

Consultants in Computer Classrooms: Integrating Writing Consultants Into First-Year Writing Courses

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the best methods for integrating writing consultants into the computer lab classes of first-year writing courses at Grand Valley State University. The essay examines the literature surrounding writing center pedagogy and the practice of embedding writing consultants into classrooms. Further research was then conducted through a series of interviews with writing faculty and consultants, as well as observations of the computer lab classes. This study was able to describe how the first-year writing faculty and consultants interact, and the ways in which writing consultants can most effectively be integrated in order to aid students.

Introduction

At Grand Valley State University (GVSU), as well as many other universities across the country, writing consultants have an additional role outside of their work in a writing center setting (Decker). They are integrated into classrooms where they are able to help the same group of students continuously throughout the semester. At GVSU, consultants are assigned to weekly computer labs where first-year writing courses meet. Every semester, GVSU's Writing Department offers approximately 62 sections of WRT 150, the university-required, four-credit first-year writing course. In this class, students learn how to write a variety of college-level essays, from narratives that allow students to develop voice and structure to research essays that teach students how to properly integrate outside sources into their writing. Each section meets twice a week, once in a traditional classroom and once in a computer lab. One writing consultant is assigned to each section during their computer lab day as a way to further help the students develop their writing skills. The consultant will spend either one or two hours in the same lab every week, depending on the professor's preference.

I began developing research questions about a consultant's place in the classroom during my two-year experience as a writing consultant at GVSU. I recall being intimidated by the prospect of going into a WRT 150 computer lab when I was a first-year consultant. I felt underprepared and uncertain about my role. Although I eventually became comfortable with that aspect of the consulting job, I am aware that there are times when consultants are still apprehensive about the computer lab and unsuccessful in their attempts to help students. There are also times when consultants do feel successful and believe they are able to connect with the students and help them develop as writers. These inconsistencies in how the consultants feel about the experience of being integrated into a computer classroom each semester led to my primary research question: What are the most effective ways of integrating a writing consultant in computer lab class sections of WRT 150 at GVSU? Several secondary questions stemmed from the primary question: To what extent do professors communicate their methods of integration with each other? Do consultants' preferences differ from the professors' preferences? In what ways do professors believe writing consultants are most effective in the WRT 150 lab? In what ways do writing consultants believe they are most effective in the WRT 150 lab? And to what extent do consultants' preferences differ from the professors' expectations?

Review of Literature

Many researchers of writing center theory have written about the function of a writing center and its consultants. A writing center can act autonomously from other departments at a university and will usually have its own space separate from any classroom. In fact, according to Teagan Decker, it is a “fundamental belief [of writing centers] that students can become better writers and learn from writing better if they have a place...that is separate from a writing classroom” (17). A writing center is meant to offer a space for students to share their writing without judgment and, ideally, in a setting that is less intimidating than a classroom full of peers and an instructor. While this independence is important to a writing center, the physical separation alone can create “a climate of poor communication between [the] center and instructors” (Decker 18). Instructors rarely, if ever, visit the writing center and may not know what takes place in the center or may misunderstand its purpose. According to Decker, when communication does not occur between the center and instructors, students are the ones who suffer most. When instructors don’t understand what takes place in the writing center and don’t have any control over it, they are less likely to recommend it to students, who then lose the chance to improve their assignments and overall writing abilities (21). A way to bridge this communication gap and help students is to send writing consultants into classrooms for a full semester.

One of the many services that consultants are able to offer in a classroom is to act as peer group leaders, which Casey You claims is especially helpful to students who are writing at a college level for the first time (72). Peer writing groups allow students to help each other. When each student reads their written piece aloud, others in the group can offer feedback and help develop the ideas of the piece. However, beginning writers may not know what kind of feedback is helpful or may be hesitant to offer advice at all. In such cases, having a writing consultant in the group can be useful (You 72). While students in the peer group may not initially give the most helpful feedback, the writing consultant is able to demonstrate the types of comments that are valuable to the writer. In this way, students are able to learn what to look for in a paper and how to give feedback by modeling their responses after the consultant’s. Having the consultant as a facilitator of the peer group is a way to teach students how to act as consultants for each other.

Besides acting as peer group leaders, consultants in a classroom might also conduct one-on-one conferences with students, provide information about the writing center, and generally help the instructor (Spigelman and Grobman 1). Essentially though, a consultant does many of the same things that they would do at the writing center. A consultant helps students develop the language, content, and form of their written works. They are also able to offer insights on brainstorming and how to find research. However, in the classroom, these activities can occur directly at the point of need. Being able to immediately receive assistance from a consultant allows a student to continue to work productively rather than ruminate on their problem, become stuck, and waste valuable class time.

Instructors and the writing center will also find it mutually beneficial to integrate consultants into the classroom. Since the presence of a consultant can “promote writing center services,” students who have experienced the help that a consultant provides in the class may make visits to the center in the future (Ryan and Kane 145). Without having gained that experience, the students may never have visited the center otherwise. In addition, instructors benefit from having “assistants who reduce the teacher-to-student ratio when guidance and feedback are needed” on their writing assignments (Spigelman and Grobman 9). Instructors are able to take their time assisting students with less worry that they might not be able to get to everyone who needs guidance.

While this arrangement can be beneficial for all, it is also possible for writing center pedagogy to “conflict with classroom-based writing tutoring efforts, producing confusion, ambiguity, and less effective instruction” (Spigelman and Grobman 10). Writing center pedagogy, according to *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, uses a non-directive approach to tutoring. Writing consultants are supposed to avoid giving

any direct instructions that could be mistaken as a “sure-fire solution” (Gillespie and Lerner 20). Rather, the role of the consultant is to help the writer work through their own ideas and writing strategies by asking questions and offering suggestions that could help refine the student’s ideas and lead the student to think about the rhetorical context of an assignment. Despite being able to offer suggestions, the consultant should not be “imposing their own ideas on a student’s text, talking too much, making changes to the student’s language, [or] generally having too much influence on the [text]” (Clark 33). This non-directive approach ensures that writers are the sole owner of their text; writers have complete control over what and how they write. While this is the best approach for one-on-one consultations that take place in the writing center, it might not work as well in the classroom, “where students and instructors expect immediate answers to particular questions on specific writing assignments” (Spigelman and Grobman 12). The consultant may have difficulty balancing writing center theory and the realities of the classroom.

If the consultant abandons the non-directive approach, they risk assuming a position of authority, a position that can be mistaken for that of a Teaching Assistant (TA). Once this occurs, the consultant can no longer be seen as a “facilitator of student self-discovery rather than [an] embodiment of fixed knowledge” (Clark 33). It is important that a consultant does not fall into the role of a TA; one of the big strengths of consultants is that they are also peers of the students. TAs are not truly peers; as Harvey Kail and John Trimbur describe it, they are “a power station or two above...a step away from student culture, a step closer to the faculty” (8). The consultant’s actions in the classroom and the use of a directive approach to tutoring can cause the consultant to act more as a TA, which would, in theory, be less helpful to the students and their writing.

In addition to problems that might occur with a consultant, complications can also arise between the instructor and the consultant that would result in a consultant’s presence in the classroom being less beneficial. Emily Hall and Bradley Hughes discuss some of the problems that can occur. If an instructor is not aware of writing center pedagogy, they may assume that the consultant should act as an editor rather than a tutor. They may assume the consultant is only there to fix errors in grammar, citations, or other surface level issues (22). There are also instructors who might struggle with sharing authority with the writing consultants, not trusting them to help the students shape their writing (27). This concern might lead a faculty member to hover over a consultant or simply not allow them to help much in the classroom. If the presence of the consultant is departmentally required, the instructor might even “resent (and resist) sharing their classroom space,” especially if the consultant’s presence is not clearly having a positive impact on the student’s writing (Spigelman and Grobman 12).

Many of these problems can be avoided or alleviated through communication between the consultant and professor as well as between professors. The consultant and professor should share their worries and expectations for the class and how the writing consultant could best be integrated. In addition, having informal faculty meetings allows professors to discuss with each other what the benefits of having a consultant integrated into a classroom are, as well as the challenges that come with it (Hall and Hughes 25). They can also share and recommend best practices for integrating writing consultants. For the consultant’s part, Hall and Hughes argue, in order to work with all types of professors and students, consultants “need to be equipped with some breadth of theoretical knowledge, intellectual flexibility, confidence, resourcefulness, and awareness of how writing abilities develop” (27). Ultimately, the research seems to suggest that, while classroom-based writing tutoring has proven to be generally beneficial, it does come with some challenges. However, scholarship on the topic does not appear to address the added challenges that might come with integrating a writing consultant into a computer lab setting, which is what occurs at GVSU every week of each semester.

Since there is no specific method used for assessing a writing consultant's effectiveness in a classroom, I designed a micro-ethnography to obtain information about the best practices for integrating the consultants in WRT 150 computer lab classrooms. Ethnography relies heavily on observations, has a "strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena," investigates "a small number of cases," and analyzes "data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions" (Atkinson and Hammersley 248). My micro-ethnographic study relied on my observations of six WRT 150 computer classes with varying professors and locations. Each class was observed once for a period of 30 to 45 minutes. I attempted to limit my interactions with the professors and consultants over the course of the observations, in the hopes of understanding how they interact with each other and the students during a WRT 150 computer lab day.

In addition, I used the ethnographic method of structured interviews, which allowed me to collect the most important bits of information in the least amount of time (Bishop 99). Prior to conducting the observations, I individually interviewed the five WRT 150 professors whose labs I had observed, as well as the Director of First-Year Writing. All of the professors have upwards of eight years' experience teaching first-year writing. I also conducted one-on-one interviews with six writing consultants, four of whom had four semesters of consulting experience and two of whom had two semesters. I interviewed the professors and writing consultants to determine the various methods of integrating consultants that were preferred by the two parties, as well as what methods they believed did not work well in the computer labs. Prior to classroom observations, the interviews were transcribed, and common themes were identified and highlighted in the consultants' and professors' responses. Coding the data for key themes served as a heuristic for what I focused on during observations. Once the research was finished, interviewees were given a chance to conduct a member check. I then revised my findings based on their feedback. My study received exempt approval from GVSU's Institutional Review Board.

Interview Findings

Consultant Interviews

The first set of interviews were completed with the six writing consultants who had at least one semester of experience as a WRT 150 consultant. When asked to describe the role of a writing consultant in a WRT 150 computer lab, half of them used words such as providing "peer assistance" or acting as the "peer-to-peer component"; however, five of the six consultants still stressed the importance of being seen as having less authority than the professor and being more approachable. Although the consultants were quick to discuss the writing consultant's purpose in the lab, they all claimed that the effectiveness of having the consultant integrated into the classroom for the entire semester depended on a variety of factors including the professor's writing pedagogy ideology, the consultant's belief in how they should be incorporated into the classroom based on past experiences, and the student's willingness to ask for help.

The consultants were also asked about what methods of consultant integration they most and least preferred. The preferred ways were to allow the consultant to have at least one hour of the class period to do what they believed would make the students comfortable and willing to talk about their writing. Some interviewees believed that allowing a consultant to do one-on-one consultation in a hallway outside the classroom or at least away from the other students would ensure that a student was not distracted or uncomfortable talking about an assignment in the presence of other students. Others found that acting as leaders of peer workshop groups allowed the students to learn to rely on each other as well as the consultant. In addition to what the consultant does, the interviews highlighted the belief that the professor's actions and attitude towards consultant made a difference in how effectively a consultant could be integrated into the lab setting. For example, some responses mentioned how helpful it was when a professor prefaced a new class with what a writing consultant is capable of doing as well as why students should use a consultant's services,

since students look to the professor as an authority. Certain professors go so far as to require the students to always have a question and a segment of writing for a consultant to read when the consultant comes to check on the student. Consultants greatly appreciated that policy, which allowed the consultant to open dialogue with the student more easily.

The least preferred methods of integration were those in which the consultants believed they were being underused. There were a variety of reasons that this occurred. Sometimes, particularly with new professors who had a year or less of experience in first-year writing classrooms, the majority of a lab period would be used for lecturing, with the consultant sitting idle. Two consultants mentioned feeling as though the professor did not “view the consultant as a resource that can be used” and felt that their ability to give assistance was limited to one service, such as editing. In general, consultants also believe that they failed to be integrated effectively into a classroom if students refused to talk or receive help on their assignments.

Faculty Interviews

The second set of interviews were conducted with professors of WRT 150 classes who were asked similar questions. They were first asked to describe what they believed was the purpose of a consultant in a WRT 150 computer lab. The varying responses included that a consultant served as a “second pair of skilled, trained eyes to help students,” a way to demonstrate the collaboration that takes place in writing, an extension of the professor, and a “qualified critical reader” who can be a safe place for students to receive feedback. The Director of First-Year Writing responded with similar language used by the consultants, referring to the value of the consultant being a “peer.”

The professors also shared some of the ways they prefer to integrate a consultant into the classroom. Most have the consultant go around to the students who have questions or request help for one-on-one conversations. Some professors will implement a sign up system for students who would like to work with the consultant. This system ensures that people who want help will receive it and that the consultant can manage their time with each person. Later in the semester, professors might also create workshop groups with the consultant as the group leader.

When asked whether they developed their method of integrating the consultant by themselves or with the help of other faculty, most of the professors admitted to developing their method over time on their own or through communicating with consultants rather than through other faculty members. Very few mentioned having even received suggestions from other professors. However, the Director of First-Year Writing mentioned that when the writing faculty meet as a group throughout the semester, they do discuss what works well when using a consultant’s services in the classroom and some of the issues that can occur. Still, as a whole, the professors agreed that a consultant’s presence in the lab is usually helpful. There are occasions where it doesn’t work out every time; however, even just having the consultant act as an extra person with a fresh perspective on a student’s assignment can be beneficial.

When asked what suggestions they had for consultants, four of the professors mentioned the desire for consultants to be more proactive. Instead of just walking around the room and waiting for a student’s hand to raise, the professors would prefer that the consultants take initiative and make the first move to find a way to assist students who may not even know that they need help. Another suggestion was for writing consultants to learn student names, to make students feel comfortable sharing their writing and thoughts. Professors also expressed the desire for consultants to communicate with the professors whenever they have questions or are unsure about anything.

Observations

In three of the WRT 150 classes I observed, the writing consultants came into the computer lab for the second hour of the class, the first hour having been used for lecturing. In the other three lab classes, the consultants

were present for the full two hours. Additionally, three of the labs were in larger rooms with more than enough seats for all of the students. The other three labs were in more cramped locations, with fewer or no open spaces. However, the computer classrooms all shared one thing in common—they were consistently quiet with few students talking or interacting. A few students also had earbuds in during the work period.

In two of the labs, both with the same professor, in which the consultant was present for one hour, Professor A had written a sign-up list on the white board for students who wished to get help from the consultant. Only a few students had put their names on the board for each class. Consultants went to the students in the order they had signed up on the whiteboard, pulling a chair next to the student or crouching next to them when there was room or hovering over them when there was not. Consultants attempted to use a non-directive approach when they could; however, students had fairly straightforward questions for the most part. Some of students' questions involved citation and how to properly incorporate quoted research. These tended to take only a few minutes. For the few students who asked a consultant to read over some portion of their work, the consultation lasted roughly ten minutes. In both lab classes, consultants finished working through the list of signed-up students with plenty of time to spare. They used the remainder of the time to walk around and ask students if they needed help with anything. In the computer classroom that was smaller and more cramped, from my seat I was able to see five students either on their phones or using their computers to check social media sites. This was particularly true for the students sitting in the back row of computers where the space was too tight for the professor or consultant to access without some struggle. This space issue had been identified by the professor prior to my observation.

In the lab with Professor B, the consultant was present for the full two hours. The professor gave general announcements at the beginning of the class before telling the students to work on revising their essays, at which point the consultant began to systematically move from student to student to check on their progress. The consultant made an effort to be on the same level as students, bringing a chair with her as she went down the rows. The consultant approached each student by asking how they were doing or where they were in the writing process. After this, the consultant asked if the student had any questions or concerns. The majority of students said no, and the consultant moved on to the next student. Occasionally, a student asked for help with citations, grammar, or interpreting professor feedback. During the thirty minutes that I observed, the consultant was able to assist half of the class, each student taking only a few minutes of the consultant's time. When later asked what she does with the rest of the class period, the consultant answered that she will use the rest of the time to walk up and down the rows of computers and wait for students to ask for help. She would also spend time talking to the professor when there were stretches of time where no one asked for assistance.

In Professor C's class, the consultant was present for only the second hour of the class. The professor listed two groups of four students on the board. The students not on the board were part of groups that were on the board the previous week. Once the consultant came in, she took the first group of students to the back of the room where a circle of chairs was set up. The consultant acted as a peer workshop leader as they all discussed their papers. The consultant was able to use non-directive techniques and addressed most of the questions about a paper to the other students, who then provided feedback. She spent about twenty minutes with each group and then used the rest of the class period to join the professor in walking around and answering questions.

In a lab with Professor D, where the consultant was present for the whole two hours, Professor D started a sign up during the class for people who specifically wanted to work with the consultant. With low interest, the professor continued to solicit students to sign up for help throughout the class period, occasionally getting someone to add their name. The consultant's method was to take the paper a student requested help with back to her seat, where there was open space. She read through it and made notes in the margins. Once she was finished, the consultant would take the paper and the student into the hall and conduct a mini-consultation, spending about ten to fifteen minutes discussing what was working well in the paper and what might need some revisions. This consultant also mentioned that she will talk with the

professor or walk around if none of the students ask for assistance, something that is less common as assignment due dates approach.

The lab with Professor E worked similarly. Students approached the consultant, who was sitting in the back of the class. They dropped off their papers, asking for help with grammar, citations, or finding areas to expand. Then the student returned to a computer to work. The consultant then read the paper, making notes and corrections in the margins. She would then return the paper to the student, talk to them briefly (for a few minutes) before returning to her seat to begin reading the next paper.

Discussion

Faculty Integration of Consultants

In interviews, consultants indicated they were not integrated effectively when the students did not ask for or want any help or when the professor seemed not to give the consultants the time or ability to attempt to aid the students. In my observations, the problem of not being given time to talk with students did not seem to occur with experienced professors. Since I was unable to observe any classrooms with less experienced faculty due to time constraints, I would guess that the consultants' concerns likely resulted from working with professors who had not used consultants in the classroom before or were still attempting to figure out how to effectively integrate them. Most professors in interviews said they learned their methods for integrating writing consultants more through trial and error and less through communicating with other writing faculty or the writing center and its consultants. Increasing communication about the successful uses of consultants might reduce the amount of trial and error that less experienced professors use when learning how to incorporate a consultant into a lab. It could also show faculty the value of the consultant as a peer tutor, a possible solution that was already identified by Hall and Hughes. Increased communication among writing faculty and between consultants and faculty throughout the semester might reduce instances where consultants believe they are under- or misused in the lab classroom. Communication could also occur before the beginning of a new academic year. Newly hired writing consultants receive a weekend of training immediately preceding the start of fall classes. This could be the perfect time for WRT 150 professors to discuss successful methods of integrating a consultant into the computer classroom. Doing so would give the professors a chance to offer advice to each other and to new consultants who may still be unclear of what is expected of them.

Students Not Using Consultants

As for students who don't request help, my faculty interviews emphasized that most students do not even know that they require help or how beneficial it can be to work with a consultant. This idea was echoed in my lab observations. When students did have questions, they were mostly about small things such as citations or how to format their paper. These easy-fix types of questions lend credibility to the idea that the students might not even recognize that they could benefit from having the consultant read their actual writing, regardless of where they are in the writing process. Additionally, students might talk less with consultants during the lab because many students use ear buds to listen to music while they work. Ear buds can act as a barrier for communication between the consultants and the students. Some consultants have confessed to feeling as though their presence would be an unwanted interruption if they attempted to talk to a student who was listening to music. This feeling especially occurs in the rare occasions when a student refuses to take their ear buds out when a consultant is trying to talk with them.

Another reason that students may not seek the consultant's assistance in their lab is if they do not have any work done. Some students will use the time allotted for writing and revising to instead browse social media or work on assignments for other classes. My observations suggested that this was especially true for

small classrooms where the computer screens were not easily visible to the professor. The consultant cannot offer assistance for nonexistent writing.

Instead of allowing the students to be silent or simply waiting for students to eventually raise their hands, consultants should be outgoing and circulate from student to student, like the consultant in Professor B's class. Even though it can be intimidating, this method ensures that the students all get to interact with consultants and become more comfortable talking to them. Since students might not realize that their writing has room to improve, it may be best for consultants to avoid only asking if the student has any questions or concerns. Instead, consultants should assume that the student needs help. They could ask to read a portion, if not all, of what the student has written for their assignment. This way the student will receive helpful feedback on what is working well and what needs more attention without having to ask for it. Taking this approach would also mean that the consultant would eventually reach any students who might not be using the lab time productively. The presence of the consultant nearby might hold those students more accountable and encourage them to focus on their writing. Another benefit to reaching out to the students is that the consultant would not spend so much time simply wandering around or talking to the professor.

A slightly different approach would be for professors not to allow students to claim that they don't need help, as was mentioned earlier, or for professors to offer incentives in the form of extra credit (as one professor does) for students to sign up for a writing consultation. While some professors may not wish to offer extra credit, creating a policy of communication between student and consultant is as easy as telling students that they are expected to share their writing with a consultant at least once per class. Consultants seemed to appreciate this approach; they believed it took pressure off of them, made the class more productive, and made the students more open to receiving help, which in turn created better essays over time.

Weaker Methods of Integration

The observations also revealed methods of integration that did not work well. For example, there can be issues with the professor and consultant relying solely on students to sign up for one-on-one consultations. Although I was unable to see this in my one-time observations, the consultants mentioned that usually only a handful of students routinely use the sign-up method, meaning that most never interact with a consultant. I had come across this problem myself multiple times during my two years of consultant work. While the sign-up method ensures that questions from students who recognize their need for assistance get answered, it does not help students who lack awareness that they could benefit from talking to a consultant. Many first-year students who are just learning how to write academically do lack this awareness. Even though the sign-up method is not a perfect way to integrate a consultant, it can be an effective approach as long as it does not take up an entire class period. If it is only used for part of the class, the consultant will still have time to reach out to students who do not normally add their name to the list, ensuring that every student can receive help. Another non-ideal approach for consultants is the "drop-off method," where the student hands the consultant their paper, the consultant edits or makes notes on it, and then the consultant returns the paper. This approach goes directly against the non-directive tutoring methods repeatedly promoted in writing center scholarship (Clark 33). The consultant becomes more like an editing service, which eliminates the collaborative aspect that professors value in having the consultant integrated into the class, and also increases the risk of the consultant appropriating the text. However, as with the method of sign-ups, this approach can be modified to become an effective method like the consultant in Professor D's class used.

As Spigelman and Grobman mention, what works in a writing center context does not always work in the classroom context (12). Therefore, while the writing center would discourage students giving a paper to the consultant and walking away, it is sometimes the best option in a class where space is primarily taken up by computers and when going into the hallways for extended periods of time is not possible. The consultant is able to take the paper somewhere it is easier to read and the student can continue working at their computer rather than just waiting for the consultant to finish. Even so, it would be advisable for the consultant to avoid making changes, such as fixing grammar errors, to the text as much as possible. Making direct changes to the

student's writing takes away some of the student's ownership of the text. It also puts consultants more in a position of authority and gives them more influence over the text than is ideal (Clark 33). Instead, a consultant should note common grammar mistakes a student makes and talk to them afterward to ensure that they understand how to make the corrections. Additionally, to make this method most effective and least like a simple editing service, consultants should spend some time, more than a few minutes, with a student after returning their paper, like the consultant in Professor D's class, using a non-directive method to discuss the writing.

Conclusion

This study focused on the most effective ways of integrating a writing consultant into a two-hour computer lab section of WRT 150 at Grand Valley State University. It asked the extent to which professors communicate their integration methods with each other, how consultants' preferences might differ from the professors' preferences, what ways professors believe writing consultants are most effective in the WRT 150 computer classroom, what ways writing consultants believe they are most effective, and to what extent the consultants' preferences differ from the professors' expectations.

Findings suggest that preferred methods of integration vary slightly for each professor and consultant; however, the most effective methods include

- Encouraging communication between WRT 150 professors and writing consultants, perhaps during the training session for newly hired consultants.
- Encouraging consultants to take initiative to approach students, even when students do not believe they require assistance, instead of waiting for students to ask for help.
- Ensuring that instructors do not use

a voluntary sign-up method as the primary means for consultant integration, especially if it is only repeatedly used by the same students in a given class.

- Avoiding the drop-off method, which could result in appropriation of the student's text.

Although extensive research was done for this study, there is always the opportunity for more. Due to time constraints, only six of more than sixty sections of WRT 150 were observed. Observing more sections multiple times would have allowed more data to be gathered about the most common consultant integration practices across all sections of first-year writing. Another way to gain more data would be to interview all of the writing consultants and WRT 150 professors. A future study might also survey first-year students at the end of the semester to discover their perceptions about writing consultants in the computer classroom.

Overall, this research touches on some of the issues that occur in the computer classrooms and suggests some of the best methods for enacting effective integration of writing consultants, which will likely benefit first-year students and their writing skills.

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