Report to the UW-Platteville Assessment Oversight Committee

March 12, 2012
Mission

Our mission is to help students become more confident, effective writers.

The Writing Center is here to assist students, staff, and faculty with any of their “word related” needs. We work one-on-one with students on anything from composition 1130 and 1230 essays, advanced research papers, technical reports, MLA, APA, and Chicago style, scholarship and graduate school applications, speeches, PowerPoint presentations, and letters to the editor. We work with staff on their professional development, applications, and conference presentations. And we are here to assist faculty by designing presentations on subjects such as plagiarism, electronic research, or citation styles. We also provide tutors for peer review workshops, study tables, and as general support for specific writing assignments.
Learning Outcomes: Over time, students using the Writing Center will:

- Increase rhetorical knowledge such as how to focus on a purpose, respond to the needs of different audiences, use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation, adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality.
- Use writing for inquiry, learning, thinking and communicating, and for integrating their ideas with others.
- Understand writing as a process; be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text; understand the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process; develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing and proofreading.
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their work.
Assessment

Assessment Tools: The following will be used as assessment tools:

• Writing Center Session Form
• Confidential feedback from student writers
• Taping/evaluation
• Focus Groups with students
Tutor Observation
(Taping and Evaluation)

Tutors and staff periodically observe one another to provide opportunities for review and reflection:

- Type of assignment
- What helped the student and worked?
- What was tried and didn’t work?
- Specific helpful language?
- General Comments
Focus Groups

Our goal is to convene one student focus group every 4-5 years:

Conclusions from the 2008 Group

• Not very reliable
• Very positive feedback
• Room for Improvement?
Student Survey

Spring 2011 Campus Writing Center Session Survey

Please circle the best response to the following questions based on how you felt during your session:

1. The tutor was courteous, helpful, and listened attentively to my concerns:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

2. I felt more confident about my writing after the session:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

3. I learned more about strategies to improve my writing:
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

4. Would you come back to the Writing Center? Would you encourage others to come?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Yes
   - No
Spring 2011 Campus Writing Center Session Survey

Please check all strategies that were discussed during the session and rate their helpfulness:

- We discussed how to focus on a purpose
- We discussed how to respond to the needs of different audiences
- We discussed organization
- We discussed how to adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- We discussed control features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- We discussed appropriate means of documenting my work (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.)
- We discussed writing as a tool for learning, thinking and communicating, and for integrating my ideas with others’
- We discussed the fact that writing is a process: it may take multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text

5. Overall, I feel the session was successful:

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Somewhat Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree
Student Survey

What was the most successful part of your session?

Is there anything you would suggest that we could improve?

Feel free to write on the back of this form if necessary.
Student Survey Results

Writing Center Survey Results 2009-2011

08-09 Total # of students 1,100; total visits during survey = 541; sample size = 323 or 59.7% of possible respondents

09-10 Total # of students 1,335; total visits during survey = 613; sample size = 344 or 56.1% of possible respondents

10-11 Total # of students 1,547; total visits during survey = 597; sample size = 419 or 70.1% of possible respondents
### Student Survey Results

**Question 1. The tutor was courteous, helpful, and listened attentively to my concerns.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A or Blank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 n=323</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 n=344</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 n=419</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>N/A or Blank</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2. I feel more confident after my session.
Student Survey Results

Question 3. I learned more about strategies to improve my writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A or Blank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Student Survey Results

Question 4. Would you come back to the Writing Center? Would you encourage others to come?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA or Blank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Survey Results

Strategies

5. Overall, I feel the session was successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A or Blank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What was the most successful part of your session?

Is there anything you would suggest that we could improve?

Feel free to write on the back of this form if necessary.
Student Survey Results

Overview
79 responses out of 419 surveys = 18.8%
78 positive responses;
1 response possibly negative (ambiguous)

“More input from others.”
Student Survey Results

Overview
36% were too general to categorize
19% mentioned grammar, punctuation, or mechanics
14% mentioned organization
13% mentioned “process” issues
10% mentioned genre
7% mentioned sources
Student Survey Results

Overview
3 positive responses also made suggestions for improvement.

“Could have been matched with a person familiar with business dept. internship process.”
“I think a lot of the tutors should read the papers out loud”
“Umm, wait until the student reads paragraph by paragraph.”
Conclusions (and Questions)

• Overall, a very high level of satisfaction with the Writing Center

• Clear answer to at least half the mission statement – 96-99% of students report feeling more confident after their WC visit

• What about the second half – “more effective?”

• What accounts for shifts in levels of enthusiasm?
  • (Very Helpful versus Somewhat Helpful?)
Recommendations/ Closing the Loop

- Spend more time training tutors to address higher order concerns
- Find resources to hire and train specialized tutors
- Find resources to increase training hours
- Continue faculty outreach
- Do a better job at educating students and faculty about appropriate expectations for the WC
- Use tutors’ backgrounds/disciplines to better advantage
$53,000 UW-System Growth Agenda Grant designed to provide extra support for students in English 10 (Fundamentals of English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Eligible</th>
<th>Number Who Returned Initial Form</th>
<th>Number Who Met with Coordinator</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
<th>Number Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th># Who Passed English 10</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th># Who Went through Academic Appeals</th>
<th>Number Retained from First-to-Second Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Partners</td>
<td>35/35</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Not in Writing Partners</td>
<td>72/91</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stylus

• Freshman Writing Anthology
• Required Supplemental Text
• In Fourth Year of Publishing
• 2009 Opportunity Grant
• 2010 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant
• 2011 Race and Ethnicity Grant
• 2011 LAE Excellence in Teamwork Award
• 2011 Invited to Present at President’s Summit
The majority found the book “useful”
- At least one meaningful reading
- At least one meaningful class discussion
- The three most useful components:
  - Readings of student essays
  - Discussion Questions
  - Sample MLA Paper
- Combination of “professional” and “student” writing useful
- This view also held by students who were not frequent users
Majority reported that *Stylus* helped them to understand their assignments and the writing process. Of those students who did not find *Stylus* helpful, the primary response was a lack of earlier drafts.
Stylus: SOTL Research

- Add multiple drafts of essays
- Use rhetorical language in the classroom
  - urge students to adopt that language in discussion
- Fully explain the value of being published
  - implications for students’ future
Other Projects and Initiatives to Assess in the Future

Class Projects (sampling below)
- Lyn Bouk’s Safety Management
- Tammy Salmon Stephens Women in Engineering
- Tim Zauche Organic Chemistry Groups
- Phil Sealy’s Circuit Design

Testing
- PPST School of Education
- Jr. Writing Exam, Psychology
- Jr. Writing Exam, Criminal Justice

Presentations
- APA Style
- MLA Style
- Library Databases Guided Workshop
- Technical Writing Skills
- Plagiarism
- Summary and Paraphrase

Outreach
- Roaming Writers

Peer Review
- Perkins Peer Review Protocol (Now used by a number of other professors)