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In this issue of *WLN*, authors focus on the power of human connection and thinking outside of the box to promote transformative learning. Writing centers have a reputation for being accommodating, accessible, and welcoming. Our field's focus on one-to-one tutoring prioritizes individualized instruction and recognizing what each writer brings to the conversation. However, as the articles in this issue make clear, we do not always interrogate our practices to know the extent to which we are living up to our social and pedagogical values. Each piece in issue 49.4 invites readers to consider ways writing centers might rethink instructional practices to provide a more personalized learning experience for writers that contributes to their growth and sense of belonging.

In "Invitational Rhetoric as a Method for Supporting Multilingual Writers in the Writing Center," Lin Li addresses the needs of multilingual writers and tutors, focusing on the importance of intentionally nurturing a "spirit of welcoming" in the writing center. Li's article addresses a gap in writing center scholarship: while there is literature on supporting multilingual writers, this scholarship rarely focuses on the experiences and perspectives of multilingual writing *tutors* who engage in this work. Li explores how the feminist framework of invitational rhetoric can help multilingual writing tutors "navigate linguistic differences and complex cultural dynamics about authority, teaching, and learning." Li's self-reflective study offers concrete examples of how to offer perspective in a way that promotes writers' agency and safety.

Alana Kuhlman and Amy Rushall also focus on developing supportive relationships with writers through course-based supplemental writing instruction. In "A Glimpse into the Possibilities of Credit-Bearing Writing Support Courses: Students' Perspectives," they present the findings of a survey study, arguing that credit-bearing supplemental writing support courses offer the opportunity for writers to improve their skills and confidence over time. These kinds of recurring meetings provide structure and accountability for writers' growth by offering optimal conditions for students to build rapport with tutors and address specific areas of need over time.

Personalized pedagogy requires in-depth knowledge of institutional trends and student needs. In "Writing Center as Genre Microcosm," Margaret Ervin, Gabrielle Stanley, and Olivia Mathers argue that writing centers operate as "microcosms" within universities. Their qualitative study provides insight into their university's understanding of genres, including students' genre comprehension and how genres are used in various disciplines. Their findings suggest that disciplinary uses of genre do not always align with the metagenres and categories described in past genre research. The authors make a compelling case for re-examining traditional notions of genre to empower writing centers to provide more targeted support for students and, in the case of faculty, professional development in the teaching of writing in and across the disciplines.

Timóteo Pereira Neves's Tutors' Column, "Harnessing the Power of GenAI," makes the case that human connection and the use of technological tools can go hand in hand in the writing center.

Using anecdotes from his own tutoring experience as well as writing center scholarship as support, Pereira Neves shows how tools such as GenAI, when used ethically and appropriately, can “enhance human relationships and increase accessibility in writing.” He concludes by offering several practical ways to integrate GenAI technology into tutoring sessions to promote “humanistic inquiry,” creativity, and a focus on writing as a personalized process.

As we approach the summer months, our hope is that this issue will inspire and energize you to continue to center the human in your writing center work.

# Invitational Rhetoric as a Method for Supporting Multilingual Writers in the Writing Center

Lin Li  
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“You are invited!” When we hear these words, we anticipate acceptance, not rejection; we expect to be welcomed, not excluded; we enter a space where our presence is valued, not dismissed. This spirit of welcoming is crucial in writing centers, where tutors aim to support and empower all writers. For multilingual writers, who might be concerned about being perceived as less capable (Bruce), this sense of inclusion is especially significant. As a multilingual tutor, I find nurturing such an atmosphere particularly complex as I must navigate linguistic differences and complex cultural dynamics about authority, teaching, and learning.

While writing center scholarship has explored various tutoring approaches, much of the existing literature often assumes tutors are native English speakers from the US, overlooking the unique needs of multilingual tutors. For example, Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli emphasize “active listening” (65-68), while Ben Rafoth advocates for “negotiated interaction” (48) in their tutor training materials. These scholars offer valuable insights. However, their work primarily assumes native English-speaking tutors working with multilingual writers and leaves a gap in the scholarship in our field around the praxis of multilingual tutors.

I contend that invitational rhetoric offers a valuable framework for multilingual tutors to create more inclusive and empowering tutoring sessions, particularly with multilingual writers. Developed by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin, this theory envisions communication as “an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination” (“Beyond Persuasion” 20). It values diverse experiences in communication by seeing individuals as “unrepeatable individuals” (Walker qtd. in Foss and Griffin 25) and acknowledging their “irreducible distinctness and difference” (Benhabib qtd. in Foss and Griffin 25), thus legitimizing our unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds as resources rather than barriers.

Drawing from my six semesters of exercising these principles as a multilingual tutor, this self-reflective study demonstrates how invitational rhetoric’s emphasis on principles including “offering perspective,” “safety,” and “value” has helped me move away from the teacher-centered authority engrained by my Chinese cultural background to create equal dialogues with writers. In what follows, I examine invitational rhetoric’s feminist origins and its key principles. I then explore how this theory can complement writing center practices by emphasizing deeper human connection. I conclude by analyzing my tutoring experiences with a writer from Iran, whose culture shares the Chinese value of holding teachers in high esteem. I hope my analysis demonstrates how invitational rhetoric has guided me in navigating cultural complexities and power dynamics and has the potential to do so for other multilingual tutors.

## **INVITATIONAL RHETORIC: EMBRACING INTERCONNECTION**

Invitational Rhetoric emerged in the early 1990s in response to feminist critiques of traditional rhetorical theories. Scholars such as Carole Spitzack and Kathryn Carter contend traditional theories marginalize women's communication styles and serve "the interests and predispositions of privileged groups—namely men" (403). Further developing this critique, Foss and Griffin highlight a "patriarchal bias" ("A Feminist Perspective" 331) in rhetorical theories. They challenge Kenneth Burke's focus on a "rhetoric of domination," which they think promotes a hierarchical mode of communication, and find an alternative in Starhawk's feminist philosophy, which is rooted in the concept of "immanent value" and "interconnection." According to Starhawk, every being has inherent worth that "does not have to be earned, acquired, or proven" but is "inherent in our existence" (qtd. in Foss and Griffin 334). This intrinsic worth means our relationships are not hierarchical but naturally mutual and interconnected, as "all beings exist in the relationship" and "no power is entirely separate from our own power, no being is entirely separate from our own being" (qtd. in Foss and Griffin 333). Drawing from insights into Starhawk's work, Foss and Griffin propose invitational rhetoric, moving beyond traditional persuasive rhetoric and towards non-hierarchical communication.

Invitational rhetoric subverts the established modes of hierarchical communication through two key communicative forms: "offering perspectives and the creation of the external conditions of safety, value, and freedom" (Foss and Griffin, "Beyond Persuasion" 27). "Offering" prompts rhetors to share their ideas "without advocating for their support or seeking their acceptance" (21). This principle disrupts the traditional power structures in hierarchical communication by rejecting the idea that the rhetor's primary role is to persuade or dominate. Instead, rhetors show "how it looks and works for them" (21), positioning themselves as equal participants in dialogue rather than authorities who seek to control others.

Meanwhile, the three external conditions are designed to nurture the confidence of audience members, encouraging them to contribute their viewpoints. "Safety" functions to open dialogue by ensuring participants share their thoughts without having to "fear rebuttal of or retribution for their most fundamental beliefs" (25). "Value" dismantles hierarchy by recognizing all participants' inherent worth, ensuring "the right of all beings capable of speech and action to be participants" in the conversation (Benhabib, qtd. in Foss and Griffin 25). "Freedom" supports participants' right to make their own choices and decisions. Together, the principle of offering and these three external conditions are meant to foster an environment dedicated to mutual understanding instead of dominance.

Invitational rhetoric has been discussed in writing center scholarship. For example, Nouf Alshreif takes Foss and Griffin's work further by introducing invitational rhetoric as an inclusive tutoring framework. She contends that invitational rhetoric "can be adopted by tutors who coach multilingual writers" to "validate their unique voices" and individual experiences. Despite Alshreif's valuable insights, there remains a gap in exploring the impact of cultural dynamics on multilingual tutor-writer sessions.

## **INVITATIONAL RHETORIC IN WRITING CENTER WORK**

Invitational rhetoric aligns with the established practices of writing centers in several ways. First, invitational rhetoric aims "to provide the basis for the creation and maintenance of relationships of equality" (Foss and Griffin, "Beyond Persuasion" 26). In writing centers, tutors already apply this principle by encouraging writers to take an active role in the learning process rather than positioning themselves as experts. Second, invitational rhetoric emphasizes fostering a non-

critical atmosphere based on “respect and care” (25). This emphasis on non-judgment means tutors create a space where writers feel safe sharing their work without worrying about being judged or criticized. Third, invitational rhetoric encourages rhetors to offer ideas without imposing their perspectives on others (20). In writing center practice, this sharing means tutors (as rhetors) offer suggestions while respecting writers’ autonomy in decision-making. Furthermore, invitational rhetoric emphasizes creating conditions that acknowledge participants’ inherent worth (25). In tutoring practice, this “value” concept encourages tutors to respect writers’ ideas and abilities. Instead of simply telling writers what to change or correct, tutors view writers as active contributors.

While writing center pedagogy focuses on the writer rather than just the text, invitational rhetoric takes this principle a step further by emphasizing the whole person behind the writing. This approach deepens the writing center’s mission by helping tutors see and support writers both as learners developing skills and as individuals bringing their unique experiences and perspectives to the consultation. Upholding the philosophy, invitational rhetoric can help tutors create a space where writers feel truly seen, heard, and valued as whole persons.

Despite invitational rhetoric’s potential, applying this theory in practice presents some complexities and requires multilingual tutors to examine their cultural assumptions when tutoring multilingual writers. To illustrate both the challenges and potential of using invitational rhetoric in the interactions between multilingual tutors and writers, I offer an anecdote from my tutoring experience.

#### **FROM AUTHORITY TO ALLY: THE POWER OF SHARED VULNERABILITY**

Resonating with invitational rhetoric, I intentionally applied it to my tutoring practice for around two months before meeting the writer described below. This practice taught me that deeply ingrained cultural values can get in the way of applying its principles. Deeply entrenched in Confucianism, I had never questioned the relationship between teacher and writer, where a teacher is seen as an authority, “a preacher transmitting infallible knowledge” (Dong 365), and writers as the disciples who humbly seek the “correct” knowledge. However, this cultural norm conflicts with the invitational rhetoric advocated by Alshreif to empower multilingual writers. This internal conflict became apparent during a session when I worked with an Iranian undergraduate. I found myself automatically taking an authoritative position when the writer sought my suggestions, which turned out to make the writer more reserved. As I navigated the conflict, I adjusted my approach by reducing the power imbalance and trying to see the writer as an equal learner. The outcomes were transformative. The writer became open and developed a more active mindset in addressing her challenges. This experience forms the foundation for my argument: Although invitational rhetoric theory originated in Western communication studies, its principles can be successfully applied in cross-cultural tutoring environments and to help multilingual tutors navigate cultural complexities.

This session is still vivid in my mind. I can easily recall the tension in her eyes when I first saw her. When I asked about her goals for our session, she expressed only a desire to practice oral English. To find a topic that both of us were interested in, I mentioned my past teaching experience and my journey from China to the US. Gradually, she opened up more. She confided that she felt lonely and disconnected from her classmates. She went on to say that she often remained silent in class and left the classroom right after lectures, never lingering to chat with her instructors and classmates. I could sense that beyond English practice, she was looking for advice on how to overcome a feeling of alienation. I guessed that my dual role as a fellow student and an educator

with prior working experience likely built my ethos as someone who understands writers and their emotional needs. This ethos led her to trust me and share her concerns.

Faced with this young international student's request for advice, I suddenly felt a mighty duty as a senior educator and experienced "expert" to guide this newcomer. I gave her suggestions such as joining social events to practice interpersonal skills. But as I presented this advice, I began to doubt its value, and I sensed her hesitation. I gently asked her thoughts. "Um...won't work," she finally admitted.

As we continued talking, I remembered to check my approach against the principles of invitational rhetoric. I quickly recognized that my approach up to that point had been superficial and contrary to the theory's central tenets. In contrast to Foss and Griffin's advocacy that invitational rhetors do not "claim that their experiences or perspectives are superior to those of their audience members" ("Beyond Persuasion" 20), my initial positioning as an "education expert" placed me above the writer, creating a hierarchical dynamic and distancing her. This power dynamic was reinforced by the writer's cultural background, which as mentioned, reveres educators. According to Mansour Javidan and Ali Dastmalchian, in Iranian teacher-student interactions, teachers' opinions carry more weight. Openly disagreeing with teachers is often seen as disrespectful (132). The combined effect likely hindered her from freely expressing her thoughts.

Foss and Griffin call for rhetors to foster "a feeling of security and freedom from danger for the audience" ("Beyond Persuasion" 25). This feeling of safety can be obtained when a rhetor "conveys to audience members that the ideas and feelings they share with the rhetor will be received with respect and care" (25). To foster this trust, I needed to reduce the gap between us and adjust my approach. Here, I drew more helpfully from my experience in Chinese culture, where sharing personal stories and vulnerabilities often helps show emotional honesty and promotes mutual trust. This sharing is an example of Foss and Griffin's "offering," where "rhetors tell what they currently know or understand by presenting their vision of the world and showing how it works for them" (22). I began to share the difficulties I faced as a non-native English speaker in joining fast-paced classroom discussions. I confessed, "You know, I often found myself sitting there, thinking hard about what to say. When I finally gathered my thoughts, I became so excited and anxious that when I finally worked up the nerve to open my mouth, I realized my classmates had already moved to something else." The writer's laughter at this conveyed a clear message: she understood me. An emotional bond rooted in our shared experience of navigating an unfamiliar environment had begun to form. My experience demonstrates the effectiveness of Alshrif's advocacy for "express(ing) feelings that convey empathy through trying to perceive things from the tutees' perspectives." Knowing that I was sincere and willing to respond to her views with care and respect, she no longer hesitated and became comfortable asking more questions. This transformation suggests that invitational rhetoric, combined with my cultural knowledge, provided me with a useful framework for creating an empathetic tutoring environment.

I told her that many multilingual writers may find themselves in difficult situations and shared some ways I had adapted to the US classroom culture. After lectures, I often asked my classmates to clarify points that I found challenging. These discussions sometimes went beyond academics to life, culture, and history, and I naturally connected more with my peers. By discussing my strategies, I once again practiced "offering," sharing what the rhetor knows without imposition (Foss and Griffin, "Beyond Persuasion" 22). My collaborative approach respected the writer's agency to make choices and determine what worked best for her. As she left, it was clear to me that she was encouraged by our conversations.

Based on my experience with this writer and others, I argue that invitational rhetoric can effectively guide multilingual tutors, provided they critically self-reflect on their cultural assumptions. Initially, I assumed I grasped the concept of invitational rhetoric and could apply it easily. However, in practice, my cultural background and past work experience interfered. As a result, my impulse to offer advice as an “educational expert” unintentionally created distance between the writer and me and silenced her voice. Recognizing this, I stepped back from the role of an “authority” and managed to reduce the power imbalance. By sharing my moments of awkwardness as a multilingual student, I created conditions of equality and safety that effectively encouraged the writer to share her concerns. When she sensed that I genuinely cared about her joys and anxieties rather than merely fulfilling my duty, our communication flourished.

I believe that invitational rhetoric offers a framework and language that can empower multilingual tutors as we engage in the cross-cultural tutoring to which we are so well suited due to our own cross-cultural experience. Multilingual tutors who have studied in both our home countries and abroad have gained firsthand insights into the challenges of navigating unfamiliar academic environments. These dual perspectives lead to what Suresh Canagarajah terms “cosmopolitan dispositions,” an ability to move between different cultural and linguistic spaces (43). These “cosmopolitan dispositions” also enable us to integrate invitational rhetoric principles into our tutoring practice. Because we know firsthand how tough adjusting can be, we understand writers’ feelings better and see ourselves and writers as equal learners exploring ideas together.

## CONCLUSION

Invitational rhetoric can be particularly effective for multilingual tutors and First-language (L1) English tutors. For me, as a multilingual tutor, it challenged my traditional values and helped me switch my role from an “authority” to a co-learner. My experience points to the possibility of writing center scholars developing tutor preparation materials tailored for multilingual tutors and incorporating invitational rhetoric to address the challenges these tutors bring to their work. For L1 tutors, invitational rhetoric’s emphasis on non-judgmental listening and valuing different perspectives enables them to engage in egalitarian exchange, helping them reflect their implicit cultural assumptions and better understand concepts from other cultures. By integrating invitational rhetoric with cultural awareness and tailored strategies, multilingual tutors can empower multilingual writers.

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## A Glimpse into the Possibilities of Credit-Bearing Writing Support Courses: Students' Perspectives

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In our writing center, one of the most common complaints we hear from students and faculty alike is that they do not have time to address all issues in students' writing in a single appointment. One possible way to overcome this is by providing opportunities for students to make consistent writing center appointments throughout the semester. At the Lumberjack Writing Center (LWC) at Northern Arizona University (NAU), students can enroll in credit-bearing writing support courses in which they work with the same tutor throughout the semester on the same day and at the same time each week. Recurring and/or credit-bearing appointments allow tutors and students to develop sustained relationships. Through these ongoing relationships, the writing process can be scaffolded across appointments and skills can be refined; this sustained work can potentially lead to noticeable changes in students' perceptions of writing improvement and confidence.

Harry Denny et al. noted that “[s]tudents would be better served by a pedagogy that prioritizes multiple back-and-forth interactions with tutors throughout the drafting process” (87). Our writing center does this for students enrolled in credit-bearing writing support courses for multiple writing tasks throughout the semester, and we also offer optional workshops to target specific areas in students' writing. By offering writing support appointments attached to course credit, there is an added element of accountability, both in terms of students attending their appointments and for students consistently working on writing assignments.

Few studies exist that examine recurring writing center appointments, and to fill this gap, we conducted a small IRB-approved study in Spring 2023 to explore students' perceptions of how the writing support courses affected their confidence and writing performance, as well as their satisfaction with the courses and additional writing workshops.

### BACKGROUND

NAU is a four-year public Hispanic Serving Institution with a total enrollment of approximately 28,000 students, over 40% of which are first generation college students. The credit-bearing writing support courses offered at our institution have emerged over the years, beginning with a lower-division one-credit class that required students to attend 12 sessions and to bring in writing-related coursework or other tasks (resumes, cover letters, etc.) to pass the course. In 2019, we added an upper-division version of the course, also one credit, where tutors were trained to emphasize research-skill development while still providing all necessary writing support. Students enrolled in courses of any discipline who feel they could use additional support in their writing are encouraged to enroll in the credit-bearing writing support courses. Often, students in the lower-division writing support courses are concurrently enrolled in their first-year composition course, and students in the upper-division writing support courses are concurrently enrolled in their disciplinary junior-level writing intensive course. These writing support courses

may be required or strongly encouraged for international students depending on their degree program. Occasionally, graduate students enroll in the upper-division writing support course. At NAU, full time students do not pay additional tuition for credits beyond what is required for full time status, making these courses accessible to many full time students. Frequently students who are one credit short of being full time choose to enroll in the writing support courses to make up their additional credit and have full time status.

To increase accountability in these courses, to make these courses meaningful, and to encourage the transfer of what students learn in writing support appointments to future writing tasks, students complete weekly reflections where they consider their ongoing engagement in the writing process. Over the last two years, we added a goal-setting element to these reflections where students work with their tutors to develop, reflect upon, and revise goals as necessary throughout the semester. We anticipated that the added element of goal setting would help students feel more accomplished and more confident in their writing.

In addition to the required weekly meetings, in Spring 2023, we offered optional bi-monthly workshops that addressed various writing topics. These supplemental workshops targeted areas of concern in students' writing in peer-led, small, inviting, and interactive group settings. Students who felt they needed instruction and support with writing topics beyond those offered within their courses were encouraged to attend, and these workshops provided more in-depth and organized lessons than those offered within writing support appointments. Furthermore, one of these workshops focused on graduate school and job applications, which are often outside of the scope of students' academic coursework. We expected that students would choose to attend these workshops because they were interested in receiving additional instruction in writing that supplemented what they were learning in their courses and/or in one-to-one writing support sessions with their tutors.

Tutors who meet with students enrolled in the credit-bearing writing support courses receive additional training to work with these students. Our writing center employs approximately 40 tutors who are either Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) or hourly undergraduate or graduate student workers. All experienced tutors may be assigned to work with students in the lower-division writing support courses, while only graduate-level tutors are assigned to work with students in the upper-division writing support courses. Tutors will typically be assigned up to three students enrolled in writing support courses. GTAs work six hours per week in the writing center, while student workers may work up to 12 hours per week, so credit-bearing writing support appointments account for between a quarter and half of the students writing tutors generally see each week.

Training sessions address topics such as establishing rapport, setting appropriate boundaries, goal setting, long-term skill development, supporting students' emotional needs/connecting students to resources, and working with students from diverse backgrounds. During the training, tutors spend time planning and developing activities for their sessions. Role playing, working through scenarios, and resource sharing are other important elements in preparing tutors to work with students enrolled in credit-bearing writing support courses. As previously noted, tutors emphasize research skill development in the upper-division writing support courses, which is addressed in training sessions. Finally, tutors learn about expectations related to engaging in regular communication with students; tracking students' progress and attendance; grading students' weekly reflections and providing feedback; and making midterm and final grade (P/F) recommendations.

In summary, both the upper- and lower-division credit-bearing writing support courses have a similar curriculum and requirements, with an added emphasis on research in the upper-division course. All students must attend a minimum of twelve 50-minute writing support sessions with their assigned tutor. Students are responsible for bringing in writing assignments, presentations, and/or projects from any of their courses to work on during their weekly sessions, thus largely driving the direction of the sessions. However, tutors may occasionally develop lessons and activities for sessions to address particular areas in students’ writing. In addition to attending weekly writing support sessions, all students must complete weekly reflections. These reflections encourage students to set goals, assess progress toward goals, and develop new goals when appropriate, as well as to reflect on their engagement in the writing process and application of what they work in in their writing support sessions and to ask questions and voice concerns and issues with their writing.

## METHODS

We approached this study to learn more about students’ experiences and perceptions of the course. More specifically, we were interested in how they perceived any changes in their own writing skills and confidence as a result of participating in the course. As such, this study had many limitations, including a small sample size/response rate, limited sources of data, and no control group. We collected data by administering a brief end-of-course survey to all students enrolled in the writing support courses each day during the last week of the Spring 2023 semester. The survey consisted of demographic questions, several questions related to students’ perceptions of the benefits of the course overall, and several questions that explored their experiences with the optional workshops. Finally, students were asked to describe their favorite part of the course and offer any suggestions for improvement. All questions were optional, meaning that, aside from a consent request, which required a “yes” answer to proceed, students were not required to answer any of the questions to move on to the next question.

To analyze the data, we used basic statistical analyses, and we coded the open-ended responses for emerging themes.

## RESULTS

Of the 89 students enrolled in the credit-bearing writing support courses in Spring 2023, 29 (31%) consented to participate in the study. Students who consented and who answered the respective demographic questions represented a wide range of academic levels, race/ethnicities, gender identities, and disciplines (see Table 1).

Table 1. Student Demographics

<b>Academic Level</b>	
First year	3
Second Year	9
Third Year	2
Fourth Year	5
Graduate	5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
Asian	12
Black/African American	2
White	5
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	6
Female	15
<b>Academic Major</b>	
Business	8
English	7
Elementary Education	2
Psychology	2
Undeclared	1

In addition to his demographic data (Table 1), seven students identified as first-generation college students. Because the demographic questions were optional, we were unable to gather data specific to other populations, such as Hispanic/Latine students and Native American students, who may have participated in the study but chose not to answer the demographic question(s).

The survey included several items related to students' experiences with the courses. The first two questions pertained to how useful students felt the course was in helping them to grow and refine their writing skills, as well as how useful the course was in helping them to be successful in their writing courses (see Table 2). The next two questions asked students about their preparedness for writing assignments in their future courses and workplace as a result of their writing support courses, as well as whether they felt they had higher grades on their writing assignments than they would have without taking the writing support course (see Table 3).

Table 2. Student Responses to Two Questions About Their Experiences with the Courses

Question	Extremely Useful	Very Useful	Moderately Useful	Slightly Useful	Not at All Useful
How useful was your ENG 100 or 405 class in helping you grow and refine your writing skills?	11	6	0	0	0
How useful was your ENG 100 or 405 class in helping you be successful in your writing assignments in your courses this semester?	10	6	1	0	0

Table 3. Student Responses to Two Assertions About Their Experiences with the Courses

Assertion	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your ENG 100 or ENG 405 class made you feel better prepared for writing assignments you may have in future courses and/or the workplace.	11	5	0	0	0
Your ENG 100 or ENG 405 class helped you achieve higher grades on writing assignments than you would have received without your weekly writing support sessions.	11	4	2	0	0

The next several questions related to the supplemental workshops. When asked which workshop(s) they attended, three attended "Starting the Writing Process and Organizing Your Paper," four attended "Writing an Effective Thesis, Introduction, and Conclusion," two attended "Writing Succinctly," and two attended "Job and Graduate School Applications." All students indicated that the supplemental sessions they attended were either "extremely useful" or "very useful."

Finally, the survey ended with two open-ended questions. The first asked: “What was your favorite thing about your ENG 100 or ENG 405 class?” Responses were coded for emerging themes, which included satisfaction with their tutor, satisfaction with the types of support offered, and satisfaction with the course materials and resources. The majority of comments offered praise for the tutor in particular, while multiple comments mentioned “everything” or the “course overall.” Other comments talked about the type of support offered, and several comments discussed course materials/resources. When asked: “What suggestions do you have to improve your ENG 100 or 405 experience?”, seven students wrote “none” and two others wrote “increase appointment time.” It is important to note that several students misinterpreted these questions to refer to the courses from which they were bringing writing assignments, so those responses were not included in the analysis.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are promising in considering the possible benefits of credit-bearing writing support courses. Of particular importance were students’ perceptions about how the course helped them to improve their writing skills, to be successful in their writing assignments, to be better prepared for future writing tasks, and to achieve higher grades on writing assignments than they would have without having taken the writing support course. We also found that students’ comments about their tutor being their favorite part of the course helped affirm the value of the credit-bearing courses, in which we hope that tutors and students develop trusting relationships. Though attendance at the optional workshops was not as high as we had hoped, we were pleased to see that all students who did attend the workshops found them to be beneficial.

While this study did offer meaningful data, it was not without its limitations, in particular, the survey response rate. This study offered insight into the experiences of the 31% of students who chose to participate in the study, which leaves the experiences of the other 69% of students unknown. Because the demographic questions were optional for students, we were unable to fully explore how different groups were affected. Additionally, this study explored only students’ perceptions of their experiences and the benefits of the courses without additional data, such as rubrics/grades to support any reported changes. As a survey with primarily multiple-choice questions and few opportunities for students to explain their answers, this study was also limited in that it did not necessarily offer information about why students selected particular choices. Furthermore, there was no control group to help determine whether students who attended single drop-in or multiple drop-in appointments throughout the semester experienced similar results.

There are a few implications of this study for future practice. Firstly, the purpose of credit-bearing writing support courses should be clarified so students understand how the writing-support course is different from their disciplinary course(s). Additionally, in the case that the workshop topics were not relevant to individual student’s needs or that workshops were not offered at times students were available, the workshop offerings could be expanded. Workshops could also be integrated into the curriculum of the writing support courses and incentivized within the writing support courses as extra credit opportunities.

There are several avenues for additional research we might pursue based on our findings. Students’ perceived improvements and increased confidence justifies the need for future studies that specifically explore the potential for credit-bearing writing support courses to help increase retention, particularly for students who come from diverse backgrounds, which is an important

concern at many higher education institutions. Examining why students chose to enroll in the course could not only help with future recruitment efforts, but also provide further insight on adjustments that can help the course and optional workshops to even better meet the needs of students. It would also be useful to include a demographic question asking if students are international or domestic to understand the unique experiences and needs of international students that could help shape the courses and optional workshops. Also related to the survey, administering a pre- and a mid-semester survey, as well as sending the end of semester survey to students several weeks before the semester ends could yield additional responses and data that could be useful. Including a control group could be useful in determining differences in experiences and perceived changes amongst students enrolled in credit-bearing writing support courses versus those who attend multiple or single drop-in appointments. Exploring tutors' experiences working with students in credit-bearing writing support courses could yield interesting insights, especially considering their experiences in writing support courses versus drop-in appointments. Finally, administering a similar but modified survey to students who use the writing center on a drop-in basis would allow a better understanding of differences in perceived growth/improvement for those who enrolled in the writing support courses versus those who used the writing center for drop-in appointments one or more times in a semester.

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## Writing Center as Genre Microcosm

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The writing center is host to a naturally occurring microcosm of writing assignment genres. In our research, we seek to understand what genres writers from across our institution bring to our writing center, and by extension, to understand what genres are assigned at our university. In order to examine the genre microcosm, we used a qualitative research design. In our writing center, post-session surveys are completed at the end of each tutorial by tutors. Tutors record the assignment title and genre the student was working on and write a few sentences about whether the student understood the assigned genre. These post-session surveys were not designed for the study but rather have been in place for years at our center and are part of the way we train tutors to attend to genre and keep focused on helping students understand the assignment. The current study took a year's worth of this data (2021-22) and qualitatively coded 1,945 post-session genre surveys, yielding a more pared-down and consistent set of genre labels than what we had from the tutors' entries alone. The outcome is a breakdown of what genres come to our writing center, which enables us to think about the genres of writing assigned at our university and to put our findings into conversation with scholarship around disciplinarity and genre.

Our analysis responds to Layne Porta Gordon's chapter "Genre Theory: A Research Approach for Understanding Learning," in Jo Mackiewicz and Rebecca Day Babcock's 2020 *Theories and Methods of Writing Center Studies: A Practical Guide*. In her chapter, Gordon puts out a call for more writing center research on genre, and our study answers one of her proposed research questions: "What genres do students bring to our centers most often? What do these trends suggest about the institutional dynamics of our colleges and universities?" (25). Gordon challenges us to define genre through the eyes of students and tutors in the writing center. By examining and labeling genres that come to the writing center, tutorial by tutorial, we have access to a snapshot of the writing assigned at the university from the students' perspective, and we believe this is an important contribution because much writing center scholarship on genre has relied on genre categories such as those proposed in Michael Carter's seminal article on genres at his university, "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines." We have found important distinctions between the genres found in Carter's widely cited categories and the genres that occur in our writing center's genre microcosm.

### CLIENT REPORT FORMS AND STUDY METHODS

After each tutorial, tutors fill out a client report form in WOnline, the scheduling and data collection software used by our writing center. While the makers of WOnline may envision that client report forms will be used to "report out" what happens in each tutoring session, for the past six years, our writing center has adapted the WOnline client report form for the purpose of "reporting in," allowing each tutor space to reflect on genre, along with reflecting on process and

the plans the client has for working on the writing further. The client report form survey asks the tutors to answer the following questions about genre: 1) Title of the assignment the writer was working on (short answer), 2) Describe the target genre this assignment is asking for (short answer), and 3) In your professional opinion: What is the genre the student is trying to produce, and do they understand the genre? (longer text box response). The expectation to fill out this client report form is included in tutor training, which also involves training in genre theory, though that training is not the subject of this study.

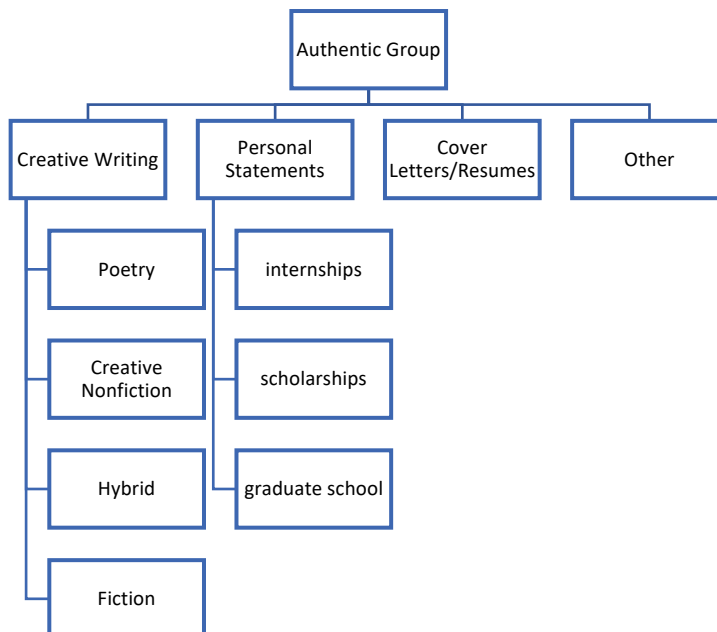
For this study, to learn more about the genres students bring to the writing center, we started with a set of genre labels that our writing center has created over years of working with the client report forms. In 2017, in response to the difficulty tutors were having with the “report in” client report form and answering what the genre was, we went through a process of analyzing a year’s worth of data according to professor assignment labels. The assignment labels are inputted by the students at the time they make the appointment. Andrew Heller, a student researcher in our writing center, created a set of labels for genres students bring to our center, using the assignment titles and the tutors’ responses, in order to winnow down assignment types into a manageable number of categories (Heller). These categories reflect, pragmatically, what writing shows up in our writing center, and we have used his categories in tutor training and as a guide to help tutors decide how to label genres.

The current researchers returned to Heller’s work for insight in inductively developing a new set of genre codes for the 2021-22 data. Since tutors at our center had been working with Heller’s genre categories for several years, the data reflected categories that were close to what he had recommended, but messy. There were missing pieces that needed to be resolved through the application of codes to a combination of three data points (the three fields named in paragraph one of this methods section). The codes used were first divided into two groups: authentic writing and writing for school (see Figures 1 and 2). The genres in the authentic group include creative writing, where we find students imagining an audience that will be reading their published work, as well as resumes, cover letters, and personal statements, where the audience will be an actual

employer or admissions officer. With authentic writing, tutors can be confident of genre.

With school writing, tutors are dealing with assignment labels such as “planning issue paper,” “major research project,” or “training evaluation.” Often, it is unclear whether the assignment is asking for a genre typical of the discipline. Is “planning issue paper” a disciplinary genre in the sense that professionals in the field, outside of the professor teaching the course, would recognize it? A writing center tutor does not know. As an example of the process a tutor goes through to determine genre, take one assignment in our data set titled “connect with me now.”

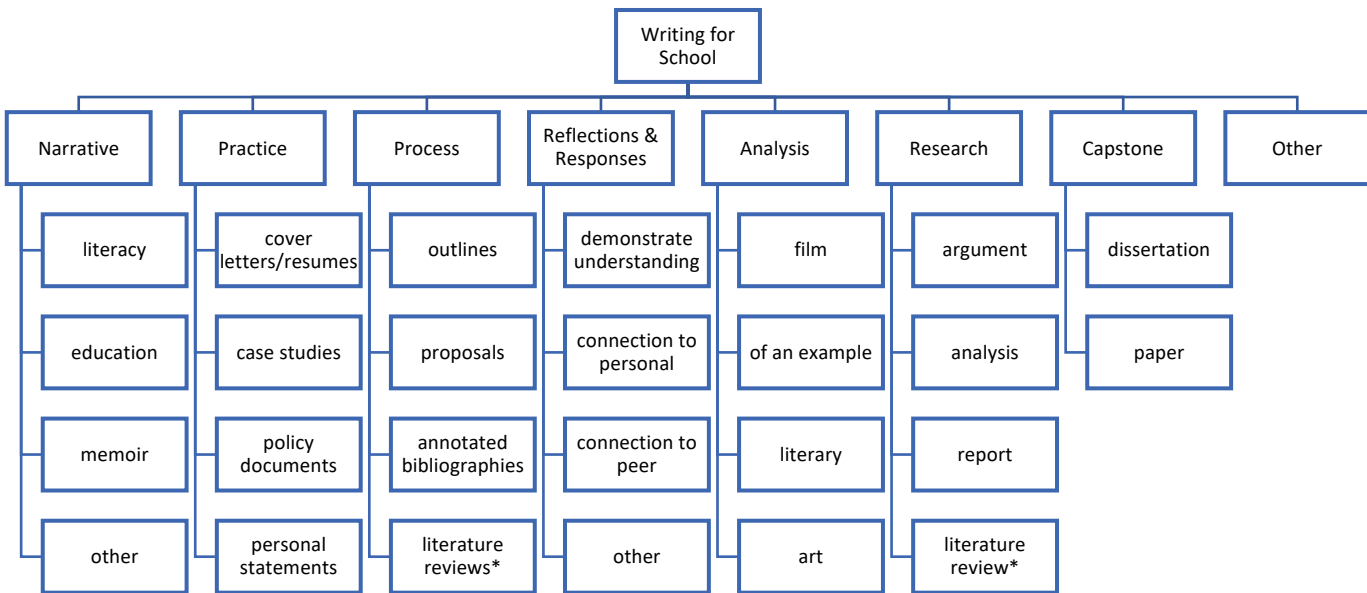
Figure 1. Authentic Group



For this assignment, the student was being asked to answer a series of questions for a Communications course. The tutor judged this to be an assignment asking for an analysis essay.

Categories for the current study are outlined in Figure 2. While any genre can call for “research” of one kind or another, our research category code was required to include citations, most often of scholarly sources. For each of those meta-categories, we had the code “other” for types of research papers or analysis that were specified but did not have a category in our coding. For each meta-category, we had the sub-category “unknown.” And finally, we had a code for unknown where no information about genre was discernible from the client report form.

Figure 2. Writing for school group



*\*For all codes, researchers coded first for the broad category and second for the subcategory. Thus, they first coded for “process” or “research paper,” then coded the subcode for the type of process piece or research paper. If the writer was completing an assignment in preparation for a longer assignment, the writing was coded “process.” Some process assignments were literature reviews in preparation for drafting a full paper. Other literature reviews were full research papers in the genre of “literature review.”*

Using these codes, two researchers independently coded the data set of 1,945 records, categorizing each entry according to the genre codes described above. The codes recorded by each researcher were then compared, and there was an 81% agreement between the coders. Codes for which there was disagreement between the two researchers were excluded from the following stage of analysis, yielding 1,548 coded tutorials for which genre was identified. In the following stage, the researchers focused on the category of research papers because research papers were the single largest category found in the data set (excluding disagreement) at 39%, with the second highest category being analysis papers (without research) at 18%. We then grouped courses according to discipline using course prefix and number. To derive the disciplinary labels, we used a combination of course numbers and the divisions in our university according to college. This yielded natural sciences (10 instances), social sciences (160), mathematics (1), arts (12), humanities (384), business (29), education (121), social work (113), health sciences (223), and first-year writing (318). In addition to those disciplines, 130 instances were not course related, 42 were interdisciplinary, four were in applied sciences other than health sciences, and one was for a first-year experience course (See Table 1).

Table 1. Disciplinary Assignment Counts by Genre Code

Discipline	Total Assignment Count	Research	Analysis	Reflections & Responses	Other School Genres	Authentic Genres
Humanities	384	87 (22.7%)	126 (32.8%)	38 (9.9%)	102 (26.6%)	31 (8.1%)
First-Year Writing	318	155 (48.7%)	70 (22.0%)	17 (5.3%)	65 (20.4%)	11 (3.5%)
Health Sciences	223	141 (63.2%)	11 (4.9%)	33 (14.8%)	30 (13.5%)	8 (3.6%)
Social Sciences	160	105 (65.6%)	21 (13.1%)	7 (4.4%)	24 (15.0%)	3 (1.9%)
Not Course-Related Writing	130	11 (8.5%)	5 (3.8%)	3 (2.3%)	31 (23.8%)	80 (61.5%)
Education	121	42 (34.7%)	1 (0.8%)	9 (7.4%)	66 (54.5%)	3 (2.5%)
Social Work	113	27 (23.9%)	32 (28.3%)	42 (37.2%)	10 (8.8%)	2 (1.8%)
Interdisciplinary	42	20 (47.6%)	4 (9.5%)	5 (11.9%)	11 (26.2%)	2 (4.8%)
Business	29	13 (44.8%)	5 (17.2%)	4 (13.8%)	5 (17.2%)	2 (6.9%)
Arts	12	2 (16.7%)	3 (25.0%)	6 (50.0%)	1 (8.3%)	0
Natural Sciences	10	7 (70.0%)	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0
Applied Sciences	4	2 (50.0%)	0	0	2 (50.0%)	0
First Year Experience	1	0	1 (100.0%)	0	0	0
Mathematics	1	0	0	0	0	1 (100.0%)
<b>Total - All Disciplines</b>	<b>1548</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>143</b>

Finally, we analyzed the frequency of different research paper types within each family of discipline, finding that 29% were unknown (undifferentiated by purpose, other than that they were “research papers”), 25% were asking for analysis, 19% were asking for a literature review,

13% were focused on argument, 13% were requesting a report on research, and less than 2% were asking for a different purpose.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What we saw in our analysis was a greater variety of genres from the humanities, and a lesser variety in the sciences, where research papers dominated much more heavily. The combined number of assignments in our data set from the natural sciences, social sciences, health sciences, and applied sciences was 397. Out of those 397 assignments, 255 were research papers. By comparison, for courses in the humanities, only 87 of the 384 assignments were research papers. Many of the humanities assignments were analysis (126), which included such things as rhetorical analysis and literary analysis, without research from sources. Other humanities genres were practice genres such as reports, resumes, and other (42); reflections and responses (38); narratives (23); process (18); capstones (16); and a few others.

Our conclusions suggest that guidance about metagenres and disciplinarity, such as that provided by Michael Carter, cannot be relied upon as a guide for tutors. According to Carter, there are four academic metagenres that respond to “academic learning situations” that call for 1) “problem solving,” 2) “empirical inquiry,” 3) “research from sources,” and 4) “performance” (394). Carter’s system of metagenres would predict that research papers would dominate in the humanities and be less prevalent in the sciences, but our analysis shows the opposite. Therefore, tutors’ conversations with students in our writing center cannot start from explaining the applicability of the genre to the discipline, or the disciplinary moves inherent to one course or another, but instead should start with the practical aspects of fulfilling the assignment’s requirements according to the professor’s assignment and rubric.

Taking the starting point of helping students understand what their professor is looking for (while also remaining mindful of genre) is an approach supported by Harry Denny, John Nordlof, and Lori Salem. In their qualitative study of working-class students’ experiences in the writing center, their advice is applicable for our center, which operates at an institution where 30% of the students are first generation. They say their “students’ biggest concerns about expertise had to do with knowing ‘what the professor wants,’ especially in situations in which they didn’t understand the form their final paper should take” (Denny et al. 87). In a writing center tutorial, the form the final paper should take would presumably prompt a conversation about genre, but a conversation about what the professor wants often falls short of the ideal of genre analysis set forth by Gordon in her earlier work, “Beyond Generalist vs. Specialist: Making Connections between Genre and Theory.” More often, tutors in our center help students see what the professor wants from looking at the professor’s rubric and combine that, when possible, with using genre knowledge to help the student understand the form the writing should take.

Bonnie Devet, writing in “Using Metagenre and EcoComposition to Train Writing Center Tutors for Writing in the Disciplines,” joins Gordon in advocating for the power of “genre talk” to help students. Like us, however, she grapples with the realities of assignments brought to the writing center, and accounts for the fact that they do not line up perfectly with Carter’s taxonomy of “metagenres.” For example, Carter maintains that one of his four metagenres, “responses to academic situations that call for research from sources,” is primarily the provenance of disciplines in the humanities or interdisciplinary studies that view “research not as an end in itself but as a means to an end” (398-99). If this is the case, we would expect few “research papers” from the health sciences, such as Nursing, or the social sciences, such as Criminal Justice. As suggested above, we have found this is not the case, as health and social sciences also assign research

papers, often understood by the students as “an APA research paper.” APA encapsulates the values of research and thinking in health sciences and social sciences, and professors in those disciplines emphasize adherence to the templates and guidelines found in the APA manual, assigning APA research papers as a way to rehearse the disciplinary understandings found in the manual. “Research from sources,” according to Carter, or what we coded as “research” was found in all disciplines in our analysis, but most heavily in the natural sciences (70%), health sciences (63%), social sciences (66%), and business (45%), where according to Carter’s metagenres, we would expect to find more “problem-solving” papers such as business plans and feasibility reports (coded as “practice genres” in our research), or empirical inquiry in the form of lab reports and poster presentations (also coded as “practice genres” in our research).

To turn to the implications of our research for tutor training and practice, what seems to be most beneficial to students is to help them understand what the professor is asking for, as Denny et al. suggest. Viewing the writing center as a genre microcosm, it seems that professors tend to default to labeling their assignment as some form of “research paper” even in disciplines where the “academic situation calls for problem solving” in Carter’s system. Rather than ask tutors to engage in a practice of translation, saying, “the professor calls it ‘sibling analysis research paper,’ but what this assignment is asking for in terms of genre is not like ‘research from sources’ but more like a ‘case study,’” our writing center has allowed tutors in their reflective responses in the client report form to keep their genre labels close to the labels on the assignments. In the preceding example, the tutor might write “research – analysis” as the genre description. This may skew our results in the direction of labeling some papers as “research” papers when maybe they are some form of problem-solving paper, yet this potential distortion of disciplinary exigency does reflect what the professor is saying to students about the assignment through labeling the assignment a “research paper.” Students come in asking for help with their “research papers” because that is the vocabulary their professors are using to describe the assignment.

## CONCLUSION

To answer Gordon’s question, the genre students bring to our writing center most often is some form of research paper, and the disciplines in which this genre dominates most heavily are the sciences. As for what this suggests about the institutional dynamics of our university, particularly when it comes to writing across the disciplines, our research reveals that Carter’s genres of the university may not hold up in terms of what students are being assigned at our university. The view from our writing center suggests that “response to academic situation” is not the operative principle when professors assign writing. Rather, at least in the sciences, it appears that many professors use the label “research paper” when assigning writing. We suggest that the writing center should engage with the writing across the curriculum director (if there is one) to determine why this is the case. It may be that faculty have good reasons to assign research papers, as with the APA research paper that provides a way into understanding the values of the discipline found in the manual, or it might be for another reason. This research provides us with a starting point for that conversation. Furthermore, understanding what genres students bring to the writing center allows the center to train tutors to address what Gordon refers to as “the implications of a genre approach for students’ agency and inclusivity” (Gordon, “Genre Theory” 24). It has been our long-held belief that tutors who are trained to consistently start tutorials with an analysis of genre are able to begin each tutorial with an exploration of what students are looking for when they come to the writing center, which is to understand “what the professor wants.” We now know that in order to achieve this, we should spend more time working with professors in the sciences to understand what the genre “research paper” means to them.

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## Tutors' Column: "Harnessing the Power of GenAI"

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Haigazian University of Utah

In the spring semester of 2023, I had an eye-opening tutoring session while working with a writer struggling with writer's block. I recommended the writer, J, do five minutes of free writing to tap into their knowledge of the written piece, and this prompted a conversation that revealed J's vulnerability. J expressed their frustrations with trying to meet tight deadlines awhile questioning their potential to convey thoughts effectively as a writer. The way J could convey their paralyzing fear that had become writer's block made the human connection visible. In writing centers, we value human connections, but we also value technology and tools. In this consultation, I realized J might benefit from both human encouragement and technological aids. At the end of the session, I told J to prompt ChatGPT for more suggestions that could address writer's block, encouraging them to chat with the software and to explore new ideas that could guide their paper. J approved of the suggestion and showed eagerness to tap into the chatbot's extensive knowledge. J did not return for a follow-up but their tone suggested enough confidence to complete the task.

The session was eye-opening to me since it integrated human and digital elements in ways I hadn't really experienced before. I know many students, faculty, and staff—including those who work in writing centers—are worried about Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) technology. However, writing centers have long embraced innovative technologies as a way to enhance human relationships and increase accessibility in writing. For example, more than a decade ago, Tammy Conard-Salvo and John M. Spartz recognized the value of technologies such as text-to-speech software when used in writing centers. They claimed that writers benefit from sessions that include both "face-to-face interactions with qualified tutors" and "technology that enables [the writer] to examine and revise their documents in new ways" (53). These scholars found value in blending technological applications and human interactions. While their words predate technological advancements such as the GenAI tools available today, the value of this integration remains. The use of GenAI in writing centers can enhance tutoring sessions when there is intentional focus on combining digital tools with human connection.

There is the need for both digital and human connection in writing center spaces. The writing center, with its access to computers and the internet, provides a doorway to the digital world that should not be taken for granted. In her essay "Who is Allowed to Be Tutored?," Dilan Mahoney describes how writers made appointments in the writing center where she tutored to enhance their digital knowledge of "working in modern word processors, navigating online assignment submission requirements, and discovering sources through digital databases" (16). The need for digital connection in education has only grown with the onset of GenAI tools like Chat GPT, Gemini, and Quillbot, to name a few. These tools provide writing assistance for students, but scholars agree that there is an urgency for students to be trained on how to use these tools effectively (Tantivejakul et al. 532; Teng 1). Writing centers can meet these demands for digital

connection, but they can do so in a way that prioritizes humanistic inquiry and increased accessibility.

Writing center tutors offer an essential human element. In her *WLN Tutors' Column*, Abigail Patchen highlights the humanization of the writing process in the writing center, mentioning how “one of the most effective forms of support we can provide is a good conversation” (21). Patchen remains skeptical of GenAI, framing tutors as “competing with AI” in the writing center; however, I argue that GenAI and the humanistic qualities of the writing center are not mutually exclusive. In fact, integrating GenAI into writing center sessions may enhance conversation and lead to deeper human connections. Muhammad Shidiq, in their research on AI and creativity, makes a similar claim, arguing that “there is a role that cannot be replaced by the ChatGPT system, which involves communicative interactions between teachers and students” (356). This role can be seen even more clearly through tutor-tutee interactions in the writing center space, which tend to be more personal than teacher-student ones. However, our focus does not need to be on one or the other—human interaction or GenAI. Instead, it should be on blending both. Through integration, the needs for digital and human connection can be met through the writing center.

Tutors can also model how GenAI enhances, rather than detracts, from creativity in the writing process. In a study investigating Thai students' responses to the use of GenAI in academic and professional writing, students perceived GenAI to lack originality and creativity despite being a helpful tool (Tantivejakul et al. 532). However, the limitations in GenAI perceived by the students could be limitations in their knowledge and use of these tools. One student, Sahin, claims that a deficit of “how-to” knowledge discourages individuals from fully adopting an emerging technology (qtd. in Tantivejakul et al. 529). These students could have benefitted from demonstrations of creative use of GenAI to enhance their how-to knowledge of the AI tool.

Dani Lester provides an example of how she shared this kind of how-to knowledge in one of her writing center sessions, leading to more creative approaches to inquiry and discovery. She prompted ChatGPT to provide reasons for pursuing an English degree to help a writer overcome writers' block. None of the five responses yielded were satisfactory to the tutor, yet she used them as examples to discuss what she personally believed to be worthwhile motivations to pursue an English degree. Lester reflects on the effect of her approach: “The student seemed surprised at how I used ChatGPT. They used GenAI to get (seemingly) accurate answers, whereas I used it to generate a disagreeable answer that inspired me to respond” (22). Lester's approach helped the writer learn how to engage with the writing tool with more critical thinking and creativity, showing how writing centers are spaces where this creative modeling of GenAI could happen.

Using GenAI tools to facilitate brainstorming and enhance the writing process is another way to develop writers' critical thinking during consultations. Auto-Peer, a computational tool developed by Philip McCarthy, is an example of such a tool. This free, peer review software not only offers writers feedback but also states that it fosters their critical thinking with an aim “to improve writing excellence” (Auto-Peer). Once the tool identifies writing issues, it provides the writer with different options to respond to the feedback: “This issue doesn't need any changes because I think the identified issues are good as they are”; “This issue may need some changes, but I am unsure as to how to make those changes”; “My instructor confirms that this is not an issue that needs modifying”; “This issue is not relevant to my paper”; and “Other.” Tutors using this tool could spend less time identifying issues in a writer's paper and dedicate more time probing the writer's reasoning behind their writing process. In this way, tutors would mix digital and human inputs to achieve the goal of supporting a writer's long-term development as suggested by Patchen (21).

There is a lot of potential in GenAI that tutors can harness to enhance writing center sessions today. It is essential that educational administrators and center directors acknowledge this potential and invest in training tutors with this know-how. Workshops and training sessions realized by writing centers should focus on GenAI literacy. Tutors and writers of the future will look back at us and thank us for taking these steps.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **IWCA Outstanding Article Award Nominations due July 15, 2025**

The IWCA Outstanding Article Awards is given annually and recognizes significant work within the field of writing center studies. Members of the Writing Center community are invited to nominate articles or book chapters for the IWCA Outstanding Article Award.

The nominated article must have been published during the previous calendar year. Both single-authored and collaboratively-authored works, by scholars at any stage of their academic careers, published in print or in digital form, are eligible for the award. Self-nominations are not accepted, and each nominator can submit one nomination only; journals may select only one publication from their own journal for nomination per award cycle.

Nominations include a letter or statement of no more than 400 words outlining how the work being nominated meets the award criteria below and a digital copy of the article being nominated. All articles will be evaluated using the same criteria.

The article should:

- Make a significant contribution to the scholarship of and research on writing centers.
- Address one or more issues of long-term interest to writing center administrators, theorists, and practitioners.
- Discuss theories, practices, policies, or experiences that contribute to a richer understanding of writing center work.
- Show sensitivity toward the situated contexts in which writing centers exist and operate.
- Illustrate the qualities of compelling and meaningful writing.
- Serve as a strong representative of the scholarship of and research on writing centers.

We encourage writing center scholars and practitioners at all levels to nominate works that they have found impactful.

The deadline to submit Outstanding Article nominations is July 15, 2025. Nominations can be submitted through the [IWCA members website](#). Self-nominations are not accepted.

See the [IWCA website](#) for more information on Outstanding Book Award nominations (due date: July 15<sup>th</sup>) and the Future Leader Award application process (due date: August 15<sup>th</sup>).

# CONFERENCE CALENDAR

**October 9-12, 2025:** Middle East North Africa Writing Centers Association, in Abu Dhabi

**Contact:** [nyuad.menawca@nyu.edu](mailto:nyuad.menawca@nyu.edu)

**Website:** <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenByANRmdDeB10kyndd5kdyCsi9bMgEIfs-930Z7Bj6vSL7g/viewform>

**October 15-18, 2025:** IWCA/NCPTW Joint Conference

**Website:** <https://iwca.wildapricot.org/2025IWCANCPTW>

**Registration:** <https://iwcamembers.org>



## ***WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship***

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### **Archives, Resources, and Submissions:**

Visit [wac.colostate.edu/wln](http://wac.colostate.edu/wln) for archive access, Digital Edited Collections, resources, and manuscript submission guidelines.

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# WLN

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