



Council of  
Writing  
Program  
Administrators

## WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies



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### **Writing Centers and Mandatory Visits** **(WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 22)**

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The mandatory writing-center visit policy is a recurring, common concern among writing-center professionals. Many of these professionals oppose mandatory visits because they believe students will benefit most from the experience if they are motivated intrinsically rather than extrinsically by their teachers. Some administrators and tutors report that students who are forced to go to the writing center resist the assistance and develop poor attitudes about writing centers, thus effecting unproductive sessions. Still others find that their colleagues require students to go to the writing center to have their grammar “fixed,” a practice anathema to contemporary writing-center pedagogy and missions.

Yet mandatory visits are more common than this conventional wisdom suggests. Mandatory visit policies can take different forms, depending on individual or institutional pedagogies, the writing center resources, and the abilities of students in the classroom and particular programs. One policy might take the form of a direct teacher referral of select students. A potentially less stigmatizing policy might take the form of a class or curriculum-based requirement, where a teacher requires all students from a class to make one or more visits to the writing center for one or more assignments. Another variation might mandate weekly visits for all students in a particular program, thus avoiding the traditional stigma often associated with writing centers by outside constituents. Yet, a program that implements this third type of policy is often for basic writers, an already stigmatized group.

Besides hearing casual conversations and presentations on the topic at conferences, readers can find threads in the *WCenter Listserv* archive, dating back to at least 2008, that offer scholarship references and anecdotal evidence about the benefits and costs of mandated visits. In the *Writing Center Journal* and *Writing Lab Newsletter* one can find theoretical, anecdotal arguments for and against the practice, while other publications present data-driven, empirical studies that investigate the effects of such a policy. Unfortunately, there is no substantial review of the scholarship.

The 18 entries in this bibliography summarize select articles and dissertations that focus on the effects of mandatory writing center visits. The entries are divided into two parts: Part 1 presents summaries of studies that emphasize quantitative and qualitative data. Part 2 presents studies that rely on anecdotal evidence and theoretical arguments. The studies in Part 1 investigate the effects of required visits on a variety of student types and with regard to one or more of the following aspects: motivation, attitude, perception, procrastination, retention, writerly maturity, marketing,

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and collaboration. Generally, the positive outcomes of the studies in part 1 include increased intrinsic motivation, positive attitudes about limited mandatory visits, increased retention rates, increased number of student drafts, higher assignment and course grades, and confidence. The studies in Part 2 begin with given assumptions and deductively work their way through various scenarios, both real and imagined. Generally, the studies in part 2 are a mix of the positive and negative. The results of mandatory visit policies include positive student attitudes when a policy aligns with writing-center resources; negative attitudes of students, tutors, and teachers; and greater student collaboration in a basic writing program.

In this bibliography, writing center professionals can find studies that examine the effects of mandatory writing-center visits on students in basic writing programs, first-year composition, and writing-intensive courses across the curriculum. To one degree or another, writing-center administrators should find all the entries useful as they develop internal programs or respond to externally imposed mandatory visit policies at their particular institutions. Additionally, other writing-program administrators, such as WAC directors and FYC directors, should find these entries useful as a starting point to foster a successful relationship with writing-center professionals and to help create policies and faculty development activities that might involve mandatory visits.

#### Part 1. Studies emphasizing quantitative and qualitative data

Babcock, Rebecca Day; Terese Thonus

Tutoring “different” populations: Basic writers

In Babcock, Rebecca Day; Terese Thonus (Eds.), *Researching the writing center: Towards an evidence-based practice*; New York: Lang (2012), 87-97

The authors’ meta-analysis of mandatory visits can be found in the section “Basic Writers” of the chapter “Tutoring ‘Different’ Populations” (87-88). The research Babcock and Thonus analyze is data-based. Under “Recommendations for Practice,” at the end of the section, the authors offer a general conclusion based on the work of Clark, Osman, Smith, and Stonerock: “Writing center administrators should consider recommending mandatory consultations for students in developmental writing classes” (92). This conclusion is based on the findings of reviewed studies that include increases in intrinsic motivation (88), positive attitudes about mandatory visits (70), retention rates (88), number of student drafts (88), higher assignment and course grades (88), and confidence (89).

**KEYWORDS:** wcenter, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, basic, retention, review-of-scholarship, meta-analysis, empowerment, confidence

Bishop, Wendy

Bringing writers to the center: Some survey results, surmises, and suggestions

*Writing Center Journal* 10.2 (1990), 31–44

[http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj10.2/10.2\\_Bishop.pdf](http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj10.2/10.2_Bishop.pdf)

The author conducted a study to discover what motivates students to visit her writing center and what discourages students from visiting. She wanted to apply this information to writing center promotion and referral services. To gather data about students' attitudes and usage about visiting the WC, the author used a questionnaire with questions similar to the surveys used in studies by Gary Olson and Irene Clark. She distributed the survey to 193 students in lower-division required FYC courses and upper-division elective writing classes (34). A majority of students found the writing center helpful and would recommend it to other students. Instructors referred the majority of students, while "The influence of friends, advertising, and staff visits to classes was surprisingly low (11%)" (34). Thirty-five percent of the students surveyed were anxious about writing before they visited the writing center, which agrees with one of the findings in Olson's study (36), while those that didn't visit said that they didn't need the writing center or didn't have time. The higher the class level, the less likely they would visit. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, the author recommends one mandatory visit early in the semester for all students, with "connected writing activity and clear class credit. (38)"

KEYWORDS: wcenter, survey, student-opinion, data, student-attitude, student-motivation, mandatory visit, required visit, writing-intensive

Clark, Irene

Leading the horse: The writing center and required visits

*Writing Center Journal* 5.2 (1985), 31–34

[http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj5.2\\_6.1/wcj5.2\\_6.1\\_clark.pdf](http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj5.2_6.1/wcj5.2_6.1_clark.pdf)

The author studied the attitudes of first-year writing students toward required writing-center visits, the effects of this requirement on students' perceptions of the writing-center services, and the relationship of required visits to actual attendance. Using a Likert-scale based questionnaire, the author surveyed 329 students, a 17% random sampling, or 26 out of 155 sections (32-33). The results of the survey show, unsurprisingly, that students are more likely to go to the writing center if required to go. Seventy-five percent of the author's sample thought the writing center improved their writing skills and that the writing center was a necessary part of the program (33). Almost 50% thought the writing center improved their grades (33). Overall, students had positive experience despite the requirement. Though most of the students surveyed realized that the writing center would help their skills and their assignment grades, they reported avoiding the writing center because they felt they were too busy. Based on the study data, the author recommends required visits, yet the author does not offer a specific number of visits. Instead, the

article states, “that the more visits required, the more times the student will be likely to go” (34).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, teacher-tutor, requirement, attendance, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit

Gordon, Barbara

Requiring first-year writing classes to visit the writing center: Bad attitudes or positive results?

*Teaching English in the Two Year College* 36.2 (2008), 154–63

The author and her student-researchers wanted to know how required writing-center visits would affect students’ attitudes and perceptions of their writing center. The researchers surveyed 32 students from two sections of first-year writing taught by one instructor (155). The article reports that most students were annoyed by the requirement, most had a positive opinion of the writing center before the required visit, most will either definitely return or “maybe” return, and most felt the writing center improved their skills and grades (156-57). Against conventional writing-center wisdom or lore, the author recommends that writing centers allow required visits or avoid discouraging them (158). The author offers solutions for accommodating required visits, such as increasing the staff at particular times of the semester, spreading the requirement over the academic year, or limiting session times. The author never gives an exact number because the number of visits would depend on resources, especially funding for a staff that can accommodate influxes of students required to visit.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, requirement, teacher-tutor, needs-analysis, two-year, FYC, positivity, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit

Morrison, Julie Bauer; Jean-Paul Nadeau

How was your session at the writing center?: Pre- and post-grade student evaluations

*Writing Center Journal* 23.2 (2003), 25–42

[http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj23.2/WCJ23.2\\_Morrison\\_Nadeau.pdf](http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj23.2/WCJ23.2_Morrison_Nadeau.pdf)

The authors know that students’ initial attitudes about writing centers are overwhelmingly positive after a writing center visit (25, 30). They wanted know if this positive attitude changed over time, how extensive was the change, and what variables might correlate with the change, especially grades on papers. The authors gathered data with three surveys of undergraduate psychology students: a survey given immediately after the writing center visit (53 students), a survey given after the professor gave the paper grade (53 students), and a survey given one year after the second post-grade survey (16 students) (28). Analysis of the data ( $p < .05$ ) reveals the usual positive results of most writing-center studies on student perceptions, “regardless of semester, staff member, or

month” (30); students expressed less satisfaction with the writing center after learning their paper grades irrespective of grade given, although students earning As lowered their ratings less than students earning a B or below (31-32); students who earned lower than an A thought that they could have worked harder; and students who earned an A thought they couldn’t have done much more (32). Excepting one student’s responses, the ratings collected by the third survey replicated the results of the first survey, and students report that their satisfaction with the writing center was “directly influenced” by the paper grade (32). While contexts might have affected the satisfaction negatively, the authors suspect that the students’ lower satisfaction of the writing center relates to the psychological “idea of self-serving bias,” where these students did not want to take responsibility for their grade (33). The authors suspect, based on this psychological theory, that students blamed the writing center for the lower grade, thinking the staff members would “fix” their papers for them (33-34). The authors recommend primarily that writing center staff and faculty work together to promote clear expectations of what writing centers and students can accomplish during sessions. They recommend “forcefully encouraging” students to visit writing centers (writing center-based model of situating), but not requiring them to visit (curriculum-based model of situating).

**KEYWORDS:** wcenter, pedagogy, pre-grade and post-grade data, survey, questionnaire, evaluation form, teacher-evaluation, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, mandatory visit, required visit, WAC, writing-intensive

Osman, Gwendolyn

Student perceptions of the effectiveness of a mandatory remedial tutorial program in a developmental program at a historically black university [dissertation]

Montgomery, AL: Alabama State University (2007)

The researcher investigates the effects of involuntary writing-center visits on the perceptions of basic-writing students and their ability in mainstream English courses at an historical black university. To examine ability or performance in the subsequent English course, the researcher collected pass/fail rates, course completion rates, or corresponding attrition rates. To examine students’ perceptions, the researcher collected responses to open-ended questions from a writing-center satisfaction survey. The author’s analysis reveals five themes that emerged from the qualitative data: tutor and staff helpfulness (Theme 1); perceived skills improvement (Theme 2); concerns about facilities (Theme 3); the mandatory visit policy (Theme 4); and “affective gains” and motivation (Theme 5) (159-160). This analysis leads to competing conclusions, with regard to basic writing students’ perceptions of the visit mandate and of tutorial effectiveness. Students felt that the required tutoring “further stigmatized” them as developmental and inferior (165). The requirement negatively affected “their view of the effectiveness of tutorial services” (165). These negative results of the mandatory visit were attached to Theme 4 (165). Yet, Themes 2 and 5 showed positive student perceptions. Students reported that they increased their competencies and abilities (188) and they increased confidence or motivation (166-67). The author lacks a description of how many visits students were

required to make, and she looks only at initial, post-consultation surveys. Despite students' perceptions, this study, along with past empirical studies, show that students' ability and grades improve with writing center visits, compared with those that don't visit.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, data, black college, requirement, basic, tutoring, program, student-opinion, tutorial, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, mandatory visit, basic, FYC, HBCU, African-Am, contrast-group

Robinson, Heather M.

Writing center philosophy and the end of basic writing: Motivation at the site of remediation and discovery.

*Journal of Basic Writing* 28.2 (2009), 70-92

The author investigated the effects of writing-center visits on the writing concerns and motivation of basic writers. She relates motivation to the concept of locus of control, or internal and external motivation. From about 1,700 tutoring sessions, Robinson studied 49 usable survey responses (79). The anonymous survey asked what the students had worked on during their visits. The researcher associated particular writing process concerns with either an internal (self-motivated) or external (teacher/grade motivated) locus of control. The author argues that extrinsic motivation is related to students' emphasis on sentence-level work, while intrinsic motivation is related to students' emphasis on reading comprehension and invention (80). Robinson's data shows that students' concerns move from the extrinsic to the intrinsic with multiple visits. The author concludes that three sessions appears to be the consistent mark where students move beyond the concerns of basic writers to concerns of competent or college-level writers (85, 88). The article is unclear about the frequency of visits, that is, whether or not the visits were per week or per semester. It appears some visits were mandatory and some were not. While Robinson writes, "attending tutoring is voluntary for students" (87), the investigator also writes, "Students are often directed to the writing center by their instructor to attend to their writing problems" (87).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, basic, locus-of-control, self-regulation, motivation, intrinsic, extrinsic

Runciman, Lex

Should writing lab conferences be required for composition students?

*Writing Lab Newsletter* 11.9 (1987), 12-14

<https://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v11/11-9.pdf>

The author studied the effects of required writing-center visits on the perceptions of students in two composition courses. The students in these courses were required to attend the writing center weekly, for a total of 12 visits during the semester. The researcher surveyed 46 students of 51 (12). The survey asked ten questions, including questions about knowledge of the writing center, feelings about the required visit policy, number of visits made by midterm, who they worked with, usefulness of feedback, type of work, degree of increase or decrease in time spent on writing, feelings about overall performance, future use, and motivation to recommend (12-13). Based on the results of the survey, the researcher concludes that required visits do not negatively effect most students' perceptions of the writing center and the requirement would increase students' awareness of the service (13). Though the results of the survey are positive, the research reports that logistically the institution's center would not be able to handle the requirement for all sections of the first-year composition course (13-14).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, promotion, requirement, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, FYC

Smith, Allison

Writing in/on the borderlands: (Basic) writers in the writing center [dissertation]

Louisville, KY: University of Louisville (2010)

The author investigated the effects of mandatory writing-center visits on basic writers at a small liberal-arts institution. The researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data, in the form of pass/fail information, surveys, interviews, and narratives (vi). She studied a four-credit basic writing class that was required to visit the writing center for 30 minutes each week for 13 weeks, and a three-credit basic writing class that was not required to visit the writing center, though they could go on their own volition (33, 81). The author's data reveal the following: Students produced self-motivated writing in the experimental class; they had more consistent attendance in the experimental class than in the control class; they felt more connected to the college community in the experimental class than in the control class; and "The experimental section's pass rate was slightly higher despite the fact that more 'at-risk' students were in the class" (90). Most students did not mind mandatory attendance, supporting the findings of previous studies on mandatory visits and perceptions (84, 94).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, basic, requirement, contrast-group, control-experimental

Soliday, Mary; Barbara Gleason.

From remediation to enrichment: Evaluating a mainstreaming project

*Journal of Basic Writing* 16.1 (1997), 64-78  
<http://wac.colostate.edu/jbw/v16n1/soliday.pdf>

The authors review the development and assessment of a new program that transforms their remedial writing program into what they call an “enrichment” writing curriculum. The discussion about the writing center in relation to the new curriculum is brief. Consultants are assigned to the classrooms, yet a description of how the 41 consultants worked in the classes is absent (67-68). It appears that students were “required” to work with consultants because they were assigned to the classrooms. The authors report voluntary visits beyond the required classroom collaboration: “61% of the students said they had made between one and several appointments each semester with their tutors” (68). Of the mainstream and established writing classes, for which no consultants are assigned, only a quarter of those students visited the writing center at least once (68).

KEYWORDS: basic, 'remediation', mainstreaming, experiment, data, contrast-group, predictive, academic-achievement, grades, enrichment, requirement, mandatory visit, required visit, basic

Van Dam, Denis

Effects of writing center usage and motivation on academic writing performance [dissertation]

Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California (1985)

The author presents the results of a study that investigated the effects of mandatory writing-center visits on the writing ability of first-year composition students at a private comprehensive research university. Sixty-three students participated in the study, in which the treatment group was required to visit the writing center three times during the semester. To determine improvement, the researcher compared the treatment and control groups' post-test mean scores of narrative and expository essays assigned at the beginning and end of the semester. The rate of improvement of the treatment group was higher, though the difference between the treatment and control groups was not statistically significant. More than 90% of the students in the treatment group thought the writing center helped their writing. Though the author avoids recommending required visits to writing centers, the study's results suggest that required visits can change the motivation of students to seek help with writing on their own volition.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, attendance, student-motivation, FYC, improvement, narrative, expository, ethnographic, pre-post, contrast-group, student-attitude, improvement, academic, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, FYC, requirement

Young, Beth Rapp; Barbara A. Fritzsche

Writing center users procrastinate less: The relationship between individual differences in procrastination, peer feedback, and student writing process

*Writing Center Journal* 23.1 (2002), 45–58

[http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj23.1/WCJ23.1\\_Young\\_Fritzsche.pdf](http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj23.1/WCJ23.1_Young_Fritzsche.pdf)

The authors conducted a study to “examine the relationships between procrastination tendency, peer feedback, and student writing success” and “to determine whether a writing center helps writers avoid procrastinating” (46). The study had 206 traditional student participants from writing intensive classes requiring “at least 6,000 words of assessed writing” [56]) and from all undergraduate class standings. To gather data, they administered the Procrastination Assessment Scale—Students (PASS), a self-report measure of six academic activities; the Writing Behaviors Assessment, which the researchers designed for this particular study; and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, which assesses current anxiety and tendency toward anxiety. After the semester, they also gathered participants’ paper grades, courses grades, and overall GPA (48). The researchers found that “writing center use was associated with higher satisfaction and fewer procrastination behaviors” (50). The researchers also discovered that students who were required to visit “were significantly more likely to report delay behavior” (52). Yet for some students the “requirement [might add] the necessary motivation for procrastinators to drag themselves into the writing center” (54). The authors recommend that bureaucratic paperwork should be reduced in order to increase visits of procrastinating students.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, questionnaire, behavior, procrastination, Writing Behavior Assessment (WBA), individual-differences, peer-tutoring, peer-evaluation, process, student-writing, survey, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, data, mandatory visit, required visit, WAC, writing-intensive, requirement

## Part 2. Studies emphasizing anecdotal evidence and theory

Bell, Barbara; Robert Stutts

The road to hell is paved with good intentions: The effects of mandatory writing center visits on student and tutor attitudes

*Writing Lab Newsletter* 22.1 (1997), 5-8

<https://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v22/22-1.pdf>

The authors report on their experience with assigning mandatory writing center visits to a writing class. The article is not clear what level the course and writers are. The research occurred over three semesters. During the first semester of the study the students had to visit the writing center for each of their five writing assignments. During the second semester of the study the students had to visit the writing center for their second and third assignments. During the third semester of the study the students had to visit the writing center two times and they could choose the assignments. The teacher reduced the required visits because students waited until the last minute, they had negative attitudes toward the requirement, and both last-minute visits and attitudes overwhelmed the writing center. The evidence for adjusting the mandatory visits includes anecdotal evidence from consultants and the narrative by the teacher-authors (6). For the second iteration, the teacher had students write after the third assignment about their experience working with the writing center, and asked whether or not they would go back voluntarily. The teacher-author reports that they responded positively and that they would return, but “very few visited again” (7). The authors advocate mandatory visits with clear communication with the teacher, orientation and student preparation, group appointments, and special calendars and appointment systems to assist with logistics.

**KEYWORDS:** wcenter, change, requirement, attendance, tutoring, tutor-student, tutoring, anecdotal, narrative, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, mandatory visit, required visit

Bouelle, Andy

The first-year composition requirement: An important introduction to the writing center

*Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* 4.2 (2007)

<http://emil.uwc.utexas.edu/praxis/?q=node/161>

Bouelle argues that one way to publicize the value of writing centers to students is to have first-year writing teachers require writing center visits, which will benefit composition classes, the writing center, and students. The article uses anecdotal evidence to support the argument. The author explains that his writing center encourages new teaching assistants to have their students visit at least once. In a presentation to new TAs, representatives ask that the teachers avoid setting a deadline for the requirement to limit the “influx of procrastinators.” The article recognizes that some teachers will not

incorporate the requirement, and it lists the benefits students might miss without it: knowledge of the service, experience with a consultant, and development as a writer, in general and across the curriculum. Some students who are required to visit the writing center resist the help and “aren’t interested in having a productive tutoring session,” reports the author. Yet, the author also shares an anecdote about a student he tutored who was about to graduate and wished she had known about the writing center.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, promotion, requirement, student-opinion, student-attitude, student-perception, mandatory visit, required visit, FYC, training

Crumrine, Nannette

Force them to and they will still come . . .

*Writing Lab Newsletter* 26.10 (2002), 8-9  
<https://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v26/26.10.pdf>

The author offers advice for working with students who are required to go to the writing center and who do not want to be there. The article presents a narrative of how the author deals with student resistance to the visit, adhering to professionalism and a positive attitude (9). Crumrine argues that remaining positive may benefit not only the current client, but also the consultant herself and future clients (9). That is, a negative approach may “sour” the rest of the day for everyone. The consultant appears to support some degree or policy of mandatory visits when she writes, “For every student who did not want to be there and did not seem to learn anything, there are two who did, and would not have otherwise come for help if they had not been required” (9).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, attendance, teacher-tutor, requirement, anecdotal, narrative, theoretical, theory, supposition, deduction, deductive, mandatory visit, required visit, tutor-training

North, Stephen M.

The idea of a writing center

*College English* 46.5 (1984): 433–46. *JSTOR*. (24 Oct. 2012)

The author theorizes the practices and image of the ideal writing center. The article argues that the idea and contemporary work of writing centers is misunderstood by his peers in English studies. They see writing centers as a place to “fix” remedial students skills through grammar drill, typically, and where students are referred to centers by teachers rather than voluntarily motivated to go (435-36). North sees writing centers as a “place to produce better writers, not better writing” (438). At the core of the “Idea of a Writing Center” is talk (443), and this talk addresses the primary concern of centers, which is the writing process (438). North argues that through talk about the writing process and concerns beyond grammar, mechanics, and punctuation, a consultant can

become a collaborator who helps students change their writing process behaviors (443). The author demands that students “seek us out” (442) and “come looking for us,” not be referred by teachers (440). The author discourages, if not bans, teacher referral or the required visit (440). This is based on assumed values, not empirical evidence. The author states that sending them to the writing center is a kind of “detention,” suggesting instead that “when they are ready, we will be here” (440).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, objectives, pedagogy, error, WAC, tutoring, motivation, anecdotal, narrative, theoretical, theory, supposition, deduction, deductive, theory-based, mandatory visit, required visit

North, Stephen M.

Revisiting “The idea of a writing center”

*Writing Center Journal* 15.1 (1994): 7–19

[http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj15.1/wcj15.1\\_north.pdf](http://casebuilder.rhet.ualr.edu/wcrp/publications/wcj/wcj15.1/wcj15.1_north.pdf)

The author critiques his original article about the goals and practices of the ideal writing center. The author writes, “it is a romantic idealization, [and it] presents its own kind of jeopardy” (9). The idealized version of the writing center is partly a problem because “institutional arrangements seem to me too idiosyncratic, and writing centers' political visions too varied” (15). The article critiques key passages that relate to the idealization of relationships between (a) tutor and writer, (b) tutor and teacher, and (c) tutor and institution (10-15). The problems with the tutor and writer ideal are 1) students rarely go to writing centers out of an internal desire or motivation to engage in their process, but rather to get the good grade and “to be finished with writing; to have their writing be finished” (10); and 2) the consultant is not an innocuous participant-observer who offers a neutral space for writers to discover their own writerly choices and process. The problem with the tutor and teacher ideal is that prohibiting tutor judgment of the teacher puts a lot of pressure on tutors (13). The problem of the tutor and institution ideal is with “scale and image” (14). North’s ideal writing center is suited for small colleges, and writing centers might not be able to escape an image of the location of “wrongness” where the “others,” that is, the remedial students, are fixed (15). In the response to his own critique, North still maintains, however, that students should not be required or referred to the writing center; rather they should be self-motivated to go as a result of their particular writing program, which is “self-selectively enrolled in a program—a coherent, four-year sequence of study—that values writing” (16).

KEYWORDS: wcenter, ‘The Idea of a Writing Center’, Stephen North, intellectual challenge, training, tutor-student, student-attitude, revisited, anecdotal, narrative, theory, supposition, deduction, deductive, theory-based, mandatory visit, required visit, image

Olson, Gary

Attitudinal problems and the writing center

*Liberal Education* 67.4 (1981), 310-318

The author discusses the manifestations of negative attitudes of teachers, consultants, and student about writing centers. With each description, Olson presents a way to address the attitude problem. In the section about teachers' negative attitudes, the author associates mandatory visits with the example of the teacher with an attitude problem, and thus implies mandatory visits have negative effects on students. The article offers theoretical scenarios and anecdotal evidence as support for its arguments.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, anecdotal, narrative, theoretical, theory, supposition, deduction, deductive, theory-based, mandatory-visit, required-visit

Saling, Joseph; Kelly Cook-McEachern

Building a community of writers in a required lab: A paradox and a dilemma

*Writing Lab Newsletter* 17.3 (1992), 13-15

<https://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v17/17-3.pdf>

The authors share how their writing center builds community in the writing lab. A part of this community is a required weekly visit by pre-freshman English students. Saling and Cook-McEachern report that these students “say the lab was a good experience” (13). Without detailing data collection methods, the authors also report that 74% of the students said they would come back to the writing center (the N is not reported). Furthermore, the authors explain, “Not only have many of them become visitors to the lab, but some have volunteered to work with other students on writing” (13). The focus of the article is to theorize how to get students to increase collaboration and to have them feel like they are writers.

KEYWORDS: wcenter, requirement, community, , anecdotal, narrative, theory, supposition, deduction, deductive, theory-based, mandatory visit, required visit, collaboration