

Annual Assessment Report: Writing Center

Executive Summary

As the final step of the AES assessment process, each AES unit is required to submit an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is a short document which provides an overview of the Unit, and the overall assessment process, highlights key findings and provides recommendation and next steps.

Unit name: Writing Center
Assessment year: 2023-24

Unit Mission

The Writing Center is the tutoring center in writing for all matriculating students at LaGuardia Community College. The Center offers individualized tutoring on any aspect of any phase of any kind of writing. The Writing Center seeks to provide a warm, supportive setting in which students gain clarity about both their difficulties and strengths as writers, and acquire insight, techniques and skills with which to approach their writing more effectively in subsequent work.

Assessment Results by Goal and Objectives

Goal 1: Provide an environment in which students feel supported and encouraged

Supporting Strategic Plan Goals:

- 1 - Build Student Access and Success
- 3 - Enrich the Student Experience

Objectives	Method and Measure
1. Students will report on encouragement behavior by tutors.	Survey results - % of students who report encouragement behavior by tutors.

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

In-person and digital surveys were administered.
99% perceived the tutor as encouraging in 2023-24.
97% reported that the tutor pointed out things that they did well in their work.

Recommendations and future initiatives

The target of 90% was reached and exceeded in the measures of this category. The high % of positive responses was supported by emphasis on this component at staff meetings and communications, which will be maintained next year.

Goal 2: Contribute to students achieving improved outcomes in previously assessed drafts
Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:
 2 - Strengthen Learning for Students - and for Faculty, Staff and the College

Objectives	Method and Measure
2.1 Students will achieve higher grades on revisions compared with previous drafts.	Survey results - Second-draft grades reported by faculty who referred their students to the Writing Center

Tutors recorded first-draft grades, name of assignment, name of student and name of teacher, and delivered this data to Writing Center administrators. Faculty were asked to supply data on first and second-draft grades, and were contacted several times.

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

With ten faculty participating, grade-change data showed 11% of second drafts improving by 1/2 grade, 41.8% improving by a full grade, and 41.8 % improving by two or more grades. No one received a lower grade, and 5.4% received the same grade. Improvement within one grade, e.g. B- to B+, was counted as 1/2 grade; any improvement across grades, ranging from B+ to A- , to B- to A, was counted as one grade. English Department Writing Program Administrators were contacted and supported this strategy in categorizing grade-change.

Recommendations and future initiatives

The survey will again be administered in 2024-25.

The data is positive, and the same approach to data collection from tutors and faculty will be repeated in the coming year.

Goal 3: Contribute to students' improvement of drafts prior to first submission

Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:
 2 - Strengthen Learning for Students - and for Faculty, Staff and the College

Objectives	Method and Measure
3.1 Students will evaluate and report on improvement from pre- to post-session drafts (SLO).	Survey % of students reporting improvement

Overview of findings, analysis, recommendations and future initiatives

Results & analysis

In-person and digital evaluations were offered to students after single sessions, plus evaluations were offered to students who ever attended -- "General Writing Center evaluations." Four- and five-point scales for this issue on surveys were used. Training emphasis on end-of-session summaries was maintained.

The results compare both the degree of reported improvement, and the percentage of students reporting improvement vs. the percentage of students reporting no improvement.

On a five-point scale, students rated their improvement at 4.38. In-person evaluations showed 90% reporting a better understanding of what their project needed, with 5% reporting a "somewhat" better understanding. Additionally, 98% reported that the tutor gave them "useful suggestions about how to improve" their work. Notably, in another measure, 97% responded that the session made them want to use the Writing Center again, indicating a positive view towards the outcome of the session.

Recommendations and future initiatives

The results clearly indicate a positive degree of improvement and exceeded the target percentage of 90%.

Staff meetings will continue to emphasize the critical importance of session summary and review in the closing segment of each session, and discussion of follow-up sessions will also receive emphasis – in order to build on the "somewhat" degree of improvement achieved in the preliminary session.

Overall summary

The Writing Center aims to provide a supportive learning setting in which knowledgeable tutors apply techniques to help students not only improve the writing they bring but also become better equipped for their future work. The 2023-2024 assessment produced measurements of all three of the stated objectives. The data shows great success in creating a sense of support according to student reports, with an extraordinary 99% and 97 % positive responses in the relevant measures. For the first time, sufficient data was accrued to measure actual grade change from one draft to another. The results were clearly positive, with 41.8% improving by a full grade, and 41.8 % improving by two or more grades. Using grade-change as a measure of effectiveness is not a reliable or valid measure by itself, both because it does not directly indicate amount of learning and because different instructors have significantly different grading systems that would result in different grades for exactly the same work and exactly the same amount of change. Nevertheless, we felt that the data should certainly confirm some degree of improvement, and it definitely does.

Students clearly felt that their papers improved as a result of tutoring. Improvement in written drafts as a result of tutoring was rated at 4.38 on 5-point scale, with 90% reporting a better understanding of what their project needed, and an additional 5% reporting a "somewhat" better understanding; "somewhat" is a very reasonable outcome for many tutoring situations, particularly when more than one session may be needed to thoroughly address the issues that papers present. Importantly, 98% reported that the tutor gave them "useful suggestions about how to improve" their work.

On a final positive note, once again the Writing Center saw significant staff turnover, so once again the maintenance and in some instances improvement over last year's results with this year's more inexperienced staff is somewhat surprising and quite impressive.