



# The Write Stuff: A Survey On The Writing Center

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First Year Research Project with the Wittenberg University Writing Center



## Introduction

The purpose of the Writing Center research project is to gather responses that allow us to understand those who utilize the Writing Center opposed to those who do not. This work builds upon recent research pertaining to scholars such as Salem (2016) who analyzed who did and did not use the writing center at Temple University. The goal was to gather responses from a variety of stakeholders—faculty and students—to better understand the experiences and values each individual sees in the Writing Center. The survey data will be used to evaluate what can be done within the Center so future visitors are better assisted. This will in turn allow advisors to adapt to any discoveries and in theory create a space that students desire to utilize.

### Goals:

1. To understand why students are utilizing the Writing Center, or why not.
2. To understand if the faculty utilize the center for helping students with the writing process.
3. To better understand the purpose of the Writing Center from the stakeholders' perspective.

## Student Use of The Writing Center



Figure 1: From the data collected within the survey, we can capture if students utilize the center and what platform they use. This first figure satisfies goal number one.

## Method

- Phase 1:** Our initial idea started with understanding the Center itself. We began reading articles and started to find what potential gaps we might be able to fill through our research. We decided that understanding the stakeholders offered the greatest potential in revamping the current center.
- Phase 2:** The next phase identified that the best way to understand the participants of the Writing Center, which we decided comes from the participants themselves. Through the construction of a survey, we felt that we could solicit a wider participation scale. We created two surveys: one for faculty and one for students which they received via email. The staff survey consisted of 12 questions and the student survey consisted of 31. We submitted our finished surveys to be approved by the IRB for continuation.
- Phase 3:** Our survey went live February 3rd and closed February 24th. We were able to gather 77 student surveys and 39 Faculty surveys. From these surveys we were able to better understand the Wittenberg Writing Centers stakeholders and gather data to support the Writing Center in a forward direction.

## Student Ranking of Importance (Based On Belief Of What Professor Look For)



Figure 2: What goes on in writing center has been an ongoing debate for centers all over. In order to establish new ways within the center, our gathered data from above allows us to best visualize what is important to the students who walk in the for a session and help those that utilize our online options.

## Faculty View of Improvement of Students Through the Use of The Writing Center

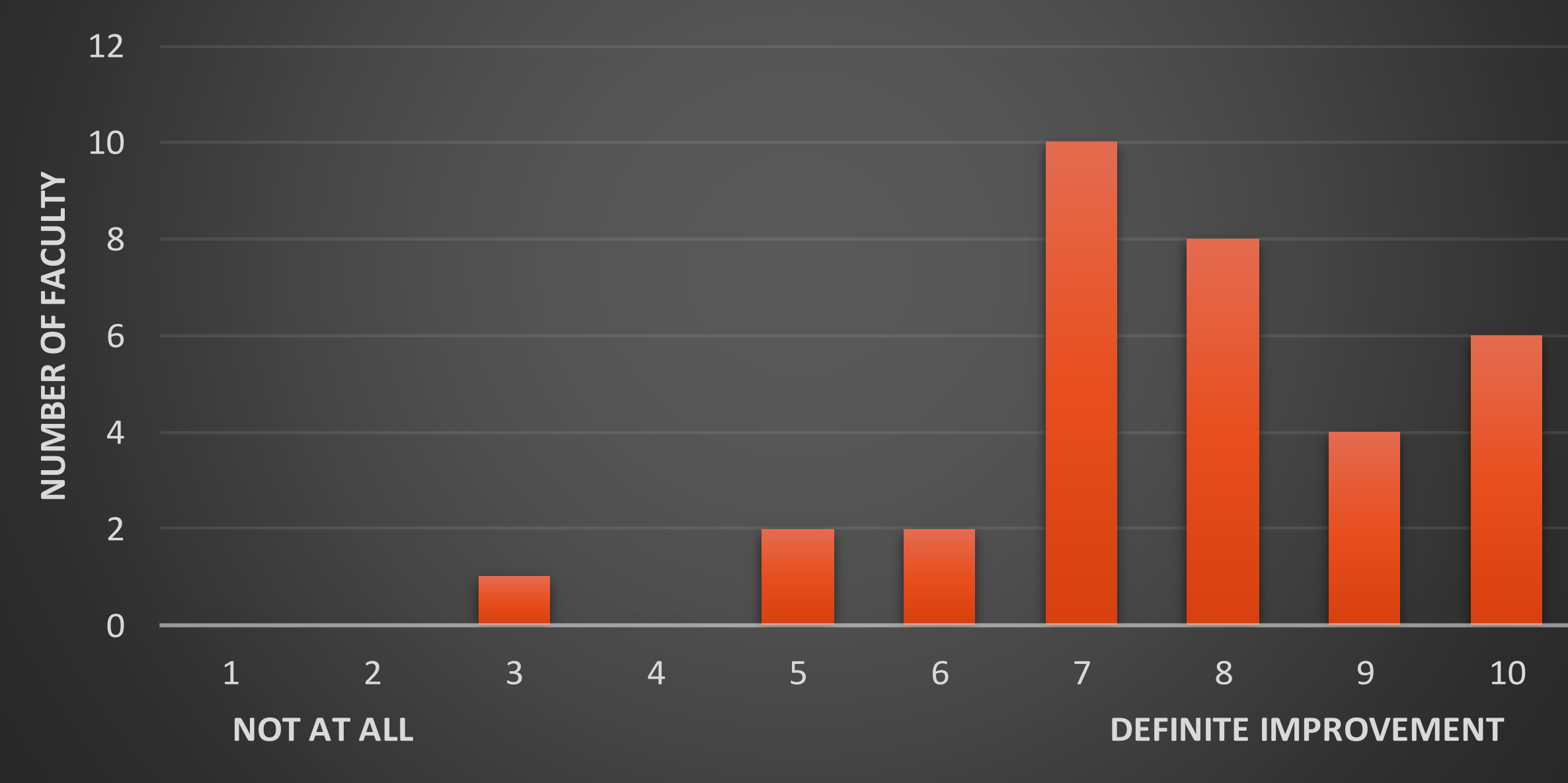


Figure 3: Looking through the lenses of the faculty is a vital component to our research. We wanted first-hand feedback on the success of the center through their assignments and this figure supported this objective.



## Results

Through our survey, we were granted insight to various aspects on the perceptions and takeaways from students and faculty. Some of our larger findings are listed as follows:

### Takeaways from student surveys:

- 66 of the 77 (86%) Students who participated in this research project have utilized the WC either through face-to-face sessions or online sessions, or both.
- 24 of the 77 (31%) utilized both in person and online sessions.
- 26 of the 77 (34%) utilized face-to-face sessions only
- 16 of the 77 (21%) utilized online sessions only
- 11 of the 77 (14%) Students who participated in the study had not visited the writing center at all.
- Of those 11: 73% were in their 1st or 2nd semester at Wittenberg. The other 27% of students were in their 4th, 5th or 6th semester at Wittenberg.

### Findings from faculty:

- 29 of the 39 (74%) faculty members directed individual students to utilize the writing center for their class.
- 14 of the 39 (36%) state that it depends on the student when considering the best time for a student to visit the center during their writing process.
- 11 of the 39 (28%) state its best for the student to visit the writing center after a draft to review.
- 5 of the 39 (13%) state the best time to visit the center is done while drafting a paper.
- 5 of the 39 (13%) state that the center should be used in every aspect of a student's writing process.
- 3 of the 39 (8%) state during the editing phase permits the best time for a student to visit the center.

## Discussion

- Most individuals utilized both aspects offered within the Wittenberg Writing Center. It is imperative that through our findings, both continue to be options that are readily available to students. This means those that benefit from in-person sessions are given that opportunity and those that need assistance but cannot commit to an in-person session can continue through an online session.
- Further research can examine one aspect from the survey, such as the preferred instruction, and what steps need to be taken in order to better these opportunities within the Center.
- One way the Wittenberg Writing Center could improve is advertising its online feature more on campus. Students reported within the survey that they were not aware of this feature or could not figure out how to use it.

## Literature cited

Salem, Lori. "Decisions ... Decisions: Who Chooses to Use the Writing Center?" *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2016, pp. 147-71.

"We're not here because students can't write; we're here because they do." -Wittenberg Writing Center