancies and most intersections are in how the groups rank writing features. Bringing stakeholders into closer alignment seems like a starting point, but we need to keep in mind that consensus on what college composition should look like does not exist among professionals, and is an ongoing issue for inquiry. Likewise, for students, instructors, and tutors, the issue is one for ongoing inquiry, especially considering the writing curricula that campuses have embraced and in light of the writing goals that educators have established for their students.

With the *Framework* informing many educator's current approaches to writing and shaping what standards are applied to writing, we might expect that students, tutors, and instructors will begin to share a common and consistent language about writing more consistently. There is much to study here as we see the effects of this document on student learning and academic preparation over time. For current students, the Writing Centers available to them offer bridges that can help span gaps in their preparation and skills for college level writing. Efforts to shape the way Writing Centers work with writers is likely to undergo several changes as they try to meet this goal.

Along with changes in Writing Centers are changes in the classroom and curriculum that can have implications for placement of students, course offerings, scheduling, accountability and

funding. As goals are aligned and the requirements established to achieve them, assessments used to place students may or may not affect some students' plans to complete their education in the time frame they thought. Departments may find that those placements affect the kinds of, number of, and time of courses offered so that student enrollment can be accommodated. Whether Writing Centers are included as a mandatory or voluntary program brings up issues of how accountability is to be measured for the students, instructors, and tutoring staff, and how that accountability is articulated in student learning outcomes (SLOs). These issues all tie into funding and eventually accreditation as Writing Centers play an increasingly significant role in many skills initiatives that drive/direct many college budgets. These matters attest to the care with which Writing Center decisions need to be made to preserve its efficacy and legacy on behalf of student success.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Surveys distributed to Students, Tutors, and Peers

Student Survey

Please select the answer that most accurately represents your response.

General questions:

1. **I am**

Part one:

a. Full-time student
b. Part time student
c. Other, specify _____

Part two:

a. co-enrolled high school student
b. recent high school graduate
c. adult student, non-high school graduate
d. adult student, high school graduate
e. adult student, w/degree/certificate earned specify _____ year ___
f. retired
g. other, specify _____

2. **Course level at time of writing center attendance**

a. ESL/ELL course (e.g. ESL 53, Read 151)
b. Developmental (e.g. Eng 26, Eng 67, Eng59)
c. College level (e.g. Eng 100, Eng 101)
d. Advanced/Honors level (e.g. Eng 103, Eng 201, Eng 401)
e. Other department (Soc. Science, Psych. etc.), specify _____

3. **Educational goal at community college:**

a. GED equivalency
b. ESL proficiency
c. Transfer to university (undergraduate)
d. Transfer to certificated program
e. Prerequisites for graduate program
f. A.S. Degree
g. Career enhancement
h. Other, specify _____

The following questions pertain to your use of the Writing Center

4. **I found out about information about the campus Writing Center**

From my instructor	Y/N
From my counselor	Y/N
From campus brochures/handouts	Y/N
From the college website	Y/N
From a classroom announcement	Y/N
From the class catalogue/course schedule	Y/N
From a friend	Y/N
Other:	

5. **If mandatory attendance to the Writing Center is part of your grade, how is this factored (how much does it count?)**

___credit/no credit ___pass/fail __a percentage (how much _____) __N/A

At the time of the survey, how much of the requirement had you completed?

__none __ less than ½ of requirement __over ½ of requirement ___almost all of requirement __completed requirement

6. **Typical assignment lengths that I have to complete and the amount of time I have to complete them in this course (please check by the assignments you do and fill in the information about the time you were given to do the assignment and how much time you spent working on the assignment; leave lines blank if not used)**

Assignment	length (pages)	time to complete	I used this much time to complete
__reading	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__journal	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__prewrite	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__draft	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__final paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__notes	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__short answer	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__in class/on demand	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__research paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__outline	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__power point	length (pages)	time (days/hours)	
__ Other: (explain)			

For assignments, I also experience

Peer editing in class	Y/N
Peer editing outside of class	Y/N
Professional tutoring service at other location	Y/N specify:
Professional tutoring service online	Y/N specify:
Conference w/instructor, face-to-face	Y/N
Conference w/instructor, online/email	Y/N
Other	Y/N specify:
Not applicable	

7. **The type of tasks that were assigned in my class and that I took to the writing center include:**

(circle Y or N for whether you were given the assignment or not, and then check the column that corresponds whether you are aware of students taking that task to the Writing Center, whether you are aware that they do not take the task to the Writing Center, or whether you are not sure).

Task	**Assigned Y/N**	**Yes, I took to WC /**	**No, not taken /**	**I am aware I could take this to the WC**
Outline/Prewrite	Y/N			Y/N
Essay draft	Y/N			Y/N
Reading Exercise	Y/N			Y/N
Research Paper	Y/N			Y/N
Short answer response	Y/N			Y/N
Journal	Y/N			Y/N
Previously graded task	Y/N			Y/N
Creative Writing	Y/N			Y/N
Grammar Work	Y/N			Y/N
Presentation, speech	Y/N			Y/N
Prompt	Y/N			Y/N
Application Essay	Y/N			Y/N
Lab write up	Y/N			Y/N
Other:				

8. **In the course I took, I thought I could benefit from help with the following elements beyond classroom instruction:**
   Please rate on a scale of 0-3
   0 (unimportant) 1 (somewhat important) 2 (important) 3(extremely important)
   AND indicate whether you believe the element could be addressed in the Writing Center

Agree/disagree	Understanding Assignment	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Freewriting	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Prewriting	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Outlining	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Invention	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Introduction	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Clustering	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Mapping	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Thesis construction	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Idea Development	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Drafting	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Providing evidence/examples	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Documentation	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Organization	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Commentary	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Analysis	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Synthesis	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Paraphrasing	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Summarizing	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Peer review	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Conferencing	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Proofreading	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Editing	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Web research	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Subjective/Objective Voice	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Acknowledging other points of view	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Critical thinking	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Agree/disagree	Conclusion	0 1 2 3	Y/N	n/a
Comment:				

9. My visits to the Writing Center for this course can be characterized as (My reasons for attending the Writing Center)

My first visit occurred while attending this class	Y / N
An occasional, voluntary visit for class assignment	Y / N
Repeat visits for the same assignment	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (department)	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (instructor includes in grade)	Y / N
Instructor recommendation/referral	Y / N
Voluntary visit for self-selected writing assignment	Y / N
Other: please explain:	

The following questions address perceptions of assistance in the Writing Center

10. The tutors in my campus's Writing Center are:

a. I'm not sure b. Full-time English faculty members c. Part-time faculty
d. A peer tutor e. A trained tutor from other than English department
f. Other, specify _____

11. The help the Writing Center gave me

a. Answered all of my questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Answered some of my questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Did not answer my questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Went beyond the questions I had/ showed me something new	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Helped me understand all of my work	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Helped me understand some of my work	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Confused me about my work	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Did not include the same terminology that my instructor used	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Included the same terminology my instructor used	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Was clearly expressed	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Was hard for me to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Gave me specific recommendations to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Gave me general guidelines	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Gave me no real issues I could work on by myself	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Re-directed me in a non-useful/non-applicable way	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. I used all the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. I used some of the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. I did not use the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

While waiting for a conference/tutoring session, I

Worked on the assignment I brought	Y/N
Did other work for another class	Y/N
Used the other tools in the center (exercises)	Y/N
Used the internet	Y/N
Spoke with others	Y/N
Read	Y/N
Occupied my time with a digital device (phone, ipod)	Y/N
Other:	

The amount of time I waited between arrival/sign up/appointment time and the actual time of the tutoring session: _____minutes

The amount of time the tutoring session lasted: _____minutes

12. Rate the feedback you received from the tutors overall

Completely Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Useful

Explain:

13. The experience with the tutors made me feel

a. Like my grade would not change	Agree/disagree
b. Like my grade would be worse	Agree/disagree
c. Like my grade would be better	Agree/disagree
Comment:	

14. Length of time I worked on an assignment AFTER visiting the center/lab

Not at all (no changes made)	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
The day before it's due	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Hours before it's due	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
2-3 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
4-5 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
One week	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Two weeks	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Other (specify)	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely

15. Please identify at least three strengths of the Writing Center and, if applicable, how you would like to see them develop:

16. How could the writing center be more helpful?

a. No change needed	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Have more tutors	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Have specific tutors assigned to a course	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Have more self-directed writing activities for students to consult	Agree/disagree/not sure
e. Have computer-assisted programs for writing	Agree/disagree/not sure
f. Have online assessment program access to submit writing to	Agree/disagree/not sure
g. Expand hours of operation	Agree/disagree/not sure
h. Expand duration of session	Agree/disagree/not sure
i. Decrease duration of session	Agree/disagree/not sure
j. Become/remain mandatory	Agree/disagree/not sure
k. Become/remain optional	Agree/disagree/not sure
l. Be available to all students regardless of English course enrollment/being enrolled in other disciplines than English	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment/Other:	

17. In my overall impression regarding the writing center, I (please include any additional comments about how you would recommend use, about what you see going well, or maybe address the possible improvements above for the Writing Center) ***Thank you for your time!***

Tutor Survey

Please select the answer that most accurately represents your response.
General questions:

1. **I am**

   Part one:

   a. Full-time faculty member
   b. Part-time faculty member
   c. Full-time student (Major: _____, grad/undergrad)
   d. Part time student (Major:_____, grad/undergrad)
   e. Tutor only
   f. retired
   g. other, specify _____

2. **English course level at time of writing center tutor duties**
   a. N/A--faculty
   b. ESL/ELL course (e.g. ESL 53, Read 151)
   c. Developmental (e.g. Eng 26, Eng 67, Eng59)
   d. College level (e.g. Eng 100, Eng 101)
   e. Advanced/Honors level (e.g. Eng 103, Eng 201, Eng 401)
   f. Completed all English requirement
   g. Other department (Soc. Science, Psych. etc.), specify
      _____

3. **Amount of time spent on tutoring duties**

_____hours/week

The following questions pertain to your use of the Writing Center

The following questions pertain to use of the Writing Center that you incorporate

4. **My department requires mandatory attendance to the Writing Center**

	Yes
	No

5. **Mandatory attendance to the Writing Center is incorporate in students' grades**

	Yes
	No

6. **Typical assignment lengths that I observe students completing, the amount of time they have to complete them (please check by the assignments you assist with and fill in the information about the time you observe students have-- leave lines blank if not sure)**

Assignment	length (pages)	time to complete
__reading	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__journal	length (pages)	time (days/hour
__draft	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__prewrite	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__final paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__notes	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__short answer	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__in class/on demand	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__research paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__outline	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__power point	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__lab report	length (pages)	_____time (days/hours)

__ Other: (explain)

7. The type of tasks that I respond to the writing center include:
(circle Y or N for whether you conference on the type of assignment or not)

Task	**Assigned Y/N**
Outline/Prewrite	Y/N
Essay draft	Y/N
Reading Exercise	Y/N
Research Paper	Y/N
Short answer response	Y/N
Journal	Y/N
Previously graded task	Y/N
Creative Writing	Y/N
Grammar Work	Y/N
Presentation, speech	Y/N
Prompt	Y/N
Application Essay	Y/N
Lab write up	Y/N
Other:	

8. While conferencing, I think students could benefit from help with the following elements beyond classroom instruction:
Please rate on a scale of 0-3
0 (unimportant) 1 (somewhat important) 2 (important) 3(extremely important)
AND indicate whether you believe the element could be addressed in the Writing Center

Agree/disagree	Understanding Assignment	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Freewriting	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Prewriting	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Outlining	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Invention	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Introduction	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Clustering	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Mapping	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Thesis construction	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Idea Development	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Drafting	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Providing evidence/examples	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Documentation	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Organization	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Commentary	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Analysis	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Synthesis	0 1 2 3

Agree/disagree	Paraphrasing	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Summarizing	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Peer review	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Conferencing	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Proofreading	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Editing	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Web research	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Subjective/Objective Voice	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Acknowledging other points of view	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Critical thinking	0 1 2 3
Agree/disagree	Conclusion	0 1 2 3
Comment:		

9. **Student visits to the Writing Center for this course can be characterized as (My reasons for attending the Writing Center)**

Their first visit occurred while attending this class	Y / N
An occasional, voluntary visit for class assignment	Y / N
Repeat visits for the same assignment	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (department)	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (instructor includes in grade)	Y / N
Instructor recommendation/referral	Y / N
Voluntary visit for self-selected writing assignment	Y / N
Other: please explain:	

The following questions address perceptions of assistance in the Writing Center

10. The tutors in my campus's Writing Center are:

a. I'm not sure b. Full-time English faculty members c. Part-time faculty

d. A peer tutor e. A trained tutor from other than English department

F Other, specify _____

Please describe how you are trained for this position, the time involved in training, the materials (if any) that you receive, how performance may be measured, and any comments you'd like to share about the strengths or weaknesses of the training you received.

11. The help the Writing Center offers through tutoring

a. Answers all of students questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Answers some of their questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Does not answer their questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Goes beyond their questions / shows them something new	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Helps them understand all of their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Helps them understand some of their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Confuses them about their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Does not include the same terminology that the instructor uses	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Includes the same terminology the instructor uses	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Is clearly expressed	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Is hard for student to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Gives specific recommendations to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Gives general guidelines	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Gives no real issues students could work on by themselves	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Re-directs them in a non-useful/non-applicable way	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

12. I think students will usually

a. Use all the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Use some of the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Do not use the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

13. While waiting for a conference/tutoring session, I noticed that students

Worked on the assignment they brought	Y/N
Did other work for another class	Y/N
Used the other tools in the center (exercises)	Y/N
Used the internet	Y/N
Spoke with others	Y/N
Read	Y/N
Occupied time with a digital device (phone, ipod)	Y/N
Other:	

14. The amount of time students wait between arrival/sign up/appointment time and the actual time of the tutoring session: _____minutes

The amount of time the tutoring sessions last: _____minutes

15. Rate the feedback you deliver as a tutor overall

Completely Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Useful

Explain:

16. The experience with the tutors seems to make students feel that

a. Their grade would not change	Agree/disagree
b. Their grade would be worse	Agree/disagree
c. Their grade would be better	Agree/disagree
Comment:	

17. Length of time I recommend that students work on an assignment AFTER visiting the center/lab

Not at all –student arrived moments before it's due	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
An hour for minor edits	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
A few hours	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
One day	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
2-3 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
4-5 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
One week	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Two weeks	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Other (specify)	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely

18. Please identify at least three strengths of the Writing Center and/or the tutoring services you perform and, if applicable, how you would like to see them develop:

19. How could the writing center be more helpful?

a. No change needed	Agree/Disagree
b. Have more tutors	Agree/Disagree
c. Have specific tutors assigned to a course	Agree/Disagree
d. Have more self-directed writing activities for students to consult	Agree/Disagree
e. Have computer-assisted programs for writing	Agree/Disagree
f. Have online assessment program access to submit writing to	Agree/Disagree
g. Expand hours of operation	Agree/Disagree
h. Expand duration of session	Agree/Disagree
i. Decrease duration of session	Agree/Disagree
j. Become/remain mandatory	Agree/Disagree
k. Become/remain optional	Agree/Disagree
l. Be available to all students regardless of English course enrollment/being enrolled in other disciplines than English	Agree/Disagree
Comment/Other:	

20. In my overall impression regarding the writing center, I (please include any additional comments about how you would recommend use, about what you see going well, or maybe address the possible improvements above for the Writing Center) ***Thank you for your time!***

Instructor Survey

Please select the answer that most accurately represents your response.

General questions:

1. I am

a. Full-time faculty
b. Adjunct faculty
c. Other, specify _____

2. Course levels taught

a. ESL/ELL course (e.g. ESL 53, Read 151)
b. Developmental (e.g. Eng 26, Eng 67, Eng59)
c. College level (e.g. Eng 100, Eng 101)
d. Advanced/Honors level (e.g. Eng 103, Eng 201, Eng 401)
e. Other department (Soc. Science, Psych. etc.), specify _____

3. For this survey, my responses are specific to the following course level (choose one):

a. ESL/ELL course (e.g. ESL 53, Read 151)
b. Developmental (e.g. Eng 26, Eng 67, Eng59)
c. College level (e.g. Eng 100, Eng 101)
d. Advanced/Honors level (e.g. Eng 103, Eng 201, Eng 401)
e. Other department (Soc. Science, Psych. etc.), specify_____

The following questions pertain to use of the Writing Center that you incorporate

4. **My department requires mandatory attendance to the Writing Center**

	Yes
	No

5. I require mandatory attendance to the Writing Center (incorporate in students' grades)

	Yes
	No

If attendance is incorporated into the grade, please explain how the component is factored:

6. **Typical assignment lengths and time to complete them in this course (please check by the assignments you use/grade and fill in the information for that assignment; leave lines blank if not used)**

Assignment	length (pages)	time to complete
__reading	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__journal	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__draft	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__prewrite	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__final paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__notes	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__short answer	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__in class/on demand	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__research paper	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__outline	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__power point	length (pages)	time (days/hours)
__ Other: (explain)		

7. **The type of tasks that I assign and am aware that students take to the writing center include:**
(circle Y or N for whether you assign the task or not, and then check the column that corresponds whether you are aware of students taking that task to the Writing Center, whether you are aware that they do not take the task to the Writing Center, or whether you are not sure).

Task	**Assigned Y/N**	**Yes, students take to WC**	**/ No, not taken**	**/ Not sure**
Outline/Prewrite	Y/N			
Essay draft	Y/N			
Reading Exercise	Y/N			
Research Paper	Y/N			
Short answer response	Y/N			
Journal	Y/N			
Previously graded task	Y/N			
Creative Writing	Y/N			
Grammar Work	Y/N			
Presentation, speech	Y/N			
Prompt	Y/N			
Application Essay	Y/N			
Lab write up	Y/N			
Other (please write in)				

8. Students need the most help with the following elements beyond classroom instruction:

Please rate on a scale of 0-3

0 (unimportant) 1 (somewhat important) 2 (important) 3(extremely important)

and indicate whether you believe the element is addressed in the Writing Center

Understanding Assignment	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Freewriting	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Prewriting	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Outlining	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Invention	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Introduction	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Clustering	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Mapping	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Thesis construction	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Idea Development	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Drafting	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Providing evidence/examples	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Documentation	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Organization	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Commentary	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Analysis	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Synthesis	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Paraphrasing	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Summarizing	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Peer review	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Conferencing	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Proofreading	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Editing	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Web research	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Subjective/Objective Voice	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Acknowledging other points of view	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Critical thinking	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Conclusion	0 1 2 3	Y/N n/a
Comment:		

9. **My students' visits to the writing center for this course can be characterized as**

Their first visit occurs while attending this class	Y / N
An occasional, voluntary visit for class assignment	Y / N
Repeat visits for the same assignment	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (department)	Y / N
Mandatory requirement (instructor includes in grade)	Y / N
Instructor recommendation/referral	Y / N
Voluntary visit for self-selected writing assignment	Y / N
Other: please explain	

The following questions address perceptions of assistance in the Writing Center

10. The tutors in my campus's Writing Center are:

a. I'm not sure b. Full-time English faculty members c. Part-time faculty
d. A peer tutor e. A trained tutor from other than English department
f. Other, specify _____

11. The help the Writing Center offers my students

a. Answered all of their questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Answered some of their questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Did not answer their questions	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Went beyond the questions I reviewed/ showed them something new	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Helped them understand all of their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Helped them understand some of their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Confused them about their work	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Did not include the same terminology that I use	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Included the same terminology I use	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Was clearly expressed	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Was hard for student to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Gave them specific recommendations to follow	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Gave them general guidelines	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Gave them no real issues they could work on by themselves	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Re-directed them in a non-useful/non-applicable way	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

a. Students used all the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. They used some of the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. They did not use the tutor's comments	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment:	

12. Rate the feedback your students receive from the tutors overall

Completely Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Useful

Explain:

13. The experience with the tutors appear to make students feel

a. Like their grade would not change	Agree/disagree
b. Like their grade would be worse	Agree/disagree
c. Like their grade would be better	Agree/disagree
Comment:	

14. Length of time students seem to plan /work on an assignment after visiting the center/lab

Not at all (no changes made)	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
The day before it's due	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Hours before it's due	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
2-3 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
4-5 days	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
One week	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Two weeks	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely
Other (specify)	Always/frequently/sometimes/rarely

15. Please identify at least three strengths of the Writing Center and, if applicable, how you would like to see them develop:

16. How could the writing center be more helpful?

a. No change needed	Agree/disagree/not sure
b. Have more tutors	Agree/disagree/not sure
c. Have specific tutors assigned to a course	Agree/disagree/not sure
d. Have more self-directed writing activities for students to consult	Agree/disagree/not sure
e. Have computer-assisted programs for writing	Agree/disagree/not sure
f. Have online assessment program access to submit writing to	Agree/disagree/not sure
g. Expand hours of operation	Agree/disagree/not sure
h. Expand duration of session	Agree/disagree/not sure
i. Decrease duration of session	Agree/disagree/not sure
j. Become/remain mandatory	Agree/disagree/not sure
k. Become/remain optional	Agree/disagree/not sure
l. Be available to all students regardless of English course enrollment/being enrolled in other disciplines than English	Agree/disagree/not sure
Comment/Other:	

17. In my overall impression regarding the writing center, I (please include any additional comments about how you would recommend use, about what you see going well, or maybe address the possible improvements above for the Writing Center) ***Thank you for your time!***

Appendix B: Sample papers and tutor response

College-transfer student: First persuasive essay assignment on Learning Power

Background: Mandatory conferencing is required for students who have either tested into the course or passed pre-requisites. Students attend a 1 ½ hour lab each week for their course. The tutors are peer tutors who passed a rigorous screening and trained for a semester. Conferences are scheduled at 10 minute intervals.

The tutor likely will begin with questions similar to the ones for developmental students: What would you like to look at in your essay?—Where do you think you have some questions/trouble?—What part(s) do you think we need to focus on for our conference today that would be most helpful to you?
The student, if frustrated, may comment first that the prompt was confusing and isn't sure that the paper is 'what the professor wants.' The student isn't sure what to work on from this point after working on it for several hours.
The tutor opts to read the paper through first and then go over each paragraph with the student while the student writes down notes from the tutor's suggestions.

Essay 1; Learning Power.

After the initial reading, the tutor notices that 1) the student has written a proposal of solution argument instead of a position/stance argument; 2) the student's examples have not been completed (i.e. the required number of sources has not been included yet); 3) the student does not have strong topic sentences to organize the argument; 4) the student has weak/inconsistent use of examples; and 5) the student has numerous sentence level/language errors. The tutor decides to focus on the genre of argument and the relationship of the topic sentences to the content of the paragraphs.

In America, we can all agree that everyone deserves a free education. So what is the power of learning? Whom does it belong to? According to Merriam- Webster Dictionary, learning is "knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study." After this free education, high school graduates are urged to continue their education in college. As we all know, America's standards of education are far lower than others. The concern is that while teacher teach from the curriculum students are not perceptive to what they taught and while we figure who to point fingers to as contrary to other great nations like Japan UK, and China strive better on their education curriculums. Americans need a scapegoat for all the problems, first we blame teacher, then teacher blame student, then administration, and so on but in reality who to blame for schools budget failures, poor curriculums, and poor test scores. We, Americans, tend to worry more about scores from our favorite team, entertainment, and competing with peers on having the latest gadgets, our easy access to all these products have become lackadaisical in our way of thinking. While reading select essays like, "Idiot Nation", by Michael Moore, "I Just Wanna Be Average", by Mike Rose, "Against School", by John Gatto,"Grades That Show What Students know, by Robert Marzano

and Tammy Heflebower, and "Get the Federal Government Out of Education?, by Jack Jennings, it bring the question of why the emphasis on education and the purpose on competing with other powers around the globe. The tutor will notice the sentence clarity issues in the writing and may underline or circle the particular areas of subject/verb agreement and or omissions in this introductory paragraph only, indicating that the student should proofread more carefully. The tutor notices the student has tried to echo the elements of the prompt about identifying key terms like learning. The student has made several assumptions about other countries and scapegoating that the tutor may ask the student to clarify for the prompt. While the student lists the work that s/he will use for analysis, the tutor notices that a thesis about value/suspicion is not clear, that the student has not articulated a position, although there is an implicit one. The student may realize that a thesis is missing but may need help understanding how the assumptions are problematic if "everyone" knows these things. There may be a need for the tutor to go into more detail about specificity/generalization to better clarify this writing issue for this level. The tutor reminds the student to revise the thesis for a different kind of argument.

Has the question on why schools are falling apart come up lately? And if so why? Over the years, researchers have failed to explain causes of the achievement gap between higher and lower income families with only different socioeconomic backgrounds. In these cases, according to Mr. Gatto, when he ask student "why they felt bored, they always answer; the work is stupid and makes no sense, they already knew it." He also describes school as doing a good job of turning children into addicts, not by mistake but to only developed " trivializing emotions of greed, envy, jealousy, and fear." The school system can be describe by Mr Gatto, as a " factories in which the raw product (children) are to be shaped and fashioned.. and it is the business of the school to build its pupil according to the specifications laid down," When ones hears those word we rather think that there are exception but in reality we look for the American dream in which we pursue happiness and the thinking we might just be the exception. While government and those that vote from the constituent decide that is better to build another bomber than to educate people. We make priorities for what's good for the short term but don't realize that we have work to do at home. The U.S government needs to be directly involved in an education referendum and with swift actions toward the education board of the United States. The tutor notices the student has used rhetorical questions for the topic sentence and may call attention to the need for a more assertive connection to a stronger thesis. The student's references to the author as Mr. Gatto may need to be addressed for not adhering to MLA format, and the missing page numbers since the student cites text/print sources. Though the student has included some quotes and commentary, the commentary does not lead back to the prompt about value/suspicion or clarify how/why the American dream is being mentioned all of a sudden as well as the building of "another bomber." The end of the paragraph takes on a "should" proposal, which isn't what the prompt is asking for, so the tutor may help the student redirect the analysis. The student may be open to these observations if s/he feels the tutor is clarifying the prompt so that the student can fulfill the assignment better. The student may also, however, not understand why the second half of the paragraph isn't "good" commentary, to which the tutor may need to clarify that the goals of the prompt are not necessarily to propose a remedy to the problem, but rather a stance/position on the problem. This may be another opportunity for the tutor to clarify the kind of argument that is being asked for in the prompt. The tutor reminds the student to work on the topic sentence and the ways that the evidence are supporting an analysis of value/suspicion about education.

Teacher have a difficult job when it come to having overcrowded class and books that as old as they are, but when Mr. Moore, has reviews of there performance that read "you've have to wonder about teacher who claim to put the interest of children first- and then look to milk the system dry through wages hike." For those hostile environments they work they've to be admire, not only are the shaping the future this kids but if I was a parent I would like then to be tender loving toward the future of my kid and they've been doing so at a minimal scale wage. Most school in the LA area has in-adequate room, ceiling that are falling and at times school being build in contaminate land-waste fills. We know that Americans aren't stupid, according to Mr. Moore, just tune in to a "sports radio show." We, indeed, have a good retention of facts but aren't challenge with anything interesting and exciting. The challenge is to get those teachers that aren't well trained with the latest technology available to the school and get creative. If we start with the administration of school we can learn in an environment were teacher and student both care about the material. By making those decisions today we can help teacher and raise those test scores. The tutor notices that this paragraph is scattered. The topic sentence is complicated by an observation and an example, neither of which are necessarily focused in a clear way on the prompt about value/suspicion except for the quote about "wonder" about teachers. The tutor likely will ask the student to clarify this source and what it says about teaching, the facilities, etc. that the student is mentioning. The student shifts unclearly between "I" and "we," and again ends the paragraph with a recommendation about solving the problem. The tutor likely will ask the student to clarify what technology and creativity have to do with value/suspicion and direct the student to the prompt that is asking for a stance in an argument more than a proposal of a solution. The student may be able to articulate the key points of the piece with guiding questions from the tutor in order to focus the analysis more in the context of what the prompt is asking for. It may be hard for the student to do this on her/his own. The tutor will ask the student to focus on the topic sentence and how the evidence helps with the discussion of value/suspicion.

American society deals greatly on how someone is smart or not by measurable test score. We value test scores so mush that solely based on that we place each student on the "appropriate" curriculum. While the function of school is to make his/her best in class and as a citizen we underestimate the non-measurable. According to Mr. Gatto, there are six functions, "1.The adjustive or adaptive function, school establish a fixed habit of reaction to authority, 2.Integrating, makes children as alike as possible, 3.Diagnostic and directive, determines proper role in society, 4. Differentiating, sorts out by role and trained as far as there social merit, 5. Selective, tag the unfit, 6. Propaedeutic, the societal system, manages the rest." While this functions in society have work many centuries we need to manage and start a merit those that are doing exceptional in there academia. What are they doing that we aren't? simple answer, discipline towards education. Their government is committed towards the future of their country. The tutor may notice this paragraph is also unclear in what it is trying to communicate and may ask the student to clarify the piece referred to and why a topic sentence about test scores is an appropriate connection to a prompt about value/suspicion. The tutor may ask the student to probe the example more as well as the comments proposing a management of education and why discipline is brought in as well as the government. The student may or may not see that s/he hasn't quite understood the concept of using an example to reinforce ideas and that s/he hasn't quite understood the concept of persuasive writing asked for in the prompt. The tutor will remind the student to think about the topic sentence and evidence in relation to value/suspicion.

Throughout history, our government has strived to make better citizens but our entire education system is broken, we immediately start pointing finger, and we continue falling behind to other nations. We know that personal factors are within the student's characteristics, it involves cognitive and behavioral variables such as untrained teacher and socioeconomics background. Teacher should also be actively involved and highly engaged with their students because they exert crucial influence over the students learning outcome. Not only do we need to have higher educational standard we need to maximize each person potential. While we debate which system work best, government need to initiate a referendum on how to deal with school standards. We may not send the burden to our educator and our students but rather blame everyone that deals with education. We need to blame the government for there lack of involvement, administration, teacher, and student. Lack of material, poor trained teacher, and budget deficits from administrations have left education expose to a series of burdens. As Gatto simply put its, "school trains children to be employees and consumers." To be competent with society today, our children should learn to be leaders and independently responsible. Ill leave you to think a little more about education and the risk we're facing in the years to come. The tutor notices that the student is making a proposal of a solution rather than a stance argument, assuming rather than articulating that education is a suspect institution (the student's implied thesis). The ideas in the closure are related but not specific to the prompt, and will need revision. The tutor may also point out that the student has not referenced the sources as needed per the prompt—two of the sources mentioned in the intro are not discussed in the body of the paper, though they are included in the works cited of the paper. The student may or may not have a better idea about needing to go back to the prompt to incorporate the requirements better and to better use the sources to forward a certain kind of argument (taking a position) rather than suggesting a solution as an argument. The tutor will remind the student that the essay is incomplete and is missing two of the sources mentioned in the introduction.

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Rose, M. (2010). I Just Want To Be Average. In G. Colombo, R. Cullen, & B. Lisle, Rereading America (pp. 157-168). New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

Overall: The tutor notices that while the student has sentence/language issues, s/he has not fully understood the prompt and written unproductively, a more pressing issue than grammar and mechanics. The tutor will redirect the student to attend to the type of argument first (a position argument) and likely help the student make a better plan for the paper so that s/he can include the required number of sources to address the position. The tutor will ask the student perhaps to make a chart of how the sources selected address both value and suspicion in education in an effort to help the student see how arguments take shape when writers look at multiple sides of issues. The student needs to articulate ideas with more focus on content and organization, and

then go back to sentence issues and MLA format errors. Given the time constraints, the tutor has had to help the student select the most important areas to revise first.

Advanced student writing sample: Rhetorical Analysis

Background: Use of the Writing Center is optional for these students and the tutors are peers who have gone through a rigorous screening and training process. Students may go into the Center on a walk-in basis. They are provided with documentation of their visit if the student's instructor awards extra credit for obtaining a conference. Students in the advanced level composition courses are likely transferring to a university shortly. While conferences are allowed to last for up to 30 minutes, they are first-come, first-served, and some students may not be seen even though they wait for quite some time.

The tutor will notice the specific requirements for the assignment and will ask the student where s/he would like to start or what specific area s/he would like help with.
The student may be able to state specifically what s/he detects as a weaker area but may also ask the tutor to help pinpoint areas that can be improved. The student knows s/he has language issues but wants to know if the piece is solid.
The tutor suggest that they look at the outline first and then go through the paper.

It's Hard Enough Being Me Outline

I. *Introduction*
Anna Lisa Raya is a daughter of a second-generation Mexican American father and a Puerto Rican mother. "It Hard Enough Being Me" is one of her essay on identity. The essay is about her experience growing up as a mix race. She defined herself a Latina, but she did not know Spanish, history, music and religion. She is stuck in a black hole of an identity crisis, and college did not make her life any easier. "It's Hard Enough Being Me" has a very strong personal narrative, but it doesn't appeal to majority population and has no evidence to support her point of view. The tutor will notice some language issues and may or may not highlight them at this stage of the drafting process. The introduction is functional in identifying the key topics in the piece and informally identifying the rhetorical features for the thesis. The tutor might encourage the student to push more of the formal identification of rhetorical features for more robust analysis. The student may recognize additional elements that could be mentioned (criteria by which to assess/ evaluate the author's work with).

II. *Body*
1. *Anna is telling her own story which is a best way to emotionally connect herself to audiences.*
    a) *The title of the essay engages the audience*
    b) *The purpose of essay is very clear*
    c) *Communicates logos, ethos, and pathos*

2. *The weakness of the essay is individual life experience cannot appeal variety population based on different backgrounds, thoughts, beliefs, educations, and perspectives.*
    a) *Appeal small group*
    b) *Fall in induction which is not enough evidence*
    c) *Fallacy of presumption*
3. *There is no statistic to support author's opinion so the essay less likely to persuade audience stay in the point of view of the author.*
    a) *No statistic number*
    b) *Genetic fallacy*

The tutor may make the student aware that the outline is not written in complete sentences and is very vague. The tutor may probe the student for his/her understanding of logos, ethos, pathos and why they show up in the paragraph that seems to be dedicated to emotional aspects of the argument; fallacy, "fall of induction," and why these are in the paragraph about the appeal to the audience; and of genetic fallacy, and statistics as rhetorical choices and why these are not all brought in to the intro. The student may see the potential of organizing the essay differently and understand the need to expand the ideas into full sentences.

III. Conclusion

"It's Hard Enough Being Me" is a personal story about how mix race survive in this society. Even though this essay full of personal experience, this essay still needs more accurate sources to support the author's point of view to appeal to a majority group. And this essay not only has very happy ending but also send moral message which is racism cannot affect anyone if each individual choose to have positive thinking about his or her life in this society The tutor may see some potential in the closure as it mentions a need for the author to include more accurate sources. There is also a comment about the message of race in the author's piece which the tutor may encourage the student to incorporate earlier. The student may see how the new information in the closure should be included earlier in the analysis.

Work Cited

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It's Hard Enough Being Me

"Racism is a much more clandestine, much more hidden kind of phenomenon, but at the same time it's perhaps far more terrible than it's ever been" (Angela Davis). According to Angela, racism is subtle rather than obvious. And racism still has many effects on minority group in our society. The United States has a racially and ethnically diverse population. A lot of people suffered due to racism so they could not get enough chances and confidences to succeed in a society. Even though The Civil Rights Act in 1964 prohibited discrimination in society, racism is

still remained in this society silently. Anna Lisa Raya is a daughter of a second-generation Mexican American father and a Puerto Rican mother, Anna Lisa Raya had childhood in Los Angeles. After graduating from high school, she graduated from Columbia University in New York (119). "It's Hard Enough Being Me" is one of her essay on identity. The essay is about her experience growing up as a mix race. She defined herself a Mexican but she did not know Spanish language, Latin history, music, or catholic religion. She is stuck in an identity crisis which leads her to many difficulties to define herself as a Latina. "It's Hard Enough Being Me" has a very strong personal narrative, but it does not appeal to the majority population and has no evidence to support her point of view. The tutor will remind the student to refer to others by their last name in the piece. This introduction supplies more information than the one in the outline, but there is still some lack of clarity in the connections between racism and Raya's identity crisis. The tutor notices that the criteria for evaluation are still vague and would benefit from additional specificity and formality. The tutor will encourage the student to articulate a stronger connection between the issues of racism and Raya's identity to focus on the prompt's directions to evaluate the essay. The tutor may or may not highlight the language issues that the student has but may encourage careful proofreading, perhaps circling the errors in this paragraph only. The student may recognize the gap between the issues of racism and those of Raya's identity to notice that it needs a stronger connection. S/he may also recognize the need to enhance the identification of rhetorical features for the evaluation.

Anna is telling her own story which is a best way to emotionally connect herself to audiences. Therefore, audiences' attitudes, fears, hopes, and values are strongly influence by her story. The title of her essay "It's Hard Enough Being Me," is full of humorous and dramatic anecdote. Even though the title is informative, it is alerting the reader to the topic and the writer's struggle which interest the readers. Despite the lack of explicitly thesis statement, the purpose of the author transforms to audience is very clear and effective. The audience understands the purpose of the author is to report how she feels and her struggles when she defines herself as Latina. The method that the author uses is relevant factors. She discusses her problem from the beginning of the essay. She opens her essay by "When I entered college, I discover I was Latina" (119). This sentence makes audience question about what happened to the author, so audiences has the desire to read the rest of the essay. The way she leads the audience to her own story is very logos by starting with her parents root and her childhood as a Mexican. Both culture shock and identity crisis affect her strongly, so she figures out she belongs to a minority. Sticking to minority idea, she shares her thought, feelings, and experiences which are full of disappointment because she does not know Latin history and culture. Especially, she does not know how to speak Spanish well, makes her claim on her mom. The reason her mom does not teach her to speak Spanish when she was young is to protect her based on her mom experience about knowing Spanish. She indirectly guides audience to another dilemma decision of minority ethnic parents. By using ethos, she gives the audience the good sense and high moral characteristic of Latina. Therefore, most Latinas who read this article may feel a familiar opinion with the author. The author sticks in her own identity as a Latina "I feel pushed into a corner, always defining, defending, and proving myself to classmates, professors, or employers" (121). The author's suffering stimulates audiences' emotion. Then audience can understand more about the struggles which minority are facing in this society. At the end of her essay, the author brings wonderful life perspective, "So you might as well do things for yourself and not for them" (121). This quote not only changes her life but also sends a beautiful massage. Happiness is a choice, and people can choose to be happy or unhappy. The author chooses to be herself

which gets rid of all the struggles that lead to a happy ending like most fairy tales so the audience feels satisfied after reading the essay. The tutor will see the student has tried to address the author's emotional appeals to the readers in the topic sentence but has also included more than that in the body of the paragraph. The tutor will encourage the student to either focus on the topic sentence for revision or consider adding different paragraphs to handle the disparate elements. The comments about happiness/choice are not clearly connected to a rhetorical strategy which the tutor might point out to the student to strengthen in relation to the rhetorical analysis. The tutor may or may not point out the language issues. The student might be aware that the paragraph is a bit unwieldy and might benefit from a break-up of the information for effectiveness. The student might recognize how the last bit of analysis can be clarified further, too.

The weakness of the essay is an individual life experience cannot appeal variety population based on different backgrounds, thoughts, beliefs, educations, and perspectives. There are many races in the United States, and each race has its own history and characteristic. Each individual in the population grows up with different perspective and difficulty. Therefore, Anna's essay can appeal a small group of audiences. Furthermore, she claims that "many Latinos like myself have undergone similar experience"; that sentence falls in to induction which is not enough evidence to claim that others Latinos fall into the same struggle like the author. Audiences easily recognize that just author opinion, so they may change their attitude while reading the essay. Then she figures out that to become Latinos which "This requires us to know our history, our language, our music, and our religion" (120). She puts herself in the difficult situation because of her fallacies of presumption. The audience may not agree with the author because history, language, music, and religion are not the main element to decide the race but the background of individual. The fact that many Latinos do not know very well about their history, music, or religion are common, but they are still proud to be Latinos. The most visible element to recognize someone is Latina is whether they can speak Spanish or not. The author does not like to speak Spanish because she cannot speak it clearly. Then she says that other Latin Americans do not want to speak Spanish either (120). Her point of view is hasty generalization which is quickly moving from true belief about herself to false belief about all Latin Americans. It may be true about small percent of Latin Americans but not all of them. Therefore, audiences need more evidences to prove what the author's thought is accepted. The tutor will note that the student has better organization and focus in this paragraph but that ideas are awkwardly worded which impede clarity. The tutor may notice that the student may not clearly understand the concept of inductive argument, using the term induction, instead. While the student notes fallacies, they may not be accurately applied, so the tutor may probe the student further about the examples chosen. The student may be able to follow the tutor's observations and be able to address how s/he selected these examples and for what purposes of analysis. The tutor's probes may help the student articulate his/her understanding of the rhetorical features.

There is no statistic to support author's opinion so the essay is less likely to persuade the audience to stay in the point of view of the author. Throughout the entire essay, Anna does not use any statistic which based on social science and natural science need countless decisions in public and private life are based on quantitative data in statistical form. Therefore, audience cannot use her essay to prove for large population facing the same difficulty as a mix race. And audiences can just digest her essay as sharing opinion even though her essay mentions racism issues in our society. The presentation of evidence is important and effective than her personal

experience. The author gives audience her personal reason why her mom does not teach her how to speak Spanish when she was a child. The author says that "the fact that she spoke Spanish was constantly used against her" (120). She traps herself on genetic fallacy which happened to her mom may not happen to her. In contrast, the fact that the author does not speak Spanish well affects her life for a long time. Then she seems fall in to the depression because of her desire for knowing Spanish, she says "I must know Spanish. I must satisfy the equation: Latina [equals] Spanish-speaking" (121). Even though audiences can understand her desire, they can recognize a disappointment of the author which she cannot control herself in this society. In her essay, Anna uses some Spanish vocabularies which can limit her audiences who know Spanish rather than majority of audience. The tutor will notice that the student has started well with focus in the early part of the paragraph but has shifted to another that is not covered by the topic sentence. The tutor will suggest the student consider dividing the paragraph or devising a stronger topic sentence for the content. The tutor may remind the student about references by last name as well as some of the language issues. The tutor may also suggest that the student reconsider the possibility that the author's example may be than just isolated ones about Latinas but may have added applicability to the concept of identity crisis for anyone with other racial/ethnic identities. The student may recognize the organizational problem in the paragraph and how it will benefit from a better plan.

"It's Hard Enough Being Me" is a personal story about how mix race survive in this society. Even though this essay full of personal experience, this essay still needs more accurate sources to support the author's point of view to appeal to a majority group. This essay not only has very happy ending but also send moral message which is racism cannot affect anyone if each individual choose to have positive thinking about his or her life in this society. The tutor will note the different elements brought into the analysis at this point and will encourage the student to include them earlier (the issues about mixed-race survival, personal happiness, and racism combatted with positive thinking. The tutor will encourage the student to reflect the analysis in the body of the essay more effectively as a closure. The student might feel encouraged to rework some areas of the essay to include these ideas, and may recognize the need to build a stronger closure for the evaluation.

Works Cited

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Overall: The tutor will likely make the student aware that the language/sentence level errors are distracting. While the student has supplied many examples, the organization and development will benefit from a stronger plan. The tutor may recommend revisiting the outline and working with it more to see how the information can be presented more effectively. The student has some good ideas about what examples from the author to include, but needs to sharpen his/her identification of rhetorical features and the author's purpose more clearly. The student may or may not be receptive to the suggestions and may decide to return to the outline for revision first,

or may decide to deal more with the actual essay if time is a factor. The tutor may have additional sources beyond the checklist that the instructor referred to in the actual prompt.

Appendix C: Agreements with the lowest percentages among the groups

(This section presents additional analysis of writing features that the groups agreed upon with the lowest frequency.)

The writing features that the groups ranked extremely important at the lowest percentages include clustering for each group, peer review according to tutors, freewriting according to tutors, mapping according to students and instructors, and invention according to students and instructors. Each of these features is included in the category of pre-writing in the condensed analysis at the beginning of Chapter 5 because of where this feature might be experienced during a writing assignment, and the responses reflect some interesting variability within the groups. These low rankings suggest that they have similar perceptions of features that have been categorized in the condensed analysis at the beginning of this chapter as pre-writing. The lowest three for each group are highlighted green and an indication given of which ones all three groups share and which ones are nearly shared.

Writing Feature	**Students (S)**	**Instructors (I)**	**Tutors (T)**	**Shared**
Peer Review	43%	22%	16%	none
Freewriting	36%	7%	36%	Exact S and T
Clustering	30%	10%	12%	**All three**
Mapping	25%	10%	24%	Near S and T
Invention	25%	20%	12%	Near S and I

FIGURE 37 TABLE OF THE IMPORTANT WRITING FEATURE BY THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE

Brief definitions of these features are:

- Peer review: Students exchange their compositions with each other for feedback in general or with particular guidelines from the instructor, formally in class or informally outside of class
- Free-writing: Students write in a linear-fashion (sequence of sentences) without editing/organizing/proofreading, essentially with free-associations without stopping for a sustained period of time (i.e. 10 minutes)
- Clustering: A brainstorming strategy for students to group ideas (cluster them) and visually "lasso" the ideas by drawing circles and lines to capture how ideas relate to each other

- Mapping: A brainstorming strategy that students use to trace how ideas relate to each other less formally than an outline but more organized than a cluster
- Invention: A broad term for brainstorming that may include the pre-writing elements mentioned above and some others that may include journaling while a student reads material and/or visual doodles of scenes in a plot

Clustering: The technique of clustering is ranked with the least frequency for the three groups. This low ranking may indicate that the groups do not deem this non-linear writing strategy as being useful, although different course levels, like developmental classes, may influence the participants who did rank clustering as extremely important. The means offer an additional perspective:

Clustering	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	1.97	1.59	1.92
Standard Deviation	(.9555)	(.7850)	(.56)

FIGURE 38 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT): CLUSTERING

While the means are all low, the standard deviations also have high variability for each of the groups. For each group, this writing strategy appears either unpopular, problematic, or confusing in its application to writing. As a strategy used early in the writing process, clustering may not be as useful to these groups for the compositions that writers are assigned. An examination of writing prompts featured in Chapter 3 may be a better way to understand if this is the case. For the developmental prompt (reproduced below), for example, students may not see how clustering would help them discuss three different texts unless they connected the idea of clustering to "similarities or differences," at which point students might resort to developing a chart for similarities and differences instead.

Developmental level Sample Prompt

Childhood

(3-4 pages), researched using class readings, cited in text by page number—include works cited (refer to MLA). Show all drafts, pre-writes, and notes for full credit (papers that show no revision process may not receive full credit). Be sure to give:

- an informative title;

- an opening with interest;
- consideration of audience;
- a clear thesis that states position;
- well-considered academic word choice and tone;
- avoiding subjective "I" needlessly;
- avoiding "dead" words like "it" or "things";
- transitions between ideas;
- supporting evidence/details/specificity/authority/fact/data, etc.;
- using researched material accurately when referencing;
- commentary as demonstration of your developing skills in using research to forward/prove your thesis;
- a conclusive ending

Task: In several of our readings from our first unit on childhood, there is a change from childhood innocence to self-discovery**. Compare at least three works** from this unit as they relate to that change. What similarities or differences do the characters go through?—**the bolded text indicates a potential for students to engage in pre-writing strategies to examine the features of the works they choose for analysis**

Be specific and make direct references to the text (quoting " " and giving page number.)

3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced, MLA format

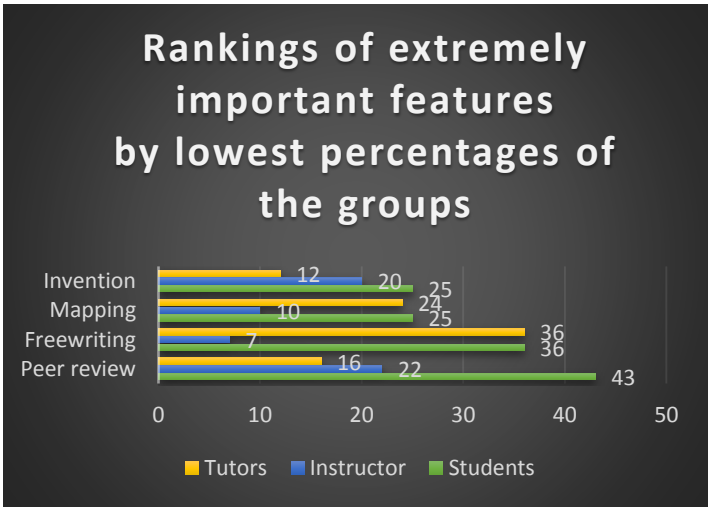

FIGURE 39 THE MOST IMPORTANT WRITING FEATURES BY FREQUENCY OF LOWEST PERCENTAGE FOR THE THREE GROUPS

Peer review: The three groups reflect peer review as extremely important with low frequency, but the tutors include this writing feature in their bottom three (16%), whereas students (43%) and instructors (22%) have other features in

their bottom percentages. The tutors' low ranking of peer review may reflect their perception that tutors working with students in conferencing one-on-one yields more productive or useful feedback than peer reviewers may offer. Students and instructors also appear to be less convinced that peer review may be helpful to them, perhaps because they are being asked to take a survey about Writing Center experiences. The mean rankings reflect variation in the groups as well:

Peer review	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.26	1.96	1.64
Standard deviation	(.8946)	(.9798)	(.7940)

FIGURE 40 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT): PEER REVIEW

Students see peer review as more important (2.26) than either instructors (1.96) or tutors (1.64), and each group reveals considerable variability in the standard deviations. Perhaps because students participate in peer review or are encouraged to do so, they may have a more favorable ranking than either their instructors or tutors. Noticeably again, the tutors rank this feature lower than either students or instructors, reflecting perhaps differences in classroom practice vs. Writing Center practice. Instructors may perhaps have noticed, though, that peer review does not yield the feedback that produces effective revision.

Freewriting: Instructors ranked freewriting in their lowest three (7%), but students (36%) and tutors (36%) did not.

Freewriting	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	2.12	1.51	2.04
Standard Deviation	(.9042)	(.7565)	(.8236)

FIGURE 41 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT): FREEWRITING

As a pre-writing strategy, freewriting may seem like a part of the writing process that instructors feel does not need emphasis at the college level, potentially because of the same reasons as

clustering discussed earlier. The variability for each group is high, making this feature a questionable one for each group. Perhaps students and tutors regard this writing feature as a helpful tool in the task of writing, although instructors may not necessarily give credit to freewriting when assessing writing assignments.

Mapping and Invention: Students (25%) and Instructors (10%) ranked mapping in their lowest three percentages, but tutors (24%) did not. As another pre-writing strategy, mapping may have varied meaningfulness to each group and their understanding or preference for the processes that best help students to address a writing task, especially if they considered clustering or free-writing in more positive ways than mapping. Tutors preferred freewriting more.

Mapping	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	1.85	1.74	1.84
Standard Deviation	(.9748)	(.6704)	(.88)

FIGURE 42 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT): MAPPING

In the mean figures, students and tutors agree more closely, however, than their percentages indicate, still responding with a low ranking, while instructors also appear to have more questions about this feature's importance. For all three groups, there is high variability in their responses.

Regarding invention, students (25%) and tutors (12%) ranked this feature in their lowest three. Instructors (20%) did not. As another element of pre-writing, invention could also have varied meaningfulness to the three groups as noted in the discussions about clustering, freewriting, and mapping. Instructors may see more usefulness to invention than students and tutors for subtle reasons that do not seem as well addressed in clustering, freewriting, or

mapping. Tutors may rank the term invention lowest because the term does not seem as precise as freewriting, and mapping.

Invention	Students (S)	Instructors (I)	Tutors (T)
Mean	1.83	2.07	1.82
Standard Deviation	(1.00)	(.6914)	(.7158)

FIGURE 43 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS USING A SCALE OF 0-3 (3=MOST IMPORTANT): INVENTION

When looking at the means, students and tutors agree closely for their low ranking, yet have higher variability than instructors regarding this element. Indeed, for students, invention has the highest standard deviation (st. dev. 1) of all student rankings. The differences among the groups are small in comparison to each other, but still indicate disagreement among the three groups regarding the early stages of writing, perhaps because they are not directly included in grades from student and instructor perspectives, or because tutors emphasize different areas. Students also may not know what this term meant in the survey if they were not familiar with it being used in their classes. Some of the discussion in chapter 3 about students encountering confusion with prompts may be helpful in understanding the reasons why students focus less on the pre-writing strategies mentioned here, especially if they feel pressured to perform (i.e. finish an essay draft) more than explore (i.e. develop their ideas).