

The 21st Century Writing Program Collaboration for the Common Good

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to review the literature on theoretical frameworks, best practices, and conceptual models for the 21st century collegiate writing program. Methods include electronic database searches for recent and historical peer-reviewed scholarly literature on collegiate writing programs. The author analyzed over 65 sources from the century, mostly within the last three years. The results were clear and consistent. The author recommends a collegial and comprehensive collegiate writing program that begins with entrance and placement assessments and continues through culminating papers, capstones, theses, dissertations, staff development, and even faculty mentoring. Collaboration for the common good will be paramount. Implications for practice also include strategic planning, staff development, and release time. Includes one table and one figure.

Keywords: *Writing Program, Collaboration, Rhetoric, Higher Education.*

At the turn of the 21st century veteran composition educator Ellen Mohr celebrated the institution of the college writing program as a dynamic and diverse project promoting discourse and equity on campus and in society. In the ten years that have passed, communications have evolved to the point that text messaging, social media, and the blogosphere are gradually crowding newspapers and literature out of what Jung referred to as the collective consciousness. The pace of innovation approaches frenzy with the *Beloit College Mindset List for the Class of 2014* survey of high school seniors finding that teens have shunned e-mail as “too slow,” and replaced it—for now—with

instant messaging. Indeed, most have never written a letter on paper to send in envelope. It is difficult to predict how an even more instantaneous medium of communication will develop, yet, we must predict and prepare in order to engage our next generation and address their needs as thinkers, communicators, and writers. Brazilian educator and social critic Paulo Friere celebrated the liberating nature of writing and the ability to lift up people, even poor and oppressed, with literacy education. Certainly, more rapid communication adds to the liberating nature of writing, but at what cost to rhetoric and discourse? For many students, the college curriculum is too

demanding on their underdeveloped writing skills to afford them full access to or opportunity in higher education. The writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement gained prominence in the 1970s to address this issue. To supplement and complement this effort to transform the entire campus into a sort of rhetorical laboratory, the college writing center grew to offer more support for struggling academic writers to succeed as students when they may otherwise have quit or failed without tutelage. The concept of a successful writing program is based on and requires, therefore, collaboration amongst faculty across the disciplines as described in over 60 articles from the last decade, which the author has reviews here. The importance of the writing program and the writing center to the higher education shows clearly in the frequency with which scholarly journals cover the topic.

American college students at the turn of the 20th century, as early as 1890, began asking for individualized instruction in writing out of frustration with a lecture hall approach that did not foster mentoring relationships; Neal Lerner traced the first community college writing center back to 1932. 19th and 20th century students sought the democratic and affective aspects of the modern writing center that Mohr championed at the dawn of the 21st century. Even this earliest community college writing center at The Minnesota General College promoted writing across the curriculum and addressed students' needs and desires to communicate effectively to the lofty goal of

the students' "satisfaction and pleasure" of self-expression (Lerner 253).

The satisfaction and pleasure of self-expression may well be a lofty goal for students, academia, and society as a whole, but it is also a worthy goal. Self-expression requires both something to say and a felicity for saying it, a felicity that is best nurtured by a comprehensive collegiate writing program that begins with entrance and placement assessments and continues through culminating papers, capstones, theses, dissertations, staff development, and even faculty mentoring. This report reviews the literature on theoretical frameworks, best practices, and conceptual models for the 21st century collegiate writing program.

Classroom as Society of the Literate

Gregory Shafer assigned letter writing assignments to his developing students to help them join the "literacy club" (285). The club Shafer envisions welcomes all willing members and greets them with a very democratic acceptance and autonomy over their learning. Shafer goes on to describe the experience as a "celebration of communal engagement and sharing" (286). The sharing included Shafer sitting down to write with his students so as to teach by example and as leader of the club. The composition classroom can be a club, when properly designed and managed, and resemble a social network, but in real space as opposed to cyberspace.

Angela Beck wrote of the importance of collaboration at her small technical college in which their "club" included writing

courses “linked” with other courses and supported by the writing center (392). The collaboration in linking courses and the writing center benefit all parties and bring better outcomes for students, faculty, and the sponsoring institution such as Beck’s. Outgoing editor of *Teaching English at the Two Year College*, Howard Tinberg, remarked on this “common good” of the writing center supporting the overall mission of the community college in his farewell essay (245).

Management

In a 2006 “position statement,” Jill Pennington and Clint Gardner (206) proposed a set of criteria for professional management of the college writing center; they included the following:

- Autonomy of separate space and budget
- Appropriate physical space with computer technology available
- Opportunity to participate in program review
- Management by tenure-track faculty with at least 50% release time
- Management by faculty with writing center experience
- Credentialed tutors who reflect the diversity of the campus community
- Ongoing training for all tutors
- Peer tutors recommended by instructors and who have excelled in coursed requiring advanced writing skills
- Pay for tutors commensurate with their qualifications and work

- Compensation for professional development of writing center staff at regional and national conferences
- Practices and philosophy based on research and best practices established in the literature
- Freedom from being treated as a proofreading or editing service

These recommendations arose from a collaboration of 22 college writing centers and took inspiration from a similar set of recommendations made by graduate students working in writing centers at universities. Barbara Lynn Gordon added mandatory participation to these recommendations in her 2008 article (157).

Gordon’s own research at her institution, where she was director of the Elon University writing center, supported earlier research at University of Southern California and Wendy Bishop’s findings at the University of Alaska that showed mandating participation had no effect on the ultimate attitude of students toward the writing center (*ibid*). Given that most students assigned to visit the writing center as part of a class acknowledge that they otherwise would not use the service, required participation yields positive results with little or no negative side effect. Gordon’s data showed that 81% of writing center students who were required to attend agreed that all first-year college students should be required to participate in the writing center program. Equally interesting were the statistics that 47% of the subjects in Gordon’s population reported feeling “annoyed” by the writing center

requirement, but none (n = 32) responded that they were “not likely” to return voluntarily (156). While “annoying” students is not the most desirable or democratic approach to education programs, the 81% approval statistic after the “annoyance” is a strong vote of confidence.

ESOL

In addition to ongoing writing support, some authors, such as Maria Scordaras recommend a reconsideration of the trend toward accelerated composition courses, especially for ESL students at City University of New York (270). Scordaras reminded us in her 2009 piece that literacy and composition education scholars such as Cummings and Collier have found that learning “cognitive academic language proficiency” requires four to twelve years in a second language (271). Strong composition skills, likely, develop toward the end of that period. Scordaras recounted her own frustration working with struggling ESOL students in the hurried pace of an accelerated six-week summer composition course. These students experienced many difficulties at both the sentence and conceptual levels throughout the six weeks, and showed only minor improvements by the end of the course, at which time some students reported feeling more “overwhelmed” than improved (274). Negotiating such issues in an overall writing program calls for collaboration amongst the faculty and administration, such collaboration for Scordaras and many of us can be a challenging, although worthy, process (271).

Strategic Planning

A 2005 Two Year College Association (TYCA) survey revealed one of the difficulties of collaboration in the widespread lack of institutional organization of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) or Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs. Leslie Roberts, in a 2008 article, displayed the pathetic statistic that only 18% of colleges (n = 342) responded that their institution featured an officially organized writing program, WAC or WID (141). Also of concern was the fact that 23% of two-year institutions housed no writing center (145). The existence of a writing center or a WAC or WID program was only a beginning, though, Roberts highlighted that 64% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their institution’s approach to their WAC or WID program (146). Common comments on the surveys pointed to the reduction of release time, staff development, and inconsistent leadership hampering collaboration on such programs, thus jeopardizing their efficacy (149).

In a 1998 article, John Paul Tassoni described his liberatory approach and the importance of a symbiotic or dialectic relationship between classroom faculty and writing center faculty so as to generate dialogic and democratic encounters for the community college students in the writing center and the classroom (34). Tassoni lamented, however, that the collaboration at his own institution left something to be desired, especially in that the faculty in the writing center did not share his liberatory philosophy, but rather saw their role as an

information and skill center. Tassoni, in a later article, warned us again of what it means to lack collaboration between the faculty in the class and the writing center (264). His 2006 personal essay lamented the clash of andragogies between the writing center, which he calls a “fix-it” shop, and his “liberatory” approach based on the philosophy of the aforementioned Freire. The clash, unfortunately, does not serve the common good nor promote writing across the curriculum, across the campus, or across the writing program as a whole. Worse, it suggests a lack of any cohesive “program” at all. Tassoni described his ideal in his 1998 article as a “reciprocal arrangement” in which students, tutors, writing center faculty, and classroom instructors all have a say in the development, philosophy, methodology, and management of the writing center and the overall writing program at their schools (42). Conversely, Tassoni laments in his 2006 article, the alternative is to erect artificial walls inside the institution and relegate ourselves to patrolling the borders we have created (276).

Spirit of Innovation

Perhaps the best, in that it is most useful and universal, is Nancy Fisher’s advice to “roll with the punches,” as she shared in her 2001 reminiscences of her early 1960s work at a fledgling community college in Tennessee, Roane State (273). Her rolling as department chair epitomized collaboration in its most exciting and productive form, which Fisher described as a “wide latitude” to develop new courses and experiment with new methods recently presented at

conferences she and the faculty attended in college road trip fashion by, “taking a packed school van,” coming home, “bubbling with ideas and ready to tackle anything” (275). The experiments were many, including group research projects, criticism of television serial dramas, linking courses between English, history, and chemistry by sharing reading of Upton Sinclair’s expose on the meat industry, *The Jungle* (271).

The vagaries of 21st century life are legion in education, nowhere more so than within the American college and university system with its breadth and depth of offerings, challenges, and clientele. Excuses and complaints come easily to us as faculty; we can always find a scapegoat for why our students are not developing in the basics, the art, the method, or the craft of writing. But as it is apparent that the American economy and our state budgets are likely to remain lackluster, at best, for years to come, Fisher’s roll-with-the-punches brand of collaboration may well be our best hope, if not our only reliable strategy for transcending the budget gap, the achievement gap, and especially the gap between organizational support and our own high expectations as professional educators.

Staff Development

Janet Myers and Cassandra Kircher stressed the need importance on collaboration as a sort of ongoing and on-the-job training for instructors assigned to teach composition as part of their load, though they have a background in literature or something other than rhetoric or composition (397). The

assignment of first-year composition, or even developmental composition, courses to faculty with backgrounds in literature or creative writing is common, and most schools offer little in the way of formal training for instructors who find themselves out of their expertise. Literature, creative writing, and composition all have places in a comprehensive collegiate writing program, but require collaboration as an integral part of the program strategy (398).

Brazilian educator and social critic Paulo Friere's celebration of the liberating nature of writing and the ability to lift up people, even poor and oppressed, with literacy education should inform and inspire academia (42). For many students, the college curriculum is too demanding on their underdeveloped writing skills to afford them full access or opportunity in higher education. The writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement emerged in the 1970s to address this issue (Thaiss and Porter 535). To supplement and complement this effort to transform the entire campus into a sort of rhetorical laboratory, the college writing center grew to offer more support for struggling academic writers to succeed as students where they may otherwise have quit or failed without tutelage (Rose 287).

Vitoria Matalon entered the fields of writing tutelage and World Wide Web entrepreneurship in 2003 with her for-fee online writing tutoring center. Her brainchild was born out of her own frustration at her alma mater, New York University, where she had to make writing

center appointments as much as two weeks in advance for assistance when she was an undergraduate student. As Matalon put it, "no one thinks they need help a week before; everyone needs help the night before" (Carlson A30). This plea for help is nothing new. In fact, American college students as early as 1890 began asking for individualized instruction in writing out of frustration with a lecture hall approach that did not foster mentoring relationships (Murphy and Byron 4).

Indeed there is a certain client/provider aspect to the writing center relationships between students and tutors. Partly in response to the popularity of the internet, many colleges and universities have added online writing laboratories to their services. Not surprisingly, these ventures have met varying success. Some institutions, such as Walden University and National University, have no brick and mortar centers whatever, but do offer extensive online writing services to their students, including one on one tutoring and online scheduling of appointments with tutors who typically work from home (P. Prince, personal communication, March 2, 2010).

Whatever the service delivery model, though, the tutoring methods remain more important than the technologies in the quality of the service and its ability to encourage such higher level concerns as critical thinking (Brookfield 89). While there are some technologies that are more accessible, useful, and inexpensive than a paper and pen, the technology should be

seen as a tool, not a magic wand. There is no replacement for a well-educated and well-trained tutor managing and facilitating the tutelage in a well-organized writing center program that is aimed at the lifelong learning of each individual student (Griffiths 31). Addressing the needs of each individual student in person or online is best done in an orderly fashion, which calls for a taxonomy for writing tutelage.

Andragogy

The concept of lifelong learning requires a consideration of Alexander Kapp's 1833 theory that adults respond better to methods designed for their maturity rather than teaching methods typically used with children. While Kapp's theory of "andragogy" as opposed to "pedagogy" gained little currency in its day, Boston University professor, Malcolm Knowles, elevated it to a new level of prominence in his teaching throughout the 1990's (Moberg 1). The construct of andragogy offers important lessons for how best to design programs such as writing instruction or writing support at the college level.

Several key components are common in most writing center designs. The most important component in the success of a writing tutoring program is the methods employed by the tutors in the sessions. With current technology, most any method available in a face-to-face service delivery model is also available online. Modeling, Socratic dialogue, collaboration, presentation, and even lecture are all

available options online as well as in person. The online format is only a medium, not the curriculum itself. The curriculum, the service delivery model, and the methods are most successful when tailored to each individual adult student's strengths, needs, and context (Trianosky 68).

Student-Centered Programming

Keeping the person, or student, foremost in the tutoring process, many long time tutors recommend beginning the relationship by allowing the student to set the agenda (S. Grogan, personal communication, March 1, 2010). This is especially fitting given that most students enter the writing center for the first time as a course requirement (Clark). "If real success is to attend the effort to bring a person to a definite position, one must first of all take pains to find him where he is and begin there" (Kierkegaard 151). Reflection and goal setting are key threshold activities for adult learners beginning a course of study (Merriam et al. 176). This introspection is fundamental to improvement in the writing process. Tutors do well to encourage students to consider their goals before during and after the tutoring session and throughout the tutoring program (Jordan 53). The organization of a model tutoring program should include at least the following: (a) organized tutoring sessions, (b) understanding the complexity of the reading process, (c) development of reading and writing, (d) oral reading by tutor and student, (e) ongoing assessment of competency and comprehension, and (f) planning beyond the tutoring session and

beyond the tutoring series (Roller and Newark). Gillespie adds that tutors begin with a self-examination of what each tutor brings to the process and that tutors should understand the process of reading and the teaching of reading to better understand the process of writing and the teaching of writing (11).

Shared Writing

Shared writing is a process of collaboration for adult literacy students in which tutors and students each read their writing aloud to each other. This method is part of the writing as a “life skill” school of thought that is currently popular with Canadian educators (Fahy and Morgan). This oral presentation is not new, though; shared writing harkens back millennia to the traditions of the bards and their oral presentations. Homer, as a blind man, could neither read nor write, but composed several classic epics still shared today. Sharing writing with a small and supportive audience is a safe way for developing writers to gain confidence in their skills.

Students can develop as writers and tutors develop as educators by sharing their works online as well as in person, or both. The use of both online and brick and mortar service delivery models allows programs and institutions to accentuate the advantages of each and accommodate for the weaknesses. This “blended” approach achieves better outcomes for a wide range of students in various stages, situations, or locations (MacDonald). The advantages of

online tutoring with respect to cost and convenience are obvious. Some students, however, still prefer or require at least initial face-to-face consultation in writing instruction. Writing centers that can offer both in person and online services can capitalize on the opportunities and qualities of each to provide a comprehensive and effective program to develop the competency of each individual student writer (Donnelly 351).

Mentoring

The student writer should find a true mentor in a seasoned veteran tutor. The judgment of a mature tutor will show in the ability to “work with the developing student,” knowing “when to move in and when to step back, when to support, and when to challenge” (Daloz 148). Programs that teach writing as a competency rather than a set of discrete skills help students grow faster and further as writers and scholars (Smits et al. 496). The ultimate goal of the tutoring session series should be the overall competency of the student to communicate in a written medium. Learning grammar, spelling, format, or research methods as individual skills are only means to the end. Tutors should interact with students as writers, as opposed to viewing their tutees as grammar students or spelling students or formatting students. Moreover, many students, especially those with more education, tend to reject lower level criticisms on grammar and format, even when well-founded (Waring 142). Negotiating such issues with aplomb

requires solid orientation training as well as ongoing in-service training provided in a deliberate manner.

Tutor Training

Many writing center tutors feel underprepared to teach all of the skills necessary to help students with their writing (Griswold 67). This feeling is understandable in that writing centers increasingly employ peers as tutors after a model constructed by Kenneth Brufee, Alex Gitterman, and Marcia Silver (Kail and Trimbur). “Collaborative learning has proven to be one of the major innovations in composition teaching in our career of our lifetimes,” as Kail described peer tutoring in 2008 (50). Some posit the tutoring experience and the educational evaluating involved as the highest order of learning (Grant et al. 1). Roller and Newark recommend extensive training for tutors and introductory training for students (12). Untrained or poorly trained tutors can cause as many problems in an online model as they can in a brick and mortar model (Martinovic 165). One key to the success of an online tutoring program is not the distance between tutor and student, but in the training each receives. In order for the technology to enhance rather than hinder the collaboration, tutors should master in new system before it is employed with students (Lipsky 96). Students and tutors with moderate computer skills can quickly learn enough about Adobe Connect or Elluminate to master the programs to a degree that allows most or all of the same opportunities

of in-person interaction at a brick and mortar center.

UMUC’s Effective Writing Center has no bricks or mortar, but exists strictly online. The Effective Writing Center actively recruits a cadre of well-trained English teachers as tutors. UMUC conducts extensive initial training and ongoing in-service training for its tutors. Part of the practice at the Effective Writing Center is to replace “track changes” type of correction editing with “positive feedback” comments (Online Writing Tutorials 41). College of Charleston Director, Bonnie Devet taps departing tutors, whom she refers to as “consultants,” to help inform Devet by writing reflective recommendations. Devet uses the advice to organize future training of “consultants.” Similarly, National University’s Writing Center conducts monthly in-service training, co-lead and co-presented by tutors themselves, stressing a student-centered philosophy. The National University Writing Center staff share methods and collaborate on how best to maintain and improve the success of the organization (S. Grogan, personal communication, March 1, 2010).

Leadership

Another key to the success of the writing tutelage is in the organization of the service. Writing center services that are well organized and well managed offer better and more reliable outcomes for students than poorly organized or poorly managed centers do. Efforts to coordinate

Table 1	Internet Resources for Writing
<u>Topic</u>	<u>Site</u>
Plagiarism	http://www.turnitin.com/static/
Rhetorical Modes	http://www.grossmont.edu/bertdill/research/reshtml/sld046.htm
Formatting	http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/format.htm
Thesis	http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html
Grammar	http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Rhetorical Devices	http://www.uky.edu/AS/Classics/rhetoric.html
ESOL	http://www.eslcafe.com/students/
Punctuation	http://www.edufind.com/english/punctuation/index.php
Free-writing	http://www.powa.org/discovering/freewriting.html
Abstracts	http://uwf.edu/writelab/handouts/abstracts/
Evaluating Sources	http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/
Résumés and Vitas	http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/6/23/
Lab Reports	http://www.marietta.edu/~biol/introlab/labreprt.pdf
Tutoring	http://www.eou.edu/writelab/tutorhandbookOWL.htm
Paraphrasing	http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/cite/paraphrase.html
Quotations	http://www.brainyquote.com/
Idioms	http://www.idiomsite.com/
Academic Words	http://www.academicvocabularyexercises.com/

writing center andragogy with overall writing program andragogy go a long way to improving the collaboration among the faculty, staff and students (Ianetta et al. 12). Student ease of access and predictability are important to success of a tutoring program and are as easy to facilitate online as in person with proper organization (Murphy and Byron 71). Organization requires clear establishment of mission, goals, responsibilities, and roles. Many college and university administrators, however, complain about the lack of clarity in their roles in campus leadership (Anderson et al. 1).

Leadership is required to run any organization, especially those with large numbers of human resources, such as institutions or higher learning. Leadership is most important in such endeavors as pursuing adequate funding for training and proper materials, equipment, and facilities (Bell and Eastmond 114). Tutors and students each need to know the basics of who, what, where, and when from the management. National University uses an online scheduling portal that the administration, tutors, and students all can access. The tutor's schedules are set by the director on the portal; students use the portal to seek open appointments and select them online. Tutors then receive an e-mail each time a student sets an appointment with them. This system allows for each interested party to know the who, what, where, and when of the writing tutelage. The information is available to any of the parties day and night, so long as they have internet

access (S. Grogan, personal communication, March 3, 2010).

Technologies

A recent internet redesign of the Purdue Online Writing lab employed a highly collaborative process from start to finish. Faculty, technical writers, graduate students, and administrators all participated in the program improvement project. The goal was to facilitate optimal experiences for each interested party in the collaboration. This collaborative model encouraged discursive interaction between the various interested parties and related technologies (Salvo).

Older, but still widely used, technologies such as spell check and grammar check, have saved countless gallons of red ink from professors' still older technology of correcting pens. The advent of word processing has likely done more to encourage writing as a multi-step process than the eraser or white-out could ever do, perhaps to the chagrin of modern day anti-technology followers of King Ludd (Pemberton 56). Researching, re-writing, revising, and re-formatting are now relatively fast and easy as compared to the heyday of the typewriter, carbon paper, and the card catalog (Badge and Badge).

Online databases and file depositories such as the Education Resource and Information Clearinghouse have replaced card catalogs to make research for writing projects easier, faster, and more convenient. Students can now do all of their research,

writing, and revising from the comfort of their homes (See Table 1 above). The cost of a netbook computer to access most of this free software and web content is as low as \$299 in 2010. Many databases and journal subscriptions are free or included in tuition and student fees at most colleges and universities. Educators are promoting these technologies across the curriculum and across the globe. There are even a host of sites catering especially to developmental writers (Calfee 78) and developmental students in all subjects (Broderick and Caverly 39). Other uses of newer technologies as means to promote older teaching methods include a project at Michigan Technology University that recruits historically under-represented students to write and share personal narratives in an online forum (Valentine).

Current online technologies, such as Elluminate Live or Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro, allow for file and document sharing in real time. A student and a tutor can collaborate on the same paper on two different computers miles away (Vallance et al. 20). This collaboration can be done on a synchronous basis as well as an asynchronous basis. Each of these online presentation and collaboration platforms is available on a fee for use basis, but is typically paid by the colleges or universities hosting the online writing center. Writing portfolios have found their way online as well integrated into tutorial software (Click and Magruder). In order to accommodate students with varying access to technology and various levels of computer and internet

skills, Many college writing centers employ more than one platform as well as multiple systems at the same time in their online writing labs (Byrne 459).

Online Writing Labs

The majority of online writing centers are outgrowths of the brick and mortar facility on campus. Some online writing centers do little more than act as electronic billboards to usher students into the campus physical center itself (Anderson-Inman 650). Most, however, offer at least web links, answers to frequently asked questions, and documents for download, such as Modern Language Association or American Psychological Association templates for research papers. Many online writing labs also offer virtual tutoring sessions via internet, e-mail, phone, or instant messaging (Harris 21).

The Purdue Online Writing Lab purports to be the first of its kind to offer writing tutelage on the internet. The founder of the Purdue Writing Lab, Dr. Murial Harris, and a colleague from Purdue Educational Computing launched the site in 1994 with a specially designed e-mail server, gopher, and web site. Their intent was to provide services for students who found it inconvenient to visit the brick and mortar center during its normal hours. The Purdue site has evolved into a state of the art stand-alone reference center and clearinghouse for countless students and writers worldwide (Harris and Pemberton). Purdue claims that their site received over 31 million visits from students and writers in more than 125

countries during 2005 and 2006, in which time, the staff tutors report having answered over 3000 writing queries strictly online (Mayer).

The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) is an online institution only and serves students from around the globe. UMUC's Effective Writing Center offers writing assistance in the form of reviewing papers, general writing advice, writing related lectures, and writing related workshops for faculty development. As with the Purdue online writing lab, UMUC also posts general writing information, tips, and resources on its site (Online Writing Tutorials 41).

Online writing lab sites continue the movement toward more education offerings being based online. This movement is often a strategic decision for institutions wanting to offer services and reduce costs so as to stay competitive (Fullmer 54). The online format reduces overhead such as rent, insurance, and energy costs. Tutors, too, reduce their commuting and parking costs while enjoying the advantages of working from home, which saves time and allows for tutors to accomplish more in the event of a cancelled appointment (Calvani 214).

Taxonomy of Composition Advisement

Each advisement appointment between student and writing tutor or writing faculty should follow a list of questions to address as part of an implied taxonomy to address a hierarchy of appropriate andragogical

concerns related to a professional advisement:

- 1) Who is the student, what are the strengths, and what are the needs?
- 2) What is the nature of the assignment and all known requirements as to form, length, style, and research?
- 3) What is the thesis statement, where is it written, and how is it stated?
- 4) Does the body support the thesis, and is the work well organized?
- 5) Is the work written for the appropriate audience?
- 6) Are the mechanics college level?

Many students treat a tutor as a copy editor or proof reader instead of as a mentor. Students develop more as writers when their growth is mentored by tutors as opposed to their work being edited by tutors (J. Eng, personal communication, March 15, 2010). While it is important for the student, as client, to set the agenda, experienced tutors do well to advise and mentor students consistent with the sequential list above, which is represented in Figure 1 below.

Conclusion

Lifelong learning is a must in our information age, especially in the worldwide recession that began in 2008. In order to gain the most from their education, adult learners in any subject, major, program, or school must master the basics of academic reading and academic writing. Towards this end, colleges and universities must create, maintain and nurture collaborative and

<p>Student:</p> <p>Who is the student, what are the strengths, and what are the needs?</p>
<p>Assignment:</p> <p>What is the nature of the assignment and all known requirements as to form, length, style, and research?</p>
<p>Thesis:</p> <p>What is the thesis statement, where is it written, and how is it stated?</p>
<p>Body and Organization:</p> <p>Does the body support the thesis?</p>
<p>Audience:</p> <p>Is the work written for the appropriate audience?</p>
<p>Mechanics:</p> <p>Are the mechanics college level?</p>

Figure 1. Composition Advisement Taxonomy (higher to lower level concerns)

comprehensive writing programs. Writing tutors and writing centers should offer individualized attention, consistent with the taxonomy in Figure 1. above, to students who need more direction than their professors have time to share in class or during office hours (Ryan and Zimmerelli). The training of these tutors, organization of their services, and management of the quality of the tutoring program stand out as key considerations in establishing and

maintaining a quality writing support program (Haviland). Whether writing centers stay within their bricks and mortar, move online, or blend their service delivery, the quality of their services will remain an essential part of the success of their host school's quest for the "liberation of the mind and growth of the student," (Kegan 273) which is a good starting point for the mission statement of a 21st century writing program.

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