

ONE-THIRD OF COLLEGE WRITING COURSE INSTRUCTORS DO NOT MENTION THE WRITING CENTER TO STUDENTS: AN AUDIT OF SYLLABI

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Many students who visit a college Writing Center (WC) do so on recommendation from a course instructor, so the way that instructors introduce the WC to students is crucial to getting them “in the door” to help them improve their writing. The first point of contact that students have with their instructors and course materials is in the syllabus. Drawing inspiration from audit methodology used in social science research, I collected a representative sample of 40 course syllabi for general education writing-intensive courses with the goal of evaluating how professors describe the WC to their students. This is the first study that analyzes a representative sample of college course syllabi to investigate how professors describe the Writing Center to students, a factor crucial in directing students to the WC. I found that over a third of course instructors never mention the WC to students in their syllabus. About half of those who do mention the WC either describe it in vague, general terms or for assisting with proofreading. The findings from this study suggest that WC administrators ought to find multiple ways to communicate with course instructors in order to more clearly convey the WC’s purpose and benefits to their students, especially in general education courses taken by underclassmen unfamiliar with institutional resources.

INTRODUCTION

My idea of the Writing Center (WC) was first influenced by my high school experience. I attended a diverse high school, with a significant population of students who spoke English as a second language. Because these students required additional support to complete writing assignments, English tutoring largely catered to those who needed to “catch up.” Students with proficient language skills had no reason to avail themselves of this supplemental resource.

This mindset stuck around until college; I felt that I did not “need” to visit the WC. It did not help that I entered higher education in 2020 at a small school that provided minimal support to students, especially during the pandemic’s virtual learning. I dropped out of school in 2022 due to deteriorating psychiatric health which would culminate in a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder, but that was not the end of college for me. I decided that when I returned to school, I would make use of any and all resources I needed to succeed.

When I resumed my studies at the University of Wisconsin, I visited professors' office hours often, attended subject tutoring, collaborated with graduate research mentors, and frequently met with advisors. Yet, I still never went to the WC; most of my classmates did not either. There was a prevailing belief among students that the WC was meant for remedial tutoring, and that they would be able to proofread but not much more. My course instructors rarely discussed the WC, and if it was included in the syllabus, it was usually no more than a brief statement. When I became a writing tutor myself and learned about the techniques we could use to assist students, I began to speculate as to why I had this (mis)perception of the WC.

I initially wrote this paper as part of the class that trained me to be a writing tutor. Specifically, I was part of a program that offered course-integrated tutors known as the Writing Fellows. Writing Fellows are assigned to a specific class, receive writing targets from the instructor, and meet with students individually throughout the semester to give feedback on a major writing assignment, usually the final term paper. For the Writing Fellows training class, our final project was to conduct primary research on a topic related to writing or tutoring. In reading studies on writing and tutoring, I noticed that much of the research relied on data taken from surveys or interviews. Most of my classmates elected to use those methods as well. Drawing on my experience in social science research, I recognized that these methods sampled a population that was already engaged with tutoring services and thus provided a limited view of what a "typical" student

or instructor thought. I wanted to conduct research that could be generalized to a wider population and explore how a typical instructor might perceive my school's writing tutoring resources. For this paper, I will focus on the WC rather than the Writing Fellows because it is more widely accessible to all students, rather than being limited to courses where the instructor opts into the program. To investigate how instructors perceive the WC and how they communicate about it to students, I investigated the descriptions of the WC in syllabi, with a focus on general education writing courses.

BACKGROUND

The college Writing Center does not exist in a vacuum. Course instructors are the first point of contact for students who need help with their classwork. Instructors must decide whether to help a student themselves or direct them to other outside resources. The main way that instructors communicate course expectations and resources to students is through the syllabus. While the main content of syllabi typically covers assignments and the course schedule, most syllabi also communicate outside academic resources. Which tutors or guides are highlighted is subject to the instructor's discretion – what they believe will be the most valuable for their students. Throughout the semester, students who need extra help in class will likely refer back to the syllabus to see what services the instructor deems most beneficial.

A student's decision to seek extra help at the WC can be thought of in economic terms, with the goal of getting a good grade on an

assignment. Even though every available academic resource shares a common goal of uplifting students' academic development, they are still in "competition" with each other for a student's time. Two of the fundamental principles that govern economic theory are *opportunity cost* and *diminishing returns* (Mankiw). Opportunity cost is the idea that everything costs something, even if not measured in dollars and cents. Students' time is limited; they only have a certain number of hours in the day for class, studying, working, and leisure, among other activities. For example, the opportunity cost of meeting with a WC tutor could be time spent at the TA's office hours. If a student prioritizes seeking help on a writing assignment elsewhere, they are also less inclined to visit the WC due to diminishing returns on academic help. After receiving writing guidance from a TA, a student may have most of their ideas set and organizational issues resolved, bringing a submission that would have received a D grade up to a B. A subsequent visit to the WC may only improve their B paper to a B+, an investment of limited hours that a student may not deem worth their time. Therefore, students must choose to spend their limited time on an assignment at the WC as opposed to elsewhere, even if the WC's services are nominally free.

Besides the WC, universities usually provide other services outside of class to meet a variety of students' academic needs, which may compete with the WC for a student's time. For example, at my university, large introductory-level courses often have dedicated tutoring for those classes. Introductory Biology, Chemistry, Language, Psychology, Mathematics and

Economics, which satisfy general education requirements, are taken by students with varying familiarity with those topics. Because of this, students can avail themselves of dedicated tutoring for these courses. These course-specific tutoring resources help to lower the barrier to entry to these classes for students studying outside of those disciplines. Students of all disciplines must complete a sequence of writing-intensive courses, which underscores the importance of accessible writing tutoring. College instructors, at least those who care about their teaching responsibilities, must provide students with accurate information regarding these services, knowing which ones will best serve them.

Instructors are important in influencing their students' decision to visit the WC. In a survey conducted by Cristina Savarese at a community college, among students who visited the WC, the majority (54.8%) heard about the WC from their professor (Savarese 37). Only a small minority heard about it through campus advertising or word of mouth (6.7%), showing that instructors are indeed the liaison between students and the WC. The other major way students were introduced to the WC was on a campus tour (33.0%). The same survey found that students with lower English grades and those in remedial courses used the WC more frequently, providing evidence for the WC being presented to and perceived by students as a remedial tutoring service (Savarese 39). Beyond tutoring writing, past research has investigated the role of faculty in directing students to relevant academic resources in other domains. A study by Kimberly Byrd

and colleagues in 2012 investigated the effect of faculty outreach on student success in an introductory accounting course. Byrd compared sections of the course where faculty either did or did not reach out to students via email about supplementary academic resources several times throughout the semester. When faculty consistently communicated resources to their students, fewer failed the course (Byrd et al. 93). However, this outreach, which promoted individual tutoring and digital study material, targeted “at-risk” students who had below a 70% grade in the class. This demonstrates how faculty perceive supplementary academic resources as primarily remedial, not just the WC.

The prevailing notion that the WC is meant for remedial tutoring is reflected in significant divergence in the perceptions of the WC between students, course instructors, and tutors (Missakian et al. 61). A study by Ilona Missakian and colleagues at one community college found that tutors place much more focus on the writing process itself, while students are most concerned with the “correctness” of the content of their writing. While instructors believed that 67% of WC visits were for feedback on completed drafts, only 36% of WC visits were actually for this reason (Missakian et al. 67). Students reported often visiting the WC for help interpreting an assignment prompt before even beginning to write or for receiving feedback on a paper that was already graded. Tutors also place much more focus on the writing process, with 88% identifying it as the primary purpose of the WC itself, while only 28% of students shared this sentiment (Missakian et al. 67). The tasks of tutors extend

far beyond simply checking over a completed draft. In the *Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors*, Ianetta and Fitzgerald highlight a common theme in tutoring philosophy: tutors engage in “conversation” with their students’ writing, guiding them through the writing process (65). The discrepancies in perception of the WC between instructors, students, and tutors show that instructors may not be accurately communicating the purposes of the WC, which may be reflected in the syllabus.

One crucial area that course instructors may not understand is the training given to writing tutors. A tutor is meant to “respond” to a paper rather than “correct it” (Bean and Melzer 302). If a student’s only reference for the WC is a professor recommending it for correcting grammar and spelling issues on a completed draft, the student may feel confused or attacked when a tutor starts to discuss the writing process and challenge aspects of their argument. This may be made worse when a student expects remedial help with sentence-level mechanics. Bean and Melzer describe a “commenting hierarchy” which reflects a trend across tutoring pedagogy to prefer higher-order writing concerns over local-level sentences or grammar. Bean and Melzer place “careful editing” near the bottom of their hierarchy, preferring that tutors focus on managing information, writing a high-quality argument, and having a strong thesis statement (310). If a professor refers a student to the WC for grammar and spelling, but the tutor pays minimal attention to the mechanics of the student’s paper in favor of exploring their argument or organization, the professor may see the WC as

“failing” to provide adequate help. Given that students, professors, and WC tutors diverge in their perspectives on what the WC provides to students, this issue may be widespread.

The present study investigates how instructors in general education writing-focused classes at a US state flagship university present the WC to their students within syllabi.

Additionally, I will review the syllabi for other non-WC resources recommended by instructors. Based on my own experience as a student and past literature demonstrating faculty’s misperceptions of the WC, I expected that many syllabi would have minimal descriptions of the WC, and that few syllabi list services outside of proofreading, which WC tutors are actively discouraged from focusing on during conferences (Bean & Melzer 310).

METHODS

The present study is based on “audit” methodology used in the social sciences to investigate real-world behavior. Audit studies involve sending a large number of contacts, such as by mail, email, or phone, and both qualitatively and quantitatively coding responses (Gaddis 3). The greatest benefit of audit studies is that a large number of responses can be obtained, and the responses reflect the real-life behaviors of the sample of interest. One limitation of past research about the Writing Center is that it largely relies on surveys administered by the WC itself or qualitative interviews, both of which bias the sample towards participants who are already engaged with the WC. Interviews in particular provide a very limit-

ed view of how a “typical” course instructor views the WC, which the present study seeks to address.

Course instructors were contacted via email using the information listed on the publicly available online course list of my school, the University of Wisconsin (Course Search & Enroll). The target for the present research was “Communication B” general education courses, which teach oral and written communication, with an emphasis on research and information literacy. Students in these courses have major writing assignments that require synthesizing many sources to construct an argument or narrative. Communication B is often a prerequisite for advanced writing courses. Instructors were fully informed of the purpose of the study, so no deception was used. No other information besides a copy of the course syllabus was requested, but it was recorded if an instructor volunteered additional context. Because the only information requested pertained to course materials and no personal information was collected, human subject research approval was not required as per institutional policy. All 101 instructors who taught Communication B courses in the Fall 2024 semester were contacted, and 40 responded. Even though 40% is lower than traditional benchmarks, Holtom et al. outlines a validity-based framework of functional response rates (1576). Because the present study’s inquiry sampled instructors from a carefully selected population and responses included syllabi from a variety of academic disciplines with no external incentives or coercion, the response rate is considered “functional” according to this validity-based framework.

Key information related to the WC and other writing resources was recorded. Additionally, I recorded information about class or department-specific academic resources, if they were mentioned. The information was anonymized.

Table 1. Information Collected from Syllabi

The location of the WC mention was coded as “Early” if it was near the descriptions of the major assignments or course goals. The location was coded as “late” if it was after the general course overview, or just before the course schedule which was located at the end of the syllabus. If the instructor noted that they discussed the WC online or in lectures, this was noted as well.

If the WC was only noted to exist as a resource or only the link was provided, it was coded as “general.” If one or more WC services, such as writing guides or individual conferences were highlighted, it was coded as “specific services mentioned.” If an instructor noted proofreading or writing mechanics as the purpose of the WC, it was coded as “grammar.” Several instructors noted that they did not include information on the WC in their syllabus but did so in an online learning management software service, Canvas, which courses

are administered through. I did not directly request this information, but it was recorded when offered by the instructor and coded as if it was in the syllabus.

RESULTS

Just over half of the instructors (57.5%) provided information on the Writing Center either in the syllabus with a link or mentioned that they did so in other course materials. There did not appear to be a standard “copy-pasted” script that multiple instructors used to present the WC. None of the courses sampled opted into the Writing Fellows integrated writing tutor program. Five instructors noted that the WC was on the online class webpage, Canvas (see Fig. 1).

Was the WC mentioned at all?

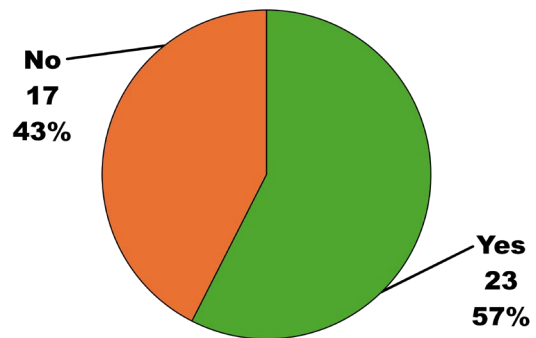


Fig. 1. Number and proportion of course syllabi with any mention of the WC. “Yes” includes instructors who specifically noted that they talked about the WC in lectures or in course materials outside of the syllabus.

Communication B courses include a variety of subjects across the sciences, humanities, business, and education. Most are lower 200-level introductory and 300-level intermediate courses; this is because many upper-level writing-intensive courses have Communication B as a prerequisite. The sample size was too small to perform meaningful statistical analyses based on subject or course level (see Appendix A for a full list of course subjects and course levels).

The specific location of the WC mentions generally fell into two categories, with the “Early” and “Late” categorizations. The WC mentions either were included along with the discussion of a major writing assignment early in the syllabus or were listed with other academic or non-academic resources much later. The latter category usually either mentioned the WC as a footnote with no other context, or alongside non-academic resources such as mental health counseling, the school food pantry, and misconduct policies. See Figure 2.

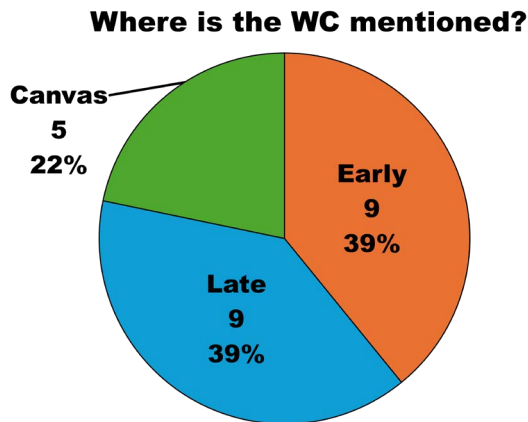


Fig. 2. Location where the WC is mentioned in the syllabus.

Syllabi differed in the way that the WC was described. Eleven syllabi described the WC in very general terms or included a link only. In these, even if the students were strongly encouraged to visit the WC as a valuable resource, they made no mention of specific services or how the WC could improve a student’s writing (see Fig. 3).

Of the 23 instructors who mentioned the WC, 9 did so early, 9 did so late, and 5 noted that the WC was listed on their class web software or lecture. Three sent a screenshot of the class web portal.

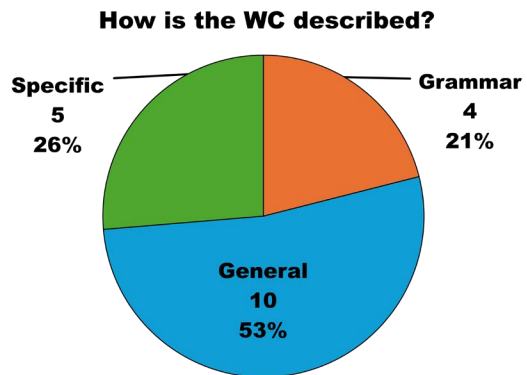


Fig. 3. Qualitative descriptions of how the WC was presented to students. Instructors who mentioned that the WC was linked in the course website but provided no other materials were excluded.

Only one of the instructors who showed their class on the Web page had text describing the WC; the others included the link only. For ex-

ample, one Forest & Wildlife Ecology syllabus says:

“I encourage everyone to consult with the Writing Center on campus: [link]. Seriously, they will read your draft and help you make it better. Email them and make an appointment.”

It is worth noting that this instructor is mistaken about how students access the WC in the first place. Students do not email the WC at this school to set up an appointment; they make appointments through a dedicated reservation website.

In contrast, just five syllabi note specific services, such as workshops, research guidance, and help structuring arguments, or the generalist nature of the tutoring for fields outside of the humanities. For example, one Dance syllabus says,

Familiarize yourself with the Campus Writing Center. You can schedule individual appointments to meet with a reader who can assist you in your writing, or to view the available workshops, and other resources.

Four syllabi note proofreading, grammar or “polished writing” as the reason why students would want to visit the WC. One Kinesiology syllabus explicitly delineates the distinction between content-based writing help the instructor themselves provides and what students can expect from the WC:

The Writing Center offers excellent resources for writing and proofreading. These

include a comprehensive website with topic-based writing handbooks as well as individualized support. If you’d like help finding appropriate literature, organizing scientific ideas for your paper, or need content-based constructive criticism of a draft, see me. For general writing help, please use the Writing Center.

Seventeen syllabi did not mention the WC at all. Six syllabi included other general writing resources such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab, books on writing style, and digital research guides, in addition to also mentioning the WC. Six syllabi that did not mention the WC directed students to domain or class-specific help. Of these six, one was an English course, where the instructor and librarians had collaborated to create a comprehensive research guide for the course’s writing assignments. Two History syllabi mentioned the History Lab, which is a WC whose tutors have an academic background in history and can help with researching and evaluating primary historical sources. Three Business instructors, all of whom taught the same introductory business communication course, independently mentioned the Presenting & Writing Lab, which tutors students in workplace communication. The Presenting & Writing Lab was recently established at this university to provide Business students with discipline-specific writing help, especially in drafting workplace deliverables (Wisconsin School of Business). In a message to me explaining why Business communication courses do not utilize the WC, one instructor said:

It's an issue of genre - we teach our students business writing, which is a quite different style from academic writing, and we want them to recognize the genre differences.

A different Business instructor said in a message that they believed that Communication B students were not allowed to use the WC, which is incorrect:

My understanding is that students in Comm B courses aren't able to use the Writing Center, which is why they have smaller class sizes and time for writing conferences with students throughout the semester.

While this instructor does also direct students to the Business Presenting & Writing Lab, the belief about the WC being inaccessible to Communication B students seems to be generalized to all disciplines. No other instructors endorsed this belief.

DISCUSSION

Even excluding the Business and History classes which direct students to departmental Writing Centers, the fact that over a third of the instructors in these courses did not mention the WC in any form is concerning. The Communication general education courses at my university have a focus on writing and research; the majority are for underclassmen who are not yet experienced with college-level writing. Because many students who visit the WC do so because of a recommendation by their professor (Savarese 37), there may be students who would have visited the WC that do not simply because their instructors choose not to

recommend it. Even if an instructor mentions the WC during a lecture, hyperlinks in the syllabus could still be helpful for students who need to refer back to it at another point later in the semester. I believe the ultimate goal of the WC is to assist course instructors, helping students engage with their course content more deeply, not just helping them complete an assignment. Communicating the benefits of the WC to instructors could improve student engagement with the WC.

Even among instructors that strongly encourage students to use the WC, several explicitly noted grammar as the reason to do so, directly contradicting the ideals of WC tutoring philosophy (Janetta & Fitzgerald 54). While improving a student's writing mechanics is an important aspect of writing tutoring, tutors are taught to mostly address "global" writing concerns, such as overall structure and organization (Bean & Melzer 305). Tutors can also help with the very beginning of a paper in the planning phase, something that is lost when recommending the WC for writing mechanics. No instructors mentioned that the WC could help with planning or outlining papers early in the writing process, something that is strongly emphasized in tutors' training (Janetta & Fitzgerald 56). Only one mentioned "any stage of the writing process." Few instructors seemed to be aware that the WC could help students with researching and other course content-related needs. Instructors preferred directing students to themselves, TAs, or discipline-specific academic resources if they required help with course content when writing. This is to say that instructors may not be fully aware of the

generalist nature of the WC, where tutors are able to be more than just spellcheckers.

For syllabi that mentioned the WC, about half did so late in the text, far from the assignments that would necessitate a visit to the WC. Of these, they largely spoke about the WC either in vague terms—*this is a resource that exists*—or included a link and nothing else. Another way that the WC was presented unfavorably was when it was grouped with non-academic resources. For example, one Psychology syllabus listed it in the middle of a “resources” section that included the IT help desk, the Dean of Students office, mental health counseling, the campus food pantry, and the national Suicide and Crisis Hotline. This may show that instructors are not familiar with the specific services that the WC provides or the training that tutors are given to assist students in a variety of fields. When a student looks through this syllabus to find help with writing, they may look past these vague, minimal statements about the WC and choose to spend their time elsewhere. While I did not have access to class portal pages, a few instructors sent me a screenshot of a webpage, which only had a link to the WC website. These are analogous to the minimal descriptions seen in general, late mentions of the WC. To address this issue, WC administrators could recommend that instructors introduce the WC to students alongside the course’s major writing assignment, either in lecture or next to the assignment description in the syllabus, as a few instructors in our sample did.

Instructors sometimes directed students to the WC’s online writing resources but ended

guidance there, which reveals another shortcoming in communication. The University of Wisconsin’s WC website hosts a comprehensive digital writing handbook that can be accessed by the public for free (UW-Madison Writing Center, *Writer’s Handbook*). This handbook covers a multitude of topics across dozens of web pages, ranging from pre-undergraduate grammar to grant proposals for PhD candidates. While this can be a useful resource, students may not know where to begin when looking for articles that could help them in their class. The same applies for instructors who recommended other online resources such as Purdue Online Writing Lab. Because not the entire digital writing handbook is relevant to students, WC administrators could recommend specific pages that would best help students in undergraduate writing courses. Directing students to the most relevant information minimizes the time of opportunity cost of utilizing WC resources.

While I was familiar with my university’s course-specific tutoring services prior to collecting data for this project, I was not aware of the departmental WCs for Business and History. The Business school at this university recently established its own field-specific WC, demonstrating that there is demand for writing tutoring for individual disciplines. Business instructors recognized that their students were not being adequately served by the WC; writing tutors at my university largely have academic backgrounds in the humanities. The History Lab, as described by the instructors, serves a similar discipline-specific purpose for History students, who often need help with researching

primary historical sources. This shows a downside of the generalist nature of the WC. Even though tutors are trained to provide help that would be useful in a variety of disciplines, some fields, such as business, may be outside of the scope of the WC due to differences in genre. When a generalist tutor is approached by a student requiring discipline-specific tutoring, tutors are more limited in the help they can provide (Bryan Malenke et al. 95). This would contribute to some instructors' perceptions of the WC as only helping with grammar and spelling. However, some colleges do not have discipline-specific WCs. In this case, WC administrators could emphasize to instructors how tutors are trained to help students clearly articulate complex concepts to people unfamiliar with their field. There is also a growing trend for generalist WC tutors to learn the writing conventions of several genres of writing (Bryan Malenke et al. 98; see also Hubbuch). The training which emphasizes developing a student's writing process gives additional value to the WC that is beyond the scope of a course itself. By conveying the unique benefits of the WC, instructors and students alike may see the time opportunity cost of visiting the WC as worth the potential improvement in writing skills and grade in class.

Regarding communication to instructors about the WC's resources, my university's WC does have information for instructors on their website (UW-Madison Writing Center, For Instructors). The website encourages instructors to refer students to the WC for individual meetings:

Our experienced instructors help students develop and organize ideas for papers, theses, or dissertations. Although we do not offer a proofreading service, instructors provide a critical audience for students, pointing out possible problems in their drafts and offering advice for revisions.

Given that none of the instructors sampled mirror this language in their syllabi, it appears that the WC has not adequately communicated with instructors. Even though this statement could be inserted into a syllabus nearly verbatim, more effortful outreach to instructors is necessary for it to reach students. It is also concerning that one instructor believed that their students were not allowed to utilize the WC. However, several instructors in disciplines not traditionally associated with writing, such as Kinesiology, Dance, Ecology, and Engineering, strongly recommended that students visit the WC. This demonstrates that, at least to a point, the WC has been successful in communicating its usefulness to instructors in a variety of fields. In smaller or less writing-intensive departments that do not have adequate demand to justify their own tutoring services, the WC still serves a valuable purpose. Given the findings of this study, improving communication of the WC's existing services to instructors should be prioritized.

In communicating with instructors, it would be helpful to outline the training that tutors are given beyond proofreading. As described by Bean and Melzer, tutors are often trained to focus on higher-order writing concerns. Tutors can even help with parts of the writing process that instructors may consider

“content-based,” such as constructing an argument, clearly presenting information, and writing a strong thesis statement (Bean & Melzer 305). WC administrators are not always able to perform this outreach themselves, so at some schools, tutors themselves can visit classrooms for a short presentation about the WC (UW-Madison Writing Center, For Instructors). Some suggestions for improving communication about the WC to students via instructors might be to:

- Describe training given to tutors, so that instructors and students know exactly what to expect when visiting the WC
- Direct outreach to instructors to better explain the WC, especially in introductory/gen-ed writing courses with undergrads unfamiliar with institution tutoring services
- Target aspects of writing that frequently challenge students – keep writing general education learning objectives in mind
- Online writing guides can be overwhelming – recommend specific pages such as the writing process, thesis statements, proofreading, and citations
- Recommend WC alongside major writing assignment in course syllabus/lecture/website to make it more visible to students
- Emphasize services beyond proofreading

More broadly, these suggestions can be adapted for communicating student resources beyond the WC. As a transfer student who originally started college in 2020, I never had a traditional orientation experience. Because of this, I of-

ten relied on professors to direct me to appropriate academic resources; I attended introductory Economics subject tutoring on the recommendation from my professor. Encouraging instructors to encourage their students to utilize such resources may help improve accessibility and equity in higher education.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research could survey instructors for their perception of the Writing Center in their own words. An interesting but predicted theme that emerged from the instructors was that very little time and verbiage was dedicated to describing the WC and its resources. This is concerning because the Communication B courses sampled are often the first time students are engaging in advanced, college-level writing with in-depth independent research. Interview research could compare the qualitative descriptions and opinions of the WC between instructors who strongly recommended the WC in the syllabus and those who left it as an afterthought. The present study also only sampled courses that fulfilled a general education requirement; syllabi for advanced writing courses, such as those with Communication B as a prerequisite, may differ in how the WC is described.

As noted by several professors in their responses to my inquiry, many students no longer look at the syllabus after Day 1. From then on, their point of contact with course material is online, through digital learning management software. While the transition to online learning man-

agement had been underway for some time prior to the pandemic, COVID and virtual learning caused a significant amount of coursework to move online. Before digital learning management software, students would *need* to refer to the syllabus whenever they wanted to know something about the class. One potential option is to analyze learning management web pages using a similar methodology to my syllabus audit. This would provide a more comprehensive and modern view of how instructors communicate the WC to students compared to only analyzing syllabi.

CONCLUSION

Before I became a writing tutor myself, I (and many of my classmates) believed that the Writing Center was meant for remedial tutoring or reviewing grammar. I speculated that this misperception of WC resources may be re-

flected in the way instructors discuss the WC with their students. Based on the data I collected from 40 general education writing course syllabi, it appears that the WC has not adequately communicated its resources to instructors. As a student, I saw this myself where the WC was little more than a footnote in many course syllabi. As seen at my university, simply having information for instructors available on a website is insufficient for reaching students. More effortful outreach to instructors is necessary to ensure that the WC is described accurately in course syllabi and other materials provided by instructors. The crucial takeaway is for WC administrators to deepen connections with course instructors by utilizing multiple avenues to communicate. The goal is to ensure an accurate picture of the WC is communicated to students, especially in introductory or general education writing courses.

APPENDIX A. DESCRIPTIVES OF COURSES SAMPLED

Table 2. Subjects for which a syllabus was received.

Subject	# of Syllabi
African Cultural Studies	2
Anthropology	1
Asian American Studies	1
Communication Arts	1
Communication Sci. & Disorders	1
Curriculum & Instruction	1
Dance	1
English	2
Forest & Wildlife Ecology	1
General Business	4
Geography	1
German, Nordic, & Slavic	1
History	3
Integrated Liberal Studies	1
Interdisciplinary (Engineering)	4
Interdisciplinary (Letters & Science)	1
Journalism & Mass Communication	1
Kinesiology	2
Library & Information Studies	2
Life Sciences Communication	1
Literature in Translation	1
Philosophy	1
Psychology	1
Rehab Psychology & Special Ed.	2
Classics	2
Asian Languages & Cultures	1

Table 3. Levels of courses for which a syllabus was received.

Level	# of Syllabi
100	1
200	18
300	14
400	2
500	4
600	1

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