

Assessment Cycle 2022-23 (Co-Curricular Programs)

Writing Center

Mission

The mission of the Writing Center is to serve as a resource on writing for the university community. We help people as they seek to improve their writing by offering positive, constructive responses to their work in any genre or discipline and at any stage of the writing process. We believe that the development of writing abilities is a life-long process, and that writing is a skill and art that enables people to create and communicate ideas.

Academic Year 2022-23

Writing Center Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1 MET

Writers will be able to explain what they plan to do next in the writing process.

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
<p>Post session survey</p> <p>A survey is automatically sent out to students after they have completed a Writing Center session. These surveys are sent at the end of each day from the scheduling system (WConline) to everyone who had an appointment that day. This survey includes the question: "What will you do next with your paper?" which provides an open-text box for students to provide an answer.</p> <p>Indirect - Survey</p>	<p>MET</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Of the 183 returned surveys, 120 (66%) provided written (open text) answers to the question "What will you/do you do next with your paper." Of these answers, 72 (60%) comments used specific language/vocabulary that reflected revision techniques, writing strategies, and/or resources used during the session that will be applied to future writing tasks. For example: "I will continue to reverse outline my draft," "break my paragraphs down into more specific topics," "revise and explain it to someone that maybe isn't familiar with he topic, so I can change it to more understandable if needed," "I re-read it outloud to a peer and now I'm ready to submit it!," "Use the handout from the session on fixing long sentences for my other papers, too," "I will continue to work on my APA formatting based on the resources," "I understand paraphrasing better, so keep practicing that." We also saw several respondents indicate that they would seek out additional campus resources as discussed in the session ("scheduled an appointment to meet with a librarian," "will go to my teachers office hours tomorrow to talk about my draft," "will use Career Services for interviewing").</p> <p>The rest indicated that they would "continue to revise based on feedback," or "continue to add to my draft," or "turn it in"</p>	<p>Maintain Assessment Strategy</p> <p>We will continue to ask this question on the survey.</p>

<p>Session Observations</p> <p>Observations of session using the observation guide. Twenty 30-minute sessions were observed.</p> <p>Direct - Other</p> <p>Target</p> <p>75% of writers observed will be able to explain what they plan to do next in the writing process.</p> <p>Writing Center Session Observation Guide.docx</p>	<p>MET</p> <p>Session Observations</p> <p>Met Not Met</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>84%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Met</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Met Total</td> <td>84%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Met Total</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Twenty Writing Center appointments were observed using the attached observation guide. Of those 20 appointments, 16 writers identified what they would do with their drafts after the session (using terms, strategies, or resources from the session), three students did not identify their next steps or said they were not going to keep revising after the session (i.e. "it's due in 5 minutes, so turn it in") and one student stayed for only 7 minutes (this observation I marked as "NA" for "Writer explained what he/she plans to do next in the writing process" as they had expected that they could drop off their paper, leave, and have the consultant "fix their mistakes" and then they would come back to pick it up-- appointment was spent discussing how the Writing Center can help the writer learn how to do that for their own work, but student wasn't interested).</p> <p>For the 16 students who discussed their next steps, all identified at least one revision strategy from the session or area of the paper that they would continue to work on after the session. 6 students also identified additional resources they would seek out (2 identified making an appointment with librarian and 4 were going to follow up with their faculty member about specific assignment questions).</p>	Category	Percentage	Met	84%	Not Met	16%	Met Total	84%	Not Met Total	16%	<p>Maintain Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Observations are an essential part of Writing Center practice and assessment, so we will continue to do these. Because our appointments are roughly 50% face-to-face and 50% over Zoom, we are still working to make the Zoom observations more authentic. We currently do not record those sessions for observations (we have discussed this as a team, and there is a national conversation about best practices for this in Writing Center scholarship). For these observations, 7 were conducted on Zoom appointments, where the writing consultant did not use a headset (but rather used the computer sound), so I could observe both sides of the conversation. This is working for now, but we are discussing alternative ways to do this as well.</p>
Category	Percentage											
Met	84%											
Not Met	16%											
Met Total	84%											
Not Met Total	16%											

Conclusion

During our weekly trainings and in their reflective writings (we do these 5 times a semester), writing consultants have expressed that writers often do not start their appointments with clear writing goals that break down the process (i.e. their goal may be "I need an A, so I just want to make sure this is good" or "I don't know what I want to work on, just the whole thing"), and often do not know where they are in the process. Our training includes a session framework to help guide conversations with writers to break down the process into manageable goals for the session and also help students develop a sense of process, revision, and how to work through research/feedback/scaffolding activities and develop vocabulary for describing the writing process. We do regular "mock sessions" and roleplaying strategies in training to support conversations around specific revision goals and strategies. We see higher instances of students being able to articulate these specifics when consultants use the last 2-3 minutes summarizing the session discussion and asking students to identify and document in their notes what their next steps will be. Zoom presents some challenges with ensuring that students were actively engaged and taking notes, so we will have and will continue to revise this in training to find practices for synchronous online sessions to engage students in note taking and summarizing the strategies discussed in sessions to help with this.

We have also spent a lot more time in training the last 3 years helping the writing consultants understand how to connect writers to other campus resources (librarians, content area tutoring, Smarthinking/BrainFuse, Career Services, etc.) and their faculty as important opportunities to continue their work through the process. We saw a dip in this around Covid, so it is positive to see these identified in both session observations and written survey feedback.

Outcome 2 MET

Writers will demonstrate positive self-efficacy regarding a specific writing task and/or writing generally.

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
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<p>Post session survey</p> <p>A survey is automatically sent out to students after they have completed a Writing Center session. These surveys are sent at the end of each day from the scheduling system (WConline) to everyone who had an appointment that day.</p> <p>Indirect - Survey</p> <p>Target</p> <p>80% will express higher confidence after their session.</p>	<p>MET</p> <p>Screenshot 2023-12-30 162318.png</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>183 post-session surveys were completed. 86% (158 responses) indicated that they felt "more confident than before the session." 12% (22 responses) indicated that they felt "about the same," and 2% (3 responses) indicated that they felt "less confident than before the session."</p> <p>We've seen a decline in students' reported confidence after sessions, which has continued a trend that we have seen reported in this survey especially since the pandemic. We do not see an increase in students identifying that they feel less confident, rather than they leave the session feeling about the same. Student engagement has shifted since the pandemic, as well as due to the introduction of easy to use generative AI (spring of 23). We see this nationally in Writing Center scholarship and continue to work to address these issues in training and resources used in sessions. Our training continues to focus on methods for helping students set achievable goals for the session, discuss transfer of strategies discussed to writers' other assignments/tasks and to their writing practice more broadly, and for breaking down the assignment into more manageable parts so students can focus on skills needed at different parts of the process. In the "post-pandemic" context, we have also incorporated more training that comes from a trauma-informed approach, with the goal of helping students address writing anxiety or avoidance, which we are seeing an increase of stress, anxiety, and feelings of being very overwhelmed expressed by writers in sessions.</p>	<p>Maintain Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Continue with current methods and continue to specifically discuss strategies in training to support this outcome--checking in with writers' understanding throughout session, goal setting and debriefing at beginning and end of session, making sure students are using/understanding their course materials (assignment sheets, rubrics, etc.), scaffolding for assignment (class notes, drafts, peer reviews, etc.), and faculty feedback (office hours, draft feedback, etc.)</p>
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Conclusion

As indicated previously, we see a decline in students' reported confidence after sessions, which has continued a trend that we have seen reported in this survey especially since the pandemic. We do not see an increase in students identifying that they feel less confident, rather than they leave the session feeling about the same. Student engagement has shifted since the pandemic, as well as due to the introduction of easy to use generative AI (spring of 23). We see this nationally in Writing Center scholarship and continue to work to address these issues in training and resources used in sessions. Our training continues to focus on methods for helping students set achievable goals for the session, discuss transfer of strategies discussed to writers' other assignments/tasks and to their writing practice more broadly, and for breaking down the assignment into more manageable parts so students can focus on skills needed at different parts of the process. In the "post-pandemic" context, we have also incorporated more training that comes from a trauma-informed approach, with the goal of helping students address writing anxiety or avoidance, which we are seeing an increase of stress, anxiety, and feelings of being very overwhelmed expressed by writers in sessions.

We have also seen an increase in faculty requiring students to bring their work to the Writing Center, which often leads to students attending without an interest or engagement in the session besides fulfilling the requirement. We find that they tend to express a more neutral experience of the Writing Center. I continue to work with faculty through the Writing Across the Curriculum part of the program to talk about best practices for encouraging Writing Center sessions and helping set realistic expectations for appointments and how to be prepared to make the most of their time.