

基調講演 2

“Building on the Positive: Best Practices for Writing Centers”

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Thank you for coming, and thank you for the introduction. I appreciate all of you in attendance here. I want to thank Tsuda College and Kansai University for the invitation to come here and talk to you about what we are doing at Wellesley in our Writing Program and about our writing tutors. Thanks to Ray for the very rich overview of what they do at Bryn Mawr in terms of what college writers are doing in the classroom. Our programs are quite similar. Our colleges, although they have a rivalry of sorts, are quite similar, and the writing programs have a lot in common. I'm glad that Ray has done a lot of work for me in introducing you to where the students are when they are coming in to work with the writing tutors. I'm going to be focusing mostly on writing centers today.

I'm going to talk a bit about what writing centers can do, at least what they can do or what they do at Wellesley College and many other American colleges and universities, and why they are such a valuable asset to academic institutions. They support those institutions' academic mission and goals. Primarily I'll focus on the second of the three items listed on the slide: a discussion of best practices, at least as we've found them to work at Wellesley College, of how to create effective writing tutoring and doing that through producing positive spaces. It is essential to have positive space: positive intellectual space, positive emotional space, and even positive physical space. These are the spaces in which tutoring takes place. And if I've got some time, I will discuss some of the slides you've got a few pages down in your handout. In those, I've provided some data on the writing tutors over the past few years, just to give you a sense of some of the kind of students who come to see us, the number of students who come to see us, and who the tutors are.

Why do we need writing centers? I think almost all academic institutions are aiming for some very basic things. In general, they are aiming to increase students' knowledge in some field or in many fields. And they are hoping that their students become more articulate about the knowledge that they possess, or that they come to possess. Writing centers and writing tutoring are very central to supporting that mission in some specific ways. When students come to the writing center, when they come to work with the writing tutors, they are practicing some of the most important skills that we want them to develop as scholars. They are taking initiative. They take responsibility for their education. As Ray was saying, the writing centers aim to be a kind of classroom outside the classroom, or an extension of the classroom.

I think at Wellesley, certainly, at Bryn Mawr, and I'm sure here at Tsuda and Kansai, we want learning to continue beyond the 50 minutes or the 70 minutes or the 2 hours that we have with students in the classroom. When students are working with writing tutors, that education continues. They're deepening their knowledge of the subject when they're working with writing tutors, but in a different way. In the classroom sometimes the atmosphere can be more formalized, and students can be a little bit more pressured to perform in front of a professor who will be grading them and evaluating them. With the writing tutor, a student still has a responsibility and an obligation to explain what she's working on, but in our case to a peer tutor--or even at writing centers with professional tutors, to someone else--someone who is not evaluating her.

And by going to a writing center, the students practice the skills of communication that are the heart of so much of what we do in higher education. Writing tutoring is very much a dialogue, a back and forth between tutor and tutee. It's not about, as Ray was saying, correction, corrective measures or remediation, but it is a much more generative, productive process. Students have to practice their oral communication in that context. Also obviously they are developing their writing skills, their written communication skills, as well.

What writing centers do vary somewhat from institution to institution. I think all of them do the first of these points on the slide, and this is the core of their mission. That is to provide

one-on-one tutoring to students in academic disciplines from across the curriculum. I think this is pretty standard practice now in the United States, and we are well beyond the idea of thinking of writing as only belonging to English or to the humanities. In the past few years during which I have been director of the writing tutor program at Wellesley, we have developed a quite robust mini-program in tutoring students in the sciences, specifically biology. In fact, of the students coming to see writing tutors, the greatest numbers are from writing courses and the second biggest group is biology.

Our writing center helps students not just with academic work; tutors help students with applications for jobs, and fellowships, even sometimes working with students to refine their e-mail messages, when they're going back and forth with professors or with potential employers. That's something we are developing in our practice, as we see that as a need among students. Many writing centers provide workshops in specific writing issues, and they provide reference material and other resources for writers. Many also support faculty and teaching assistants.

Today I'm going to focus on one-on-one tutoring. I'll discuss what happens in those tutorials and how those tutorials can support the student's development and support the mission of academic institutions.

At Wellesley, our writing tutor program operates under the auspices of the Writing Program, which administers a course that's very similar to the Emily Balch seminars at Bryn Mawr: it is a required first-year course in writing that all students must take. There are many different models, however, and writing centers can be located in many different places within an academic institution, including in writing across the curriculum programs, in a learning commons, or in the dean's office. Sometimes writing centers are operated by English departments, in some cases a holdover from the old days.

When it comes to tutoring, wherever the writing center is located and whoever is in charge of it, there are 3 essential elements that productive writing tutoring requires. First it requires intellectual space, an intellectual climate that is generative, that meets the student where she is. It builds on her knowledge and her skills. Ray was talking about trying not to focus so much on her deficits or the weaknesses, but on her strengths. We need to identify errors and weaknesses, but she can't build on this, for it would be like building on sand. We need a foundation of strengths to build on. And an intellectual climate that's generative works in 2 directions. It requires a lot of the student in the writing tutorial. She's not just getting instruction from the tutor, and the tutee often spends more time speaking than the tutor herself during a tutorial.

The second element that's important to productive tutoring is a kind of emotional space that is conducive to a positive relationship. And that can happen regardless of the type of tutor the institution has. At Wellesley we have, exclusively, peer tutors. We have trained undergraduates who work as tutors on campus. I know here at Tsuda there are professional tutors, faculty as well as professional writers. At other schools there is a hybrid of these, and some schools have graduate students working as tutors. Regardless of the system, creating the sense of trust and mutual responsibility is essential to the kind of environment in which we can help a student achieve her academic goals.

The third space in which to build an effective writing tutor practice is physical space. I want to talk about the physical space that we are lucky to have at Wellesley. Physical space for what we do is important because all of our tutoring at Wellesley is in-person and one-on-one. Over 95% of our students live on campus, and we are only now beginning to have online courses. So we don't offer online tutoring. I think this third component--we can think of it more as the space that unites the tutor and the student, and this can be enriched. As long as we think about this space properly, even an online forum can provide an effective space for tutoring, if we have the proper software, a proper interface, and we are thinking about how that interaction takes place even if we are not in the same room. These three spaces, the intellectual, emotional/psychological, and then whatever is left, physical or ethereal, are those through which we make this connection.

At Wellesley, as at Bryn Mawr, we have a required first-year writing course, and most students are introduced to writing tutors as a result of the writing course. Faculty members encourage them to go see a writing tutor: the course is called a writing course, so they see this as a natural part of

what is required. But many of them come back for tutoring in other courses. At Wellesley our system is a little bit different from that at Bryn Mawr, as we do have some discipline-based courses, such as in art history, literature. “The Novels of Jane Austen” and other titles on this slide: these are titles of courses that are offered, though they are just some samples. Students can choose from “Chemistry in the News,” an economics course, or others, and these are pretty discipline-specific courses among the choices. We also have interdisciplinary ones, such as a combination of environmental studies and religion, or technology and the law. “Wellesley and the World” is a course that I teach which involves history, women’s education, literature, politics: you name it, it goes on and on.

I want to talk about some of the goals of the first-year writing courses. I want to do so because the writing center does cater very much to these students, but also because these courses provide an example of the wider goals and the curriculum at Wellesley. One of the goals we have is to provide a common introductory experience in college-level thinking and writing. We are introducing students to a higher level of expectation of what they are supposed to be thinking about and writing about. We aim to help them develop a useful writing process from the point at which they are still developing their ideas through revision, and Ray’s already talked quite a bit about that. And we aim to provide instruction in argument, the use of evidence, organization, style, using sources, and other mechanics of writing. These are examples of what I think are the goals that many courses at Wellesley have, even those aren’t designated writing courses, but that do assign writing. Using the first-year courses as an example, I want to talk about how the writing tutors support the teaching of writing in the College.

Our idea is that the tutoring program is very much in harmony with these goals on the slide. I’ll be taking the 3 goals that I had on the slide before in reverse order: we start with “providing instruction argument and use of evidence, organization and so forth.” Tutors offer advice in specific points of writing. They point out what a student is doing well and what she can build upon. There is a focus on mechanics, but much more on the larger, macro-level issues of argument and organization.

We want to help students establish a useful writing process. And Ray talked about this, as well. The idea of process is new, especially to first-year students--or at least to many of them--and we want them to think about process. By going to the writing tutors and seeing how they can break down their assignment into manageable parts, we want them to get away from the idea of writing as a single one-time act: sit down at your computer for 2 hours, or 8 hours, or 12 hours, and knock out a paper, and that’s the end of it. Just the act of going to the writing tutor interrupts that process, or it lets students know that that’s not even a process. It interrupts that habit as they start to think about the development and the refinement of their ideas. When students go to see writing tutors, it helps to demystify the writing process. They can see it as something manageable, something they can control and break down into smaller parts. And, again, the act of going to tutoring reinforces the idea that advanced writing requires time and effort and repeated attempts at the thinking and the writing, and at the development of the ideas and the deepening of your command of the topic and material.

The third of the goals that I mentioned is that the writing course is aimed at providing a common introductory experience, and an introduction to college-level thinking and writing. And this carries over in writing tutoring in the sense that it emphasize the commonality, or the collegiality, of writing tutoring. In going to a writing tutor, a student can continue the work that she’s done in the class but in a lower-stakes environment, in a place where she is not necessarily evaluated.

By working with a tutor, particularly peer-to-peer, she is putting herself into a larger scholarly community. Many first-year students come in with the idea of working as a scholar in isolation. But scholarship is meaningless without that larger community. And so they are making these connections with students beyond those they made in the classroom.

Students who come to see writing tutors spend more time on their assignments, which, as long as they are being efficient, is a good thing. And, with peer tutors one advantage is that the tutors are students, too. They can sympathize with the challenges that the students might have, though I think there is plenty of sympathy that professional writing tutors can provide as well.

Let me make a big transition from the intellectual and emotional space, and let's talk about the physical space that we have at Wellesley. I think that any space can work if you have the right tutors, the right training for them, and the right students. With our writing center, most of the tutoring takes place within our main library. The arrow is pointing you towards the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center. We call it the PLTC. That's where our space is, in the library: here you can see the entrance. We have a variety of places, armchairs, sofas, tables and chairs, and plenty of natural light. We are lucky to be able to have tutoring occur in this space which is not exclusive to the writing tutors, and there is a lot of other supplemental instruction that happens in this space. There is professional staff who work there, and there are seminar spaces and meeting spaces. Here is a photo of a very typical tutoring session in the morning when there are not as many students studying there. You see the tutor and the tutee sitting at the table, with the paper between them, next to each other: it's a very collaborative situation. Here is another photograph of space for tutoring and for study. As I mentioned before, many writing centers including ours have resources of various kinds for the tutors and students and for faculty: these are reference works, separate from the other book stacks. And here is a photo of more tutoring going on. They like that table I guess. It's right in the middle so they can keep an eye on everything in each direction.

In the few minutes that I have left today, I'll talk a little bit about who the writing tutors are and who the students are that they see. I'll talk a little about the data that we are able to collect. We use an online scheduling software system that we lease from a company. It allows us to track an enormous amount of data, which is helpful because all administrators love to see data. This is really the proof that what we are doing is being utilized and that we are doing it in an efficient way, as we hoped to. It's been enormously helpful to me to see what times and days are most popular with students so that I can assign tutors to work then and maximize utilization. We offer about 70 hours of tutoring per week. And about 70% of those hours are used throughout the semester. That's an average: by the end of the semester we are routinely near 100% capacity.

As for the tutors themselves, we generally speaking have 15, 16, or 17 tutors on staff any given year. Last year we had 16. Their majors represent quite a variety of academic disciplines, but they themselves work as generalists. We don't match students and tutors based on the tutor's specialty. They are trained to be able to work with students from any academic discipline.

One of the advantages of peer tutoring is it's relatively cheap. This is our budget for the year. This does not include my salary, but it does include all of the tutors' salaries and training and materials for the academic year.

As for the students who came to see writing tutors, here are some of the data from the previous academic year 2012-2013. These are unique users who came at least once, but many of them came more than once. We like those repeat customers. The total from fall and spring are 1800 tutorials offered, and that includes tutorials that last 30 minutes and tutorials that last 60 minutes.

Most of our users are first-year students, but as you can see, sophomores, juniors, and seniors are also coming to see the tutors. Over the course of the 5 years that I have been director of the writing tutor program, we've seen an overall uptick in the use of the tutors. As you can see, there is a big difference between 2008 and 2012-13. I see the increase for use and demand of tutors not as a reflection of greater weakness among the students, but actually a growing understanding of the value of the resource. They're learning about it, and they find it's really essential to their development as scholars.

Of the students who come to see writing tutors, the biggest number are coming from writing courses: approximately 30% of the students who come to see writing tutors are coming for help with their writing course. I've listed here the next most popular, the next largest groups of courses in which students seeking tutoring are enrolled. As I mentioned before, biology is right up there with other disciplines that you might expect to see, writing-intensive disciplines like history and political science. We see students from almost every course with the exception of math, because they don't assign too many essays in math. We also rarely see students from physics, studio art, theater studies, and those courses that don't assign writing for the most part. We also don't see students enrolled in foreign language classes. Students writing essays for those classes would see a foreign language tutor.

シンポジウム講演要旨

「日本の大学教育におけるライティングセンターの可能性－米国の先進事例をふまえて」

2013年8月3日（土） 13:30~17:00

I've emphasized peer tutoring, and I do think it works very well. But I think 95% of what I've said applies to tutoring of any sort, whether it's peer or professional tutoring. The last point that I do want to reiterate is that writing tutors are a valuable asset to a college and university, as it creates the space--intellectual, emotional and physical--in which we can build on students' and tutors' skills, contributing to their college experience and the larger success of the institution. Institutions that support writing centers and writing tutors are supporting their students: in this slide, you can see how happy my tutors are, they like their job. It's a demanding job, but they like it. Institutions that support writing centers and that support writing in general are supporting their students by helping them to become more articulate, more confident, and ultimately more successful scholars. Thank you very much for your attention today.