

The Writing Center as Classroom Resource

Ten Minute Class Visit: In the brief span of ten minutes, a Writing Center staff member will energetically inform students of the benefits of visiting the Center. Students will learn what can transpire during a one-on-one session as well as how to benefit from the many programs and resources available.

Tour of the Writing Center: The length of a tour depends on what you would like students to gain from the visit. A tour usually consists of a “how to make an appointment” piece as well as an overview of how students can gain the most from using the Center. In the past, students who had a tour were more likely to return to the Center for a session.

Customized Writing Workshops: Faculty can request workshops dealing with particular aspects of the writing process or with particular assignments. Performed by a Writing Center staff member, these workshops can be held during scheduled class time or outside of class at another mutually agreeable location. When workshops are held outside of class, faculty may request a list of students in attendance.

Writing Center Hours

Sunday – Friday Please call 232-6567
for appointment/walk-in times.

The Writing Center's Philosophy

The Writing Center staff firmly believes in writing as a learning tool and is committed to helping Bryant students become better writers and learners. We offer students feedback on writing for any course or discipline, and at any stage in the writing process.

What we offer is more educational experience than “service.” Wonderful dialogue occurs in the Writing Center. Students discuss Foucault, stock diversification, and cell mitosis, recalling class discussions, readings, and their own thoughts on these subjects. Their responses are instances of learning; students come to better understand subject matter by talking it out with one less initiated, who may not have had the same course or read the same text(s). Center visitors become the experts, if only for a half-hour, developing confidence within a discipline, and learning where they need to provide a clearer explanation or example to drive home a point.

Some sessions focus solely on narrowing a thesis, others on matters of style. The session focus isn't imposed on students, as peer tutoring is more about dialogic exchange between equals. The focus is negotiated throughout the session given the assignment, due date, and other mitigating factors. Students often come to talk about their frustrations with writing, and we talk about the source of that frustration, typically a result of poor time management or a less-than-constructive reaction to feedback.

Our staff provides students careful readers of their work. We ask questions, voice confusion, talk through ideas. We encourage students to improve while resisting “approving” their work.



The Writing Center

A GUIDE FOR
FACULTY

Unistruure, 1st floor
X6567

web.bryant.edu/~ace/wrtctr

Writing Center Myths

Myth #1: Writing Center visits should be mandatory.

We feel that students must want to learn, must actively seek help with their writing in order for our advice to be helpful. We aren't simply a fix-it shop for failed papers. Our philosophy encourages students of all abilities to strengthen their writing skills. If, however, you feel that requiring a Writing Center visit would truly benefit your students, you are, of course, free to do so.

Myth #2: Students can drop off their papers to have them proofread.

Instead of working for students, our staff works with them to show them how to identify, fix, and avoid the types of errors they commonly make, fostering independence. While we will help with grammar, we will not do the work for the student for two reasons. First, the student is ultimately responsible for the paper, and correcting all grammatical errors for the student shifts the responsibility for that final, "clean" draft onto the proofreader. Second, the student learns little, or at least less, from such an exercise.

Myth #3: Students who've received help with a paper at the Writing Center should submit outstanding work, an "A" paper, and/or work with no "errors."

We do not guarantee better grades on assignments. Students can, and *do*, come to the Writing Center with an assignment only, with an assignment and some hastily scribbled notes, with a preliminary outline in need of much more thought, with a "draft" that was created in an hour or less. These students aren't polishing up final drafts. Students—far too many—come at the last minute, the day the paper is due, and haven't left themselves time to make any substantive changes. Of course, students also come to the Center with drafts that they've written diligently. Some even come a week or more before the paper is due. In all cases, what we offer students is *advice*. We tell them directly that they are the authors, that only they will earn a grade for their work, and that ultimately they must decide what to do with the advice offered. A student may be offered terrific suggestions regarding alternative ways to structure ideas—during a discussion that lasts an entire hour—and leave the Center with no plans to revise the paper one bit. Alternatively, a student may take a consultant's advice to develop a point further despite a conversation the student had with the faculty member where this was discouraged. In both cases, the student is responsible for the paper.

Myth #4: Students can drop in any time to meet with a Writing Center staff member.

The Writing Center is a busy place. Many times students must wait a day or two for the first available appointment. We do offer some walk-in hours, but there could very well be a line of students waiting for sessions at these times. In order for students to guarantee that they will be able to take advantage of Writing Center feedback, they should make an appointment at least two days in advance. A growing number of students make appointments a week or more in advance, working us into their writing process.

Myth #5: The Writing Center should replace faculty conferences.

The mission of the Writing Center involves enhancing the writing skills of Bryant students. We are an academic support system, and as such cannot replace faculty feedback on writing. We are prepared to support faculty instruction. Indeed, our staff is aware that some student questions can be answered only by the faculty member who assigned the paper. We encourage students to get direction from the Writing Center as well as from faculty.

Faculty Endorsements

The Writing Center will continue to be an effective resource for students only with faculty support. Our research shows that a faculty member's endorsement increases the likelihood that students will use the Center. We truly appreciate your assistance in letting students know how the Writing Center can help them.

If you have comments and/or suggestions for the Writing Center, please drop by, call x6567, or e-mail dklepadi@bryant.edu.