WRITING CENTERS AND AI

GENERATING EARLY CONVERSATIONS

Perspectives
on Writing

Edited by
Elisabeth H. Buck
and Joshua Botvin

WRITING CENTERS AND AI: GENERATING EARLY CONVERSATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

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On the 27th of January 2026, we asked the generative AI (GenAI) tool ChatGPT to respond to the prompt, "Why should writing center practitioners be invested in understanding AI?" This was its response:

> Writing center practitioners should be invested in understanding AI because AI is already reshaping how writers think, draft, revise, and learn—and writing centers sit right at that intersection of process, pedagogy, and ethics. A few key reasons:
>
> 1. Writers are already using AI (whether we like it or not). Students and faculty are experimenting with tools like ChatGPT for brainstorming, outlining, revising, and even overcoming writer's block. Writing centers need enough AI literacy to have informed, non-judgmental conversations about how these tools are being used—and how they can be used responsibly.
>
> 2. AI challenges traditional ideas of authorship and originality. Writing centers have long helped writers negotiate citation, voice, collaboration, and academic integrity. AI complicates all of that. Understanding AI allows tutors to help writers ask better questions like: What counts as my own thinking? How do I represent sources honestly? How do I maintain my voice?
>
> 3. It directly affects writing pedagogy and process.
>   Writing centers are process-oriented spaces. AI tools can support (or short-circuit) stages like invention, drafting, and revision. Practitioners who understand AI can help writers use it as a scaffold rather than a replacement for learning.
>
> 4. Equity and access are at stake.
>   AI tools can widen or narrow gaps depending on how they're taught and regulated. Writing centers often serve stu-

dents navigating linguistic, cultural, or institutional barriers. Being AI-literate helps practitioners advocate for ethical, inclusive uses rather than blanket bans that may disadvantage some writers.

5. Tutors need guidance, not guesswork.
    Without training, tutors are left to improvise responses to AI use—leading to inconsistency, anxiety, or misinformation. Understanding AI empowers writing centers to develop clear policies, shared language, and tutor training aligned with institutional values.

6. Writing centers are uniquely positioned as mediators.
    Unlike classrooms or disciplinary departments, writing centers are dialogic, low-stakes spaces. They can model critical engagement with AI—helping writers reflect on why and how they use it, not just whether they should.

Bottom line:
AI isn't just a tech issue; it's a writing issue, a learning issue, and an ethical issue. Writing centers that understand AI can continue doing what they do best: supporting writers as thinkers, not just producers of text. ("Why should writing center practitioners")

It is impossible not to see the radical, and perhaps existential, potentialities that GenAI tools like ChatGPT represent. The above text captures an impressive reply that took approximately ten seconds for ChatGPT to create. While Elisabeth has been for years invested in tracking the ways that technological interventions inform practitioners' ways of thinking about writing and the work of writing center professionals, the sophistication of tools like ChatGPT and other large language model AI software admittedly took her by surprise. In Chapter 3 of her book *Open-Access, Multimodality, and Writing Center Studies*, she traced the ways that the major writing center journals *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* (formerly *Writing Lab Newsletter*), *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, and *The Writing Center Journal* published conversations about computer-mediated technologies, beginning with *WLN* in the late 1970s (Buck). A favorite artifact from this historiography was Daniel Reimer's piece from the September 1984 issue of *Writing Lab Newsletter*. Reimer shared his thoughts about his center's new computer, writing,

> When we first brought a microcomputer into the Writing Lab, it was kind of like putting a lion in the front seat of a Mercedes: it looked impressive, but who wants to get close

enough to take it for a test drive? It seems that, immediately
after creating the computer, humanity raised it to a super-hu-
man level…. We are still exploring possibilities and, like
many, we have a long way to go. (1-2)

Reimer's piece is now over 40 years old, but the field of writing center studies might see some prescient echoes vis-à-vis his fears about computers in our current discourse about AI.

Writing centers have always been on the front lines of assessing the impact of new technologies on students' writing processes. Matthew Bryan sees writing centers' histories as in fact essential to understanding our future(s), arguing that "the decades-long history of writing center discourse around software-mediated writing and tutoring practices can and should inform" contemporary conversations about GenAI (16). In *Open-Access*, Elisabeth also traced the ways that writing center researchers have published on their engagement with new technologies, arguing that these conversations exist in three stages: 1) navigating the advent of computers, 2) the development of the internet and sharing best practices for online tutoring, and 3) understanding the utility that new media tools like social media, blogs, and massive open-online courses (MOOCs) have in and to the writing center. We argue that GenAI represents a new, fourth stage in this trajectory. Our published histories demonstrate writing center practitioners' resilience in navigating new challenges, but the contemporary moment should necessitate active reckoning with GenAI's substantial impacts. Editor Genie Giaimo's excellent introduction to *The Peer Review*'s two-part special issue on GenAI provides a searing assessment of one of these impacts:

As I write this, there are multiple fires raging in and around
Los Angeles. Water has run dry in municipal pumps as
tens (if not hundreds) of thousands have evacuated. On-
line, many are blaming AI's water greediness for the pumps
running dry and the fires remaining out of control and
unquenchable. While AI might not be literally stealing water
from the pumps needed to quell the fires, it does require
massive amounts of water and energy to power it. We are in
a time where the material realities of our lives are deeply in-
tertwined with technology. The digital world is still material;
it requires natural resources to run.

GenAI's well-documented environmental repercussions (Rogin et al.) represent only one concerning by-product of increased usage of these tools. In fact, if one were to Google something like *why AI is bad,* the GenAI-powered search

tool will "helpfully" point you to a huge range of other negative manifestations of GenAI. These include massive increases in internet users' exposure to poor quality and misleading content (Hoffman), GenAI's tendency to erode critical thinking skills (Turner) and foster delusions (Klee), and the extent to which GenAI is already replacing human workers (McGowan) and preventing recent college graduates from accessing entry-level jobs (Ellis and Bindley). The indisputable truth is that, despite all of these grim realities and prognostications, GenAI will not simply disappear. ChatGPT is quite correct in this case: "AI isn't just a tech issue; it's a writing issue, a learning issue, and an ethical issue." *("Why should writing center practitioners").* We know that students are already using GenAI, and we know GenAI is impacting the work we can and will do in the writing center and beyond. Our edited collection, *Writing Centers and AI: Generating Early Conversations,* explores this transformative moment as we seek to understand the consequences and utility of tools that might, on one hand, lead to our collective irrelevance but that also could have great import for advancing access and equity in our discipline's long and complex conversation of how to best assist learners.

Our motivation for developing *Writing Centers and AI* emerged from several experiences at the Writing and Multiliteracy Center (WMC) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where Elisabeth served as director and Josh as assistant director.[1] It was quite soon after the November 22nd, 2022 launch of ChatGPT that our tutors began to see evidence of this and similar tools emerging in their consultations with students. One tutor, Kay (a pseudonym), was particularly concerned. She saw GenAI as symptomatic of a lack of confidence in writers' own abilities, and wanted to mount a campaign against its use. With our permission, she created a flyer and peppered it around the liberal arts building that housed our writing center. "We want human connection and innovation, not AI generation," the flyer proclaimed, "The *pen* is mightier than the *machine*. Don't support AI essay generators. Visit the writing center instead." In the subsequent months, we found ourselves, both individually with tutors and at full staff meetings, having complicated conversations about how tutors should (or should not) respond when they suspected writers substantially composed using GenAI and about the utility of these tools in their own writing practices. As a member of the campus committee on AI, Elisabeth participated in equally complicated conversations on developing a cohesive AI policy for the institution. Members of the disciplinarily diverse committee shared radically divergent anecdotes about how GenAI was being taught and talked about in their departments, and, as a branch campus of a larger state system, it was unclear the extent to which our

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1   Elisabeth moved to a new role at Fordham University in fall 2024.

university should refer to our sister institutions' policies, given our very different student demographics. Elisabeth recognized that her stance on this committee was greatly informed by her role and perspective as the writing center director and her concomitant on-the-ground knowledge of students' use of GenAI in their writing process.

The circumstance that most robustly motivated our decision to put together this project involved an accusation levied at a student writer who visited our center regularly. Josh will detail this more extensively in Chapter 27 of this collection, but this writer's experience of being falsely accused of using GenAI helped us to see clearly the role writing centers can and should play as advocates. In brief, the student's instructor was convinced that they had used ChatGPT to substantially compose a culminating assignment in their major. This student's department chair, who was fortunately inclined toward sympathy for the student, asked us to intervene with the student's instructor and help defend them against this accusation. In our conversations with the instructor, we quickly realized that the allegation had discriminatory overtones, with the instructor implying that a student of color could not be capable of producing such "effective" writing, and, thus, it must be GenAI. We were able to successfully assist the student, but not before we produced literal pages of evidence describing the lack of efficacy of GenAI detection software, our own and our tutors' specific interactions with the student, and general arguments about the strength of students' writing as observed in our own classes. This was a story about the intersections of GenAI and writing centers that we did not see being told, and so, we resolved to tell it.

We quickly realized that many others also had stories and research they wanted to share about writing centers and AI. We launched our call for papers for the collection in February 2024 and ultimately received over 50 proposals. It was a difficult process to narrow down the pieces to include as, frankly, we could have made a case for nearly all of them. We are conscious of not labeling this interest as merely reflective of a trend and instead see *Writing Centers and AI* following the path of other collections about writing centers and technology that, we would argue, still have strong relevance both as artifacts documenting significant periods of writing centers' histories and as practical tools. These works include Eric Hobson's *Writing the Writing Center*, Dave Coogan's *Electronic Writing Centers: Computing in the Field of Composition*, and Sohui Lee and Russell Carpenter's *The Routledge Reader on Writing Centers and New Media*.

In their piece for *Praxis*, "Claiming an Education: Using Archival Research to Build a Community of Practice," Molly Teatreault et al. argue that "the possibilities for understanding the past will only continue to grow as we incorporate documents produced by our own assistants into the archival collection, thereby extending the legacy of our community." As we work in this collection to

build an archive about GenAI for our collective writing center community, we understand the importance of including contributions that represent the scope of writing center research. Dana Lynn Driscoll and Sherry Wynn Perdue effectively summarize these research tropes: chapters in this collection engage with RAD (replicable, aggregable, and data-supported) research; narrative conversations about the ways GenAI is being experienced in writing centers and as writing center practitioners (i.e., "lore"); and praxis-based discussion about how to engage with GenAI in tutor training and within writing center consultations. We believed that each of these methodological approaches enabled important and valid explorations of this topic.

Our secondary goal in framing this collection, beyond offering research method multiplicity, was to ensure that we published many different voices. We realize that the application of GenAI within higher education settings is highly contextual. We wanted to represent as many of these contexts as possible. We include in *Writing Centers and AI* perspectives from undergraduate writing consultants through to the current leadership of prominent disciplinary organizations, at institutions of various sizes, geographies, modalities, and student demographics. The perspectives here are also not limited to writing centers in the United States, but also include several contributions from international writing centres/ers. We hope again that the diversity of voices represented will offer a complex and comprehensive portrait of the ways in which writing centers are thinking about and engaging with GenAI and complicate the *AI-is-good* or *AI-is-bad* binary. Many authors in the collection are ready to embrace GenAI as an essential component of writing centers' continuing relevance and longevity; others are far more skeptical. We also asked contributors to explicitly disclose any use of GenAI in their own composition of their chapters. It is perhaps telling that only two of the 27 chapters opted to incorporate any GenAI tool. The perspectives represented in this collection offer glimpses into the early relationship between GenAI and writing centers, but we believe they will offer continued relevance as GenAI inevitably grows in sophistication and reach.

NOTES ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

We grouped the chapters in *Writing Centers and AI* into five different categories that are not all that dissimilar from what ChatGPT suggested we see as important. We encourage readers to explore the intersections and slippages between these sections, as several chapters could feasibly be placed in multiple categories. *Part 1, "Writing Center Professionals as Institutional & Disciplinary Leaders on Conversations about AI,"* takes on the important roles that writing center practitioners are playing to help outline GenAI policies across institutions and disciplinary

contexts. In "Centering GenAI: Leading from In-Between Spaces," Sarah Z. Johnson and Sherry Wynn Perdue speak to their status as disciplinary leaders in this complicated moment and their efforts to develop and share resources for writing center practitioners in classrooms, departments, and communities, and they offer strategies for writing center professionals to navigate the new terrain of GenAI as a middle ground on campuses. Meghan Velez, Cassandra Branham, Ashley Rea, and Alex Rister's "Lending Our Voices: The Role of Writing Center Leadership in Institutional Conversations about AI" speaks to the ways writing centers can provide necessary resources to faculty in the shift to wider GenAI adoption. Joseph Cheatle recounts the differences in positionality across various institutional writing centers and provides guidance for how professionals can build social capital across these contexts in "Leading the Conversation: Writing Centers as Institutional Leaders on AI." Kristi Girdharry's "From Margins to Mainstream: Writing Center Voices in GenAI Strategy" offers tangible strategies for writing center professionals to position themselves in institutional conversations concerning GenAI implementation. Stephanie Hedge and Sarah Collins describe collaborative strategies between writing centers and writing programs for developing wide-ranging policy in "Developing AI Policies and Statements: A Reflection on Writing Center/Writing Program Collaboration." Closing the first section, Joella Cleary and Anna Rymer's "A Springboard, Not a Landing Zone: Student-First Discussions about AI and Ethics" centers student perspectives as a means through which to develop wider GenAI policy.

Part 2, "Researched Inquiries on AI and Writing Center Labor," includes several Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved studies that provide data-supported inquiries on the intersections between GenAI and writing center labor, along with other chapters exploring GenAI through a theoretical lens. In "'ChatGPT is good at some stuff … but it's not like it's a person': Student Writers Reflect on AI," Rebecca Hallman Martini collects student perspectives with the goal of first understanding how students are both using and viewing the technology before developing large-scale policy. Julia Bleakney, Lauren Jablon, and Paula Rosinski's "Understanding the Landscape of Generative AI Use among Writing Center Clients" similarly explores the ways in which writing center clients are using GenAI, so that tutoring staff can be properly equipped to navigate sessions in which such technologies have been used in student writing. Matthew Fledderjohann and Emily C. Perkins' study in "'I Needed Help': Generative AI as Writing Tutor" collects data describing why students are using GenAI for their writing and offers suggestions for how writing centers can demonstrate their value to the university in the wake of this technology. Hamza Miftah, Dacia Dressen-Hammouda, and Christine Blanchard's "Research-Based Guidelines for Building More Targeted Writing Center Actions: Faculty and Student Views on AI for Academic Writing" focuses

on the concerns of both teachers and students in regard to GenAI technology as a means of positioning writing centers to act in response to these concerns. Jean Schwab provides an analysis and review of past writing center scholarship as a means of better positioning professionals to make policy decisions in the present in "Conversing with the Past: How Previous Research Can Guide Approaches to Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in Writing Centers." Rodolfo Barrett concludes the section with "The Machine Genie: Instructional Metaphors for LLM Text Production," a theoretical underpinning of the various metaphors formed around the wider adoption of GenAI.

Part 3, "Developing Training Materials and Praxis in Response to AI," takes on practical ways that writing center leaders are approaching GenAI in tutor training and resource development. In "Into the (Un)Known: Using Academic Habits of Mind to Address Generative Artificial Intelligence Concerns and Possibilities in Tutor Training," Kat Greene and Charlotte Kupsh seek to utilize practices central to habits of mind to frame conversations regarding GenAI held in the writing center to stem from a place of inquiry and critical reflection. Ashley M. Beardsley's "What Is Our Writing Center's Stance on AI? Using Tutor Training to Develop Guidelines and Learn about GenAI" recounts the collaborative process of developing an AI statement for her university's writing center. Amanda M. May discusses the implementation of GenAI in asynchronous tutoring sessions conducted over email in "Re(de)fining Collaboration: Leveraging AI's Potentials in Asynchronous Writing Center Sessions and Tutor Training." Helen Lepp Friesen and Eunhee Buettner's "Reinventing a New Vision and Raison d'Être: Holistic Writing Center Community of Practice Framework" provides students and teachers with a means of articulating concerns with GenAI in an open and judgment-free forum by utilizing a Community of Practice framework. Ending this section is Ellen Cecil-Lemkin and Lisa Marvel Johnson's "Centering the Human: A Tutor Training Approach to AI-Generated Writing Technology," which offers a tutor training model centered on human interaction and dialogue.

Part 4, "Practices for Navigating AI with/in Writing Center Consultations," addresses innovations taking place within writing center consultations via conversations about or implementations of GenAI. In "Countering AI Shame in the Writing Center: Cultivating Tutoring Practices of Openness and Vulnerability," James M. Cochran, Kathryn Pilliod, and Madilynne Smith discuss the importance of framing conversations of GenAI use with an open mind and with a sense of understanding regarding student vulnerability. Chloe Crull and Nicholas Stillman's "Embracing AI as a 'Second Reader' in Writing Center Consultations: Exploring New Opportunities for Learning and Reflection" responds to the growing concern that GenAI might replace services offered by writing

centers and, in an effort to adapt to the new technology, offer strategies for GenAI to be used to instead enhance tutoring sessions. Deirdre Vinyard and Carly Schnitzler discuss the important limitations in GenAI technologies, and the ways in which writing centers serve as vital sites of transfer in "LLMs Generate Answers, Writing Tutors Ask Questions: GenAI as Sites of Transfer for Writing Center Practice." Eric Mason and Kevin Dvorak's "Looping Generative AI into Writing Center Consultations" proposes methods that position writing center staff to effectively and ethically utilize GenAI in their sessions. Kirkwood Adams and Maria Baker conclude the section in a rebuttal against neo-liberal policies, which devalue the human agent in "De-Centering AI Outputs & Re-Centering Student Labor."

The collection culminates with *Part 5, "Writing Centers' Role in Fostering Accessible, Anti-Racist, and Ethical AI Practices,"* which explores the ways that writing centers can advocate for and model accessible and principled applications of GenAI, as well as counter the ways that GenAI might be perceived or utilized as a tool to perpetuate oppression. Austin Anderson, Alexandra Omogbadegun, Sabrina Bramwell, and Paola Yuli begin the section with "HBCU Writing Centers Confronting the 'Canonized Corpus,'" in which they analyze the ways GenAI training models rely heavily on and thus perpetuate standardization of the "canonized corpus," offering writing centers as a means by which students can reject such homogeneity. Cara Violini positions GenAI as an assistive technology that allows students to take control over their writing process in "Disrupting the Writing Process: How Generative AI Helps Students with Disabilities Communicate." In "Recentering Writing Centers to Address the Hidden GenAI Curriculum," Joni Hayward Marcum and Lisa Bell position writing centers as a campus space in which students can learn crucial digital literacy skills relating to GenAI and other emergent technologies. Joseph Franklin and Anna Laura Falvey place translingualism as a crucial factor in pushing back against the hegemonic language practices of GenAI in "Reclaiming Agency: AI Hallucinations and Translingual Interrogations in the City Tech Writing Center." Finally, in "'How Do We Stop Students from Using AI?' Writing Centers, Generative AI, and Linguistic Justice," Joshua Botvin responds to bias-driven plagiarism accusations and offers the writing center as a campus space well-positioned to hold conversations concerning linguistic justice.

We hope that *Writing Centers and AI* will stand as both an important, enduring contribution to writing center scholarship and as a valuable resource to readers as they navigate this complicated moment *in medias res* in their own writing centers, classrooms, and institutions. GenAI is *our* lion in the front seat of a Mercedes, but we believe that this collection might render this lion rather less fierce. Writing center practitioners have always demonstrated durability in

the face of constant change, technology-mediated and otherwise, but we see in this text an important new discourse that advances our collective goal to advocate for the agency and potential of all (human) writers.

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PART 1. WRITING CENTER PROFESSIONALS AS INSTITUTIONAL AND DISCIPLINARY LEADERS ON CONVERSATIONS ABOUT AI

CHAPTER 1. CENTERING GenAI: LEADING FROM IN-BETWEEN SPACES

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Perhaps more vexing than the pace at which generative AI (GenAI) has evolved is the ever-present challenge for writing centers (WCs) to navigate—and survive—competing institutional priorities. In the face of benign neglect and contradictory institutional practices, writing center professionals (WCPs) confront an important conundrum. On the one hand, we need allies from and tools crowdsourced with other literacy organizations; we need to stand collectively with literature, writing, and language professionals on campus and in the face of industry. On the other hand, we need to hone WC-specific conversations and resources; we need collective representation as WCPs. These needs don't always dovetail in ways that respect the diversity of our spaces, org charts, purposes, and geographic locations.

In this chapter, we narrate how two WCPs have negotiated roles within a global conversation about policy and pedagogy that has grown more urgent since OpenAI and its competitors saturated the market with advanced text generation tools that make Grammarly look like our grandmothers' rotary phones. Drawing upon our participation in intra- and inter-organizational initiatives, we examine the opportunities—admittedly labor-intensive, political, and context-specific—that literacy leaders are pursuing to demonstrate stewardship in a rapidly-changing environment.

As our community knows, the nature of WC work is interstitial. We love the ecological definition of this word because it's so apt. Interstitial organisms live and thrive in gaps—between rocks, corals, and grains of sand. Interstices, whether marine or academic, are rich with opportunity, but they require inhabitants to hone a specialized skill set to survive and thrive. The tools, spaces, and partnerships conducive to faculty work aren't always adequate for our WC roles. WCPs have evolved to operate in those rich spaces between and across classrooms,

centers, and departments; academia, community, and home; globe, region, and locale. We exercise leadership between zooming out to collaborate with others and zooming in to fill gaps with resources more organic to our WC contexts.

By telling our stories, we hope our colleagues will be emboldened to embrace this kairotic moment as an opportunity to lead rather than to retreat. To respond rather than to react. To name what we know in the face of many unknowns. And, perhaps, not only to survive but to thrive in the gaps of current understanding and practice.

SARAH'S STORY

I've identified as a "writing center person" for as long as I've worked in higher education. But like many of us, I fill various other roles in my professional and scholarly life. I therefore started my work in GenAI and literacy education with some of these other identities at the forefront. I was invited to join the Modern Language Association (MLA) and Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, not because of my WC role, but because, as the Past Chair of the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA), I was a member of the CCCC's Executive Committee. Moreover, I was my institution's Academic Integrity Officer, allowing me to participate in scholarly conversations around academic integrity.

In those first months on the Joint Task Force (JTF), I sought to implement the advice I give when I teach group dynamics in my professional communications class. To be an effective member of a committee or team, I tell students to look for gaps: "What roles are going unfilled as the group interacts?" This is something many of us do when we represent our colleagues on committees and work teams, whether in our professional organizations, our faculty senates, or our union negotiations. We try to speak up for those whose voices aren't being represented. Similarly, on the JTF, while we certainly were not politicians, there was a clear sense that each of us felt our role was to represent certain interests and constituencies. We represented a number of institution types—Research 1 (R1), two-year, Historically Black College or University (HBCU), selective private—and came from different fields of interest and expertise.

If finding and filling gaps was part of work we were performing, so too was identifying the places and spaces in which we overlapped. With all our differences, the nine members also found many intersections in our work and experience. Having at least one other person at the table whose experience overlapped meant that we could corroborate each other's observations without long explanations. For example, Anna Mills and I represent a community college context, which allowed us to support one another when one of us brought up issues related to

fulfilling an open-access mission. Alex Lockett and I are both WC folks, but like me, she was operating as a "split advocate." An independent scholar who'd left academia, she was providing essential feedback to the JTF on GenAI and industry. While Alex and I would occasionally discuss how WC work would be impacted by the guidelines and policies our JTF recommended, that part of our identities took a back seat to our primary representation.

As our work gained traction and Working Papers 1 and 2 gained circulation, members increasingly understood that while the JTF was providing much-needed guidance, we needed to address important gaps in representation and expertise. The JTF lacked input from Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), modern languages, and library science. Most importantly for our purposes in this chapter, no one on the JTF served as the designated WC representative. As it became clearer that Working Paper 3 would tackle the enormous issue of critical AI literacies, we knew we needed to invite more voices to the table.

Shortly after attending the 2023 annual conference in Baltimore, I got the okay to invite an International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) officer to contribute to Working Paper 3. Even before the group met on the ground in New York, I immediately felt the difference once Sherry joined our weekly virtual meetings. Someone else was in the room who automatically understood the nuanced implications of our AI literacy work for WC folks. Someone else was willing to speak up or to back me up when I raised questions about WCs. This was (and is) essential when operating in cross-disciplinary organizational leadership. As WCPs, we're used to having to explain what we do. Until Sherry joined, I had not experienced enough of that overlap on the JTF when it came to my WC identity.

STORY OF NEW YORK MEETING: FILLING GAPS AND EMBRACING INTERSTITIAL SPACES

Although we were very different scholars, the JTF had built a sense of camaraderie that fueled our productivity; we had found ways to give each other space to listen and speak. Our expanded team—which included representatives from organizations like the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the College Language Association (CLA), the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the TESOL International Association, and TYCA—faced essential but complicating factors as we commenced Working Paper 3. With little time to become acquainted, expanded concerns about how different stakeholders could be represented, and an ambitious agenda, we struggled to capture nuance without embracing flat-out contradiction.

During the breaks between meetings in New York, Sherry and I came to the realization that this working paper on AI literacies was going to be helpful to the WC field, but it was not going to be sufficient. The content of the paper was already rather sprawling, and we could no more request special sections for tutors than each of the other special interest groups could. As we contributed to the section on "educator literacies," Sherry and I inserted reminders that not all educators could control curriculum or policy and articulated that academic freedom means something different for folks who may be categorized as staff rather than faculty—not to mention peer tutors who occupy and work in the gap between students and educators. Even as we worked, we knew more would be needed.

SHERRY'S STORY

To understand why I embraced Sarah's invitation to be IWCA's representative on Working Paper 3 well into my much-extended presidency, you must appreciate how my tenure began. Promoted to chief officer in July of 2020, three months into the COVID-19 pandemic and only nine months into what was supposed to be a two-year apprenticeship as vice president, I didn't yet have my finger on the pulse of the organization. I barely understood my role in planning conferences, or, as it turned out, in unplanning them. While others scouted masks, I negotiated event cancellations, organized webinars, and pored over the organization's constitution and bylaws. WCPs were struggling to transition online, to negotiate with their administrations, and to advocate for their student workers. Some members crowdsourced a potential position statement on how to respond to mounting crises that included the pandemic, the death of George Floyd at the hands of police, and the growth of Asian hate. I struggled to respond, concerned that IWCA's messaging reflect the organization's international scope (the struggles facing members in places like Colombia, for example, were very different from those in the US), respect the diversity of WC contexts, and follow the association's parliamentary procedures. I deferred to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)'s response to these problems because I was convinced that it did so on behalf of IWCA, one of its assemblies. Although I don't believe members needed WC-specific statements to address the pandemic and the social inequities augmented by it, there are many other situations in which they do. With that said, members needed more communication from me explaining why the officers didn't circulate the statement and why we believed the advocacy they sought was already available from a much larger literacy organization with paid, year-round staff.

By October 2023, when I responded to Sarah's invitation, I understood the culture of IWCA. Moreover, I was convinced that GenAI invited the

kind of organizational response I was not prepared to provide during the pandemic.

Honing a Specialized Skill Set

News of ChatGPT-3's much advanced text generation capabilities became public shortly after IWCA's October 2022 annual conference. Although the CCCC's Annual Convention and the IWCA Collaborative programs for February 2023 were already slated, planners managed to organize a special session, "ChatGPT, Magical Thinking, and the Discourse of Crisis," for a packed room in a Chicago convention center (Byrd). Presenters included Antonio Byrd, now a member of the JTF, and Harry Denny, one of the WC community's most visible and visionary leaders. Their words affirmed my growing belief that the GenAI evolution presented WCs with problems and possibilities unique to our spaces and services. As a WCP and the President of IWCA, I needed to prioritize GenAI.

The learning curve has been slow, shallow, and uncomfortable. Occupying those in-between spaces doesn't come without bruises. I appreciated the difference between machine learning and human intelligence and understood the devastating implications of conflating them for WCs and the writers we serve, but I was blissfully ignorant of all things Large Language Model (LLM). That was about to change. I entreated my computer science colleagues to translate their vast knowledge into tangible nuggets upon which I could build; consumed numerous studies on the intricacies, affordances, and challenges of GenAI; joined John Warner's Master Course on *Teaching Writing in an Artificial Intelligence World;* and negotiated difficult conversations with overwhelmed and sometimes resistant associates.

The process has empowered and humbled me. It has allowed me to forge new alliances and strained existing relationships. I've been reproved for straying from the "path" to another's "turf" (Woolf), but I've also been invited to new tables. These positive and painful experiences have honed my skills, leading me to refine or change my positions on GenAI policy and pedagogy. My once thin skin, a bit bruised and nicked, has molted. It's mine, but it's also transformed to suit the risk-rich aspects of the spaces I inhabit. Whereas I initially agreed with my institution's decision not to provide policy guidance on GenAI, I now address the confusion and contradiction that grows in its absence. Whereas I once understood but silently disagreed with some colleagues' decision to return to in-class writing sans devices, I now explain how such moves may augment inequities. Whereas I continue to appreciate the numerous challenges presented to WCs by GenAI, I have grown convinced

(and correspondingly vocal) that WCPs not only are well-positioned to shape policy on our campuses—in our centers, classrooms, university senate meetings, and board rooms (Essid; Essid and Cummins) —but also that we don't have the luxury of opting out.

As animated discussions during robust revision sessions and critical reception to Working Paper 3's October 2024 release revealed, some of Sarah's and my colleagues—on the JTF, in WCs, or in the greater literacy community—disagree with this conclusion. I risk alienating readers by arguing that WCPs must hone our own and others' GenAI literacy despite very real concerns about academic freedom, equity and access, the environment, labor, resources, and learning. This language—one characterized by "must," a modal verb shouting a command—feels foreign in my mouth and prose. I consider retreating to a more polite and agreeable rhetorical space and to my postmodern roots, but I'm reminded that the consequences of not doing the work, of not advocating for our centers and our writers, are just too great. In the face of criticism that by engaging with GenAI we relinquish our power to critique it, acquiesce to its purveyors, and compromise our humanity, I ask: Do scholars have another way to vet, venerate, or veto it? Will ignoring GenAI vanquish it? If we don't participate, who or what will fill the gaps? These questions do not impede vigorous debate about how, when, and whether GenAI is used, but they assume familiarity with its affordances and limitations. For example, we must understand the degree to which it was present in writing tools that preceded ChatGPT, its cousins, and competitors. We also must concede that detection tools and efforts are fraught with pitfalls (Elkhatat et al.; Perkins et al.; Weber-Wulff). As I write, however, I recall a GenAI syllabus statement from a recent academic integrity case that characterizes "any" use of GenAI as academic misconduct and overstates the ability of our institution's detection tool to uncover it.

WCPs must embrace new ways to justify our existence, to make our work meaningful, to make writing understood as the product of human thought, and to distinguish tutoring as a human interaction, a nuanced conversation that cannot be replicated by a machine. We must distinguish writing as a process and a product of human thinking, served by but distinct from the technology that produces it. We must do so in an environment where increasingly sophisticated algorithms run by mega computers can aggregate data from millions of sources in microseconds. And, we must remind ourselves and others that even in the face of an authoritative display, computers cannot (at least for now) filter bias and prioritize quality over quantity. Without an informed user orchestrating an ongoing exchange, GenAI output is simply the product of word patterns that masquerade as thinking in writing.

LISTEN. LEARN. LEAD. [1]

As we collaborated on Working Paper 3 during those overcast March 2024 days, we began to map the ecological context in which WCPs, tutors, and the writers we serve operate—both in terms of how we are similar to and different from the other literacy-focused colleagues and with regard to our own vastly different centeredness. Much of our early planning was spurred during moments when we experienced a disconnect despite genuine efforts to be more inclusive. We felt this most poignantly while reviewing draft language that addressed most of the audience via the terms "faculty" and "students" rather than by titles that included more of the roles represented by the literacy leaders in the room. This sharpening awareness—as much as the rich discussions about the shared vision and experience of the larger group—encouraged us to resist assumptions about WC roles and contexts when we drafted an invitation for WCPs to join what would become IWCA's version of the JTF. And before readers infer that the JTF believed the inclusion of new partners in Working Paper 3 would fully satisfy the needs of all constituents, we must note that co-chairs Liz Losh (MLA) and Holly Hassel (CCCC) encouraged us to leverage the relationships we honed during the project and to customize the tools we shared in New York City within our own professional organizations. They even provided us with the names of scholars in our disciplines who had contacted them regarding the urgency of the work. It was in that list that we found our inaugural IWCA task force members.

Shortly after we returned to our respective Midwestern campuses—Sarah to a two-year college in Madison, Wisconsin, and Sherry to a regional public Research 2 (R2) doctoral institution in Southeastern Michigan—we shared our vision with that short but mighty list of WCPs. They generously agreed not only to meet in June and from locations like Dublin and Germany but also amid major career transitions. Although we appreciate the problems of asking for more from already overworked and often under-resourced WCPs, we cannot help but give a shout-out to IWCA AI TF members for their willingness to balance an eclectic and heavy load in under-resourced interstices. Thank you to Genie Giaimo (Hofstra University) for drawing our attention to issues of labor and sustainability in *Unwell Writing Centers*, their award-winning book. Thank you to Joe Essid (University of Richmond) for composing "Writing Centers & the Dark Warehouse," which we believe is the first peer-reviewed article to discuss GenAI in WC contexts, and for articulating WCPs' authority to exercise leadership on GenAI. Thank you to Saurabh Anand (University of Georgia), a doctoral student and recipient of the 2023 IWCA Future Leader Award and the

[1]   We borrow this title from a 2-hour webinar hosted on October 29, 2020, by IWCA's leadership during what would have been its annual conference.

2024 CCCC Scholars for the Dream Award. They have worked steadfastly since July 2024 to provide leadership on GenAI. Thank you also to Nathan Lindberg (Cornell University), who agreed to join the IWCA's AI TF and to spearhead its Research and Reports subcommittee.

To begin phase one of the TF's work, we first sought to identify the breadth of experiences and perspectives in WCs across different Carnegie classifications, missions, regions of the US and the world, student demographics, WCP roles, etc. We bracketed the insights Sarah and Sherry had derived while working with the JTF and the collective knowledge that the TF shared, so we could listen to and learn from a diverse group of WCPs. We drafted and distributed a survey within two weeks of our first meeting. By the time the Research and Reports subcommittee began analyzing the data in January 2025, we'd received over 200 responses, representing 35 states, 17 countries, and almost every institution type and student demographic, albeit disproportionately reflecting the experience of faculty WCPs who operate in U.S. doctoral-intensive public institutions. Findings revealed challenges that included fears about reduced WC usage and gaps in training, but many respondents saw the evolution of GenAI as an opportunity, albeit a labor-intensive one, for WCs to redefine their purpose and to shape policy (Lindberg et al.).

In addition to a strong rate of response on the survey, we have been heartened by an outpouring of volunteers, including the generous folks who participated in our follow-up focus groups during October of 2024. Since then, 28 WCPs from a cross section of WCs now serve on TF subcommittees dedicated to professional development, advocacy, and research. Many of them have carefully articulated how their specific contexts and roles are essential to IWCA's GenAI literacy effort and how their expertise and experiences might help shape a global conversation about GenAI in and beyond the WCs. They have been eager to discuss the many ways in which the pitfalls and promise of GenAI will enhance or exacerbate existing trends. Moreover, we are pleased to report that our efforts to replicate the JTF's Experiments Archive for WCs have been rewarded with workshops, assignments, help guides, and tutoring scenarios. Our community is so generous with its innovations.

One of the most valuable lessons we've learned since forming the IWCA AI TF is that participants become leaders. The people who responded to our surveys, who agreed to participate in our focus groups, who reached out with questions, many are now members of the TF subcommittees. Repeatedly, we heard in our focus group discussions that hardly anyone began this work feeling they had enough expertise to lead. Yet, when they saw a need on their campuses, they stepped forward to begin doing that vital AI literacy work. They stayed open and curious and humble. These campus leaders are now becoming national leaders who are helping to shape practice for WCPs all over the world.

As we lead from these in-between spaces, we also recognize that even as we take steps forward, the landscape continues to shift around us. After the publication of Working Paper 3, MLA and CCCC sunsetted the JTF in early 2025, and each organization launched its own separate AI-related initiatives aimed at the specific interests and needs of the two organizations. Sarah now serves on both the CCCC Special Committee on AI and Writing and the MLA Task Force on AI Initiatives, and by maintaining these connections, the IWCA AI Task Force will continue its own work informed by the direction(s) these sibling organizations are taking, finding and filling gaps in scope and guidance that WCPs will need.

By laboring within the interstices of an academic ecology, we've learned that the rocks must form before we can comprehend what will (and won't) develop within the in-between spaces between conversations, organizations, and partnerships. The IWCA AI TF will continue its work providing policy guidance, training resources, and research for the global WC community. Through collaboration and coordination with other literacy professionals from within the interstices between center, institutions, and disciplines, we can introduce writers to new ideas, encourage them to develop the grit that will overcome inertia and gridlock, build their self-efficacy, and help them to grow a time-tested toolbox of reflection.

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CHAPTER 2. LENDING OUR VOICES: THE ROLE OF WRITING CENTER LEADERSHIP IN INSTITUTIONAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT AI

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Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) is a private STEM university with three campuses: two residential campuses in Daytona Beach (DB), Florida, and Prescott (PC), Arizona, and a Worldwide (WW) campus primarily focusing on online education. These two aspects of our institutional context—its STEM focus and its multi-campus structure—have shaped our opportunities and our strategies for engaging in AI-related dialogues at ERAU. First, each campus has its own writing/communication center, each with a slightly different focus, to serve the needs of the distinct student populations. Each campus also has its own center leader: at the time of writing this chapter, Cassandra (Sandy) was Director of the Center for Communication and Digital Media at DB, Ashley was Director for the Writing & Design Lab at PC, and Meghan and Alex were Co-Directors for the Virtual Communication Lab at WW. Although ERAU has recently introduced a "one university" model intended to unify the campuses, there is a history of inconsistent policy creation and implementation, as well as inconsistent faculty support, across the three campuses. This has also been the case in the institution's response to generative AI (GenAI) in two major ways. First, while there has been clear interest in and concern about GenAI among both faculty and university administrators, including cross-campus conversations about GenAI led by groups such as our Centers for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE), as well as policy statements used by two campuses, there are still many differences in how each campus is addressing GenAI. Second, ERAU's emphasis on STEM (and its comparative lack of faculty specializing in writing and communication studies) led to somewhat polarized dispositions about AI among our faculty: those who were immediately prepared

to wholeheartedly embrace AI in the classroom, likening it to "autopilot for writing," and those who were convinced that AI would devalue our academic programs entirely by removing all opportunities for valid assessment (see Chapter 8, this collection, for Bleakney et al.'s discussion of a similar range of tutor attitudes toward GenAI). Both these perspectives pose problems that writing specialists can help bring to light.

In the wake of inconsistent university support and subsequent faculty confusion, we became involved in our campus and institutional conversations about GenAI in various ways and to various degrees. As we all hold faculty ranks along with our writing center leadership roles, we are not only considering the impact of GenAI in our own classes, but are also dedicated to providing support to students (both tutors and tutees) in our respective centers. We have each been involved in institutional conversations about GenAI outside of our respective classrooms and centers; however, it is important to note that, in most cases, rather than being asked by upper administrators to participate in these discussions because of our roles as writing center directors, we instead found ourselves leveraging our own expertise in order to articulate the importance of our presence in these conversations.

In this chapter, we argue that writing center administrators are ideally positioned to help faculty respond to this unique and challenging moment in higher education. While writing center staff, including both administrators and tutors, can support students in using GenAI as a writing tool, center leaders should also be proactive in guiding faculty, in part because we can build upon our existing knowledge and experience to do so. First, writing center leaders already find ourselves needing to bridge the gaps between faculty expectations for and student experiences with writing. Second, we are typically well-versed in the tools and technologies used by students and faculty for completing writing tasks and are accustomed to providing support for both groups seeking to use these tools effectively. Above all, our experiences with students have prepared us to approach these conversations in a way that centers student agency, equity, and ethics.

MAKING STUDENT WRITING PROCESSES VISIBLE TO FACULTY

Our experiences at ERAU indicate a wide gap between faculty concerns about students' AI-enhanced writing and students' own anxieties about ethical AI use, a gap that has been observed in national studies. In this section, we argue that this expectation gap constitutes an opportunity to help faculty better understand students' writing processes, something with which writing center leaders are well aware.

Insights from National and Local Surveys

While the overwhelmingly plagiarism-focused reactions to GenAI have somewhat calmed since 2022, many faculty across institutions remain concerned about students' use (or more specifically, overuse) of AI in producing written text. For instance, a 2024 ITHAKA survey of instructor perceptions and practices surrounding GenAI use revealed that the vast majority of instructors across disciplines feel skeptical about the use of GenAI in academic settings, with one respondent arguing, "LLMs and Generative AI are going to undermine the trust between faculty and students. This is serious for all courses that involve writing" (Ruediger et al. 6). Moreover, faculty who may be interested in encouraging students' ethical AI use in their classes feel unprepared to do so due to a lack of knowledge about how to use GenAI themselves or lack of support for AI integration in their teaching.

The latter sentiment has also been found at our institution in similar surveys of faculty. The CTLE at our DB campus hosts a Taskforce for Innovation (TFI), consisting of leaders across the DB campus who form subcommittees to research important topics, one of which is focused on GenAI in higher education. Sandy was invited to join the TFI in fall 2023, after participating as an external member of a Students-as-Partners subcommittee, and subsequently volunteered to be part of the GenAI subcommittee. In the 2023-24 academic year, this subcommittee developed and deployed two surveys, one for faculty and one for students, to learn more about their views on GenAI as well as its role in the classroom and students' future careers.

504 students and 284 faculty from all three campuses completed the survey. 85 percent of students surveyed acknowledged using GenAI tools in some way, with 44 percent of students acknowledging use of GenAI in writing and research, as shown in Table 2.1 (for data from other localized surveys on student use of AI, see Essid and Cummins; and, in this collection: Bleakney et al., Chapter 8; Fledderjohann and Perkins, Chapter 9; Miftah et al., Chapter 10). Students also revealed they were more likely to learn about GenAI through informal avenues than from academic or professional sources, as shown in Table 2.2. Importantly, this survey also reveals that students are eager for more guidance from their professors on the use of GenAI, as shown in Table 2.3. These findings demonstrate that students are not only aware that GenAI will likely be an important tool in their future professions, but that they also crave instruction and guidance from faculty. Survey results reveal the need for formal support for students and faculty on GenAI, and writing center professionals are ideally positioned to provide that support for faculty in curriculum-related professional development.

Table 2.1. Students' Current Use of and Understanding of AI Tools (n=504)

Students' AI Use	Number and % of Responses
Not used AI	77 (15%)
Some use of AI	258 (51%)
Use of variety of AI tools	141 (28%)
Use of AI in writing/research	222 (44%)
Use of AI in personal life	230 (46%)
No understanding of AI	69 (14%)
Understanding of AI strengths	315 (63%)
Understanding of AI limitations	314 (62%)
Understanding of AI ethical risks	350 (69%)
Understanding of AI in discipline	187 (37%)

Table 2.2. How Students Learn about AI (n=504)

Sources for Learning about AI	Number and % of Responses
Self-taught	318 (63%)
Learning from friends and peers	268 (53%)
Learning through social media	223 (44%)
Learning from professors	144 (29%)
Learning through professional development	76 (15%)

Table 2.3. Students' Interest in Further Support Related to AI (n=504)

Areas for Further Support	Number and % of Responses
AI in my field/discipline	365 (72%)
Clearer course expectations around use of AI	302 (60%)
Using AI as a learning support tool	297 (59%)
Using AI to save time	295 (59%)
Understanding AI as it relates to the honor code and plagiarism	293 (58%)
The benefits and abilities of AI	282 (56%)
The biases and ethical risks of AI	260 (52%)
Limitations of AI	239 (47%)

The need for faculty support is further demonstrated by the 53 percent of faculty surveyed who indicated that GenAI impacted their course design or teaching. However, only 18 percent of faculty surveyed had an AI policy beyond that provided at the university level. 85 percent of faculty respondents indicated that they used GenAI tools themselves with varied levels of proficiency and understanding, as shown in Table 2.4. While this data indicates that the majority of faculty are using AI tools, these findings also suggest that faculty may not feel well-enough informed to craft their own policies or to have classroom discussions with students about GenAI regarding disciplinary best practices. However, because students crave this type of information and guidance from faculty members, universities must provide faculty with professional development opportunities focused on GenAI that prepare them to fill these needs for students.

Table 2.4. Faculty's Current Use of and Understanding of AI Tools (n=284)

Faculty AI Use	Number and % of Responses
Not used AI	44 (15%)
Some use of AI	157 (55%)
Use of variety of AI tools	72 (25%)
Use of AI in writing/research	99 (35%)
Use of AI in personal life	100 (35%)
Use of AI in teaching	96 (34%)
No understanding of AI	44 (15%)
Understands AI strengths	182 (64%)
Understands AI limitations	161 (57%)
Understands AI ethical risks	181 (64%)
Understands AI in discipline	111 (39%)

RESPONDING TO FACULTY CONCERNS WITH WRITING CENTER KNOWLEDGE

While faculty across institutions and disciplines display varying levels of familiarity and comfort with the use of GenAI, as indicated by the ITHAKA and the ERAU surveys, many faculty familiar with GenAI have concluded that product-focused grading is no longer an effective method for assigning and assessing learning, particularly when it comes to writing (Bedington et al.; Chiang et al.; Sakzad et al.). Proponents of GenAI use in higher education argue that these tools can help faculty shift to more process-oriented, individualized learning

models in their courses by encouraging AI tools as partners in the learning and writing process. However, even among faculty who have come to this conclusion, many may be unsure how to implement process-based or labor-based writing instruction effectively (for a recursive, process-based approach to GenAI, see Violini, Chapter 24, this collection). Writing center leaders, therefore, are particularly well-equipped to help faculty better understand students' writing processes and how they might make those processes a more fundamental part of their courses. After all, writing centers see those processes in action more than perhaps any other entity on campus. This is particularly true in online courses where the composing process is largely invisible to instructors.

In addition to providing insights about student writing processes, writing center leaders can also help faculty better understand student anxieties about GenAI. While faculty may worry about students use or overuse of GenAI, students, meanwhile, may be afraid of being accused of plagiarism for using tools like Grammarly, which have been shown to trigger AI detection software, or may simply be unsure where to draw the line of ethical AI use, especially if their instructors have not issued clear policies or guidance (Deans et al.). ERAU's survey of students confirms this finding, with 58 percent of students indicating a desire for further support in understanding GenAI as it relates to the honor code and plagiarism (see also Cleary and Rymer's Chapter 6 within this collection for discussion of students' "enthusiasm for discussing ethical implications and considerations of AI usage"). Writing center administrators are also well-suited to respond to these concerns and to bring them to faculty attention, in part because we have been in the middle of academic integrity conversations for decades, but also because we hear students' anxieties about navigating inconsistent course expectations on a regular basis (Lindberg et al.). Speaking from the middle in this way allows us to hear faculty concerns while also guiding clear messaging toward students.

As writing center administrators, we have long histories of working to bridge the gap between faculty and student concerns about writing. For example, when establishing the Writing and Design Lab on the PC campus, Ashley implemented a participatory design approach to invite students, faculty, and staff to take on co-designer roles (Rea et al.). Participatory design as a methodology values users' knowledge and experiences, demanding reflexivity and co-determination of research goals between researchers and users (Spinuzzi). Using a participatory design approach allowed Ashley and her center staff to better understand student and faculty writing needs and concerns and work to create solutions together. This participatory design approach carried into our campus conversations about GenAI as the PC writing center supported faculty and staff in drafting departmental AI writing policies.

At ERAU's WW campus, the writing center was also able to capitalize on a history of providing faculty development programming in addition to our support for students: we have hosted Communication Across the Curriculum Conversations and faculty research/writing groups since 2019, often in partnership with other campus stakeholders like CTLE. The emergence of GenAI has spurred us to provide more professional development focused on process-oriented instruction, including sessions on scaffolding larger writing assignments and incorporating reflection activities into courses across disciplines. While these topics are far from new, faculty anxieties about GenAI offered a new sense of relevance for these teaching practices. Our strategy echoes Hartung and Sharp's process of leveraging existing partnerships to build collaborative instructor development programming related to GenAI.

Finally, our status as center directors who also hold faculty appointments gives us additional ethos, allowing us to talk about faculty perspectives and anxieties with empathy. For example, in fall 2023, Alex participated in the pilot of a WW campus AI Incubator program designed to explore AI in the online writing classroom. Leveraging a virtual community of practice model, faculty in the program redeveloped their courses with newly created AI instruction and assignments. Participation in this program not only demystified the use of AI in Alex's own courses, but it also provided her opportunities to engage alongside faculty colleagues in open dialogue about the expectations and realities of AI in instruction. Writing center administrators are often used to engaging in these kinds of cross-campus conversations from their positionality as center directors, but this co-director's participation as a faculty member offered new opportunities to learn and collaborate with colleagues. As a result, she gained familiarity with using AI to enhance student learning and writing skills in a supportive setting, leading to increased confidence in the classroom and enabling her to be an example and source of peer support for fellow faculty. While we acknowledge that not all writing center leaders hold faculty appointments, we encourage their presence in professional development programs offered to faculty whenever possible to gain a "behind the curtain" view of the institution's faculty guidance on AI usage. When this is not possible, conversations between writing center leaders and faculty/teaching and learning support centers on campus can provide similar insights.

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE: WRITING CENTER LEADERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF TECHNOLOGY

In addition to making writing processes more visible to faculty, writing center administrators can also help faculty better understand AI within the context of

the many tools and technologies students and faculty use to assign, create, and review writing. Composing technologies, after all, have often been at the forefront of writing center scholarship and practice (Bryan). Many of us have been early adopters of emerging composing technologies, fueled by a need to meet our student tutees where they are and with the tools they use to write, and, as a result, have become de facto "tech experts" among our colleagues in humanities and communication fields. This reputation can serve writing center directors well when it comes to supporting faculty usage of GenAI.

At the WW campus, center co-directors Meghan and Alex have typically been the point people for piloting new composing technologies adopted by the university, including tools like Grammarly, Canva Premium, and Turnitin's Draft Coach integration. Students and faculty alike have been directed to us for help in using these tools effectively, and we have directed workshops and created resources to help faculty understand the benefits, limitations, and ethical implications of these technologies. We were therefore able to leverage this ethos after the launch of ChatGPT, adding workshops on AI to our existing faculty development programming as early as spring 2023. At first, these sessions focused on holding space for faculty concerns about academic integrity while educating them on the role of GenAI in professional sectors, providing examples of how to talk to students about GenAI, and reassuring faculty that the writing center would also directly support students in ethical GenAI use. Since then, our faculty workshops have focused on more specific topics, such as how instructors can use GenAI as writing and research partners or how GenAI tools might be used (in partnership with humans) for course material development or student feedback and peer review. We believe that our experiences as technology experts over the past several years prepared us well to be a trusted provider of faculty support for AI.

Likewise, writing center administrators have a keen awareness of how access to composing technologies can be uneven, often putting underrepresented students at a disadvantage. Writing center expertise in translingualism and equity-oriented pedagogy can be productively applied to conversations on GenAI use (for greater detail, see Marcum and Bell, Chapter 26, this collection, and Gebers et al.). In part to address this inequity, and in part to prepare students for the wide variety of written, spoken, and digital communication tasks they will perform in their professions, many writing centers, including those at ERAU, have adopted aspects of multiliteracy centers and design labs. Providing students access to and training to use digital composing and editing tools that may be cost-prohibitive, such as those offered by Adobe, as well as providing access to and support in using more affordable composing tools, such as Canva, equips students to be stronger, more experienced, and more professional communicators. Additionally, as these types of digital composing tools also have GenAI integrations, the experience writing

center professionals have in working with these tools further prepares us to help students and faculty negotiate their use. By directly supporting students and providing them a space to play, experiment, and learn technical skills with AI and non-AI tools, writing centers can help faculty understand the potential inequities presented by their AI policies or practices.

Similarly, writing center administrators can leverage our technology expertise to contribute to conversations about AI-detection tools and policies. While much of the early discourse around AI and writing positioned AI use as violating academic integrity (Alexander et al.), writing center scholarship has long highlighted the problematic nature of plagiarism detection software (Vie). Rather than encourage use of AI detection software, writing centers can reframe the conversation around academic integrity to advocate for writing curriculum development and policy design, echoing calls from scholars like Lauren Short to move past AI policing both within and beyond writing center tutorials.

CONCLUSION

While the impact of GenAI on education is only beginning to be felt, it is important to remember that the concerns it raises regarding issues such as academic integrity and the integration of new technologies into the classroom are not. Writing center administrators and staff have the opportunity to observe students across the disciplines communicating in multimedia for varied purposes and audiences, and our experiences as and working with faculty help us to create a bridge between student and faculty perceptions of writing. As such, writing center administrators should feel empowered to join and guide university conversations regarding GenAI in the classroom.

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CHAPTER 3. LEADING THE CONVERSATION: WRITING CENTERS AS INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS ON AI

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Writing centers have come a long way since their modern inception. Once on the margins of institutions, writing centers are now ubiquitous in higher education, growing rapidly internationally, and expanding in secondary education. Rather than an afterthought, they now function as a core service to students, faculty, staff, and, sometimes, to the broader community. At the same time that writing centers are becoming more established in institutions, artificial intelligence has taken higher education by storm. Institutions have scrambled to develop policies, procedures, and practices to address a nascent technology that is quickly evolving. Writing centers, meanwhile, are primed—as hubs of communication—to assist institutions in dealing with, and responding to, artificial intelligence.

While writing centers may have once been viewed as liminal spaces (Sunstein) or on the boundaries of institutions (Davis), that is no longer the case. More recent studies have shown the broad scope of writing centers, including Sabatino and Rafoth, who estimate that there are more than 3,000 writing centers domestically in the United States and internationally. Meanwhile, Salem challenges the idea that writing centers are marginalized and powerless:

> Inside a single institution, a writing center might well seem "marginalized" and powerless, and if we reason forward from those impressions, we will conclude that writing center work is marginalized and powerless. But in the system of higher education overall, writing centers are neither. The fact is that writing centers are the single most common model for academic support, and a majority of institutions have them…. More importantly, writing centers clearly serve institutions in their efforts to compete in a stratified university system. Writing centers allow universities to signal the kind of literacy

> they sponsor, and they give universities a concrete venue for operationalizing institutional goals and agendas. (37)

Writing centers serve as an important service that signals an institution's support for the kind of literacy they sponsor and a place to carry out those literacy goals. Salem recognizes that even though writing centers are different from each other and are frequently institutionally specific, they are still the most common model for academic support at institutions of higher education. Because of their importance for institutions, writing centers are well-placed to join institution-wide conversations, especially on artificial intelligence.

As a field, writing center personnel are very much engaged with issues surrounding artificial intelligence. There has been a flurry of threads on the WCenter listserv and posts on artificial intelligence to the Directors of Writing Centers Facebook group. Topics include the ethics of a session with a paper written with artificial intelligence, collecting artificial intelligence resources, plagiarism detection software and artificial intelligence, working with Grammarly and artificial intelligence, and more. There has also been this edited collection (*Writing Centers and AI: Generating Early Conversations*) and two special issues of *The Peer Review* focusing on generative AI (GenAI). All of this is to say that writing center administrators and tutors are engaged in these debates about artificial intelligence; in fact, I can't think of many people on campus more ready and prepared to lead discussions, develop policy, and inform decisions on artificial intelligence.

This work makes the case that writing center personnel, both tutors and administrators, should be institutional leaders surrounding conversations on artificial intelligence in higher education. In this chapter, I begin by describing institutional and faculty approaches to artificial intelligence. I then make the case that writing centers should build and use social capital to confront what some view as the existential threat posed by artificial intelligence to writing centers. Lastly, I provide multiple ways that administrators and tutors can be institutional leaders in artificial intelligence before concluding with the benefits to writing centers from this positionality.

INSTITUTIONAL AND FACULTY APPROACHES TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence has presented a unique challenge, and potential opportunity, for institutions, disciplines, departments, and even individual faculty members. As a part of my previous institution's AI Rapid Task Force, I was a witness to how artificial intelligence splits faculty members from even the

same discipline and the difficult challenges facing an institution in creating a unified response to it. I experienced first-hand that the main problem is that there was not an agreement on how to approach artificial intelligence on any level of the institution; individual faculty members, even sometimes those within the same fields, had an array of pedagogical responses to artificial intelligence. On one extreme, some faculty members were quick to embrace artificial intelligence for the benefits it can provide to writing and research. In particular, faculty members thought they could use artificial intelligence to increase productivity, save time, assist in brainstorming, guide content creation, and assist with proofreading and editing. Meanwhile, on the other extreme, faculty members viewed artificial intelligence as an existential threat to their teaching and even careers. And, in between these two approaches, were many faculty who were just trying to figure out how they feel about, relate to, and engage with artificial intelligence.

As part of the AI Rapid Task Force, we were not tasked with creating an overarching institutional policy because of the array of ways faculty were choosing to engage, or not, with artificial intelligence. A singular policy supporting the use of artificial intelligence, or the ban of it, would have run afoul of many faculty members. Rather, we were tasked with creating syllabi statements that would allow individual faculty to customize their pedagogical approach to artificial intelligence. The committee's three approaches reflected how faculty were engaging with artificial intelligence—now, this is not the official language of the policy, but rather the spirit of it. The first was a "No use of artificial intelligence in the course." The second was "Artificial intelligence allowed only with specific instructor permission and only in specific ways." The third was "Artificial intelligence can be used in any way that students see appropriate and helpful without limits." In many ways, the institutional approach reflects the broad array of faculty approaches to this issue.

Just like individual faculty members, institutions of higher education often do not have a singular approach to artificial intelligence. While there is often a lack of overarching institutional policy regarding artificial intelligence, there is frequently guidance in the form of institutionally sanctioned syllabi statements or pedagogical approaches that faculty can take with artificial intelligence. Moving out of the first few years of working with artificial intelligence, how will institutions deal with artificial intelligence going forward? They are currently scrambling to create ad-hoc committees, standing groups, and, in some cases, permanent institution-wide committees to address this issue. In the next section, I make the case for why writing centers should build and use social capital in order to position the center as an institutional leader on artificial intelligence.

BUILDING AND USING SOCIAL CAPITAL: WRITING CENTERS AS INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, writing centers are ubiquitous at institutions of higher education. They are also a core student service that often serves the entire student population and, in some cases, faculty, staff, and community members. While tutoring functions as a common denominator among vastly different and disparate writing centers, they do more than just tutoring. According to Jackie Grutsch McKinney, "Tutoring is seen as the great connector; the single thing that all writing centers have in common, the *work* of a writing center" (59). But writing centers do much more than tutoring and have a broad portfolio. In her survey of 141 writing center directors, McKinney found that most (81% or more) provide workshops for students, most (61–80%) provide Writing in the Discipline (WID), Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), or Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC) initiatives, many (41–60%) conduct workshops for faculty, among many other services the writing centers offer. Writing centers also provide numerous services outside of peer tutoring, including workshops, writing retreats, community partnerships, embedded tutoring, dissertation/thesis programming, writing groups, speaker series, and more. These statistics highlight how writing centers engage with, and serve, institutions in a variety of different ways and functions. They also show how writing centers are often doing WID, WAC, and CAC initiatives that span the institution.

The pandemic highlighted for many institutions the importance of the writing center and the services that they offer. When the pandemic hit, writing centers were quick to shift their services online (if they weren't already providing online tutoring and resources) and to find unique and creative ways of providing services to their institution. Many writing centers were able to find inventive ways of taking what they had been doing in person and shifting it online. With the rise of artificial intelligence coming on the heels of the pandemic, writing center personnel can capitalize on this unique moment to argue for their enhanced role in working through issues surrounding artificial intelligence on an institutional level.

Artificial intelligence represents a seismic shift to writing centers because of the potential for it to mimic many of the moves that tutors do when helping a client with the writing and composing process. It is during these types of seismic shifts that it is important for writing centers to build and use social capital. Social capital is "value derived from positive connections between people," which "[i]n industry, … is described as a set of various relationships, reputations and assets existing within an organization or with its partners and customers that enable

business processes to function as efficiently and effectively as possible" (Mask). It is important for writing centers to develop and build social capital as a way of increasing goodwill, trust, and relationships between the writing center and various stakeholders within and outside of an institution. This social capital can be used to support, maintain, and sustain the writing center. If artificial intelligence presents a potential threat (or even an existential threat, according to some) for writing centers, then being proactive rather than reactive would be beneficial. This would allow writing centers to help mitigate the negative effects of artificial intelligence while advocating for their own role in the institution. Being proactive for writing centers builds on Rebecca Hallman Martini's work *Disrupting the Center*, where she argues that writing centers must be proactive in responding to "crises" in higher education. If artificial intelligence is not a "crisis"—if only because we are not sure how, as a field, to approach it—then I am not sure what is.

Artificial intelligence is a technology that is not going away and, if anything, will continue to quickly evolve. In this situation, it is important for writing centers to be among the leaders at the institution in addressing the issue of artificial intelligence. One way to do this is to build and use social capital. Writing center administrators should develop partnerships and collaborations with other members of the institution are leading the response to artificial intelligence. This will allow administrators the chance to build a coalition of support and stakeholders that can help the center. Hallman Martini writes, "When writing centers can find ways to respond innovatively to potential disruptions in higher education, they increase their chances to build social capital" (6). With social capital comes the opportunity to influence the future of the writing center.

Since the advent of artificial intelligence, I have worked at two institutions of higher education as a writing center administrator. Both experiences have been drastically different in terms of how the institution responded and how I was able to use social capital. At my previous institution, institutional administrators were quick to respond to artificial intelligence by developing an AI Rapid Task Force; artificial intelligence was viewed as a harbinger of a seismic shift in higher education. However, each institution has responded to artificial intelligence in different ways and, as Buck and Botvin note in their introduction to this collection, the "application of AI within higher education settings is highly contextual." And, in Chapter 2 of this collection, Velez et al. observe that even among campuses in the same system, there are differences in how each is addressing GenAI. This demonstrates the institutional differences, not to mention the potential drastic differences, among writing centers in approaching this issue. However, it is important in both situations to develop social capital and position the writing center to participate in important conversations about artificial intelligence when they happen.

How can we, as writing centers, build social capital at an institution? Here are some strategies that have worked for me:

> **Run the Center Well:** It seems obvious, but a well-run writing center is the foundation for developing social capital at an institution. The center should have effective tutor training, assessment, supervision, management, and mentoring.
>
> **Shameless Self-Promotion:** Take any opportunity to promote the writing center on campus through listservs, emails, and other forms of communication. Other forms of self-promotion include semesterly and annual reports disseminated to campus partners and institutional administrators.
>
> **Develop Partnerships:** Connect with other programs and services both on- and off-campus. This helps to create advocates who understand what the writing center does and defenders of the writing center. Additionally, partnerships help build goodwill towards the writing center.
>
> **Create Programming and Initiatives:** Expanding writing center services beyond tutoring will help to insulate it against changing tides in student learning (like artificial intelligence). This also helps writing centers diversify their offerings to students, faculty, staff, and community members so that when there are challenges to one program, it does not necessarily mean that that program is the only thing the center is invested in.
>
> **"Speak" to Institutional Administrators:** Use semesterly and annual reports to "speak" to administrators with data featuring the impact of the writing center on student GPA, retention, persistence, as well as usage rates. It may be helpful to collaborate with institutional research (or a similar office if the institution has one) that can help provide demographic and other information about students who use writing center services.

These are just a few of the ways that I build social capital at my institutions which I can then use to advance the goals of the center. In the next section, I discuss how writing centers (both tutors and administrators) are on the front lines of addressing issues of artificial intelligence.

WRITING CENTERS ON THE FRONT LINE

In a recent workshop I provided on artificial intelligence, I queried the

participants on their use of it. The responses from students, faculty, and staff could not have been more different. While students admitted that they use artificial intelligence tools frequently and in a variety of ways, most faculty and staff members present acknowledged that they rarely, if ever, had used artificial intelligence tools. In fact, some faculty and staff members had not even used the tools. It was telling that even if faculty and staff were not using these tools, students were. The downside is that this mismatch does not necessarily place many faculty and staff members in a strong position to contribute to artificial intelligence conversations at institutions. For writing centers, this situation highlights just how important it is that tutors, often students, are prepared to talk with other students about artificial intelligence.

Writing centers are uniquely positioned to address artificial intelligence considerations because they are on the front line of working with students on artificial intelligence in their writing and communication. Scenarios abound where students may bring in works that intersect with artificial intelligence, including:

1. During a session, a student indicates that they used Grammarly to help them improve their language in their work. However, unbeknownst to them (but known by the tutor), some Grammarly versions use artificial intelligence.
2. A student is using artificial intelligence in their work and comes to the writing center to see if it can be detected by a tutor. Their idea is that if a tutor can detect it, then so can a teacher; if a tutor can't detect it, then maybe the teacher can't as well.
3. A student does not want to plagiarize and wants to learn how to properly cite the portions of their paper that they used artificial intelligence to assist with.
4. A student is encouraged by their instructor to use artificial intelligence to help them develop their paper. However, the artificial intelligence software is not giving them the responses they want, and they need assistance in how to create better prompts for the tool.
5. A student is using artificial intelligence to help develop their work but still wants feedback from a tutor.

These are just a few of the many ways that artificial intelligence may appear during a tutoring session. And, outside of the classroom, this may be the place that sees the most issues connected to artificial intelligence.

Outside of teachers, tutors are most likely to encounter issues of artificial intelligence in their daily work; tutors are also well-positioned to help students navigate artificial intelligence. In particular, within any given session, tutors can

help students with artificial intelligence literacy, ethical considerations, and creative applications.

> **Literacy:** Writing centers have the opportunity to help teach students about artificial intelligence. Tutors can teach students how artificial intelligence is based on LLMs, how to provide iterative instructions to artificial intelligence in order to get the program to do what they want it to, and about the biases inherent in artificial intelligence. How to incorporate artificial intelligence into a student's work and how to cite artificial intelligence.

> **Ethical Considerations:** Tutors can work with students to discuss and examine the ethical considerations of using artificial intelligence. This can include how and when artificial intelligence can be used in a work, as well as proper citation when it is used. This could also involve reviewing an instructor's individual policy or the institution's policy to ensure that the student is in compliance with all requirements.

> **Creative Applications:** Artificial intelligence is not limited to just composing texts but also has creative applications for other forms of composing. Artificial intelligence programs, according to faculty in the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University, "can make suggestions for visual editing (such as color correcting or enhancing the image), assist with the design of 3D models, make suggestions on typography based on context and the intended audience, and generate complex patterns and designs that humans might not be able to do on their own." Artificial intelligence can also help create videos, photos, images, and more.

Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli, in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, list what they call the "many hats" that tutors wear. These include ally, coach, commentator, collaborator, writing "expert," learner, and counselor. We can add "Artificial Intelligence Practitioner and Authority." While tutors can work with students through these areas of artificial intelligence, writing center administrators and professionals can also assist faculty and staff in navigating artificial intelligence issues.

Writing center administrators are also on the front line of artificial intelligence considerations. Administrators must not only prepare tutors to work with students on issues of artificial intelligence, but also prepare tutors to navigate the myriad of policies put in place by the institution and individual instructors. Not only must

tutors be trained to be literate in artificial intelligence, but tutors also need to be able to talk about ethical considerations and creative applications. That means writing center administrators must understand artificial intelligence, have the ability to develop tutor training for it, and know how to implement policies for the writing center concerning it. Additionally, faculty and staff may query administrators about how they should pedagogically approach artificial intelligence or how students are working with it. For both administrators and tutors, there is much they can contribute to institutional knowledge regarding artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

Much of this work has been devoted to why writing centers should be part of institutional conversations and policymaking regarding artificial intelligence; however, there are also benefits for writing centers that result from being party to these discussions. Part of it is self-serving—if artificial intelligence presents a potential crisis or disruption for writing centers, then being proactive, rather than reactive, is beneficial. Being proactive allows writing centers to help mitigate the negative effects of artificial intelligence on the center while advocating for their own role in the institution. It also allows writing centers to build important partnerships and collaborations—namely, social capital that can then be used to support and protect the center. And, it ensures that writing center administrators are preparing tutors to work with a technology that is here to stay.

Throughout this work, I have argued for the important role that writing center administrators, staff, and tutors can, and should, play at institutions of higher education surrounding conversations and decisions about artificial intelligence. Others in this collection, including Girdharry (Chapter 4) and Johnson and Wynn Perdue (Chapter 1), make similar arguments about writing centers. While the situation of each writing center is different, they are bound together because of the way that they serve as hubs of communication at the institution. Even though this work has argued and laid out the case that writing center personnel should help plan and implement an institution's approach to—and policies surrounding—artificial intelligence, it remains an open question if institutional administrators are going to welcome writing center personnel to a seat at the table.

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CHAPTER 4. FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM: WRITING CENTER VOICES IN GenAI STRATEGY

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Babson College

Tell me if you can relate: every summer, about two weeks or so before the fall semester starts, I have a wacky teaching dream where I show up to class without a syllabus or any preparations done, and my classroom is a hotel room or something equally as awkward, distracting, or uncomfortable (most recently, we were in some kind of aquarium situation with water-splattered whiteboards and large fish with pointy noses). Although I love teaching and have been at it for a while now, I still get those little anxious dreams of worst-case scenarios (students awkwardly sitting on hotel beds is way worse to me than some stinky fish water).

During July 2023, still weeks ahead of my annual teaching dream pattern, a new type of anxiousness emerged around my sleep cycle. The public releases of generative AI (GenAI) platforms were becoming increasingly prominent in students' lives, and I worried we might see a decline in our writing center's appointment numbers. Would students still seek our guidance when some GenAI could potentially offer instant feedback and writing support? And at all hours of the night? In my head I imagine students tapping away on their computers, chugging energy drinks at 2am with lo-fi Spotify playlists coming through their headphones (either curiously small or almost comically oversized—there's no in between in my brain's rendering of students in headphones); how could our modest writing center compete with a form of accessibility we would never be able to offer?

Determined to face this challenge head-on, I devised a strategy to maintain my writing center as a neutral, welcoming space for students, regardless of their engagement with GenAI. The guiding principle was simple: honesty and openness. It was important for students to feel comfortable discussing their use of GenAI to allow us all to learn and adapt together. To this end, I reached out to my department that month and urged colleagues to include clear GenAI policies in their syllabi, even providing sample language to make the process easier, whether they were all-in, all-out, or open to experimentation with GenAI. That fall, when I announced the opening of the writing center to the larger faculty

community, I outlined our stance on GenAI and emphasized our commitment to fostering a critical and ethical approach to these new tools, should they be allowed by instructors. To support my staff, I also developed a mini-training session to begin equipping them with knowledge and strategies to address GenAI-related queries during tutoring sessions.

These efforts were not just about managing a potential decline in usage; they were about positioning the writing center at the forefront of this advancement in writing and technology. By taking on GenAI with a critical yet open mindset, I aimed to enhance our support for students and remind them that conversation is a critical part of the writing and learning process (Bruffee). But why stop there? In just a short amount of time, higher education is being reshaped by the public availability of generative GenAI technologies. While this new age of GenAI presents unique challenges, it also offers opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning. Writing center leaders, with their long history of adaptability to technological advancements and close eyes on the kinds of writing happening across campuses, are positioned to play an important role in navigating these changes.

FIRST, A FEW CAVEATS AND SOME CONTEXT

This chapter builds on Joseph Cheatle's argument in Chapter 3 that writing centers are not only ready but well-positioned to lead institutional conversations about GenAI. While Cheatle underscores the importance of building social capital and proactively addressing GenAI's challenges, my contribution offers a closer look at what that leadership can look like in practice. Drawing from my experience as a director, I explore how writing centers can leverage their positionality, pedagogical knowledge, and cross-campus visibility to shape ethical and practical responses to GenAI without losing sight of the very real labor and resource constraints many of us face.

Before saying more, there are a few caveats to consider. Writing centers still often continue to be marginalized within academic institutions, with their leaders juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, often without adequate financial support (see, especially, *Disruptive Stories: Amplifying Voices from the Writing Center Margins*, edited by Elizabeth Kleinfeld, Sohui Lee, and Julie Prebel). This marginalization can exacerbate the strain on writing center staff when they are called upon to contribute to new initiatives, such as GenAI integration. Moreover, it is also important to note that being at the GenAI table does not necessarily mean advocating for an all-in approach to GenAI. Even the most technologically excited writing center directors can, and probably should, voice concerns about GenAI integration to ensure that the ethical and pedagogical

implications are carefully considered. Lastly, writing center professionals should be consulted on students' learning and writing regardless of GenAI integration, as they have a strong pulse on what is happening across the college. Writing centers are still perhaps "the last best" neutral spaces on college campuses that can offer unique insights into writing practices and challenges across disciplines (Waldo). This neutrality makes writing center professionals essential voices in broader institutional conversations about writing, and their involvement should be seen as part of a broader commitment to thoughtful and balanced strategies (with or without GenAI) that prioritize student learning and support.

While acknowledging the constraints faced by writing center administrators, it is essential to take seriously Jackie Grutsch McKinney's argument to "complicate the writing center narrative in ways that include what now lies at the periphery of our work" (6). Writing center professionals possess unique expertise that can significantly contribute to institutional GenAI initiatives; however, having a seat at the table must mean more than just being present: it must also come with the necessary resources and recognition to ensure sustainable and effective contributions. While this may seem like a line of pie-in-the-sky thinking given the fiscal challenges many institutions are facing (Marcus), we need to take seriously the creative ways we can best leverage the expertise various constituents across campus bring, given the historical dimension of our field and the breadth of ways writing centers can add depth to further institutional strategic initiatives. Given the experience we bring to the GenAI table as well as the caveats around labor and valuing expertise, what might having writing center professionals in GenAI strategy roles look like? In the following section, I offer a brief narration of one way my writing center has been brought into a positive spotlight when it comes to GenAI and writing. For context, I direct the writing center at Babson College, a small, private business school in Wellesley, Massachusetts, with 29 percent international students as well as 21 percent first-generation students. I manage a staff of around 20 undergraduate peer consultants and one or two professor consultants each semester. I am a non-tenure track, full-time teaching professor who receives one course release per semester, which equals a 2-2 teaching load. In addition to teaching and directing the center, I have service and scholarship requirements. Our writing center is not open during the summer.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN GenAI INTEGRATION

Soon after emailing my department about GenAI policies, I received an email from associate professor of entrepreneurship Erik Noyes: he was putting together an interdisciplinary team of faculty to build community around GenAI, which was called The Generator (The Generator). The team wasn't trying to create the

tools—we'd leave that up to the labs at places like MIT and Stanford—but we were trying to see what we could do with the tools in our context as a business school with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. As Erik explained during those first months of planning, this was about thought experimentation (*and ethics*, I'd add); this was about classroom innovation (*and pedagogy*, I'd emphasize). When I accepted the invitation to "play" with this group—and it was playful in its very nature of coming to try something new and share our successes and failures, like children pretending to be stranded in the forest gathering sticks and leaves to ford a stream—I found myself with a team of curious and thoughtful colleagues with disciplinary backgrounds in IT, strategy, and theater as well as the director of The Foundry, our on-campus makerspace where students do things like make prototypes with cardboard and scissors. We'd eventually add a few more colleagues to the team: a design-thinker, a philosopher, an academic technology specialist, and a data scientist who specializes in machine learning.

I emphasize my colleagues' areas of expertise not to just highlight the interdisciplinary nature of this team but to share something intentional on my part: I was always promoting the writing center. Given that my duties involve maintaining and sustaining the work of the writing center, promoting its work is a major part of that. Given that my main collegial interactions had been with other liberal arts faculty members who knew my role on campus yet still needed reminders on what exactly happens in the writing center, being physically present in spaces with these colleagues from other areas of campus further reemphasized the role of the writing center. And given the visibility this work would go on to give me as part of the team—through events for faculty, meetings with various stakeholders, a think tank with the college's president, and a presentation to the Board of Trustees—being director of the *writing* center meant something because GenAI and writing were so bound up in this moment.

To be clear, I do not recommend that writing center directors immediately create an interdisciplinary team for the sake of potential think tanks with their presidents or anything like that (and, chances are, many are already engaged in some form of committee work in this area). What I do recommend, however, is strategically making GenAI part of your work and then strategically making that work visible to others. In my case, this included giving a GenAI-focused workshop for our Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching, speaking about how GenAI has impacted writing at our Academic Technology Innovation Center's semesterly kickoff meeting, conducting research on GenAI (surveys, interviews, and teacher research), and supporting my staff in these conversations. Most of these opportunities emerged because of my visibility through The Generator—chairs, deans, and other administrators were now casually reminded of both me and the writing center beyond the opening-day email I send every semester.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR WRITING CENTER DIRECTORS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

To move from individual case to broader application, the next section offers a set of strategic initiatives designed for writing center directors working in a range of institutional contexts. While my own experience at Babson has been shaped by interdisciplinary collaboration and administrative visibility through The Generator, I recognize that not all writing center leaders have access to the same networks or resources. Yet, across contexts, many share a common imperative: to understand and respond to the shifting terrain of writing and GenAI while protecting the core values of student-centered support. These strategies build on the ethos of relational, context-sensitive leadership that has shaped my own work and that I believe can guide writing centers through this moment of change. The following chart outlines strategic initiatives that writing center directors could implement to examine GenAI and/or integrate it into their services and potentially raise visibility of their important voices in larger GenAI strategy. These initiatives are categorized by complexity and resource availability, ranging from basic steps to more advanced, resource-intensive strategies. Each level offers actionable ideas that can be tailored to the specific needs and capacities of different writing centers and are meant to inspire contextualized projects as opposed to offering any sort of blueprint to follow.

Table 4.1. Actionable Ideas for Writing Center Directors

Level	Initiative	Description
Basic	Data Collection	Collect data on the usage of GenAI tools in clients' drafting (e.g., as part of an intake form or exit survey).
Basic	Pilot GenAI Tools	Start with small-scale pilots of GenAI-powered tools such as Grammarly.com and MyEssayFeedback.ai to see if they might complement writing support services. These tools can provide immediate feedback on grammar, style, and structure, but how effective are they in your context?
Basic	Staff Training and Workshops	Organize training sessions or workshops to familiarize staff with GenAI tools. While highlighting the benefits and drawbacks of using GenAI in writing support can be useful, I recommend prioritizing listening to staff and students' concerns and feelings.
Intermediate	Collaborate with IT Departments and Librarians	Partner with campus IT departments and librarians to explore more advanced GenAI tools and literacies. Leverage their expertise to integrate these tools and ideas into writing center services.

Level	Initiative	Description
Intermediate	Interdisciplinary Workshops	Host an interdisciplinary workshop, seminar, or speed-share event on GenAI that involves faculty from various departments.
Intermediate	GenAI Tools Evaluation Committee	Form a committee within the writing center that regularly evaluates emerging GenAI tools for their pedagogical value and ethical implications. This committee could provide recommendations on which tools to adopt and how to integrate them effectively into writing support services, which could then be shared with other interested parties.
Advanced	Advocate for Institutional GenAI Policies	Engage in discussions with administrators to advocate for the inclusion of writing centers in institutional GenAI policies. Let them find ways to compensate you for labor beyond your job description.
Advanced	Develop a Campus-Wide GenAI Literacy Initiative	Lead a comprehensive, campus-wide initiative aimed at increasing GenAI literacy among students, faculty, and staff. This could involve creating online modules, hosting a series of seminars or workshops, or developing resources that teach the basics of GenAI, ethical considerations, and practical applications in writing and beyond.
Advanced	Host a GenAI and Writing Symposium	Organize a symposium or conference focused on GenAI and writing. This event could bring together scholars, educators from all levels, and/or industry professionals to discuss the latest developments, share best practices, and explore the future of GenAI in writing education. This would also provide opportunities for networking and establishing the writing center as a thought leader in your local context.

By starting to think about initiatives that, firstly, serve your writing center's needs and, secondly, could be of interest to the larger institution, one might naturally be able to make moves towards the center of the GenAI storm (for better or worse, of course) in ways that fit with one's job description as opposed to adding too much to it. Whatever the efforts, we can aim to not only enhance writing support but also position writing centers as key voices in shaping the future of writing instruction and policy within their institutions.

LAST, ANOTHER CAVEAT AND SOME FINAL CONTEXT

Although I anticipate wacky teaching dreams to continue for as long as I have the honor of being an educator, and while—at the beginning of each semester since the proliferation of GenAI tools started impacting my work—I still

secretly wonder if *this* will be the semester students stop making appointments with us, I feel more confident than ever in the work of writing centers. I further feel immense pride in my writing consultants and what we are able to offer that GenAI cannot. I also, at times, feel overworked and, far worse, guilty that my attention is diverted away from my staff and students. As much as I think that engaging in this work from my position ultimately benefits the learners my institution supports in various contexts, it can sometimes feel like a full-time job on top of my regular, full-time job. As Lepp Friesen and Buettner argue in Chapter 16, sustainable engagement requires reimagining our roles as collaborative and caring rather than endlessly responsive. At the heart of writing center work lives conversation and collaboration, and my final caveat for writing center professionals is that we consider ways of working that protect our time and peace. For some, this might mean that conversation is the main driver of participation—it's coffee with colleagues from across the institution; it's committee work on policy and best practices for writing and pedagogy; it's finding allies who have the capacity to carry part of the load at this time. For others, actively collaborating on events and initiatives with those on your staff and beyond are the best starting points for making a difference. To be certain, my experience has been invigorating, but I may benefit from some self-advocacy for continuing this work: additional payment, a course release, an assistant director to help with the day-to-day tasks of managing a schedule, a staff, and a physical space. To offer some final context of what I've accomplished from the list of strategies in my current context at Babson College, here is the list again but with a sense of what I have done:

- **Data Collection:** My writing center uses WCOnline (https://mywconline.com/), a widely used writing center management platform, for scheduling and data collection. On our student intake form, I added the following question: "We are here to help you succeed in writing and would never judge (or share information about) your AI usage. Are you/will you be using AI? (check all that apply)." Students choose from a list of options:
  - Yes—because my professor wants me to
  - Yes—because I want to
  - No—because my professor doesn't want me to
  - No—because I don't want to
  - Other—will explain below
- The addition of this question was inspired by conversation, and nervousness, in my tutor-training practicum, where a source of stress came from the idea of "calling out" a student for potentially using Ge-

nAI. While it is hard to gather how this is impacting sessions, I don't feel that it is hurting them at all.

- **Pilot GenAI Tools:** Although I have dabbled with GenAI tools specifically meant to support writers, such as the ones listed above, this is not where I'm putting my energy, beyond a couple of informational meetings with Grammarly and trying out MyEssayFeedback.ai with my own writing.

- **Staff Training and Workshops:** GenAI has become a regular part of our center though I haven't necessarily done any rigorous training for my staff: in spring 2023, I simply asked how they felt about GenAI (they were horrified); in fall 2023, we worked through scenarios inspired by the blog post "AI in the Writing Center: Small Steps and Scenarios" (Deans et al.) (they were curious); in fall 2024, I ran a storytelling exercise where small groups of consultants co-wrote very short stories about Princess Babson, and then we collaborated on a story as a whole group by having consultants add one word at a time, which modeled how LLMs work (there's a reason we all started the story with "once upon a time"; they were delighted, particularly when we saw how much better our small-group stories were vs. the predictive-text story). Like several contributors in this collection (Beardsley; Greene and Kupsch; May; Cecil-Lemkin and Johnson), I've found tutor training to be an evolving space for navigating GenAI through tutor reflection, roleplay, and revision of their own understandings of GenAI as co-writers, evaluators, or rhetorical readers. These activities reflect a broader shift across the field toward training tutors to navigate GenAI as a site of rhetorical and ethical complexity (Craig; Crull; Partida; Krasova and Othman). Like recent professional development efforts at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, which combine theoretical grounding with practical strategies, our approach encourages tutors to explore both the possibilities and limitations of AI within the context of student-centered learning.

- **Collaborate with IT Departments and Librarians:** Our digital literacy librarian created a "Generative AI and Information Literacy" Canvas course as part of a badging initiative; she asked if I would consider piloting it in my first-year writing classes. I did. This meant adding my current students to her course site and giving them homework credit for completing the modules in one week.

- **Interdisciplinary Workshops:** Although my Generator colleagues have really been the ones to step up and lead interdisciplinary workshops for faculty, one initiative I've been a part of is helping to co-facilitate

a full-day AI Teacher Training Program (AITTP); using a peer-train-
ing model (sound familiar?), after three iterations of the AITTP, 50
percent of our faculty have been exposed to various GenAI tools and
concepts—I specifically focused on AI-powered tools for research and
talked about prompting in relation to the rhetorical concepts students
learn in our writing program (audience, purpose, genre, exigence).

- **GenAI Tools Evaluation Committee, Advocate for Institutional
GenAI Policies, Develop a Campus-Wide GenAI Literacy Initiative:** I
have not done any of these.
- **Host a GenAI and Writing Symposium:** On November 1, 2024,
I hosted 40 representatives from over 30 institutions to talk about
GenAI and writing. There was so much enthusiasm and gratitude for
creating space to share successes, challenges, and plans for the future
that I hosted a second symposium on June 14, 2025, that grew to 60
representatives from over 40 institutions.[1]

CONCLUSION

As this edited collection illustrates, GenAI presents challenges and opportunities
for writing that need to be addressed contextually. The case of Babson College
demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and strategic
planning, and the initiatives outlined in this chapter offer a menu of strategies
to navigate the complexities of GenAI integration. Whether through small-scale
projects or comprehensive institutional collaborations, these strategies empha-
size the importance of various perspectives and the need for continuous dialogue
with faculty, students, and administrators.

Further, in this moment of GenAI, the inclusion of writing center voices more
specifically in broader institutional discussions is not just beneficial but neces-
sary. Their unique perspective on writing pedagogy, coupled with their ability to
balance technological innovation with student-centered support, positions them
as essential contributors to the ongoing evolution of higher education. Whether
advocating for thoughtful and responsible GenAI use or offering informed con-
cerns, writing center directors can ensure that these tools enhance, rather than
undermine, the core mission of supporting learners. As we look to the future,
writing centers should continue to play a role in shaping the way GenAI is used
in education and ensure that technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather
than a replacement for the rich, interactive processes that define learning. Or, at
least, one can dream.

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1   For more context on what this looked like, see https://theimportantwork.substack.com/p/
spilling-the-ai-tea

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CHAPTER 5. DEVELOPING AI POLICIES AND STATEMENTS: A REFLECTION ON WRITING CENTER/WRITING PROGRAM COLLABORATION

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In the fall of 2023, staff and tutors at the writing center (officially called The Learning Hub) collaborated with writing program faculty at the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) to create a generative AI (GenAI) policy and syllabus statement for all first-year writing courses. This chapter (written collaboratively by the writing coordinator in our Learning Hub and the writing program administrator) digs into the process by which the two loci of writing on campus worked together to develop this policy and put it into practice. We believe that it is useful for students to hear consistent messaging around how, when, and whether to use GenAI in their writing from different sources on campus and that the writing center and writing program are key touch-points for new college students—the guidance from the classroom and the center together can influence the approach that students take towards GenAI in the future. By working together, the writing center and the writing program can create a "vibrant community of writing" that provides a shared space for contemplating GenAI (Myatt and Gaillet xi). Moreover, a partnership between the writing center and the writing program in policy creation ensures that the policy represents multiple approaches to writing and learning to write, drawing from a richer pool of theory and practice to create a policy reinforced in multiple places on the campus. We found this shared approach to GenAI policy development led our tutors to feel ownership over the developed policy and feel comfortable raising and engaging in conversations with students about GenAI, specifically in the context of their first-year writing course.

This chapter explores the partnership between the writing program and the writing center at UIS, looking at how the center acts as a hub for instructors, tutors, and students. First, this chapter provides some background and context for UIS, the partnership between our programs, and our collaboration to

create the GenAI policy, before exploring the writing studies theories from both writing center and writing program scholars that inform the policy. Then, this chapter dives into how our embedded-tutoring model (with tutors assigned to specific sections of composition and attending classes once a week) gives tutors the opportunity to put theory into practice and shape conversations about GenAI on our campus, acting simultaneously as ambassadors, experts, and peers through this collaboration. We hope that this chapter can offer a model for similar collaboration at other institutions, one that is flexible and responsive to the changing landscape of writing in the face of emergent GenAI technologies.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND COLLABORATIVE POLICYMAKING

One bright and sunny day in August 2023, a handful of writing professionals met for the annual Writing Program Orientation, determined to develop a statement and policy for GenAI in the first-year composition classroom at UIS.

UIS is a small, public, teaching-focused institution in the Midwest currently navigating an identity shift, transitioning between liberal arts college to regional comprehensive. UIS serves approximately 2,500 undergraduate students, and 250-300 of those students move through the two-course first-year writing sequence each year, with roughly 15 composition courses offered each semester ("About UIS"). The writing program at UIS, housed in the English Department, is led by tenured faculty member Stephanie Hedge (co-author of this piece). The writing program has two full-time instructors who teach 6-8 sections of composition each semester, with other sections taught by tenure-line faculty, adjunct labor, and the writing coordinator of The Learning Hub, Sarah Collins (co-author). The writing center at UIS is embedded in The Learning Hub, a comprehensive center for academic support services, housed in the library and situated under the Center for Academic Success and Advising, where the Writing Coordinator is a staff position. The Learning Hub employs roughly ten undergraduate and graduate peer writing tutors and a small number of full-time professional writing tutors. UIS uses an embedded tutoring program (see Kurzer et al.; Spigelman and Grobman), assigning the writing tutors to one or two composition sections each semester. Tutors regularly meet with instructors and attend class, working closely with students in the classroom by offering writing workshops and other instructional support.

In attendance that sunny day in August were Hedge and Collins, the full-time writing program instructors and adjuncts, and the peer tutors. The GenAI policy conversation followed from a program overview and general orientation, beginning with a discussion in the room about AI generally. The peer tutors

offered valuable insights into how they personally felt about GenAI and AI-generated writing (broadly: not positively), *and* how their peers talked about and used GenAI (broadly: with enthusiasm and abandon, which largely matches UIS' institutional approach to GenAI). Following a short, grounding talk on the development of algorithmic writing and what it produces, the discussion turned to metaphors about GenAI and the challenges of calling it "intelligence" (see Chiang; Huang; Xiang), thinking about how to frame GenAI for our students, both in the classroom and in The Learning Hub. Finally, Hedge posed a question to the room: Can (and how and should) we use GenAI in the composition classroom?

Our policy answers that question (see below), but of note here is the development of this policy through discussion and conversation with all voices in the room. Hedge shared a sample statement as a starting point, and using Google Docs as a space for collaboration and discussion, the writing experts in the room debated definitions of plagiarism, whether invention and revision fall under the broad umbrella of "writing," and potential consequences for not following policies; the discussion culminated in the development and refinement of our GenAI policy.

Working together to create the policy ensured both a breadth of experience and expertise in crafting the policy and buy-in from all stakeholders charged with enforcing the policy. Reflecting on the experience of co-creating the GenAI policy, Learning Hub TA Sami Pierce uses "we" to mean both the writing program instructors and the tutors in the room, saying "while it was obvious to **us** that the use of [Gen]AI was antithetical to developing writing and rhetorical skills … **we** decided that it was best to explain this reasoning in the policy," demonstrating how participating in the process fostered a sense of ownership in the policy for the tutors (Pierce, emphasis added). In the end, our policy came together through the expertise and best judgment of both the writing center and writing program experts, and it represents our combined understanding of writing theory and practice.

THEORY INFORMED POLICIES

Our GenAI policy is calibrated particularly for the student population at UIS who enroll in our first-year writing courses: majority first-generation college students who are still developing their writing and literacy skills. Our students frequently understand the importance of writing (for college, careers, and beyond) while simultaneously feeling that they are not strong writers. Our co-developed GenAI policy centers skill development through practice, aiming to bolster both writing skill and student confidence in their writing. We hope

that by gaining confidence in their writing skills, they will feel better equipped to make strategic decisions about GenAI writing in the future. Our policy for GenAI writing in UIS' first-year composition classrooms is:

> Submitting writing generated by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) or algorithmic writing program (e.g., ChatGPT) is not permitted in ENG 101 and ENG 102. These courses are designed to help you develop and hone skills in writing, and the best way to develop those skills is to do the writing work yourself, through consistent, sustained practice. The goal of this class is not to produce well-written papers as much as it is to help you develop the skills necessary to do that writing work. Having a machine complete the writing work for you will not aid in the development of your skills. (Hedge et al.)

Two core theories anchor this policy: first, the idea that writing is a skill developed through practice, and second, that a first-year writing course's purpose is to develop students as writers rather than to produce good writing. The latter theory echoes North on writing centers: "in a writing center the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction. In axiom form it goes like this: Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing" ("The Idea" 438). While none of us cited North in the room during our discussion, this idea was clearly at the forefront of our thinking as we grappled with creating a policy. Central to our discussion were the overarching goals and purposes of the classroom, and the voices from the writing center (embedded as they are in these classes) helped us come to this conclusion: "The goal of this class is not to produce well-written papers as much as it is to help you develop the skills necessary to do that writing work" (Hedge et al.). While GenAI writing may produce "better" writing (a debatable claim), our policy argues less for the result of student writing than the process (and practice) by which the student gets there. Moreover, we believe that to successfully assess or edit GenAI text, students need to gain a measure of fluency in their own writing—North's "better" writer has a strong foundation for making strategic and critical decisions about AI writing.

Core to the writing program at UIS, and our statement, is the idea that writing improves via practice—as Yancey argues in *Naming What We Know*, learning to write requires practice to develop fluency with words and language, practice to develop and hone techniques and strategies, and practice to engage with a community of practice and other people (64-65). Yancey likens the act of writing to learning how to swim, and compares the physical act of writing to moving the body in the water, both reminding us that writing is also always a physical

activity as well as a cognitive one, and offering a useful metaphor for GenAI and writing skills: swimmers who always or only use assistive or floatation devices cannot swim effectively without them; writers who rely on GenAI before they develop their own internalized writing skills may struggle without the technology and may lack the foundational fluency to make informed, strategic decisions about writing and GenAI.

While we recognize that, by the time of publication, this policy may seem overly restrictive, it provided a grounding touchstone for conversations about GenAI in the classroom and beyond at a time of turmoil and change. Further, new research, like the MIT study that found a direct relationship between the use of AI and cognitive load struggles when drafting an essay (Kosmyna et al.), suggests that restricting GenAI use for novice writers may support increased skill development, and our policy remains the same in 2025.

Of importance here is not necessarily the specific theories that informed our policy but rather the blend of writing center and writing studies theories that shaped our thinking; the collaboration between the writing center and writing program was key to developing the GenAI policy and, as we will discuss in more detail below, sharing out that policy on campus.

SHAPING CONVERSATIONS INSTITUTIONALLY

Once we crafted our GenAI policy for our first-year writing classroom, we had to put the policy into action, both in the classroom and in the writing center. While scholarship has historically indicated a somewhat contentious, if not outright antagonistic, relationship between writing programs and writing centers (North, "Revisiting 'The Idea'"), our direct and intentionally fostered collaboration is lived out through embedded tutors and the work they do in the writing classroom. As writing coordinator and director of first-year writing, we co-developed, as proposed by Cohen and Mankin, an "action framework" for the partnership undertaken by The Learning Hub tutors and composition faculty which ensured "clear structure and strong interpersonal relationships," including a position description, collaborative paperwork guiding initial discussions, and qualitative assessment surveys solicited from tutors, faculty, and composition students at the end of each semester (qtd. in Myatt 6-7). This partnership grew out of "negotiations … in articulating the shared values and outcomes that are needed to implement and sustain" the relationship (Myatt and Gaillet xiii). We believe in the power of shared values and outcomes when it comes to GenAI and writing for first-year students, and that by working together, the writing program and writing center can significantly impact how new students interpret or engage with GenAI.

Collaboration with an embedded tutor in composition classrooms offers a unique perspective from a peer at a further point in their progression as writers, not only due to their training through The Learning Hub, but also through their experiences as students themselves. As Chapter 1 in this collection argues, writing centers, and by extension their peer educators, are interstitial: existing "between and across" the bounds of particular programs of study on a campus (Johnson and Wynn Perdue). From this position, the embedded tutors serve as valuable sites for discussion about GenAI. As writing tutor Sami Pierce explains, "I think that embedded and peer tutors can open valuable dialogue with students about [Gen]AI usage in academia and personal life. Having the common ground of both being students can help bridge understanding and communication between the instructors' and students' views on the issue of [Gen]AI." Being embedded in the classroom explicitly invites the tutors into context-specific conversations about GenAI, and, in their positions as peers, the embedded tutors can challenge, complicate, or enrich discussions about GenAI for these specific writing tasks.

As the embedded tutoring model favors a stronger bond between the tutor and the instructor and students of their assigned sections compared to external visits to the writing center (Kurzer et al.), the tutors can use that trust and that bond to have conversations about GenAI without judgment. As writing tutor Jacob Laurenzana shares in a reflection on a tutoring session with one of the students from his section, "I posed a question to the student: 'Are there any tools you used to help you write this paper?' The student was caught off-guard and was hesitant to admit they used these tools in their writing until I told them that it is not my responsibility or intention to report them, but rather I am just here to help you make your writing the best it can be." The student was more willing to engage in a conversation about their writing and GenAI because it came from the peer tutor rather than the instructor; at the same time, Laurenzana could have that conversation with the student because he was embedded in the class and afforded the opportunity to read the students' work in context. This example furthers the conversations begun in Chapter 2 related to writing centers' positionality of "speaking from the middle" and affording opportunities for students to discuss topics like academic integrity, writing process, and instructor expectations in a safe, judgement- and consequence-free zone (Velez et al.). Sami Pierce echoes the importance of giving students a space to explore responses to generative GenAI beyond the instructor, reflecting, "I have found that often students are very interested in what [Gen]AI means for them in and out of class…. This curiosity can clash with the uncertainty surrounding the topic and often students can feel uneasy approaching the subject with their professors because of the power dynamic that exists between professors and students." This intermediary position—not-quite-instructor but not-quite-student—creates a space

where the GenAI policy can meaningfully live on the campus as the tutors exercise their expertise as an "interested, rhetorically savvy audience" which "rests in large part on knowledge of the social and rhetorical dimensions of constructing knowledge through writing" as they respond to GenAI use in specific rhetorical contexts and situations (Nowacek and Hughes 181-2). In Laurenzana's specific case, he responded to the student using GenAI by emphasizing the rhetorical power of the individual voice, telling the student that writing "allows you to find and develop your voice in a way that benefits you long term professionally and socially … because your writing is an extension of yourself, and you have your own unique importance that should never be undervalued."

The embedded tutors can offer multiple perspectives on many aspects of writing theory and praxis, helping to make connections between our program policy, writing theory, and the work the students are doing. For example, many emerging writers lack an understanding of writing as "an ongoing and iterative process" full of recursion and metacognition and failure and, eventually, success (Downs and Robertson 109), an idea key to our GenAI policy, and many students get stuck at the failure stage. In their discussions with students, writing tutor Sami Pierce recognized a lack of confidence in writing skills/processes as a "common theme in LLM usage," which led to "many meaningful conversations about skill building as a process," showcasing how an embedded tutor embodies putting theory into practice for students while reinforcing the GenAI policy. Through the embedded tutors, and working together, learning centers and writing programs alike can fight the stigma of students not "being good" at writing—they can invest students in healthier ideas, including "writing is not natural" and "failure is part of the process" and other threshold concepts, and can help defeat the nagging anxiety related to the expectations for a product of writing which can push a student to rely on GenAI or turn to other academic integrity issues (Adler-Kassner and Wardle).

Our embedded tutors also facilitated conversations about using GenAI critically and thoughtfully. If our goal in our writing program is to develop foundational writing and literacy skills so students can achieve the goal of, as Anson notes, "being rhetorically flexible" when it comes to making decisions about GenAI, then through our partnership, the tutors actively practice those critical skills with our students (qtd. in Dryer et al. 78). Writing tutor Audra Liniger shares that she frequently has conversations with students about the reliability of AI-generated research and notes, "I emphasize how important it is to learn the writing and research skills that [Gen]AI claims to offer because, if one is not proficient in these skills, they will not be able to easily recognize when information is inaccurate." Liniger and others lean on the threshold concept that "writing creates new meaning rather than transmitting information unaltered"

and invites students to think critically about the perceived-as-unaltered information shared by predictive text models (Downs and Robertson 109). Pierce has had similar conversations with their students in the context of "an interesting shift in a zeitgeist," where students are asking ChatGPT for results instead of saying "let's Google it." As students expressed a lack of confidence in responses given by GoogleAI, Pierce pushed back by asking students why they trust responses from other [Gen]AI sources, inviting students to think critically about where they source their information.

Ultimately, the embedded tutors in our classrooms bring the GenAI policy to life. As they work with their peers on their writing work, the tutors can have discussions about the theory and practice of writing and using GenAI in contextual and practical ways for the students, discussions that come from a familiar and trusted source.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between the first-year writing program and The Learning Hub at UIS shows how "the unique influences of both the Writing Program and the Writing Center, individually and together, can be powerful, effective, and harmonious" (Myatt and Gaillet x) as we work together to respond to GenAI in theory, practice, and policy. Writing centers need to respond to GenAI flexibly as it continues to evolve and change, and at UIS we have fostered a model of collaborative responsiveness driven by a theory-based approach that articulates our institution's core values on writing grounded within the writing center and first-year writing program—as Boquet and Lerner affirm, "It will take all of us who are invested in literacy education … to maximize the potential of these exciting new opportunities" (186). By collaboratively writing a GenAI policy that was then brought to life in the classroom by our embedded tutors, we were able to create a consistent, sustained response to GenAI for our students—and one that may grow and change as we continue to adapt to advances in GenAI. After all, the August orientation, where we developed the policy, continues to be held every year, offering an ongoing space for continued exploration, refinement, and engagement.

We hope that our example serves as a way of thinking about not just GenAI, but other emergent writing trends or practices that may benefit from collaboration between these two sites for writing on college campuses.

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CHAPTER 6. A SPRINGBOARD, NOT A LANDING ZONE: STUDENT-FIRST DISCUSSIONS ABOUT AI AND ETHICS

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Salem College

On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, we stood poised at the front of the Library Assembly Room at our small women's college in the Southeastern United States. Students began to file in, many that we knew as fellow student consultants from the Writing Center, and several that we did not know at all. We cleared our throats, introduced ourselves—Joella first, then Anna—and welcomed our student participants. Months of research, weeks of planning, a complete dry-run of the workshop for writing center staff, and effusive support from our writing center director had culminated in an hour-long workshop and dialogue around generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) that was open to all students. Thus began the first student conversations regarding GenAI programs at Salem College: student-led, student-centered.

CONTEXT: SALEM COLLEGE

We want to preface this piece by providing additional context for the place in which we exist and where this conversation began. Salem College, as previously mentioned, is a women's college with a focus on health leadership and a traditional liberal arts approach. Being a small institution of only around 700 students, Salem affords individuals the opportunity to potentially have an immense impact on the campus. With a robust staff of undergraduate students overseen by our professor director, the Salem College Writing Center (SCWC) is uniquely supported by the women's college in its pedagogical approach and in its policies as well. We recognize that Salem's size, demographics, institutional policies, and values allow our center to function with an amount of freedom that might not apply to all collegiate writing centers.

CONTEXT: WRITING CENTER

Our philosophy in the SCWC is informed by a cultural rhetorics approach (Brooks-Gillies), and our center functions not only as a "community of practice,"

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but also as a "critical community," drawing from the work of Bettez and Hytten (Walter). To this end, our director has worked to create a place where students feel comfortable as they approach the vulnerable task of sharing their writing. For us, this is centered in feminist decolonial studies and means utilizing a dialogic approach to consultation in an endeavor to understand and contextualize subjective experiences and realities, rather than strictly adhering to abstract objectivity rooted in "white rationality" and patriarchal standards (Anzaldúa 36). Ratcliffe's theory of rhetorical listening (Walter) and Street's ideological model of literacy (Grimm 46) are necessary to our daily work in the writing center as we strive to meet students where they are mentally and emotionally, with consideration to their positionality and our own. In our work, our consultants endeavor to move beyond "words on a page" and to help our clients work on improving their broader relationship with the writing process (Grimm 46). Our decolonial pedagogical approach fosters a holistic methodological focus on the *person* rather than merely the products they produce and influences all of the writing center work we do. Like many other writing centers that adopt a cultural rhetorics approach, the SCWC provides subcommittees that allow consultants to pursue additional writing center work and professional development. It was through our partnership on a subcommittee that we began our first fledgling steps towards developing this workshop.

Building off of Ede's work regarding "the interdependence of theory and practice," we wanted to utilize our time and resources as part of the SCWC Workshop Subcommittee—which was focused on the development of workshops to teach writing skills outside of our typical tutoring hours—to explore our own anxieties and concerns regarding GenAI through a collaborative learning project that would spark broader campus dialogue and benefit the campus community (Ede 4). Our chief concern was that many of our student peers would be thrust into professional environments that might expect (or demand) that GenAI tools be implemented without adequate means or time to begin their own inquiry into the potential impact of those tools—personally, professionally, socially, environmentally, ethically, politically. For this reason, we wanted to develop a workshop that would allow students to begin the process of ethical inquiry into GenAI programs in a safe and neutral environment.

FRAMEWORK: WORKSHOP

This workshop grew out of our shared anxieties and concerns about GenAI and its potential impact on the discipline of writing, on academia as a whole, and on our futures as dedicated writers. Our feelings were compounded by the lack of an official campus policy regarding the use of GenAI at our institution.

As Johnson and Wynn Perdue (this collection) suggest, we are writing center practitioners, accustomed to finding and filling in these gaps in true interstitial fashion. Because of our training and approach to tutoring, we felt the most holistic method of addressing GenAI concerns was through meaningful discussion with peers. We both firmly believe that it is the duty of each individual to determine for themselves whether GenAI can or should be used in specific applications as a matter of personal ethics. However, we both felt quite lost as to how we might begin navigating our own decisions, and we knew that other students must certainly be in the same boat. We further recognized that, while neither of us felt any urge to gravitate towards GenAI to complete or assist in completing our assignments, our positionality as tutors in the writing center and as majors in the professional writing program is likely to mean that we have an increased awareness of and comfort with the writing process that other students on our campus might not have. While we initially sought to find ways for the writing center to offer alternatives to students who might feel tempted to turn to GenAI programs, we decided early on that an open, student-led conversation would offer a better approach in allowing students to have their perspectives heard without fear of judgment or retribution. Like many other writing center practitioners featured in this collection, we also feared that the rise of chatbots, available all hours of the day and never fatigued, might lead to a decline in our appointment numbers (see Johnson and Wynn Perdue; Girdharry; Hallman Martini; Fledderjohann and Perkins). Like Girdharry, we wanted to approach our AI workshop as a "neutral space," and commit to "prioritiz[ing] student learning and support." As such, we decided to create a hybridized conversation and workshop. After all, if all of us as students are tasked with determining how we will approach and respond to GenAI as individuals, might we not benefit from shared perspectives and frank discussions?

We knew that encouraging students to become active participants in a campus-wide dialogue regarding GenAI was likely to cause concern among faculty members. While our writing center director had offered a faculty workshop about GenAI the previous spring, their general impression was that faculty were (understandably) apprehensive about the subject. Though many faculty members expressed their desire to participate in or attend our workshop, we elected to restrict attendance to students only, in order to provide a comfortable environment for participants to openly engage in frank discussion. While some students may view student writing consultants as having a certain amount of authority, we wanted it to be very clear that there was no traditional hierarchical structure at play, as that would be antithetical to the environment we hoped to foster. However, we also wanted to ensure that our workshop did not become a source of added anxiety for instructional faculty and staff. Our director was essential

in fielding their questions and concerns while providing us with direct support to conduct this student workshop in a way that would be truly beneficial to our student participants.

With GenAI being a relatively new technology in terms of general accessibility at the time, it was unsurprising that many of the sources we encountered were framed through an instructional lens—written by professional writers and instructors. Chiefly instrumental were Annette Vee and Tim Laquintano's resources, generously available through Creative Commons NonCommercial license. Formatted as a series of frequently asked questions, their letter, "Dear Students: Should you use AI for your Writing?" was perfectly aligned with our goal to lead students through inquiry. We adapted this structure to suit our student-led format and pared it back to ensure that the information provided would be digestible as part of a sixty-minute workshop. While we supplemented with further readings, we also used Vee and Laquintano's basic explanation of Large Language Models (LLMs) and introduction to GenAI as a starting point for our research.

For the sake of practicality, we knew early on that we wanted our workshop to address both sides of AI tools: Conceptual AI and Applied AI (Dobrin 8). Conceptual AI addresses the ethical questions and consequences that surface with GenAI use, while Applied AI asks how we utilize GenAI practically. Dobrin's 2023 publication, *AI and Writing*, further affirmed that we were asking the right questions as we approached this workshop. Citing a *Best Colleges* survey from earlier that year, Dobrin reiterates that the majority of college students "anticipate increased use of GenAI" and that they are interested in learning "how to use these tools responsibly in their academic careers, as well as their professional, civic, and personal lives" (4). See Velez et al., "Lending Our Voices: The Role of Writing Center Leadership in Institutional Conversations about AI," for more robust research regarding students' eagerness to engage with GenAI.

Our approach to the Conceptual AI portion of this workshop was informed by the Salem College Engaging Ethics Program, an ethics across the curriculum project centered around five ethical touchstones: integrity, justice, courage, respect, and care. At Salem College, these touchstones serve as the basis for guiding ethical inquiry for all students across the disciplines, beginning in their requisite first-year seminars. Given the familiarity and accessibility of that existing framework for our students, we hoped that they would be encouraged by our use of the touchstones to actively engage with our questions. We planned and prepared discussions for all five of these touchstones. Although we hoped that student participants would lead us through the touchstones freely in ways that intersected their own lives and planned careers, we prepared material for discussions on all five touchstones so that we would be adequately equipped to more directly steer the conversation if participation was timid.

The majority of our planned discussion was centered around integrity, justice, and care. We grounded our discussion of integrity through questions of academic honesty and the use of GenAI, as we wanted to ensure that students were aware of the potential repercussions for using GenAI in their writing. Beyond that, we wanted students to understand how those given texts are generated by AI chatbots and that many consider them a form of plagiarism. Furthermore, despite our college's lack of a formal institution-wide AI policy, many professors at Salem *do* have individual policies that forbid the use of AI for any assignments, and failure to comply with such policies constitutes an Honor Code violation—an important factor at a college with student-proctored and self-scheduled exams. The justice touchstone was used to anchor considerations of bias, which we felt very deeply about addressing during our allotted time. Our discussion of bias was used to underscore our argument that GenAI should never be considered as an endpoint—the bias inherent in any AI program requires that all AI-generated products, from images to text, be subject to careful *human* review. We also wanted to help guide students to question the use of AI programs in professional settings by asking who or what is ultimately being privileged through the use of AI and products that are produced by it, leading us to tie our discussion of care into Salem's health leadership focus via questions regarding the use of AI programs in medical settings.

THE HYBRIDIZED WORKSHOP

The basic structure of the hybridized workshop was split into two sections: 20 minutes for the GenAI "crash course" and ethical framework and the remaining 40 minutes for a prompt engineering session using OpenAI's ChatGPT 3.5, a program equitably accessible to all students at that time. We transitioned from our ethics conversation into a discussion of the writing process to foreground our prompt engineering session. Again, we wanted to illustrate that GenAI always requires reflection and review, and that AI-generated texts should never be considered a "final product" in any setting. Rather than taking a negative stance, we hoped instead to positively instruct students on how to use GenAI to help them brainstorm for assignments, if it is aligned with their instructors' policies regarding GenAI use. After using GenAI to brainstorm ideas, we wanted to help move our participants beyond the brainstorming portion and into planning—a process that again returns to the necessity of human-centeredness when working with GenAI.

The prompt engineering session guided student participants through the process of ethically engaging with GenAI. We provided students with several

potential essay prompts and allowed them to choose which we would use to brainstorm with ChatGPT:

- Prompt 1: "Write an argumentative essay supporting or refuting why you believe that your generation experiences more anxiety than previous generations."
- Prompt 2: "Write an essay describing how technology has evolved in your lifetime and what the impacts of those technological advancements have been for society."
- Prompt 3: "Write an essay persuading your reader to break a specific habit that is detrimental to their physical, mental, or financial health."

We wanted students to gain practical experience inputting different prefixes into ChatGPT as we workshopped together and outlined our sample essay, not only to discourage the wholesale copy and paste of prompts into AI programs, but also to demonstrate how GenAI can be ethically used as a brainstorming resource or sounding board (Dobrin 68).

WORKSHOP REFLECTION

The most surprising result of our workshop was discovering how eager students were to discuss Conceptual AI. Although we had originally planned to dedicate 20 minutes of our workshop to Conceptual AI and utilize the remaining 40 minutes for Applied AI and the early stages of the writing process, our discussion of Conceptual AI stretched to 30 minutes. Our participants were highly enthusiastic to discuss the ethical implications and considerations of AI usage. Originally, our writing center director had planned to remain in the room to take notes despite it being a student-only workshop, but through a shared spur-of-the-moment decision, we collectively decided they should exit the room. We believe that this spontaneous decision at the beginning of the workshop fostered a more comforting and relaxed environment, as it remained truly student-exclusive, leading to deeper and more raw discussions about AI. This peer-to-peer conversation crossed interdisciplinary boundaries that extended past writing and included ethical considerations related to the broader societal landscape. Students from different backgrounds and academic disciplines were eager to voice their opinions and concerns about how GenAI was infiltrating their respective fields of art, film, healthcare, law, business, and more. We found that students were most interested in discussing the integrity touchstone, and we specifically examined how AI relates to plagiarism and authorship. Students eagerly asked questions about platforms such as Grammarly, Paraphrase, and other writing applications, specifically curious if we believed—and if their professors might

believe—that the use of those platforms constituted plagiarism. While some of their questions were readily answered (check the syllabus!), we also made it very clear that we didn't have all of the answers.

When we moved to the prompt engineering session, students chose to workshop the argumentative essay prompt. Anna manned the computer, while Joella used a whiteboard to formulate an essay outline with students as we went. We showed students that instead of copying and pasting the essay prompt into ChatGPT, they should instead use prefixes to receive more digestible and workable results, encouraging them to pause and reflect *before* they begin engaging with GenAI. As an example, one of the prefixes we included was, "Give me a list of 5-10 reasons that anxiety has increased in the past few decades." We did not want huge blocks of text, but instead short ideas and topics that students could expand upon in their own writing. As we workshopped through the brainstorming process, we reminded students that further research from valid sources should be done afterward to ensure the accuracy of the information given. The brainstorming session with students and ChatGPT went smoothly, and students chose to use a linear outline to display their ideas for the argumentative essay. Despite being pushed for time during prompt engineering due to the extended ethics conversation, we still managed to create a complete outline by the end of the workshop. We discovered that students didn't even rely on ChatGPT to brainstorm for them as much as we anticipated; once we got the ball rolling, students quickly came up with their own ideas.

At the conclusion of the student workshop, we asked our participants to take an informal survey, wherein the main questions were (1) Was this workshop helpful? and (2) Would you be interested in more campus conversations surrounding GenAI? Ninety percent of participants answered "Yes" to both questions, and ten percent responded "Maybe," indicating that the need for further conversation and guidance on how to use GenAI is warranted on our campus. Following the success of our workshop, multiple instructors reached out to our writing center for information on how to continue the conversation in their own classrooms, seemingly bolstered by the reassurance that our writing center would help support them. In the summer of 2024, as we worked on drafting this chapter, one of our deans reached out to our writing center director about creating an AI Literacy minor at Salem.

CONCLUSION

As a community of students, tutors, and writers, the SCWC welcomes the exploration of new ideas that go beyond our perceived boundaries and challenge our existing perspectives (McKeehen). From our own 'brave space,' within our

four walls (and screens), we hope to provide our students with the fortitude and confidence they will need as they venture into an ever-evolving and unpredictable future (Walter). We recognize the privilege of working within a space that equips us with the resources to create a groundwork for conversations on our campus, and we believe that writing centers ought to be epicenters of the discussion regarding how all of higher education will address and reorient itself around the implementation of technological advancements. In agreement with many other authors in this collection, we firmly believe that writing centers should capitalize on their positionality within the broader academic landscape by continuing to resist "strict policing" and rather focus on prioritizing "critical empathy in addition to critical thinking" during this time of change (McKeehen). Although many writing center practitioners, ourselves included, have espoused concern that GenAI reproduces existing work and thus "runs contrary to values writing centers and their staff broadly uphold regarding responsible source use" (Roustio), we must also consider how important it is to "interrogate our own assumptions, ideologies, and beliefs about writing and how writing should be taught" (Lundin). Furthermore, while writing center work has historically been dismissed or misunderstood because of its existence in the periphery of academia, this is precisely where these conversations should be taking place: on the periphery, away from centers of power.

We are finishing our final edits to this chapter in late July of 2025—over a full year after we gave our workshop. Since then, the SCWC has updated tutor training to address GenAI and crafted an official writing center policy on GenAI with the assistance and input of all current tutoring staff. Our director has led multiple workshops on GenAI—on and off the Salem College campus—and several of us participated in a panel at the 2024 IWCA conference. Both of us have continued to research AI and ethics—Anna furthered her research through her senior thesis project, and Joella completed an honors independent study to assist our writing center director with developing the aforementioned AI Literacy minor. We still don't have all the answers, but we remain hopeful that our contributions have laid the foundation for our fellow students not only to adapt or rise to the challenges presented by AI, but to emerge as thriving leaders in an era of continued uncertainty. Although there are many times that the future seems admittedly bleak, we are here—still sharing ideas and writing our very human thoughts to and *for* one another. The conversations that bind these books are the very ones that we should continue encouraging in our own writing centers and broader communities. We offer this chapter as a single piece in the collective patchwork of writing center work, and we hope that you will find it as handy and enlightening as it has been for us, as writing centers emerge as leaders of AI conversations on campuses. In the spirit of outreach, we

have made our workshop presentation materials available for anyone to access through the SCWC webpage via the following link: https://guides.library.salem.edu/c.php?g=1339751&p=10669643.

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PART 2. RESEARCHED INQUIRIES ON AI AND WRITING CENTER LABOR

CHAPTER 7. "CHATGPT IS GOOD AT SOME STUFF … BUT IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S A PERSON": STUDENT WRITERS REFLECT ON AI

Rebecca Hallman Martini
University of Georgia

Like most writing center directors in 2023, I was thinking seriously about how to respond to the threat of generative AI (GenAI): how to prepare consultants to work with writers and what to do if they suspected its use, among other things. We were talking about it as a staff, with new consultants, and everywhere in between, but we were trying to better understand the thing before deciding exactly how to respond. And yet, like most policy writing and quick responses, something happened in September 2023 that called for an immediate response. A rightfully outraged graduate student requested a meeting with a member of our admin team to discuss her asynchronous feedback from a consultant on a grant application; her feedback was generated by GenAI.

I was caught completely off guard!

According to notes from my assistant director, Amulya was a fourth-year PhD student in Psychology who had a long history with using our writing center as well as experience as a tutor.[1] She booked an hour-long, synchronous online appointment to discuss a major grant proposal with Cassia, a sixth-year, international PhD student in Physics with a few years of writing center experience. After 10-15 minutes of discussing the project, Cassia concluded the appointment and told Amulya that she would be sending her detailed feedback via email. While this was not what the writer wanted, she agreed. At first, Amulya was happy with the line-by-line feedback she promptly received. Yet, when she looked more closely, she realized that the voice did not sound like her own. She noticed that the dozens of comments had the same timestamp, which prompted her to run it through an AI detector. Sixty percent of the feedback shared by the consultant was AI-generated.

I felt deep gratitude for the writer's willingness to talk with us. She voiced her real concerns over the sharing of her intellectual property without her permission, the possibility of getting caught by her advisor for cheating on a grant that now

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[1] All names have been changed to pseudonyms that aim to preserve cultural, gender, and other identity markers made visible in the original names.

appeared to be heavily written by GenAI, and the lack of respect for her own voice. We apologized profusely, committed to writing a policy to clearly prohibit such activity, and told her that we would meet with Cassia and consider what to do next.

When I met with Cassia, I was nervous about how she would react: would she deny her use of GenAI? Would she get defensive? Instead, Cassia was completely relaxed: she had no idea this behavior wasn't okay, and she used GenAI for her own work as well so figured it would be acceptable. She seemed sincere. Clearly, Cassia was not convinced that using GenAI was the wrong way to go. Although she stopped using it in her writing center feedback, she still wanted to use it herself if it was allowed.

While there is much to unpack here, I want to highlight what this taught me about writers and writing centers, about what they expect and what they need: writers, like Amulya, are not coming to the writing center to get the kind of help that GenAI offers; they want something else. And yet, some writers, and even our staff members, are using GenAI in ways that they believe to be sound. Still, in the center, when we integrate GenAI into our practice without writer consent or intent, we are doing them and ourselves a disservice.

While writing center studies so far has seemed to focus primarily on how to integrate or tutor *with* AI in the center (Deans et al.; Coffill; Bell; Cheatle), and writing studies more generally has suggested that perhaps some students turn to AI because they believe they have nothing to learn or they will not need writing in their future (Davis and Taczak; Morrison), writers like Amulya, and many others with whom I spoke, suggest otherwise. Several scholars have offered more nuanced approaches to writing and AI, pointing out the need for creative, critical engagement with not just the software's output but also with how the corpus gets created (Byrd; Johnson), how it responds across languages (Owusu-Ansah), and how we might integrate critical awareness and use into our writing (center) pedagogies intentionally and carefully (Graham; Vee; Johnson; Stanton; Giaimo, "TPR AI").

Yet, in writing centers, where we do not have a 15-week semester in which to engage in critical conversation, it might be smarter to approach our response to GenAI differently. Drawing on data from 535 student writers from across the US who shared their experiences with writing centers and (sometimes) AI with me, I think we, as a field, have been misguided, despite good intentions. Instead of attempting to integrate AI into writing center praxis, we should centralize the human, affective, collaborative work we do.

CENTERING WRITERS: AN OVERVIEW AND METHOD

This data comes from a project that is not about GenAI; it is first and foremost about student writers. This project, which I have titled, "Centering Writers"

aims to amplify writer voices from underrepresented backgrounds at eight different institutions to understand writer experiences and how they perceive popular commonplaces in writing studies, such as inclusivity, access, belonging, and advocacy. [2]

This qualitative, empirical research is rooted in an ethnographic and folkloric approach, drawing on a rich tradition within writing studies as well as on more recent scholars who attend critically to identity, representation, and presentation of both participants and researcher (Brodkey; Cintron; Hallman Martini, *Disrupting*; Heath; Lindahl; Mortensen and Kirsch; Price; Restaino; Webster). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured not only at my home institution, but also at the additional seven that participated in the study. The writing center directors at each university assisted with both question development and survey distribution to writers at their schools. At the end of the survey, writers were asked about interest in an interview.[3]

All 535 survey responses (distributed in spring 2023) and 51 interviews (conducted from summer 2023 - fall 2023) were fully conducted, coded, logged, transcribed, and analyzed by humans, both me and a couple of smart and gracious research assistants. I used Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, an Infinity foot pedal, and an audio playback control software called Express Scribe.[4] The survey results referenced in this chapter respond to the short answer prompt: describe an experience in your writing center that you found memorable. Interviews were conducted with fifty-one writers. Although these interviews were conducted shortly after GenAI became commonplace in most universities, these perceptions are invaluable because they give us a sense of students' initial reactions and attitudes before GenAI became more prevalent (see within this collection Bleakney et al.; Miftah et al.; and Fledderjohann and Perkins).

WRITERS AND AI: USE AND PERCEPTIONS

This overall dataset is widely diverse. While 73 percent were female and over 69 percent were undergraduates from across majors, nearly 40 percent were over 22 years old, 30 percent identified as other than straight/heterosexual, over 55 percent as a race other than white, over 45 percent as fluent in a language other

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2   Data is drawn from students at two Research 1 (R1) universities and a small liberal arts college (SLAC), a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), a tribal college, a two-year college, and a regional campus.

3   Writers were compensated for time completing the survey (via a gift card raffle) and for time spent interviewing (gift cards).

4   For a more detailed explanation of the logging, coding, and interview method used, see Hallman Martini, "Counselors, Tsunamis."

than English, and nearly half identified as having one or more disabilities. Each writer's perspective shared includes a footnote bio that provides some of this demographic information. Given that most writers represented in empirical writing center research (including research on GenAI) come from predominantly white universities (see Bleakney et al., this collection; Zieve-Cohen et al.), I find it valuable to know that much initial resistance to GenAI among writers who use their centers is coming from students who identify as other than white, in addition to holding many other under-represented identity markers.

While the number of students using GenAI at the time of this survey (2023) seems incredibly low at just 5.4 percent (n=29), the overall use of technology assistance with writing is quite high, at 63.5 percent, with Grammarly being the highest used assistive technology at 52.7 percent (n=282).[5] Further, given that the survey short answer questions primarily asked about memorable experiences with the writing center, writers did not provide any detail about their experiences with GenAI. In fact, in 19,794 words shared by 535 writers, neither GenAI nor AI was mentioned. Not even once. Therefore, interviews with writers are a better indication of writer perceptions. Of the 51 writers interviewed, 26 did not mention AI or simply said they did not use it, 14 said they used it, and 11 said they did not use it but did provide their perception of it. To that end, Perceptions 1 and 2 are from writers who spoke about AI (n=25). Perception 3 is drawn solely from those who use AI (n=14).

PERCEPTION 1: GenAI IS CHEATING (52%; N=25)

Like Amulya's concern about being perceived as cheating on her grant application, nearly half of the writers who shared their perceptions of GenAI mentioned that they consider it to be a form of cheating. While emotional responses varied from fear to temptation, to disgust, to hatred, the connection to cheating remained constant. For instance, Astur[6] talks honestly about GenAI, which he does not use, explaining that "it's a good software, but it's cheating, because AI is doing your work and not you … it's kind of really lame in my opinion because it's not your work and then you're claiming [it is] and you're not improving." Despite its ability to help in some ways, Astur still considers its use dishonest, as well as not very good, as he notes both the mistakes that it makes as well as the obvious marker of its use: "the words don't have a soul to it, you can say."

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5   This number includes students' use of papermills, Chegg, GenAI/ChatGPT, and Grammarly. Writers had much to say about their use of Grammarly, especially in relation to GenAI, but discussing this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

6   Astur is a trilingual Somalian immigrant and sophomore undergraduate at a Midwestern R1.

Similarly, Zein[7] does not use GenAI and admits their fear around its use, expressing frustration with AI art specifically and the way that it "takes existing [art] from real people doing real work and not getting the credit." In this sense, they seem concerned with stealing as a form of dishonesty or cheating. Still, Zein is concerned about GenAI in academic settings, asking: "What is it about writing, or our assignments or education that our students don't feel that they can do on their own? … Are we not giving our students the tools and the resources they need, and so therefore … they're turning to these outside sources?"

Other writers find the connection between GenAI and cheating to be more nuanced, as they still use it. To illustrate, Marina[8] admits that she uses GenAI to help her identify areas where she can eliminate words, explaining, "I try to be ethical about it because I never want to submit a piece of writing that I feel like I cheated on … I've had a lot of professors actually who encourage us to use it (laughs), which I'm trying not to because I don't feel like I'm a strong writer and I really value that skill, so I'm working on it." In this case, use of GenAI for word elimination rather than generation seems like a more acceptable use of the tool for Marina, especially because she is interested in learning how to become a better writer, a skill that she feels like she is learning when she visits the writing center through conversation: "I think the writing center provides the outside perspective, again, having people who have seen other students' writing is super helpful … it's just nice to be able to have a conversation with someone as well, ask them questions that come up in that moment."

Similarly, Clay[9] finds GenAI to be a way of cheating through the writing process by skipping the early brainstorming stage of thinking about the prompt. He argues, "I think the cognitive processes are important. I think ChatGPT disrupts that … it's like a cheat system for student writers to go over the next step rather than … think about topics, that sort of brainstorming session … it sort of gets rid of that and goes straight to the writing stage."

Clay then compares GenAI to fast food.

Similarly, according to survey data about memorable experiences, writers value the center because it supports their agency, independence, and learning of new skills (26.8%, n=77). One writer notes appreciation for consultants who "comment on specific things that didn't fit the voice of the paper instead of only [on] things that were incorrect from a writing standpoint." Another writer mentions

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7   Zein is a bisexual, transgender, neurodivergent Hispanic graduate student in the humanities at a regional PNW college who works in the office for affirmative action.

8   Marina is a senior undergraduate Asian public health major at a regional Pacific Northwest (PNW) college.

9   Clay is a junior physical sciences major at a New England SLAC whose first language is Bisaya/Cebuano.

her appreciation for a similar attention to voice in asynchronous feedback that she received through email, noting that "it was clear, but also offered flexibility so that my voice remained my own in writing." Not only do many writers value preservation of their own voice and autonomy over their writing, but they also want to learn new skills that they can take with them and apply to their own writing when they are working independently. One writer shared a memorable experience from their past, explaining that the tutor "gave me strategies to help teach me how to pay better attention. I remember one recommended I print things out and cover up everything but the line/sentence I was trying to proof. I am now much more effective on my own." Without mentioning GenAI, these writers indicate their respect for determining and strengthening the voice of the paper (their voice) and learning how to revise and edit writing independently.

PERCEPTION 2: GENAI IS NOT HUMAN (76%; N=25) AND IT'S JUST NOT VERY GOOD (56%, N=14)

Alongside their perception of GenAI as a form of cheating, many of the writers above also noted its lack of humanity: Astur mentions its lack of soul, and Marina explains that she prefers to "use a real human being." Other writers noted this too, such as Juan,[10] who is a user of his center and a current tutor-in-training. Juan hesitates in his discussion of GenAI, admitting, "I have used ChatGPT, I won't lie to you (laughs), but … it cannot replace human emotions and a lot of times, the AI will be wrong." Juan has much to say about the community within his center, which he describes as "comfortable," "welcoming," and full of "happy people," especially for writers like him who speak a first language other than English. Juan also spoke about the benefits of having bilingual sessions to work on personal scholarship essays, where he talked through ideas in Spanish, and the bilingual consultant helped him translate. This practice relied on human engagement and would not be possible with AI.

In addition to the preference for humans over AI, some writers mention that GenAI does not help them improve as writers. Sabine[11] explains how she used GenAI once with mixed feelings: "It was kind of cool because it was, like, done for me, but it, like, it was *done* for me, you know?" She further describes the experience as a "stress reliever," yet still prefers the writing center since they "use my example, fix it, but then I needed to do the rest, so I actually learned … you're not really learning with ChatGPT … [the learning part] is super

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10   Juan is a sophomore undergraduate gay male student whose first language is Spanish and who identifies as an undocumented student at a small HSI in the West.

11   Sabine is a white, female junior majoring in occupational therapy at a two-year college in the West with an anxiety disorder.

important … this learning that I'm doing now applies to everything in my life." Through learning about herself as a writer, Sabine knows that she's a visual learner, so she can tell her future employer that she needs to do things in a hands-on kind of way and take notes in the field. These are things she learned about herself through her experiences with the writing center and ones that would not be possible with GenAI.

This aligns with Emma's[12] perspective of GenAI as a less dynamic, one-dimensional, imitator of human language. As a computer science major, Emma explains in depth both what GenAI is good at and what it's not good at, emphasizing along the way that "it's not good for getting correct answers because it imitates human language and that's its first and foremost job." Emma's emphasis on imitation speaks to both GenAI's strengths—which she notes are often at the end of the writing process when you need to find synonyms, consider alternative ways of organizing or "reorienting to the topics of your paper," and presenting your ideas in different words—as well as its weaknesses—like coming up with new ideas, conducting research, and connecting to real sources.

While Emma does use GenAI as a tool, most of our interview focused instead on how her experience in the writing center, and with one consultant, supported her during a time of crisis. In descriptions of her work in the center, she mentions love, kindness, and her struggle with writer's block and not being able to produce a draft. Yet, her tutor helped her "turn bullet points into paragraphs." Not only had Emma's college experience been interrupted by COVID, like many of her peers, but she also lost her mother, which made returning to school and being productive even more grueling. She explained, "The problem wasn't procrastination, I had worked for many hours. I just quite literally couldn't think. My tutor had one of the kindest responses I've ever received, he didn't make me feel bad about it at all. He said we could still work with what I had and he offered extra help to get me back on track. Thanks to him, I didn't end up failing that class that semester."

Like Emma, many other writers indicated that they value kindness (43.2%, n=124), validation/confidence (64.6%, n=95), and collaborative work during sessions (53.7%, n=50). The sheer presence of kindness throughout the survey responses and interviews *is* overwhelming. One writer simply states kindness alongside availability: "I was able to sign up for multiple sessions which was really nice and the tutors were so kind," while another notes that it was memorable because she was able to bring her infant with her to the center, where "some instructors played with him" while she had her session. Another admits

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12   Emma is a senior, bilingual, biracial, undergraduate computer science major with ADHD and depression at a New England SLAC.

her initial nervousness at the start of the session, and yet, "Throughout the meeting, the person was very nice and genuine. I felt that my writing was understood and together we made great improvements." This kindness is often paired with a sense of collaboration, like one writer who explains, "I came in with a messy draft, and together a peer reviewer and I planned out the next steps." Sessions of kindness and collaboration often result in writers feeling a sense of confidence (belief in one's ability to write) or validation (a felt sense of being seen, heard, or understood as a writer). A case in point, one writer notes: "The advisor helped me formulate a draft by asking probing questions to better understand what experiences were truly most important to me. This showed me that they cared about me as an individual."

PERCEPTION 3: CHATGPT IS A TOOL (57%, N=14) THAT CAN BE USED MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR NON-ACADEMIC WRITING (64%, N=9)

Like Emma's explanation of how GenAI can be useful, several other writers also mentioned that they did find some value in using GenAI as a tool.[13] Yet, none of them were very excited about it, nor did they consider it to be reliable, accurate, or intelligent. For example, Hao[14] explains that GenAI can be a "helpful aid" that he uses to make his writing clearer, especially regarding fragmented sentences. This gives him a "skeletal structure" from which to work. Hao also says that he never cuts and pastes directly, and that GenAI is simply "not very good," and "it kills creativity." Juan also uses GenAI as a tool, and, like Hao, uses it early on in his writing process and does not ever use exactly what GenAI offers. Juan's perspective of GenAI as a tool is shaped by his experience with faculty talking about it: "Like every class that I have [used GenAI for], the faculty use it as a tool, not something that will do your work for you." Although Juan does not necessarily seem to consider GenAI to be cheating, he does distinctly talk about an ethical way of using it. As someone whose first language is not English, Juan explains his use of AI to help him when "I have an idea in Spanish but not exactly in English, or an idea I just can't seem to translate it to words." He goes on to use a brilliant metaphor to describe his use of GenAI:

> I cannot untie the knot on a specific sentence, and so the way
> that I use it is I just put it into ChatGPT, ChatGPT gives me
> a word, and then I'm like, 'oh, I didn't have it this way' and

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13   Student use of GenAI as a tool is nuanced and significant. Analysis of this data set is in process.

14   Hao is a gay, Vietnamese international student in the life sciences and recent graduate of a New England SLAC who used his writing center over ten times.

> then I don't use what ChatGPT gave me at all. I completely
> do my own after that, because it tells me how to unknot the
> knot, and, or it kind of like, develops the idea I had a little
> more specifically so then my brain just starts like, 'oh, this is
> what I can do this is what I can do, this is what I can do.' So,
> I implement that in my writing, and I don't use exactly what
> ChatGPT has told me because I'm just like no …

Both Hao and Juan use GenAI as a tool in the early stages of their writing processes before they take their writing to the center. They are both very clear about not actually using what GenAI produces. Similarly, Kabir[15] is adamant about his refusal to use any software like GenAI that "does the work for you" or produces text that the writer then uses directly. Kabir prefers Quillbot, which he describes as a "re-worder," and something that is not cheating in the way that GenAI can be, as "it's my ideas, but it's using better words and stuff."[16] Kabir's use of AI falls in line with others who use it primarily to give them alternative options for sentence structure and word choice.

While most students were quite mellow in their attitudes, one was very much not. Kira[17] put it perhaps most directly: "I fucking hate ChatGPT," they said twice during our interview. Despite their frustration, both as a writer and as a teacher, Kira does admit that they use it quite a bit in their workplace but is outraged by its use in the university:

> And, don't get me wrong, I use ChatGPT, cause I do, like,
> side projects in terms of content writing and stuff, so one of
> my clients has me writing, um, you know when you have an
> app, and apps have little chat bubbles that pop up? So, when
> I'm writing emails and chat bubbles for apps and services that
> go to clients, I'm using ChatGPT because nobody cares. I
> know so many people who do for content writing because it's
> outsourced to the global south because we're cheaper labor,
> apparently, and they use a bunch of ChatGPT for it, and
> that's fine, but for academic writing, I fucking hate it because
> it's so stupid …

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15   Kabir is a current teaching assistant and soon-to-be graduate student at his alma mater, an R1 in the Midwest. He identifies as Asian, speaks fluent Tamil, and used the writing center extensively to aid him in writing his personal statement for medical school.

16   Quillbot seems to be similar to GenAI in some regards but tends to work with shorter amounts of text.

17   Kira is a genderqueer, neurodivergent humanities graduate student whose first language is Urdu.

Kira goes on to explain that she discourages both her students and herself from using GenAI in academic writing, claiming that she would "much rather get a B or a C and write myself than take a risk on something like that … it's not intelligent at all." Here, Kira justifies her decision to use GenAI for writing about which "nobody cares" but finds a different kind of value in academic writing. Although her exact reasoning for holding this position is not clear, it is possible that, given the inequitable labor conditions of her "content writing" job, she treats the writing with what she deems an equal lack of respect and care by using GenAI.

Similarly, Millie[18] used GenAI during her internship with a non-profit to write up articles and policy memos. Yet, she didn't like it because "it doesn't sound like me … [and it] doesn't cite sources and it makes stuff up." She chose not to use it in her legal research class, despite her professor's encouragement. Kira and Millie are not the only writers to use GenAI for non-academic or course-based purposes: Kabir used AI for medical school applications, and Molly[19] used GenAI to help her write an awards acceptance speech for her program when she had no idea how to start.

Overall, most writers used GenAI as part of their process, along with the more valuable experience of going to the writing center. For example, Kabir used GenAI quite a bit before meeting with his consultant to talk through his statement, often meeting for two hours at a time, twice a week. This aligns with responses from the wider dataset of writers who used the center for high-stakes writing support: Writers go to the writing center for help with applications related to their future (40%, n=57) and to get acclimated to the university (21.1%, n=30). Over 30 percent of memorable stories were about application materials specifically, and the majority of writers interviewed also mentioned using the center for this kind of help. In addition, many writers, especially those returning to school, used the center to help reorient them to university life. A case in point, one writer explains: "I was lost on how to write an essay because I was returning to school after a 15-year gap. The writing center helped me create an outline and answered my questions. They really helped me out." Similarly, Elena[20] admits her temptation but also her fear of cheating and her turn towards the writing center due to her learning style. In other words, these writers have memorable writing center experiences when they are working on or in high-stakes writing environments, either related to their future beyond graduation or in their current moment of higher education, in which they feel under-prepared.

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18   Millie is a white, straight female law student with ADHD at an R1 in the South.

19   Molly is a 33–39-year-old mother of three who returned to a two-year college in the West to pursue occupational therapy.

20   Elena is a 33-39-year-old female Hispanic immigrant who speaks Spanish at home and is an undergraduate education student at an HSI in the West.

Worth noting here is that for these writers, who are primarily writers of color, queer identifying, neurodiverse, immigrants, and/or are nontraditional in some way, GenAI may be a tool, but it is not sufficient for providing the human-centered feedback these writers want and need.

WRITING CENTERS AND AI: A WRITER-INFORMED PATH FORWARD

Unsurprisingly, writer feedback about the use and value of GenAI is somewhat varied, although most seem cautiously resistant. Yet, if I listen seriously to what these writers are telling me, then I can't help but hear the value and worth in what we do in writing centers, especially through our human-to-human connections, which are even felt online and asynchronously. These are the writers who came through school during COVID-19, which means they know what it's like to lose human interaction, so perhaps they have a different sense than those who came before or those who will come after. I can't help but think about Amulya and how we failed her. How many students might have a similar reaction to the writing center's use of GenAI? If the writing center doesn't offer human response to writing, then what is the point?

I'm thinking too of Genie Giaimo's recent call for higher education to "invest more in things [like writing centers] that we already know have a deep impact and help students not only to finish their degree, but also to flourish" ("The College Writing Center"). Similarly, I argue that we, too—as educators, writing program administrators, tutors, and writers—should devote ourselves to this kind of work: deep, impactful work that is meaningful to writers and is often affective, collaborative, and human.

Of course, I still recognize that we need to respond to our current technological moment, and that it would be irresponsible to simply ignore GenAI, even though research in this area is still new and evolving. Based on what I have learned from writers in this study so far, here is what I suggest:

1. Keep one-on-one consultations about student writing and human interaction without using GenAI, unless its use is initiated by the writer. This aligns with current writing center pedagogy that emphasizes collaborative agenda setting, and if a writer introduces GenAI into the agenda, then it makes sense for it to be part of the session.
2. Offer outward-facing workshops about GenAI for writers: how to use it ethically, what it's good for, what it's not so good for, etc.
3. Host critical conversations about new technologies (like GenAI) and writing for the campus community.

When I began this research, I was very interested in what we might learn from writers about how best to integrate and work alongside GenAI. I am no longer interested in this. Much to my surprise, my attitude has changed from one of curious optimism to more of an eyeroll to a heartfelt recommitment to the interactive basis of most writing center work. Instead of drinking the GenAI Kool-Aid, perhaps we can continue to do the kind of work we've always done, the kind of work we're known for, and lean into it more. For many students with whom I spoke, for those who are already using their university writing center as an invaluable resource, our physical spaces, our affect, our consultants, our kindness matters at least as much as our pedagogical interventions. Writing centers have long been spaces of and for difference. Spaces of and for writers. When it comes to preserving a space of human-to-human, affective collaboration around writing, I can't help but wonder: if not us, then who?

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CHAPTER 8. UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE OF GENERATIVE AI USE AMONG WRITING CENTER CLIENTS

Julia Bleakney, Lauren Jablon, and Paula Rosinski
Elon University

In our October 2023 meeting for writing center consultants, four lead consultants led a conversation about students' use of generative AI (GenAI) and what consultants were seeing in the writing center.[1] The conversation was mixed: one consultant said that most of his appointments had involved GenAI in some capacity, but another consultant said she hadn't seen any AI use and that faculty's fears about students' misuse of it were "overblown." Some consultants expressed enthusiasm for helping students use AI effectively, especially for brainstorming, whereas for others, using AI in any capacity signaled the death knell to their deeply held views about writing as a tool for self-discovery and self-expression.

This conversation was one of several we held with our hired cohort of 40 consultants during the fall 2023 semester, starting with initial training at the beginning of the semester, in which Julia Bleakney, the writing center director, introduced guidelines for AI use in the writing center that she had quickly drafted as the term began. In addition to the conversations with our consultant staff, fourteen students preparing to be writing center consultants (in a four-credit course) received training focused on Tom Deans et al.'s "AI in the Writing Center: Small Steps and Scenarios." By the end of the fall term, conversations with both experienced and new consultants had revealed much variation in their attitudes toward and experiences of AI in our writing center, making it clear that we needed to more fully understand how students were using AI in order to best prepare consultants to work effectively and responsibly with it in appointments.

Our university's response to GenAI is important context for our writing center's conversations about GenAI. Our university has been quick to respond to the GenAI challenge. At the beginning of fall 2023, after gathering information from faculty and staff about their AI concerns and needs, university administration released a "Generative AI Statement"; this statement emphasized that

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1   AI Disclosure: Grammarly was used for proofreading; all edits are authors' own.

AI use for courses was faculty choice and asked faculty to include AI policies in their syllabi and talk openly with students about if, when, and how AI use would be acceptable in their courses. Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, our university held several campus-wide discussions about the potential impacts of AI on education; our Center for Writing Excellence (comprising the writing center and Writing Across the Curriculum [WAC] programs) was at the forefront, offering faculty and staff AI-focused professional development workshops, AI pedagogy grants, and online resources. A university-wide task force, with three co-leaders, including Paula Rosinski, collected faculty and staff concerns, questions, and needs about AI, culminating in a final report to the provost. The university also created a new director of AI integration position; the internal search (co-chaired by Paula) resulted in the hiring of a faculty member with substantial AI research experience.

With so many initiatives and conversations happening around campus regarding GenAI, the writing center struck us as an ideal space to study students' AI use related to writing because we are "ground zero" for seeing students as they struggle to incorporate new technologies into their writing processes and for supporting student writing across the disciplines: as Elisabeth Buck and Joshua Botvin in their introduction to this edited collection state: "Writing centers have always been on the front lines of assessing the impact of new technologies on students' writing processes." Additionally, our approach to training, as is the case with other writing centers, is informed by a practitioner inquiry model (see, for instance, Liggett et al.): we gather evidence from consultants and clients based on their experiences and needs and then develop training for the consultants in order to best meet those needs.

In this study, then, we sought to understand how and in what ways students who come to our writing center are using GenAI to support their writing for any kind of purpose, academic or otherwise. At the same time, we also sought to understand if or how writing center consultants are using AI in their appointments with students. The goal of the client survey was to create a baseline understanding of students' use of and attitudes toward AI, and the goal of our consultant survey was to have a clearer understanding of what consultants were encountering with clients' AI use, as well as their sense of comfort with addressing or utilizing AI during sessions. In consultant meetings, the most strongly opinionated voices, both pro- and anti-AI, were speaking the loudest, and a survey would allow us to understand a fuller range of consultants' perspectives related to AI. After reviewing our context and research methods and presenting the data, we discuss our findings and offer some implications for our own and other writing centers. We found in our study that most clients are using AI, and they are using it for the invention and proofreading stages of

their writing processes; not all clients are disclosing their AI use to consultants; and consultants have a cautious interest in using GenAI in their writing center appointments.

WRITING CENTER CONTEXT AND STUDY METHODS

Elon University is a mid-sized private university in rural North Carolina with approximately 6,400 undergraduate and 800 graduate students. Consultants in the writing center, housed within the Center for Writing Excellence, are all undergraduate students. Also within CWE is Writing Across the University (WAU), our version of WAC. Julia Bleakney is the writing center director, and Paula Rosinski is the WAU director. Lauren Jablon, our third author, was a lead writing center consultant in 2024. In spring 2024, when we ran the surveys, we had 64 consultants: this included 15 trainee consultants in our four-credit course; these students worked about 16 hours in the writing center as part of the course. For our study, which received Institutional Review Board (IRB) exemption, two surveys (one for consultants and one for clients) were prepared using Google Forms. Each survey had three sub-sections: one section to collect participation consent, another with the survey questions, and a final section to collect emails for a gift card drawing. (To incentivize participation, we conducted a drawing every two weeks for one gift card of $25.) Each of these sections was created in a separate Google Form (to disaggregate identifiers, such as name in the consent form and email in the gift card drawing form). This example of the client survey at https://forms.gle/3avrCnXuZ1rjFPxK8 shows how all three sections were incorporated into one form.

CONSULTANT SURVEY

Writing center consultants were invited (via an email sent through Moodle, our university's learning management system) to take the consultant survey three times during the spring 2024 semester—at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. We asked a total of six survey questions in three areas: if clients were using GenAI (based on clients' self-reporting and consultants' observations), how clients were using AI, and clients' and consultants' perspectives on AI use, particularly whether they felt that AI use for coursework is ethical. While most questions in each of the three consultant surveys were the same, we made some adjustments to account for the time of the semester. For instance, in the first survey, we asked consultants to reflect on their experiences with clients in the fall 2023 semester, and by the third survey, we asked them to reflect on the spring 2024 semester.

CLIENT SURVEY

The client survey was emailed every two weeks to all students who had visited the writing center within the prior two-week period; the email list was generated through our appointment scheduling system, WCOnline, and sent as a "BCC" to clients. The client survey was much longer than the consultant survey, with 19 questions across four main areas: if they are using GenAI and, if so, which tools and for what purposes; if they used GenAI for the assignment they brought to the writing center; other ways they have been using GenAI; and their ethical perspective on AI use. For this article, due to space constraints, we don't examine the ways clients use AI outside of coursework.

For both surveys, because responses were collected anonymously, we do not know how many consultants took all three surveys, two surveys, or just one; likewise, for clients who visited the writing center multiple times during the semester and therefore potentially took the survey more than once. What we can say from both surveys is that they provide us with a useful snapshot of clients' use of AI and consultants' experiences with AI in a semester with lots of initiatives, as well as uncertainty about AI.

Table 8.1. Response Rates, Client Survey

Total No. of clients, Spring 2024	No. of Survey Responses	Response Rate
502	72	14.3%

Table 8.2. Response Rates, Consultant Survey

	First Survey		Second Survey		Third Survey	
Total No. of Consultants, Spring 2024	No. of Responses	Response Rate	No. of Responses	Response Rate	No. of Responses	Response Rate
64	15	23.4%	14	21.8%	12	18.7%

SURVEY RESULTS

In this section, we present the results of our surveys of writing center clients and consultants. We start with survey responses related to writing center clients' generative AI usage, followed by survey responses from both clients and

consultants on how generative AI is being used. Finally, we present survey responses from both groups on the perceptions about the benefits and drawbacks of generativeAI.

SECTION 1: ARE WRITING CENTER CLIENTS USING GENAI?

Client Responses

In the first set of questions, we wanted to understand what percentage of writing center clients are using GenAI and if they are bringing their AI-enhanced writing to their writing center appointments. First, we asked: "Have you used generative AI tools to assist you with any writing assignments for classes (and not just the writing you brought into the writing center recently)?" We also asked if they had used GenAI on the assignment they'd recently brought to the writing center. Their response options were "yes," "no," and "not sure" for general assignments and "yes, "no," and "prefer not to say" for the center-specific assignment. We present the responses to both questions in Figure 8.1. In general, 59 (81.9%) of clients had used GenAI, 11 (or 15.3%) had not used GenAI, and two (2.8%) were unsure. In their study on perceptions and use of AI at Clermont Auvergne University in this collection, Hamza Miftah, Dacia Dressen-Hammouda, and Christine Blanchard similarly found that a majority of students were using AI. In our study, for students' writing center appointments, 26.1 percent (18) said they had used AI, with some clarifying that it was "for grammar and spelling," 72.5 percent (50) said they had not, and one student preferred not to say.
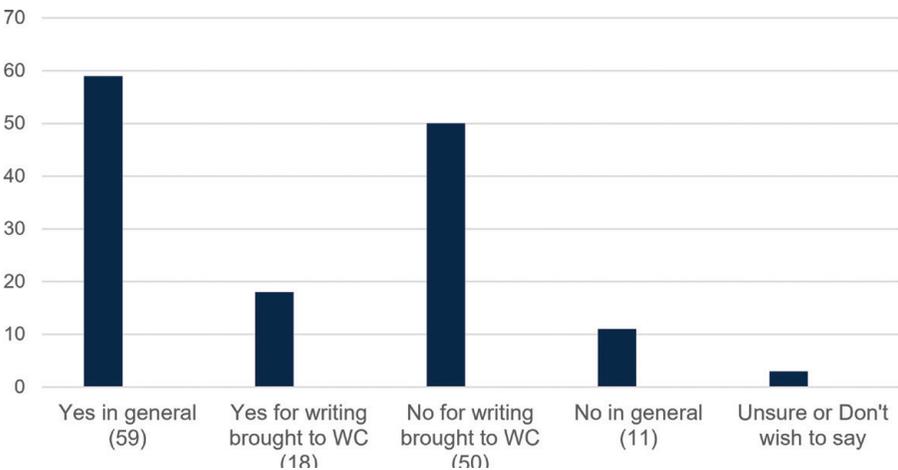
Figure 8.1. Clients using AI in writing assignments in general and for the writing they brought to the writing center.

What is striking about this figure is the discrepancy between clients' general use of AI versus their use of AI for the writing they brought to the writing center. Possible explanations for this discrepancy include students bringing in assignments where AI use was prohibited, or students being uncertain about how to use AI for that particular writing situation.

We also wanted to know if clients had discussed their AI use during their recent writing center appointment. Most students (88.2%, or 43) said their consultant did not talk with them about AI, while eight students (15.7%) said they did. Note that 51 students (70%) chose to answer this question; we assume that no response likely means "not applicable."

Finally, we asked clients which AI tools they were using; while we provided some examples (including Grammarly, ChatGPT, etc.), we left this survey open-ended so clients could write in whatever they wanted. Overwhelmingly, clients were using Grammarly (46 students) and ChatGPT (45 students). We consider Grammarly to be an AI tool because it uses AI to offer suggestions on grammar, style, and clarity. One client said they used Quilbot, and one said Microsoft Word (which we assume means CoPilot, though we can't know for sure).
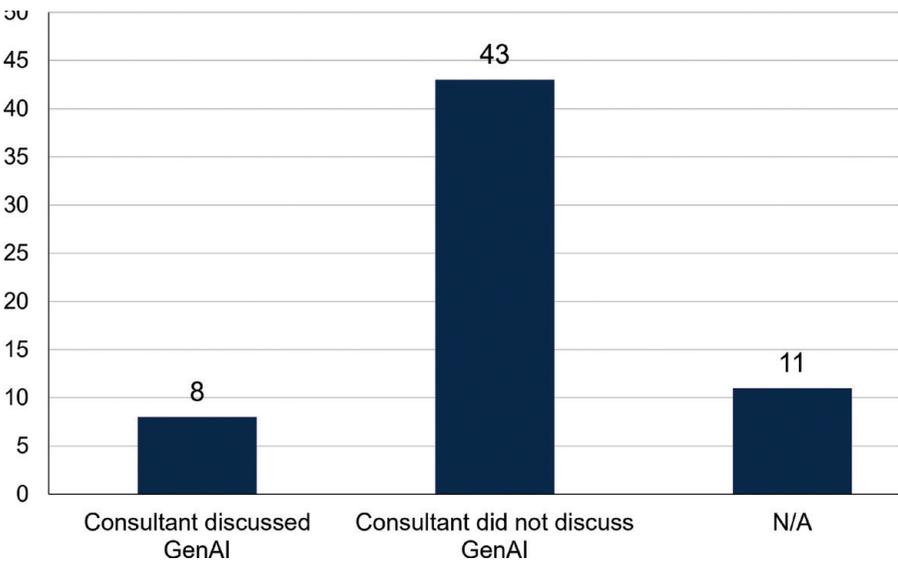
Figure 8.2. Number of clients whose consultant talked with them about GenAI use.

Consultant Responses

We first asked consultants if they had worked with any students who appeared to be using AI in their writing (see Figure 8.3). As a reminder, we ran this survey three times. In the first survey of the semester, we asked consultants to reflect

back on the previous semester; eight consultants (of 15) said their clients had used AI, and four consultants said they hadn't. Mid-semester, we asked consultants to focus on the current (spring) semester; two consultants (of 14) said their clients had used AI, while eleven said their clients had not used AI. By the end of the semester, the numbers were similar to the first survey: eight consultants (of 12) said their clients had used AI, and four consultants said they hadn't.

One possible explanation for the response to the mid-semester survey is that faculty had implemented "no AI use" policies for the spring semester; another possible explanation is that detecting AI use was getting more challenging. To understand how consultants were identifying AI use, we added a new question to the third survey: "How did you know they were using/not using AI?" The most common response was that the client either verbally disclosed their use of AI or started using the tool during the appointment. This suggests that, in the absence of evidence, consultants assumed the client was not using AI.
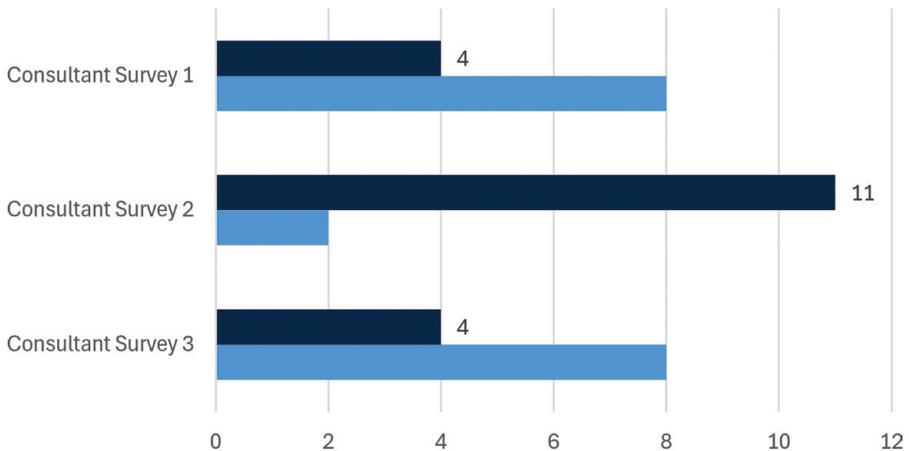
Figure 8.3. Consultants' response to "Have your clients used AI?"

SECTION 2: HOW ARE CLIENTS USING GENAI?

Client Responses

We also asked clients and consultants to explain for what purpose or during which stages of the writing process clients were using GenAI. In both client and consultant surveys, we provided a list of possible options; they could select any or all of the options, and there was room to write in their own response. While the list of options on both surveys was mostly the same, there was some variation; for instance, we did not ask consultants if clients had used AI to "check spelling and grammar" because we (wrongly) assumed that clients rarely complete this

step prior to coming to the writing center. As it turns out, checking spelling and grammar was the number one way clients used AI, and for this category, the tool was most likely to be Grammarly. After spell check and grammar, as shown in Figure 8.4, clients most frequently used AI to brainstorm ideas or to provide topics to write about, followed by using AI to explain concepts or answer questions, and then to provide feedback on their writing.
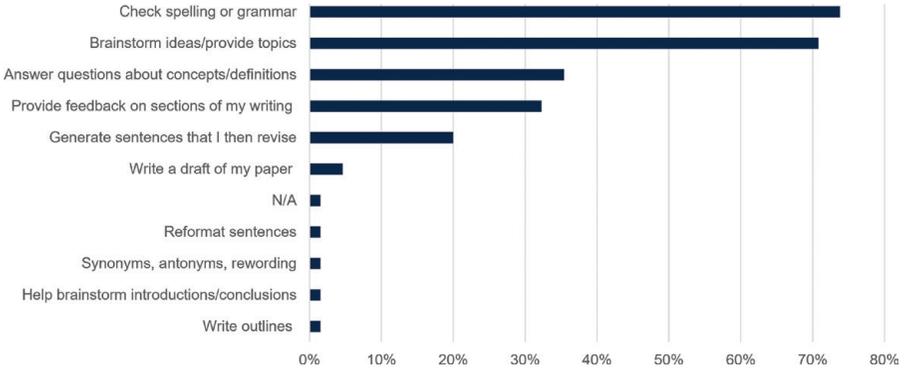
Figure 8.4. Writing center spring 2024 clients' purposes for using GenAI in writing.

Consultant Responses

Consultants (see Figure 8.5) also most frequently noted clients' use of AI for brainstorming, then to write a portion of their paper (which did not show up in the client survey, except perhaps for "generate sentences that I then revise"), and then to understand a concept or subject. Across the three surveys we ran during the semester, the only time consultants indicated their clients were using AI "but were unclear how" was at the beginning of the semester.
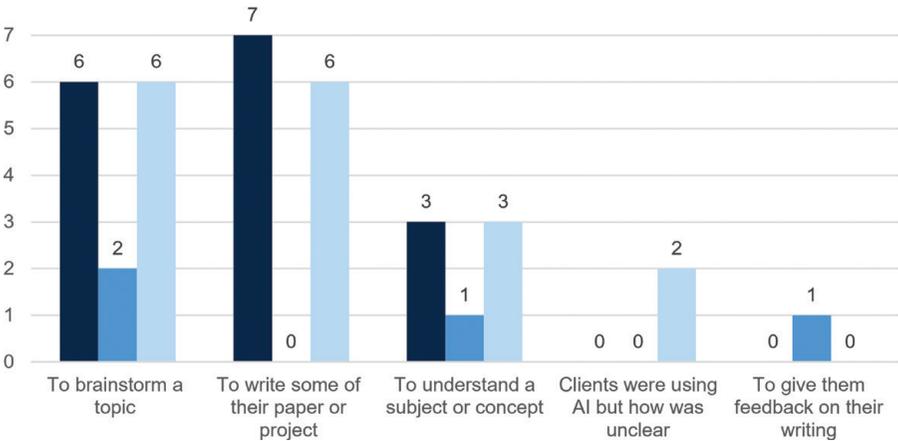
Figure 8.5. Clients' purposes for using GenAI according to consultants.

Section 3: How Do Clients and Consultants Perceive Generative AI

Writing center consultants and clients were also asked about their attitudes toward AI use, particularly related to coursework.

Client Responses

Clients were asked to rank a series of statements using a Likert scale of 1-5, with the first statement (see Figure 8.6) being "Using generative AI is cheating." No client "strongly agreed" with this statement, but 15.3 percent (11) "agreed" and 8.3 percent (6) "strongly disagreed." The majority of clients either felt neutral about AI as cheating (34.7%, 25) or "disagreed" (41.7%, 30). We can compare these responses to Miftah et al.'s study of students' perceptions of AI in this volume, where they show how students find AI beneficial to learning but also express concern about how AI might negatively impact critical thinking.

We also asked clients if they had used AI for one or more writing assignments and not disclosed it to their professors (see Figure 8.7). While the majority (62.3%, 43) said no, 29 percent (20) said they had used AI without disclosing it to their professors. This response could mean that the clients' professors did not ask them to disclose their AI use, or the clients used AI in ways they did not think needed disclosure, or they were expected to disclose AI use but chose not to.

Finally, we asked clients whether they found GenAI helpful for their writing process. Shown in Figure 8.8, the responses are unsurprising: 32.5 percent (25) said yes, 49.5 percent (38) said yes for some parts of the writing process, and 18.2 percent (14) said no.
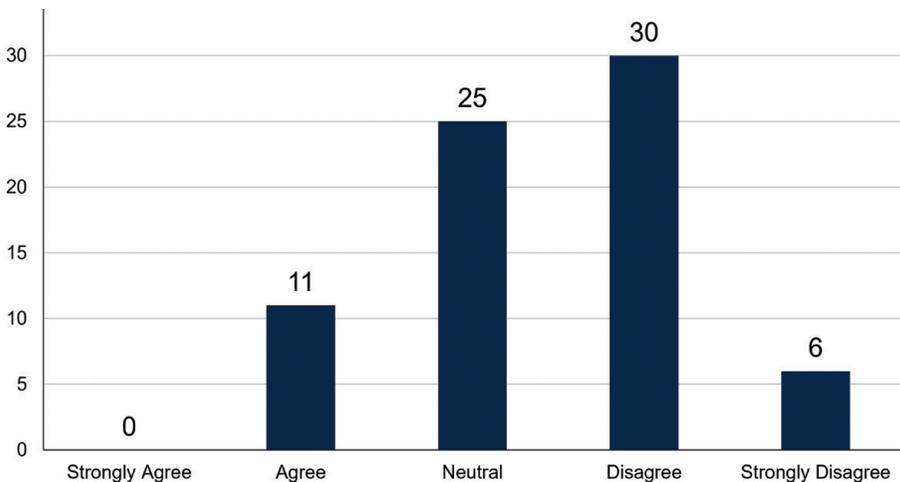
Figure 8.6. Clients' Likert scale response to "Do you think Using AI is cheating?"
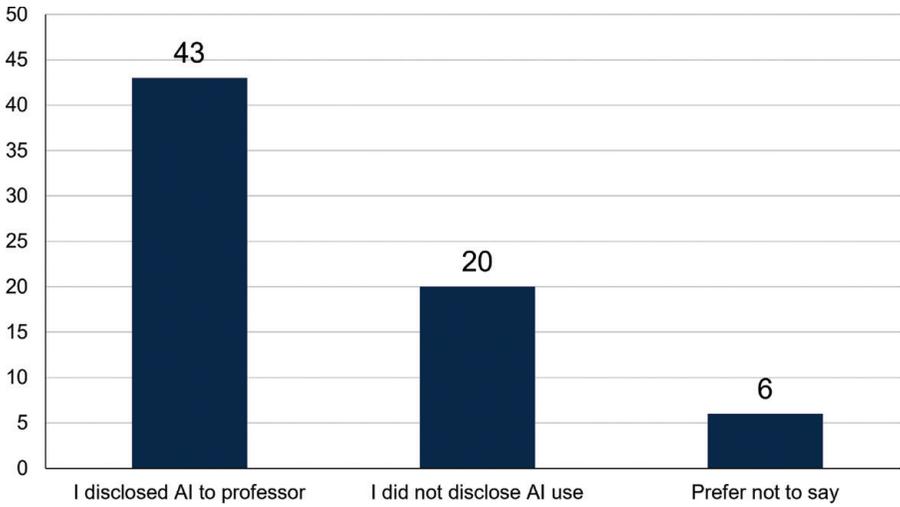
Figure 8.7. Clients' response to question about whether they disclosed AI use to their professors.
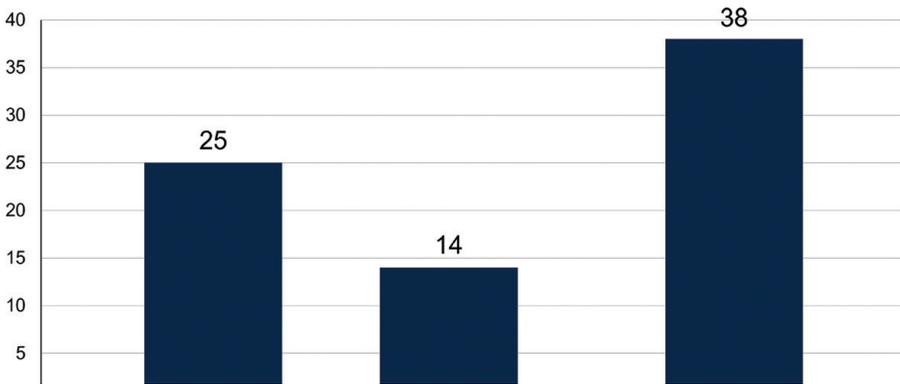
Figure 8.8. Clients' response to question about GenAI's usefulness to their writing process.

Consultant Responses

To understand consultants' ethical perspectives on GenAI, we provided five statements and asked them to rank each statement in relation to the other statements. Each statement presented a perspective ranging from "GenAI is essential" (meaning it's an indispensable tool for the writing process) to "cheating" (implying it should not be used). The statements consultants were asked to rank are:

1. Generative AI is an essential tool to support all aspects of the writing process.

2. Generative AI is a useful tool for the writing process if used ethically.
3. Writers should limit their use of generative AI to only certain tasks, like narrowing a topic.
4. Generative AI dulls writers' creative and critical thinking skills.
5. Using generative AI is cheating.

Consultants ranked the statement they most strongly agreed with as "1" and the one they most strongly disagreed with as "5." For instance, if one consultant felt that the statement "GenAI dulls writers' creative and critical thinking skills" best captured their beliefs about AI, they would drag that to the top of the list, or to the "number 1" spot. The results of the highest-ranked statement (the statement most often ranked at number 1) and lowest-ranked statement (the statement most often ranked at number 5) are in Figures 8.9 and 8.10.
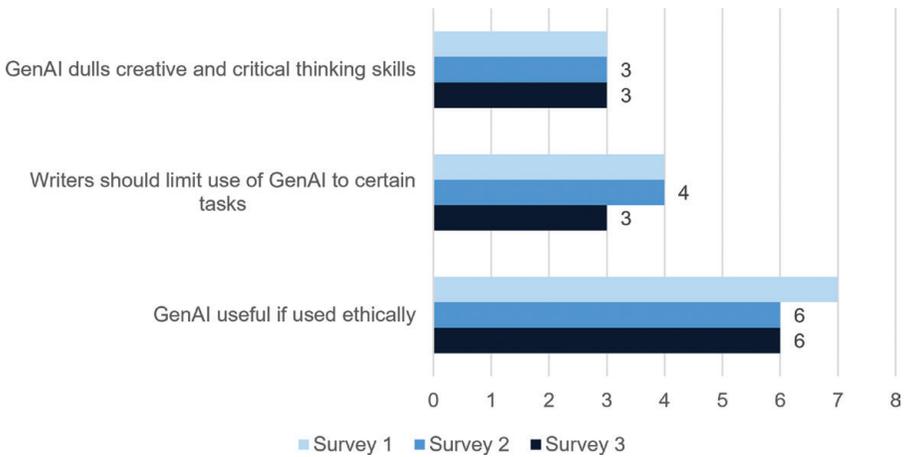
Figure 8.9. Consultants' highest-ranked selection across surveys.
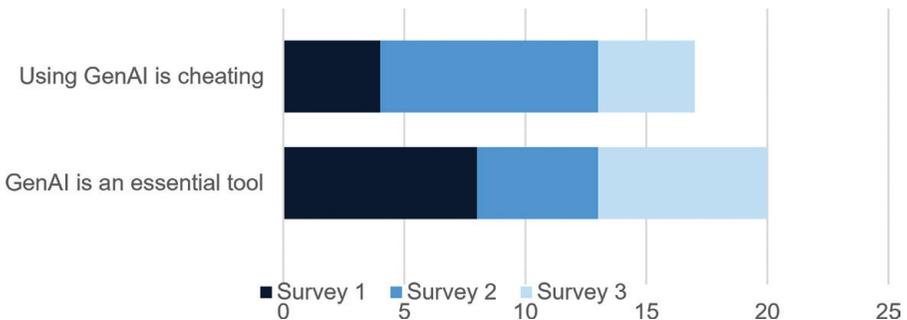
Figure 8.10. Consultants' lowest-ranked selection across surveys.

These figures show a clustering of strongly agree and strongly disagree in two areas. In the area where consultants most strongly agree (ranked "1") are the statements: "Generative AI is a useful tool for the writing process if used ethically," followed by "Writers should limit their use of generative AI to only certain tasks like narrowing a topic," and "Generative AI dulls writers' creative and critical thinking skills." On the other end of the scale, the statements that consultants favored the least and most frequently ranked "5" were "Generative AI is an essential tool to support all aspects of the writing process" and "Using generative AI is cheating." This suggests that consultants generally don't believe AI is either essential to the writing process or that it's wrong to use it. Rather, consultants' attitudes to AI are cautious and nuanced; generally, more consultants believe GenAI use is acceptable if it's used ethically and carefully, for some selected aspects of the writing process. They are not convinced that it's necessary for the writing process, but if students want to use it (especially in ethical ways), it shouldn't be considered cheating.

And, finally, we asked consultants to rank their comfort level with using AI in their appointments. What is notable (see Figure 8.11) is that quite a number of consultants across all three surveys are uncomfortable or very uncomfortable consulting with AI (six in each survey).

■ Very comfortable consulting with AI
■ Somewhat comfortable consulting with AI
■ Neutral
■ Somewhat uncomfortable consulting with AI
■ Very uncomfortable consulting with AI
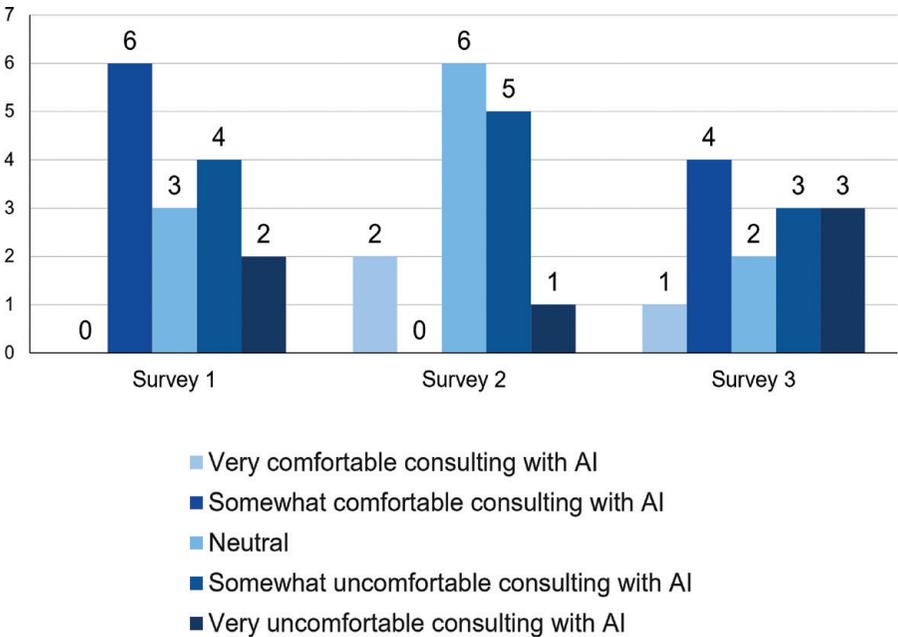
Figure 8.11. Consultants' self-reported comfort level with using GenAI in writing center appointments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings of our spring 2024 surveys of writing center clients and consultants, we now have a better understanding of if, how, and in what ways our clients are using GenAI, as well as how consultants are handling clients' use of GenAI in their appointments. While a 14.3 percent client response rate and a 21.3 percent average consultant response rate (across three consultant surveys) must be considered with caution, we can say, tentatively, that:

1. Most writing center clients are using GenAI, as other recent studies have found (e.g., Cheatle), they are using the most predictable tools (Grammarly and ChatGPT), and they are using these tools primarily for the beginning and end stages of the writing process: ChatGPT for brainstorming and getting started and Grammarly for grammar and spelling checks. Other recent studies have also found that students commonly use GenAI for these parts of the writing process (Zieve-Cohen et al.)
2. Clients are not always disclosing their use of AI to the consultants (and indeed to their professors), and consultants do not always bring up AI, even if they suspect their client is using it.
3. Both clients and consultants have a somewhat nuanced ethical response to GenAI use, and neither clients nor consultants believe using AI is cheating.
4. Finally, some consultants are moderately comfortable using or discussing AI in consulting sessions, while others are not comfortable doing so.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WRITING CENTERS

We still have much more to learn from our clients and consultants about how GenAI is impacting their writing lives. And so much has already changed since we conducted the survey in the spring of 2024, including students' attitudes, the tools themselves and students' access to them, and faculty attitudes toward using AI. However, our study shows us that students are already using AI and that consultants want to help students use AI tools in thoughtful and responsible ways. With these findings in mind, we have some next steps for our own writing center, and we believe these suggestions are useful for other writing centers as well.

- Consultant training needs to include techniques for how to discuss AI use with clients, a conclusion reached in other recent studies (Aikens and Weildon; Zieve-Cohen et al.). As AI becomes increasingly

integrated into students' writing processes and their writing technologies, consultants need to feel comfortable asking clients about their use of AI. Discussing students' GenAI use in a safe environment will more likely lead to productive conversations about how to use these tools responsibly and in accordance with faculty guidelines. Consultants need training and sample question scripts to lead these conversations with clients.

- Writing consultants also need to develop their AI critical literacies. As is the case when any new technology emerges, consultants need some training to help them understand how AI tools function, as well as their benefits and limitations.

- Consultants also need to know faculty's AI use policy, which means that faculty should have clearly stated AI use policies. This is especially important as students report being confused by conflicting faculty AI policies (Cheatle; Zieve-Cohen et al.). Consultants already use a series of questions in the opening moments of an appointment; now they also need to ask about professors' GenAI use policy before proceeding with those policies in mind.

Many writing centers are concerned about how AI tools will impact not only the nature of our work but our very futures (Lundin). Will writing centers continue to exist if students or administrators think AI can do our jobs just as well as humans can? Despite this real concern, the nuanced response to AI from consultants, in both our and other writing centers, leads us to end on a more hopeful note. Writing centers remain essential places of learning by providing human-to-human connections, kindness, and affective collaboration opportunities (as discussed by Rebecca Hallman Martini in Chapter 7 of this collection). As importantly, consultants have a crucial role to play in leading honest conversations with their peers about the benefits and limitations of using AI as part of the writing process, as well as in helping students use AI tools critically and responsibly.

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CHAPTER 9. "I NEEDED HELP": GENERATIVE AI AS WRITING TUTOR

Matthew Fledderjohann and Emily C. Perkins
Le Moyne College

An undergraduate studying in a STEM field said he used generative AI (GenAI) often for his academic work. He'd used it to explain concepts; develop introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions which he then revised; and check grammar. ChatGPT and Grammarly helped him write literary analyses, annotated bibliographies, research papers, and lab reports. He explained:

> I … think that [it's] hard for a student not to use [AI] as deadline[s] infringe on everyday life[,] and the stress of being a student can easily be fixed by an automatic essay generator…. Simply put[,] when you have 3 essays and 2 tests this week[,] why not lose more than half your work by having a very talented instant writer do it for you[?]

Implied within this student's rationalization of his GenAI use are the interrelated realities that writing is difficult and writers need help. The multifaceted cognitive and linguistic activities writing requires are challenging for everyone—especially developing writers. It is an established fact that writers need help because writing is a difficult, time-consuming, varied activity. Writers know they need help (Bond). We, as writing program administrators (WPAs), know they need help (Davies; Rose). And writing centers have long existed to respond to these needs (Harris). However, the proliferation of GenAI has given writers access to a powerful, readily available tool that responds immediately to writing assistance needs. As a result, what does it mean for writing centers when students start turning to large language models (LLMs) to mitigate writing's difficulties? How does students' use of this technology reposition the role of peer writing tutors? Through an Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved study, we surveyed 357 students enrolled at a small, liberal arts college about their experiences with and perceptions of GenAI. In what follows, we closely analyze data from the 171 respondents who reported using GenAI because they needed writing help. We examine who these students are, how they report using GenAI, and what

they feel about this technology. Our findings highlight what challenges writers identify needing help with and how writers' attitudes about GenAI converge with their reasons for using it. Understanding writers' motivations for using GenAI helps writing centers position and advance the assistance we can provide in contrast to and in connection with what LLMs offer. Our focus on how GenAI informs students' academic writing relates to wider scholarly interest in the costs and benefits of students' interactions with writing-support computer applications ranging from online thesauruses (Gero and Chilton) to Grammarly (Koltovskaia). Much of the research on students' use of Grammarly, in particular, has focused on how it can be an effective tool to help students' writing development (Zinkevich and Ledeneva)—especially multilingual students who are learning English (Alotaibi). Several scholars have drawn attention to the way both in-person tutoring services and Grammarly's analytical tools can complement each other to promote students' development as writers (O'Neill and Russell; Zhang et al.). But, of course, the editing recommendations Grammarly provided prior to 2022 are very different from what GenAI is capable of today. Given this, much recent research has already been devoted to this question of how students are using GenAI. Scholars conclude that many college students have generally favorable opinions about ChatGPT (Das and Madhusudan; Shoufan; Thi Thuy) that is tempered by students' concerns about academic integrity issues (Zhou et al.). This merging of positive perspectives with ethical uncertainty appears in Wang's research. One of his case study subjects rationalized her GenAI use by relating it to seeking writing center assistance: "Now I don't have to physically go to the writing center at 11 PM, waiting for the previous visitor to finish their session" (12). This possibility that GenAI can help students with their writing has led Bedington et al. to encourage WPAs to prepare for administrators to ask, "If ChatGPT can be a 24h tutor, why do we need so many human tutors in the writing center?" (11). This question can be best answered if we know more about which student populations are using GenAI for help with academic writing.

METHODOLOGY

To that end, we designed an IRB-approved study in which we anonymously surveyed currently matriculated undergraduate and graduate students at the small, private liberal arts college in the Northeastern United States where we work as writing center directors. The survey included multiple-choice, check-all, and short-answer questions, covering demographics and participants' usage and attitudes towards GenAI. We elicited feedback about who the respondents were, if they have used GenAI for their academic work, what GenAI tools users

have engaged with, what kinds of academic assignments they have used those tools for, and how and why they used them. Additionally, the survey's 5-point Likert scale questions elicited feedback on participants' experience using GenAI in the classroom, views on GenAI in relation to academic integrity, and overall perceptions on how GenAI tools may influence their futures. All survey questions were optional. Table 9.1 provides survey participant demographic information for the whole participant population (n=357) and the participants who self-reported using GenAI because they needed help (n=171). We've included all demographic data fields here in order to offer the clearest possible picture of our participant pool.

Table 9.1. An Overview of Participant Demographics

Category	Sub-Category	Full Population (357)		"I needed help" Population (171)	
		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	99	27.8	47	27.5
	Female	248	69.7	121	70.8
	Non-Binary	9	2.5	3	1.8
Ethnicity	Caucasian	269	75.6	127	74.3
	Black/African	24	6.7	10	5.8
	Latinx or Hispanic	24	6.7	13	7.6
	Asia	11	3.1	6	3.5
	Multiracial	15	4.2	6	3.5
	Other	13	3.6	6	3.5
Standing	First-year	83	23.3	36	21.1
	Sophomore	75	21	43	25.1
	Junior	76	21.3	38	22.2
	Senior	84	23.5	43	25.1
	Graduate student	37	10.4	10	5.8
Reported GPA	3.7-4.0 (A- to A+)	163	45.7	63	36.8
	2.7-3.69 (B- to B+)	171	47.9	99	57.9
	1.7-2.69 (C- to C+)	20	5.6	8	4.7
	0.0-1.69 (F to D)	2	0.56	1	0.58

We distributed the survey via the campus' digital newsletter, bulletin boards across campus, and through faculty members' in-class promotions and virtual survey distributions. Then, we used descriptive statistics and compared distributions, correlations, and means to identify connections between factors relating to students' use of and attitudes towards GenAI. For open-ended responses, we used thematic coding to identify and summarize whether participants' perceptions towards GenAI were positive, negative, or ambiguous.

RESULTS

Students use GenAI for a variety of reasons. However, the large number of students reporting use of GenAI to seek help is compelling (n=171, 47.8% of 357 total respondents, 72.8% of 235 GenAI users). Of the 235 respondents who said they'd used GenAI for academic work, their top reason given was "needed help" (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2. Respondents' Reasons for Using GenAI

"Why have you used GenAI for academic work?"	GenAI Users (235)	
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
I needed help.	171	72.8
I was curious.	112	47.7
It saved me time.	108	45.96
My instructor encouraged me to.	70	29.8
My instructor required me to.	22	9.4

Since this question about motivation was a multi-selection question, many students provided multiple reasons for why they used GenAI. However, the single highest response for using GenAI for academic work was, "I needed help" (n=35, 14.9% of 235). Table 9.3 displays the five most frequently occurring combinations of selected reasons, which together represent 133 students (56.6% of all GenAI users). Notably, "I needed help" appears in all five of these most common response combinations, indicating that it functioned as a central or underlying motivation that often accompanied other reasons such as curiosity, time savings, or instructor encouragement.

Additionally, GenAI users who reported needing help used GenAI at significantly different rates than those who used GenAI for reasons other than "I needed help", $\chi^2(3, 234) = 15.35$, $p= .002$ (Figure 9.1). More specifically, the students who reported needing help tended to use GenAI more frequently ("often" or "all or almost all the time"), 22.2 percent (n=38 overall compared to only 7.9 percent (n=5) in the group that did not report using GenAI because they needed help.

Table 9.3. Top 5 Distributed Reasons for Using GenAI

No. of GenAI users (133 of 235)	I needed help. (133 of 171)	I was curious. (69 of 112)	It saved time. (59 of 108)	My instructor encouraged me. (11 of 70)	My instructor required me. (0 of 22)
35 (14.9%)	X				
30 (12.7%)	X	X	X		
29 (12.3%)	X		X		
28 (11.9%)	X	X			
11 (4.7%)	X	X		X	
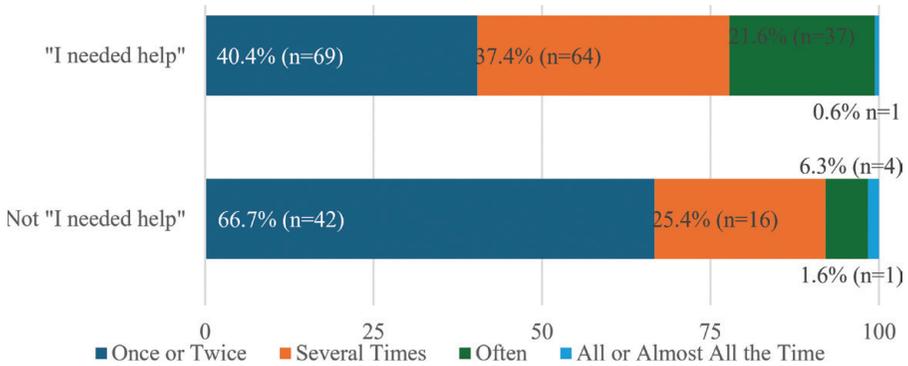
Figure 9.1. Frequency of GenAI use.

Examining how GenAI users who reported needing help used GenAI tools allows us to better understand where in the writing process students seek assistance the most. A high percentage of students reported using GenAI tools for assistance with pre-writing tasks including "brainstorm ideas" (n=191, 81.3%) and "explain concepts" (n=142, 60.4%) as well as revision tasks like "check my grammar" (n=140, 59.6%) and "give me feedback on my writing" (n=100, 42.6%) (Table 9.4). In regard to those invention activities, 89 percent (n=209) of GenAI-using respondents selected either "brainstorming," "explaining concepts," or both of these options to describe how they've used GenAI. Among the population of respondents who'd said they used GenAI at least in part because they needed help, these numbers were higher; 87.7 percent (n=150) used GenAI for brainstorming, 66.7 percent (n=114) selected "explain concepts," and 93.6 percent (n=160) selected at least one of the two.

Table 9.4. Distribution of How GenAI Users Use GenAI

"When using generative AI for academic assignments, how have you used it?"	GenAI Users (235)		"I needed help" Population (171)	
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Brainstorm ideas	191	81.3	150	87.7
Explain concepts	142	60.4	114	66.7
Check my grammar	140	59.6	111	65
Give me feedback on my writing	100	42.6	82	48
Develop an introduction	57	24.3	49	28.7
Develop a conclusion	47	20	41	24
Develop body paragraphs	40	17	37	21.6
Synthesize sources	27	11.5	25	14.6
Draft an assignment that I then revised	26	11.1	25	14.6
Write a full assignment	8	3.4	6	3.5

There was a statistically significant difference between how many different kinds of assignment types (e.g., research paper, lab report, discussion post) the GenAI users who selected "I needed help" reported using GenAI for and the number of assignment types that GenAI users who hadn't identified needing help said they'd used GenAI for (Table 9.5). The number of assignment types for which GenAI users who were at least sometimes motivated by needing help used GenAI tools for (M=3.5, SD=2.24) was significantly more than the number of assignment types for which GenAI users who never reported needing additional help used GenAI for (M=2.6, SD=2.19) (t(232)=2.65, p.009). Across this data, people who used GenAI because they needed help used it more frequently (Figure 9.1) and for more types of assignments (Table 9.5) than people who used it for other reasons.

Table 9.5. Number of Different Kinds of Assignment Types GenAI Users Used GenAI On

	GenAI Users Who Selected "I needed help"	GenAI Users Who *Didn't* Select "I needed help"
How many different types of assignments respondents used GenAI on	Mean: 3.5, n=170	Mean: 2.6, n=63

Finally, we were struck by how much more positively the students who used GenAI because they needed help felt about this technology than the students who used it for other reasons (Figure 9.2). The rate at which the "I needed help" population of GenAI users felt differently about the value of GenAI than the population of GenAI users who hadn't used it because they needed help was statistically significant, $\chi^2(2, 191) = 6.20$, $p = .04$. This is additionally notable given how GenAI users had such different opinions about GenAI than the population of respondents who reported not having used GenAI (Figure 9.3), $\chi^2(2, 287) = 67.51$, $p < .00001$. Students who used GenAI thought about it more positively than students who didn't, and more students who used it because they needed help perceived it positively than those who used it for other reasons (Figure 9.3).
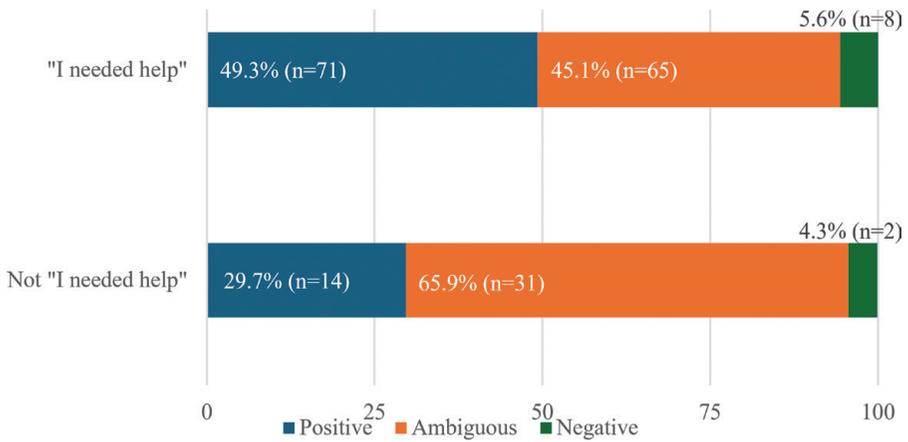
Figure 9.2. GenAI users' motivation and attitudes towards GenAI.
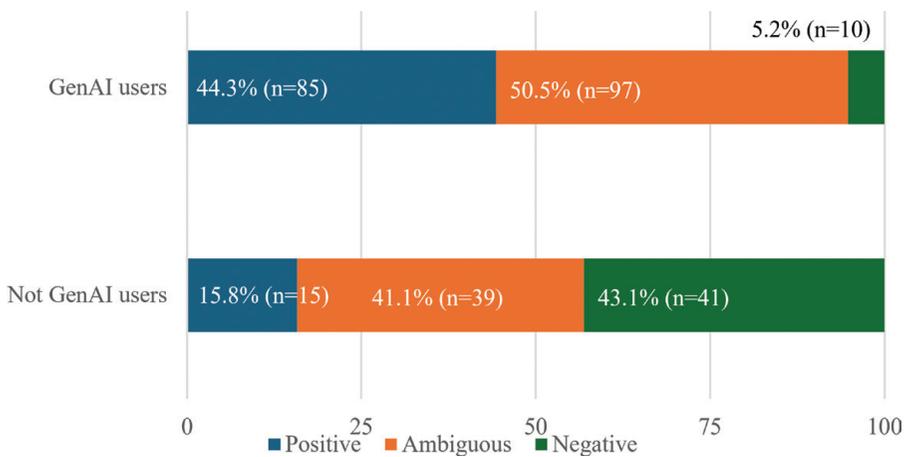
Figure 9.3 Respondents' attitudes towards GenAI.

While we believe our research productively informs our subsequent discussion of how GenAI is influencing the future of writing centers, our study's design is subject to limitations. First, respondents who reported they used GenAI because they needed help did not necessarily seek help every time they used GenAI. For example, one student reported using the tool several times because it saved her time, she was curious about the tool, and she needed help. It's possible that she only used GenAI once for help and then additional times out of curiosity and to save time. Furthermore, our study relied on convenience sampling and self-reported data, so we cannot make generalizations from our sample to the larger population of GenAI student users or guarantee the accuracy of the responses. We received responses from participants who were easiest to contact and recruit, thereby not capturing the perspectives or objective behavior of all students at our institution. The non-representative nature of our findings is particularly notable when considering how many of our survey respondents self-reported maintaining an A or B grade point average (GPA) (n=334, 93.5%).

DISCUSSION

Our survey's findings have direct implications for how writing centers function and understand themselves in conversation with GenAI. Specifically, what we learned about the kind of writing-related assistance students seek from GenAI can guide how we contribute to and train our tutors to help during early invention stages. Furthermore, what we learned about GenAI users' positive attitudes about this technology can point us towards how GenAI needs to be addressed and not dismissed within our writing centers and composition pedagogy practices.

BRAINSTORMING

While 235 respondents had dozens of different responses to the survey's questions about how they've used GenAI, as previously identified, the most common use was "brainstorming." This trend has been found across other studies about students' use of GenAI (Bleakney et al., this volume; Essid and Cummins). We found that, after "brainstorming," the next most commonly cited reason for using GenAI was "explaining concepts." These two activities were even more commonly selected among the respondents who said they'd used GenAI because they needed help.

Of course, writing centers are eager to help students through the invention stage of the writing process. And while generalist tutors can't be accountable to explain all concepts, they are consistently ready to ask insightful questions that can advance content knowledge. Our tutoring handbooks devote paragraphs,

sections, and chapters to prewriting techniques (e.g., Bishop, 82; Clark, 31-42; Fitzgerald and Ianetta, 198, 204; Ryan and Zimmerelli, 31-35). However, although we know writing centers can be excellent places for writers to generate, understand, and refine new ideas, the writers at our institutions might not know this. In his review of 250 tutoring session logs, John Kneisley found that only 6 percent of sessions focused on invention or brainstorming tasks. The distance between our enthusiasm for helping writers through the invention process and the extent to which writers may not make appointments to brainstorm may be related to gaps in students' knowledge about the purpose and function of writing centers (Cheatle and Bullerjahn). However, knowing how many students are turning to GenAI for prewriting purposes elicits important questions. Should we prioritize connecting with students where they are by teaching them how to brainstorm effectively with GenAI? Is there a fundamental difference between the quality of a piece of writing depending on if its prewriting stage was accomplished by two people having a conversation or by one person prompting an algorithm? Is outsourcing brainstorming to machines a bad thing? And if so, why? The insight our study provides regarding how many students view GenAI as a productive tool in their prewriting process has motivated us as administrators to continue encouraging our tutors to discuss brainstorming techniques with students. We created a brainstorming handout for tutors to use during sessions to introduce various brainstorming strategies, such as freewriting, mind mapping, outlining, and asking questions. These types of practical tools can be used to guide conversations and help students recognize the value in working through the challenges of the invention process. We hope our study's findings will compel WPAs to further explore this phenomenon and position writing centers as actively engaging with and responding to the pre-writing assistance students are receiving through GenAI.

INCREASED USE AND POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

Our research also reveals that students who turn to GenAI because they need writing help are using it across more genres and expressing a heightened level of positivity toward the technology compared to students who are using GenAI for other reasons or not at all. This suggests a growing acceptance of and reliance on GenAI tools as valuable aids in the writing process across academic contexts. These findings highlight the evolving landscape of writing support services and the increasingly significant role that GenAI tools are playing in helping students navigate their writing endeavors.

The fact that positive perceptions increase with use, especially among students who have turned to GenAI for help, suggests that writing centers must

find ways to respond to GenAI without dismissing it. Many students perceive it as a good thing. Instead of trying to persuade them otherwise, we would do best to face its disruption directly and reimagine what the writing process (and especially the revision process) looks like when a machine can efficiently generate ideas, summarize content, and churn out copy in seconds. Students recognize they need help with writing, and many see GenAI as a good thing. As such, perhaps writing centers can become places where students are guided toward how to critically evaluate and use all of the writing resources available to them—including GenAI. In her 1987 article about computers in the writing center, Jeanne Luchte used Corbett's assertion that authors are "heralds of the new age" to enjoin WPAs to embrace computers in their efforts to teach "the new literacy with a process approach from an ideal situation" (18). GenAI has brought us to a similar moment—an opportunity to work with student writers as they learn about the strengths and weaknesses of this new technology.

CONCLUSION

Several respondents among the 171 who used GenAI for help mentioned how valuable these tools can be if used "correctly." One specified, "Students should be taught how to use AI without losing the ability to work independently of it." Writing centers are uniquely positioned in the higher education landscape to help bridge the gap between convenient use and effective learning. Many students want to learn and know they need help. When it comes to writing, the invention stage, in particular, poses challenges for them. And, as students use GenAI for help, they have increasingly positive perceptions about it. What we know about students' use of GenAI must influence how writing centers function. We should be actively spreading the word across our campuses that writing centers can provide the kind of individualized, specific recommendations available through ChatGPT—with the added benefit of coming from a relatable peer who can explain a writer's thought process and sympathize with the writer. Additionally, writing tutors' advice can fill the responsibility gap GenAI has created (Capps), and they can be guided to ethically navigate the plagiarism and academic integrity concerns GenAI raises (Roustio). Writing centers can provide the help writers are seeking from GenAI. But the choice between meeting with a writing center tutor or plugging in a GenAI prompt is a false dichotomy. We also need to train our tutors to talk to writers about GenAI and perhaps even (depending on campus policies) use GenAI in tutorial sessions. We must embrace rather than resist the inevitable influence of GenAI by acknowledging its resources and limitations, collaborating with it, and teaching through and about it to continue helping student writers gain more rhetorical skills and apply compositional knowledge.

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CHAPTER 10. RESEARCH-BASED GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING MORE TARGETED WRITING CENTER ACTIONS: FACULTY AND STUDENT VIEWS ON AI FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

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While the integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has transformed the higher education landscape over the last decade (Grassini; Essid and Cummins), new technologies in academic contexts often provoke negative attitudes and concerns (Ismatullaev and Kim 4). As seen in commentary across higher education communication platforms and mainstream media after the public release of GPT-3 in November 2022, the arrival of GenAI in higher education is no exception. Concerns raised by faculty include the lack of value and benefit from GenAI, the risk of cheating and plagiarism, teachers' lack of experience in using it for teaching purposes, and perceived difficulties in use (Iqbal 102). While Iqbal's study was conducted soon after the release of GPT-3, these themes and attitudes have remained relatively constant, as found in similar studies published since then.

Several studies have highlighted, for example, how negative attitudes are often tied to the risk of plagiarism and cheating (Nguyen 81). This recurring concern is legitimized by the fact that large language models are trained using massive amounts of existing data. The data contained in AI-generated textual outputs is organized in ways that cannot be easily detected without appropriate tools (Khalil and Er 11). While there is ongoing debate about whether using GenAI constitutes plagiarism, using it to write complete texts is considered cheating in most situations.

Another source of reluctance about GenAI is its potential impact on critical thinking and the cognitive effort required for learning (Gandhi et al. 2). If critical thinking and cognitive effort are essential to the learning process, it is safe to assume that overreliance on GenAI could be detrimental. To prepare for the increasing presence of GenAI tools in education, a number of studies have

focused on how to adapt the use of GenAI tools so as to transform them into a factor for development (see Cons et al.; Dergaa et al.; Qawqzeh; Wu).

At the same time, several potential benefits of GenAI have also been noted, including its ability to streamline work processes (Lee and Perrett 6), generate customized feedback (Kim and Kim 10), and provide students quick access to information, helping them refine their writing (Iqbal 105) while broadening their approach to information searches (Darwin et al. 11). Other applications, such as automatic text generation or translation, are well-documented in the literature on generative language models (Guo and Lee 4881; Gao et al. 3; Huang and Tan 1152; Imran and Almusharraf 3).

Regardless of GenAI's benefits or drawbacks, examining current attitudes toward its role in academic writing support is essential, as these attitudes can impact its integration in writing centers. Studies show that teachers have generally been stricter and more cautious about GenAI than students, often viewing it as harmful to learning or advocating for its exclusion from education (Ma 8). This disparity may stem from differences in GenAI usage and familiarity: students tend to be frequent users of AI (Essid and Cummins; Schiel et al. 8), while teachers report lower usage rates and proficiency (Chounta et al. 13; Dilzhan 25). Limited experience and competence, however, could hinder GenAI acceptance (Galindo-Domínguez et al. 7).

This contribution is situated in a writing center based in France, at a public European university.[1] Reflecting our context, we retain the terminology "writing peer tutors" and "students," rather than the U.S.-based terms "consultants" and "clients." The research we report in this chapter addresses the anticipated growth of GenAI in French higher education. In this regard, understanding the attitudes of both students and teachers is important to strategically accompanying that growth. Like other contributors in this section (Hallman Martini; Bleakney et al.; Fledderjohann and Perkins, "'I Needed Help'"), we were interested in learning how and in what ways the students and tutors at our writing center were using GenAI to support writing tasks, thereby providing a cross-institutional and transnational view of these issues.

At the graduate school writing center at the Université Clermont Auvergne (UCA) in France, peer writing tutors have encountered a range of student reactions to GenAI tools. Some students have outright refused the use of ChatGPT during sessions, while others have been hesitant due to concerns about plagiarism, doubts about the quality of AI-generated text, or restrictions imposed by their instructors. While there is growing research about GenAI innovation in

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the field of education sciences, such individual reactions can make it difficult to meaningfully integrate AI-generated techniques into writing tutoring sessions.

To address these concerns, we conducted a perception study involving both students at the writing center and their teachers. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured as part of a larger investigation into the impact of GenAI on the development of critical thinking in early graduate writers. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are teachers' and students' main concerns regarding the use of GenAI in student learning and academic writing tasks?
- How do negative perceptions of GenAI impact students' willingness to use it in their writing processes?

Addressing these questions is crucial for our goal of establishing research-based principles to more effectively integrate GenAI into writing centers and support students in developing essential writing skills. In our discussion, we propose strategies for overcoming negative perceptions and concerns about GenAI among faculty and students. We explore ways to train tutors on how to discuss and use GenAI effectively during tutoring sessions, further promoting best practices for using GenAI to support academic writing.

WRITING CENTER CONTEXT AND STUDY METHOD

UCA, as part of a nationally funded initiative to enhance French universities' international visibility and regional socio-economic ties, launched the "Clermont Auvergne Project Graduate School (CAP GS)" project, selected in 2020 under the Programme d'Investissement d'Avenir 3 (PIA-3) "Structuring Training through Research in Initiatives of Excellence (SFRI)" call. This project established seven graduate tracks by integrating select master's and doctoral programs into an international graduate school where teaching and research are conducted primarily in English (https://www.uca.fr/en/graduate-school). UCA also plays a key role in French AI education and research through its partnership in the Multidisciplinary Institute in Artificial Intelligence (https://miai.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/), focusing on integrating GenAI into higher education and workplace training.

The graduate school writing center, established by one of the study authors (Dressen-Hammouda) in 2021, supports master's and doctoral students from six of the seven graduate tracks in developing academic and scientific writing and presentation skills in English and French. Its three main missions are: training writing peer tutors, supporting scientific writing and communication courses across the disciplines, and organizing workshops on scientific writing and presenting. Serving around 500 students, mostly native French speakers,

the writing center aims to enhance academic success. Students currently use both English and French versions of GenAI tools like ChatGPT, which produce text of similar quality. This chapter reflects on the integration of GenAI in the writing center during the 2023-2024 academic year, drawing on findings from the first author's (Miftah) funded doctoral research.

In June 2024, 173 master's-level student users of the writing center's peer tutoring services and 16 of their teachers were contacted by email. The teachers taught content courses in the graduate school and were considered potential sources of information about GenAI for the students. Thirty-two students and ten teachers agreed to participate in our study. To measure each cohort's use and perception of GenAI, we created two separate questionnaires, drawing on the questionnaires developed by Zablot et al. and Demonceaux et al. on AI acceptance among students and teachers. The surveys asked participants about their use of GenAI in academic contexts, covering frequency of use, perceived skill level, and GenAI's impact on their academic activities. Another section sought their opinions about GenAI in higher education, including views on banning it, perceived risks, and beliefs about the attitudes of other students and teachers towards GenAI. All responses to the questionnaire were anonymous; agreement to answer the questionnaire constituted consent. We also conducted brief semi-structured interviews with two of the four writing center tutors, the only two available for interviews during the study period. During the interviews, the tutors were asked to comment on their experiences and feelings about students' reactions, including reluctance toward using GenAI in tutoring sessions. They were further invited to share how GenAI was implemented in sessions and whether they felt comfortable using it. The participants gave informed consent regarding study participation. The following section describes the results of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the use of GenAI technology, responses to the student survey indicate that only three of the 32 students had never used any form of GenAI; in contrast, only three out of ten teachers had used it for their university activities. The teachers' main concerns about adopting GenAI included doubts about the accuracy of the information generated and a lack of understanding of its purpose.

Teachers' relatively low interest in GenAI contrasts with students' use. Figure 10.1 shows the frequency of GenAI use by students for university assignments, while Figure 10.2 indicates the main purposes for which students use GenAI. As can be seen in Figure 10.1, nearly two-thirds of the students indicated a relatively high rate of use, either daily or several times a week. This mainly involved using GenAI for help with different aspects of their writing (Figure 10.2).
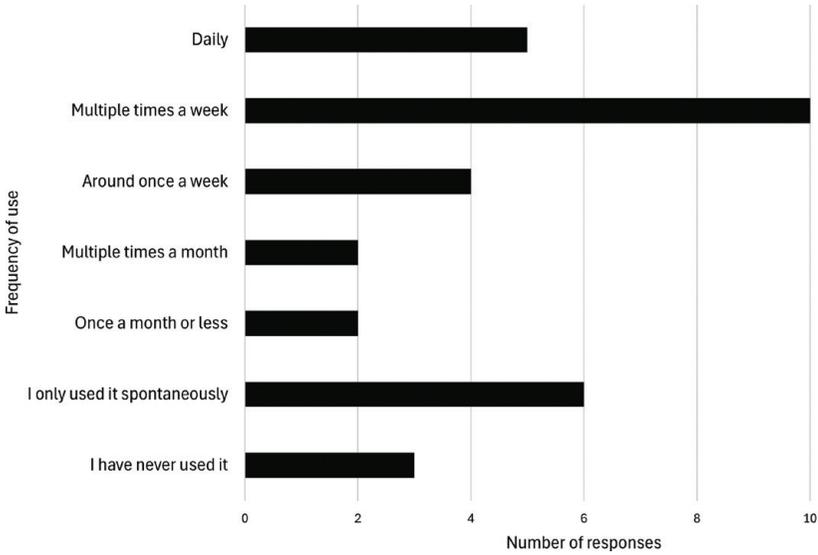
Figure 10.1. The frequency of students' GenAI use for university assignments (n=32).
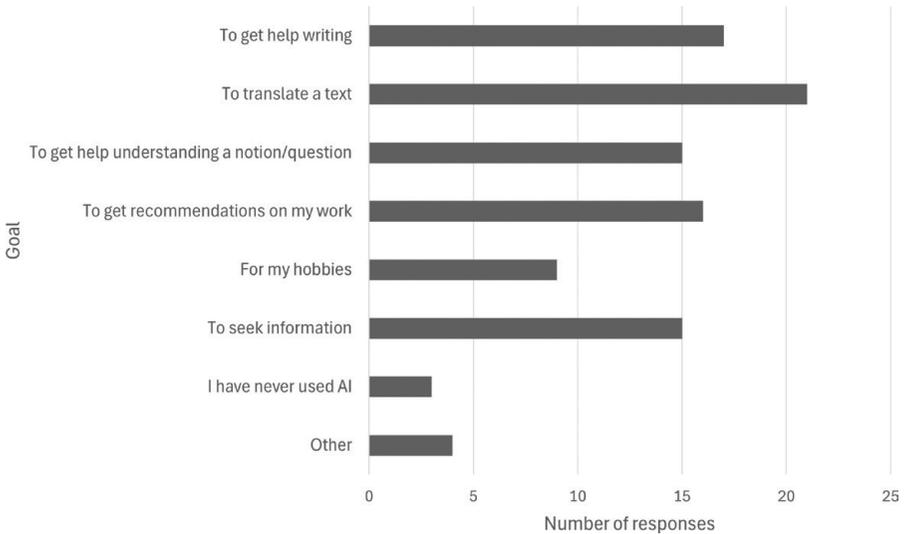
Figure 10.2. Students' purposes in using GenAI (n=32).

Students' frequency of use is further reflected in terms of general attitudes towards using GenAI. Figures 10.3 and 10.4, respectively, display results for students' and teachers' general attitudes about GenAI use in higher education. Answers ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with an opt-out ('I don't know').

As shown in Figure 10.3, a large majority of students agreed that aspects of conversational assistants (CAs) could be beneficial to learning and disagreed with prohibiting them in academic contexts. However, concerns appear as well, as two-thirds of the students agreed that using CAs could limit their ability to learn independently, and one-third thought that its use was not compatible with the development of critical thinking (for an illustration of student-voiced ambivalence about AI "help" versus voice/ownership, see Hallman Martini's case narrative in this volume about graduate grant writing issues). In addition, students raised concerns about the unreliability of AI-generated content, leading them to think that CAs should not be used (Figure 10.3).
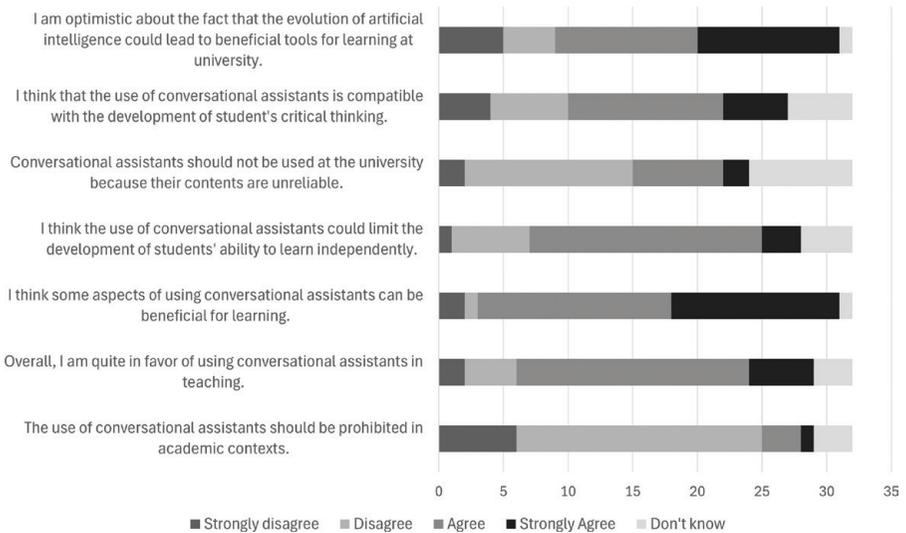
Figure 10.3. Students' attitudes towards GenAI use in higher education (n=32).

Similarly, Figure 10.4 shows that most teachers are in favor of using GenAI in teaching and agree that it can be compatible with students' critical thinking. Opinions about potential threats of GenAI are evenly spread. However, teachers are proportionally more cautious than students about GenAI use and lean toward banning it at the university level. They also show stronger divergences in attitude than students, an observation which aligns with their lower frequency of use.

Concerning the potential threats of GenAI for higher education, in the teacher survey, participants were asked to select three major potential threats from a list of eight. Teachers most frequently considered the weakening of students' critical thinking abilities and the potential negative impact on their writing skills to be the main threats posed by GenAI. In addition, plagiarism was a central concern. Figure 10.5 presents these results.
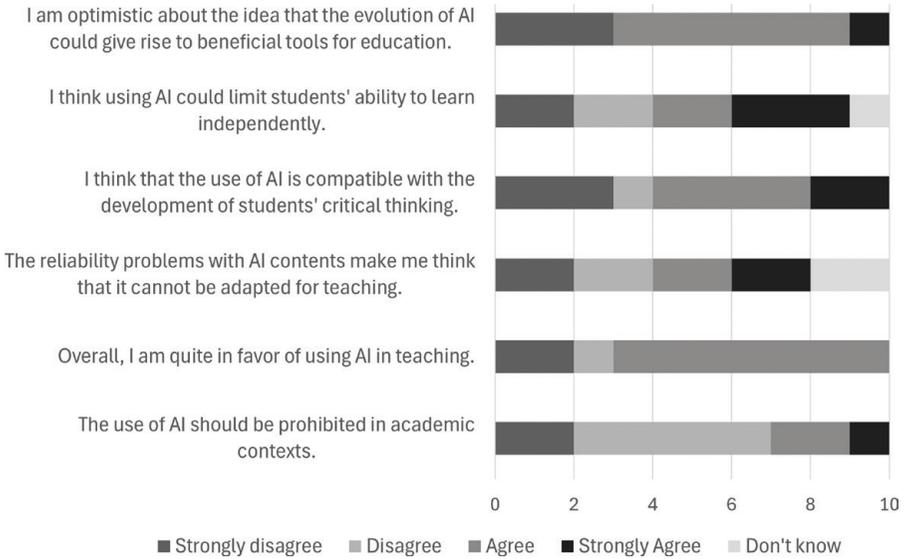
Figure 10.4. Teachers' attitudes towards GenAI use in higher education (n=10).
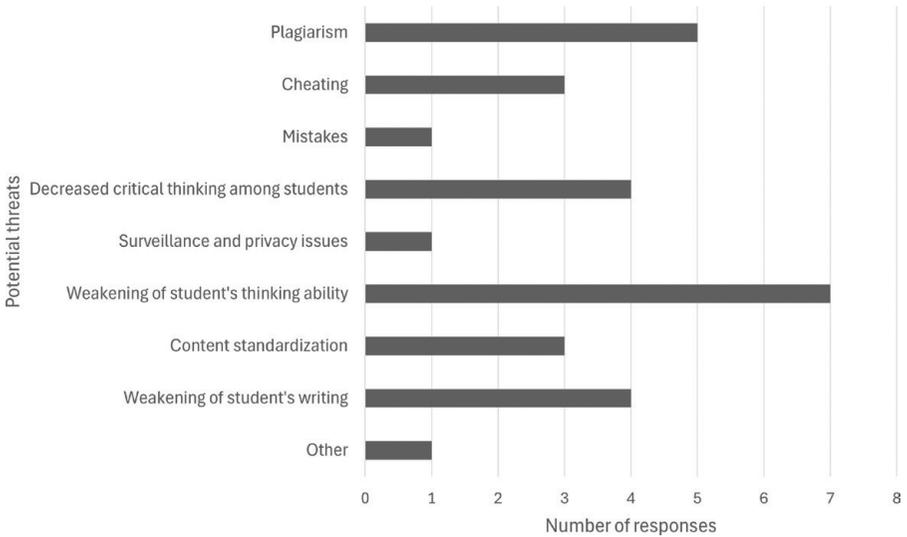
*Figure 10.5. Teachers' perceptions about potential threats
of GenAI for higher education (n=10).*

Overall, the most notable observations from our perception study are the largely positive attitudes towards GenAI among participants and the lack of significant rejection of GenAI. These positive attitudes contrast with the writing

tutors' interviews, which revealed that many students were reluctant to use GenAI during tutoring and that refusals were common. The discrepancy between tutors' comments and our survey results suggests that GenAI-reluctant students may not have participated in the survey. To address this, we cross-referenced the survey results with the tutors' interviews to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind students' avoidance. This would help us identify the main attitudes towards GenAI and develop strategies for the writing center to mitigate negative impressions, as discussed below.

For example, the threat of plagiarism was seen in the surveys to be an important concern for teachers and was cited by writing tutors as the most common reason why students refused to use GenAI during tutoring sessions. This concern likely stems from uncertainty about how to properly integrate AI-generated material without crossing ethical boundaries. This caution is understandable given the serious consequences of plagiarism. However, the writing center aims to model the use of ChatGPT in ways that do not lead to plagiarism or replace students' written work with AI-generated text.

Tutors also believed that students' reluctance was fueled by a lack of understanding of how GenAI can be used and by teachers' frequent prohibitions, citing plagiarism risks (Chevalier and Garcia 9). Despite tutors' explanations that using GenAI does not necessarily lead to plagiarism or cheating, students often refused because of these concerns. Research has shown that insufficient knowledge about a technology and a lack of trust in it can lead to its avoidance (Galindo-Domínguez et al. 6; Ismatullaev and Kim 7). For this reason, even students who generally use GenAI may become reluctant to use it in a writing center context (Bleakney et al.). This situation presents a challenge for tutors, who must balance suggestions for GenAI use with ensuring students' comfort. Tutors sometimes avoided recommending GenAI when they sensed it would not be well received. Both tutors interviewed reported feeling uneasy when suggesting ChatGPT during tutoring sessions. This unease stemmed from frequent negative student reactions and initial doubts about GenAI from the tutors themselves. Such issues complicate the tutor-student relationship and can hinder the impact of GenAI on learning.

A solution we have found involves changing how GenAI is introduced in tutoring sessions. Our tutors now incorporate ChatGPT into the session to generate examples that illustrate or deviate from key writing principles. These examples are specifically tailored to address the primary writing challenge identified for each session. Tutors then ask the student to identify and improve upon these issues, first in the generated examples and then in their own writing. We believe this approach promotes a more critical use of GenAI and engages students more effectively by presenting a quick challenge, potentially stimulating

their engagement and motivation (Hamari et al. 176; Khan et al. 2792). Only moderate training and experience would be required for tutors to consistently use GenAI for this purpose; our training program integrates this approach to GenAI in three two-hour sessions. Such training not only equips tutors to integrate GenAI effectively but also enhances their familiarity with language models, enabling them to better support students in developing critical writing skills.

In the survey results, teachers indicated concern that GenAI might weaken students' critical thinking skills. This frequent concern highlights the need to foster a critical use of GenAI that aligns with students' learning needs. As explained above, our writing center's approach with ChatGPT in tutoring sessions aims to guide students in using GenAI as a tool in the learning process, not a replacement for critical thinking. For instance, if a student has a recurring writing issue, ChatGPT can generate a text containing similar problems, and the tutor can critically guide the student to identify and correct these issues. In this regard, GenAI can serve as a virtually infinite source of worked examples to train specific skills. We believe it is important for potential users to understand that GenAI cannot replace the human user and can be beneficial for those who explore its use in new ways.

The unreliability of AI-generated content was also a major factor for the negative attitudes, with teachers frequently citing this as a reason for their apprehension. Among students, nine out of 32 agree that CAs should not be used due to content reliability issues. Concerns about generating misleading or incorrect information are significant barriers to GenAI adoption in academic contexts (Peters and Visser 7). In contrast, our writing center's objective is to promote a critical and informed use of GenAI, developing students' ability to evaluate the reliability of AI-generated content. We consider tutor guidance essential in conveying this critical perspective, and encourage practices that experiment with tutor mediation between GenAI and students, as several chapters from this collection do (Adams and Baker; Crull and Stillman). By clearly stating that language models can make mistakes, we aim to encourage students to critically reconsider information. This approach helps mitigate misinformation risks by encouraging students to use GenAI as a supplementary resource, emphasizing the importance of cross-checking AI-generated content with other reliable sources.

The most significant difference between students and teachers in our study is the frequency of GenAI use. Students use GenAI tools much more frequently than teachers for various tasks (Schiel et al. 8). This more frequent use helps them discover GenAI's useful aspects and become more confident integrating it into their writing practices. Conversely, not using GenAI makes it harder to experience its benefits. This correlation between usage and perception has also

been observed in other studies: those with hands-on experience of GenAI tend to report more positive attitudes, while non-users are more likely to express skepticism or concern, among both students (Zieve-Cohen et al.) and tutors (Fledderjohann and Perkins, "Teaching through Ambiguity"). This discrepancy leads to differences in knowledge and skill levels, widening the usage gap and affecting attitudes towards GenAI integration in academia. While teachers in our study showed high interest in GenAI, they perceived their skill level as low, as was similarly observed by Galindo-Domínguez et al. (6). This suggests that negative perceptions may stem mainly from lack of skill and knowledge among some teachers. Similarly, one tutor, initially doubtful about GenAI, became more confident and supportive of its use after learning how it works and discovering its benefits.

These observations highlight how actual use influences the intention to use GenAI. Since teachers often advise against GenAI in the classroom, their guidance significantly shapes students' attitudes. This underscores the importance of tutor support in improving students' perception and fostering effective GenAI use.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the diverse attitudes towards GenAI among students and faculty at the graduate school writing center at UCA. While there is general recognition of GenAI's potential benefits and little outright rejection, concerns remain, particularly about plagiarism and academic consequences for students and for teachers and about the reliability of AI-generated content and its impact on critical thinking. These findings align with other studies on attitudes towards GenAI in higher education (Al Darayseh 4; Lundin; Ma 5).

We observed significant differences in GenAI use and attitudes between students and teachers, with students using GenAI more frequently and being less concerned about its consequences. We also found that infrequent use, skill level, and knowledge level contribute to less positive attitudes towards GenAI in academia. Tutors' experiences revealed that these attitudes also affect their confidence in suggesting the use of GenAI during sessions.

This study was limited by the low response rate and potential participant bias, as those strongly opposed to GenAI might have chosen not to answer the survey. To address this, we supplemented our findings with writing tutors' interviews to gain a deeper understanding of faculty and student attitudes towards GenAI. We believe writing centers and tutor training can play a significant role in mitigating concerns about GenAI by integrating its use in ways that stimulate critical thinking, avoid plagiarism, and enhance students' understanding of its risks and possibilities. Writing center tutors, who work at the intersection of

academic standards and students' composing practices (Roustio), are particularly well positioned to guide this integration. With these insights, we have adapted tutor training at our writing center to better address these reactions, further allowing for more effective studies on the impact of AI on learning academic writing.

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CHAPTER 11. CONVERSING WITH THE PAST: HOW PREVIOUS RESEARCH CAN GUIDE APPROACHES TO GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN WRITING CENTERS

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When I first drafted this chapter, I was writing at a time when the rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) meant there was a lack of peer-reviewed research about GenAI and teaching writing—and especially in the context of writing centers—when we would most benefit from such research. In the time since that first draft, we've seen research projects set in writing centers move through the peer review process to publication (Aikens and Weildon or Essid and Cummins represent two recent examples in *The Peer Review*), along with tutor training resources (see Bell). Just look at Part 2, "Researched Inquiries on AI and Writing Center Labor," in this collection for further examples. Even so, the sudden proliferation of GenAI tools and the rapid pace of change within the tech industry have still left many writing center professionals uncertain about whether GenAI can benefit our students and, if so, how.

From a personal perspective, I'm not convinced that GenAI offers our students anything useful that isn't better achieved through other tools or teaching methods. Since first proposing this chapter, I've moved from tentatively curious about the possibilities of GenAI to almost entirely opposed to using it in education. I simply don't see what it brings to the table that wasn't already there, other than efficiency, and learning (especially learning to write) isn't and shouldn't be efficient. As Ellen Cecil-Lemkin and Lisa Marvel Johnson write in this collection, GenAI's aggregation of data to generate text erases the very feature of writing that makes it such a human endeavor, the messiness. They argue for centering the human and embracing the mess when helping students and writing center consultants navigate GenAI as a writing tool.

From a professional perspective, I see Joe Essid and Cady Cummins' reasoning when they note that we may be near a point of practicality when it comes to GenAI adoption. The technology is here, our students are using it, and our institutions are largely either allowing or actively encouraging its use across the curriculum. Writing centers support student writers, and GenAI is quickly being integrated into students' writing processes (whether by student initiative or faculty assignments). Our role is to help our students grow and improve as writers. That means engaging with GenAI to some extent. How do we do that?

I believe that to find our way forward, we should look to the past. We have decades of research on how and why writing centers are effective resources for writers. Matthew D. Bryan also reminds us that we have a "decades-long history of writing center discourse around software-mediated writing and tutoring practices" (16). We can find parallels and inspiration by reviewing how our field has navigated the upheaval of new technology in the past (Bryan) and by revisiting existing research on writing center practices. Asking how GenAI might fit within past research can inform our thinking and decision-making regarding the role of GenAI in our writing centers going forward. As others point out, those decisions must center the human writers we work with (Cecil-Lemkin and Marvel Johnson; Essid and Cummins).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In response to the release of OpenAI's ChatGPT, some institutions created task forces and drafted policies to address growing uncertainty about what GenAI means for higher education. Other institutions let faculty decide for themselves whether GenAI has a place in their classroom. My institution, Furman University, has been operating closer to the latter position. While faculty set in-class policies, multiple departments, including our writing center (the Writing & Media Lab), have been independently developing resources related to our areas of expertise.

Furman is a small, private liberal arts college in Greenville, South Carolina, in the southeastern United States, that serves approximately 2400 undergraduate students and a growing number of graduate students enrolled across just over 25 master's programs. Prior to the 2023-24 academic year, administrators reviewed our academic integrity policies and determined that if faculty want to allow or prohibit GenAI in their courses, the policy as written already had provisions supporting either position. Administrators have continued to refine the policy's wording as we learn more about how GenAI is being used by faculty and students, but any in-class use of GenAI remains at the instructor's discretion. While the university's open-ended guidance promotes academic freedom

for faculty, it also means that our students receive a variety of different messages about GenAI. Those of us who support the academic program face uncertainty about how best to move forward.

In the Writing & Media Lab, we have taken some tentative steps toward exploring GenAI by training consultants on what it is and how it works. But consultants must be cautious in their consultations. Before using GenAI with a student, we need to confirm through the syllabus or the assignment whether GenAI is allowed in any way. If it's allowed but not required, we also need to consider whether GenAI would help the student achieve the learning goals of the assignment.

THEORY, PRACTICE, AND GenAI

In 2021, Jesús José Salazar published a meta-analysis on the impact of writing centers. A meta-analysis allows researchers to "average out the results of many studies into one general result" (56). Salazar used 82 studies conducted between 1954 and 2019 to answer whether visiting a writing center has a measurable impact on student writing outcomes. After conducting seven meta-analyses, Salazar found "a statistically significant and positive relationship between students visiting the [writing center] and greater writing performance compared to not using the [writing center]" (69). Furthermore, "we can be 99.9% confident (nearly 100% confident!) that between 28.7% and 32.7% more students who visited the writing center demonstrated greater writing performance than students who did not" (69).

In retrospect, Salazar's publication was well-timed, considering ChatGPT was released the following year. Given Salazar's results, it seems safe to operate under the assumption that writing centers help students improve as writers. We can also conclude that the theories and practices underlying consultant-student interactions play a role in Salazar's results. If we decide to use GenAI during writing consultations, we need to keep in mind that the writing center practices developed and used over the last 65 years are effective. The question then becomes not just how we can use GenAI, but rather, can we use it in a way that enhances current writing center practices and supports student learning?

MINDSET ABOUT WRITING

Carol S. Dweck identified two categories of mindset: growth and fixed. Growth mindset is the belief that intelligence is a changeable attribute. When someone has a growth mindset, they see setbacks as opportunities for growth and criticism as valuable feedback. On the other hand, someone with a fixed mindset views setbacks and criticism as evidence of their innate level of intelligence (Dweck).

When students say, "I'm a bad writer" or "I can't do math," they are articulating a fixed mindset about those skills. However, mindset is not a strict binary. A student can have a fixed mindset in one aspect of their life while simultaneously approaching another with a growth mindset. According to Dweck, we can change our mindset regarding our intelligence, skills, and abilities. When we change our mindset, we also change our learning experience. Writing centers operate with a growth mindset—we start from the assumption that writing is a skill that students can improve.

Yves Karlen and Miriam Compagnoni hypothesized that students with a growth mindset would have a greater diversity of self-regulated learning strategies, as well as a greater knowledge and use of metacognitive learning strategies in their writing, than students with a fixed mindset. In their study, they found that this was partially true. Among their participants, growth mindset was most strongly correlated with the use of planning and monitoring strategies for writing, such as outlining. They also found that mindset might affect the use of metacognitive learning strategies during only certain phases of students' writing processes.

Laura K. Miller wondered whether writing center consultants can help change student mindsets related to writing and tested an intervention to find out. A course-embedded consultant delivered a lesson about mindset to one section of a class and then met once with each student for a consultation on a literature review assignment. Miller found that those in the intervention class significantly changed their mindset from fixed to growth. They also improved more on the literature review assignment than students who were not in the intervention group. A relatively small intervention had the potential to positively change students' mindsets toward writing (Miller).

Traci Freeman and Steve Getty took a different approach and investigated whether mindset, along with sense of belonging, played a role in whether students visited the writing center in the first place. They found that mindset and belonging likely impact students' decisions regarding writing center visits, but also that student motivations around help-seeking behaviors are understandably complex. They also raise an important question based on Miller's intervention: if writing center consultants can inspire students to embrace a growth mindset toward writing, can a writing center visit also cause a student to develop a more fixed mindset?

If mindset impacts how students approach writing tasks and whether they seek help with writing, then we should ask similar questions about the relationship between GenAI and mindset toward writing. Could using GenAI in a consultation encourage students to develop a growth mindset? Or might the opposite be true, and using GenAI could lead students to see writing skill as fixed? Students might wonder why they should learn to write if GenAI can more quickly generate text. While in the writing center, we know that the best way to

learn to write is to engage in the process of writing, students often focus more on the final product. GenAI can lead students to circumvent that process in favor of quickly creating a product. Furthermore, students may not fully embrace the idea that writing is not just rhetorical but also social; writers are always writing for an audience (Roozen). With its lack of contextual awareness, GenAI cannot write for an audience as well as a human can. GenAI mimics audience awareness when it synthesizes its training data into generated output, but connecting with an audience requires authenticity, not just mimicry.

Consultants can model a growth mindset not only about writing but also about using GenAI. A growth mindset approach to GenAI centers the writer, not the technology. Consultants should openly acknowledge GenAI's limits and emphasize the need to employ critical thinking skills when assessing outputs. Kirkwood Adams and Maria Baker's usage-narrative (this collection), a process intended to make students' engagement with GenAI visible through metacognitive questioning, offers one strategy that consultants can use to help students approach GenAI with a growth mindset that centers their agency as users and writers.

When helping students who are using GenAI, consultants should approach prompt-writing as its own genre of writing to which students' previous writing skills can be applied. GenAI may respond to a prompt quickly, but the initial result is rarely exactly what a user is looking for. Overly broad and generalized prompts often generate less useful outputs. Using GenAI for a writing task requires having a clear goal in mind and following a recursive, multistep process of assessing outputs and revising prompts. Consultants can help students articulate what they want to achieve with GenAI, then guide students through analyzing the rhetorical situation of their GenAI use, much like they do when discussing student papers. This might include asking students to talk about what prompt they want to input and explain what kind of output they expect or hope to see as a result, then comparing the actual output to their expectations.

An effective prompt often includes: a clear task or role for GenAI; a specific format for the output; and context or examples (Bowen and Watson; Giray). It may also be helpful to describe the user's role (e.g., "I'm a first-year college student"). If the GenAI tool provides too much information for the learning context, students can build stops or pauses into their prompts (e.g., "Respond with 'I understand' and wait for the next set of instructions before you begin"). A detailed prompt is more likely to generate a usable output. When consultants understand the structure and conventions of an effective prompt, they can teach students using the same methods they would when teaching any other writing convention. This approach can encourage students to see how their actions directly impact GenAI outputs and help them maintain agency over their writing processes.

DIRECTIVE AND NONDIRECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Experienced consultants use a range of both directive and nondirective instructional strategies. Jo Mackiewicz and Isabelle Thompson analyzed the tutoring conversations of experienced writing center consultants and found that consultants most often used three instructional strategies: telling, suggesting, and explaining. Directive strategies are those in which the consultant provides explicit instructions for how to accomplish a task. While telling and suggesting are both directive instructional strategies, suggesting includes elements of mitigation that allow students to save face and maintain ownership over their writing. Nondirective strategies are those in which the consultant guides a student as they determine what to do on their own. Explaining is a nondirective strategy in which the consultant provides reasons or examples for specific writing advice or conventions (Mackiewicz and Thompson).

GenAI could support consultants' use of instructional strategies in several ways. When explaining a concept, consultants might use GenAI to quickly generate examples, such as a list of sentences featuring comma splices. They can also ask GenAI to rewrite a paragraph in different ways, changing the tone, voice, or audience. Consultants can then initiate a conversation with the student in which they discuss the different features of the examples and how to apply what they learn in their own writing. Consultants could also use GenAI to quickly reword any explanations that students are struggling to understand. In these examples, GenAI outputs are the starting point for a conversation between the student and consultant.

SCAFFOLDING IN WRITING CONSULTATIONS

Directive strategies are often a first step in helping a student write independently, interwoven with nondirective strategies. Using nondirective strategies requires that consultants respond to new information as they work with the student, something GenAI can't really do. Consultants can more easily switch between directive and nondirective methods as needed during a consultation. However, there may be ways consultants can use GenAI to support their use of nondirective tutoring.

Scaffolding underlies many of the nondirective tutoring strategies consultants use with students. Scaffolding "metaphorically refers to a learning opportunity in which a more expert tutor teaches a less expert student to answer a question, correct an error, or perform a task without telling the student the answer or doing the work for him or her" (Mackiewicz and Thompson 54). In a writing consultation, the role of a consultant is to "establish what the student already

knows and what the student is learning so that the consultation can be focused on building the scaffolding or structure for the student to practice under supervision those skills that are in development" (Nordlof 58).

In their study of tutoring conversations, Mackiewicz and Thompson describe two types of scaffolding that consultants use: cognitive and motivational. Cognitive scaffolding strategies require that students think through a challenge, and motivational strategies encourage students to persist in their task. Mackiewicz and Thompson found that consultants most often used the cognitive scaffolding strategies of pumping (withholding part of an answer or asking leading questions), reading out loud, and responding as a reader to "give students opportunities to figure out what to do on their own" (56). Consultants' motivational scaffolding techniques included showing concern, praising, and reinforcing students' ownership of their writing (Mackiewicz and Thompson).

If we know that scaffolding is an effective method for helping students improve as writers, then can we use GenAI to support consultants' use of cognitive or motivational scaffolding? When considering this question, we need to remember the limitations of current GenAI tools, particularly that GenAI does not have true contextual understanding and cannot pivot in response to new information (at least, not without a human prompting it to do so). The ability to adapt teaching methods when students show improvement and respond when new challenges arise is foundational to effective scaffolding. If consultants use GenAI for scaffolding, the purpose should be to support the student as they work through writing tasks on their own.

Two of the cognitive scaffolding techniques Mackiewicz and Thompson describe, pumping and responding as a reader, provide a potential set of instructions for incorporating GenAI. If students prompt GenAI with instructions to respond only with questions that seek further information, consultants can guide students as they respond to a nearly endless supply of pumping questions. The student does not even need to respond to the AI to get more questions. The consultant acts as quality control, preventing GenAI from leading the student in an unproductive direction. Then consultants can use their contextual knowledge to build on the AI-generated questions in conversation with the student.

Similarly, students can prompt GenAI to respond to their writing as a specific audience and provide feedback or ask questions. The hypothetical audience could be experts in the topic or highly skeptical of the paper's thesis. The consultant would then engage the student in conversation to judge whether GenAI has accurately represented the potential audience for a piece of writing and guide the student as they critically reflect on the generated reader response.

Of the motivational scaffolding strategies that Mackiewicz and Thompson describe, reinforcing students' ownership of their writing is a strategy that might

work well in conjunction with GenAI. For example, Matthew Grendel et al. note that having a revision plan at the end of a consultation can significantly reduce student stress related to writing and improve motivation to continue writing. Students can use GenAI to generate a draft revision plan based on the student's current stage of writing, goals they've outlined with their consultant, and any relevant due dates. Then the consultant and student can review the draft revision plan together, adapting for the student's schedule and writing processes. Using GenAI to collaboratively construct writing tools, such as a revision plan, could help students engage in metacognitive reflection on their writing processes and encourage them to actively participate in planning for future writing.

CONCLUSION

Navigating the role of technology in writing processes is not new to the field of writing center studies (Bryan). Furthermore, GenAI has not fundamentally changed the challenges we face as educators who teach and tutor writing; it has amplified existing challenges. Many of these challenges come down to timing and motivation. Students' motivation to write does not always align with the time they are in class or the semester in which they take a writing-heavy class (North). When the motivation to write does not align with the time in which it needs to be done, then some students feel pressured to seek shortcuts. GenAI hasn't changed this dual challenge of timing and motivation, but it has made it much easier for students to use GenAI as a shortcut on a much larger scale than before.

These are challenges that we have long dealt with in writing centers. In fact, when a student chooses to visit their campus writing center, very often "they are genuinely, deeply engaged with their material … they are motivated to write" (North). This remains as true today as it was in 1984 when Stephen North first wrote those words in his 1984 essay, "The Idea of a Writing Center." It's why writing centers are well-positioned to shape how GenAI affects our work in the future. Past research shows us how to use GenAI as another tool in our consultants' toolkit and reminds us to always ensure that writers, not just writing, remain the focus of our work.

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CHAPTER 12. THE MACHINE GENIE: INSTRUCTIONAL METAPHORS FOR LLM TEXT PRODUCTION

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The comic book miniseries *Eight Billion Genies* is, in my opinion, a charming and affecting piece of speculative fiction. It chronicles the aftermath of "G-Day," on which every human on earth was visited by a personal genie offering to grant them exactly one wish. Suddenly, millions of often selfish, impulsive wishes created a dangerous, ever-shifting reality (Soule and Brown). The series explores how human social structures creak and buckle under the weight of (even limited) omnipotence. I was struck by the parallels to large language models (LLMs), where a short textual prompt (a wish?) is all anyone needs to instantly produce seemingly polished communication. This odd metaphor has helped me grasp how GenAI is reshaping our writing reality.

Metaphor, described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another," is so essential to our everyday thinking and communicating that it can become nearly invisible. GenAI is steeped in metaphor; platforms (e.g., "assistant," "co-pilot") and concepts (e.g., "artificial *intelligence*," "machine *learning*") are named with parallels to human labor and knowledge-making. Writing centers too are metaphor rich. We create and challenge metaphors for writing centers like "fix-it shops" (Haviland) or "cozy homes" (McKinney). We define tutor roles with metaphors like *The Bedford Guide*'s "hats" we "wear" (Ryan and Zimmerelli). We render concepts relatable with metaphors like comparing an essay's introduction to a "funnel" or "bridge." If we employ these metaphors because we believe they influence how writing or writing centers are experienced and understood, then the same should be true for GenAI. The associations we give to GenAI tools as we seek to explain and understand them will shape how we and our clients understand and use them.

To suggest metaphorical approaches that might promote writers' effective and responsible GenAI use, this chapter identifies common metaphors used about LLMs by writing center practitioners and examines their potential implications.

METHODS

This study was approved by James Madison University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Protocol #24-4789). I invited participants from the WCenter listserv, a long-running email forum for writing center practitioners, and from our center's internal mailing list to first complete a Qualtrics survey and then opt in to semi-structured interviews on Zoom. From 61 respondents, I conducted 21 interviews, primarily with members of my undergraduate student staff (15) but also with some of our graduate consultants (2), writing center clients (2), and peer educators from other institutions (2).

In each interview, I asked participants to characterize their understanding of and user experience with LLMs, describe writing center sessions where they discussed LLMs, and offer salient metaphors they've used either internally to conceptualize or externally to explain LLMs.

I collected audio recordings of each interview, transcribed them using AI-assisted speech-to-text tools, and coded them manually using an emergent topical coding scheme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following sections, I offer some examples of metaphors invoked often in my qualitative data with my commentary on their potential instructional benefits and/or challenges.

WRITING PROCESS METAPHORS

Many interviewees used metaphors about when in the writing process they use LLMs or felt like a writer "should."

STARTING POINT OR LAST RESORT

Some respondents described LLMs as a "first resort," "jumping-off point," or "starting point." They felt GenAI was most useful early and it either lost usefulness for them as the task developed or they felt they were ceding writing autonomy if they used it beyond brainstorming.

More common was framing LLMs as a "last resort." Respondents said: "[GenAI] might be something I consult … in a time of need, when, honestly, I feel at my weakest;" "I really only use it when I'm like super stuck;" and, "I don't think I've ever encouraged someone to use ChatGPT … the only situation [I would do so] would be if they're super last minute to do an assignment…."

The metaphorical framework of "starting point" vs. "last resort," also explored well in this collection's Chapter 6 (Cleary and Rymer), may be useful to get clients talking about their writing processes and integration of GenAI tools. I encourage consultants to push back against the "last resort" framing, as, if used too late in a process or only under duress, the likelihood of uncritical or unscrupulous GenAI use likely increases. I could imagine saying to a client: "Some feel they can only use LLMs when stuck or up against a deadline; I've found that when I integrate it in my process earlier (if allowed), I have more time to check outputs, find sources to corroborate, and employ my own phrasing and written voice."

Shortcut

A common metaphor in the interviews was GenAI as "shortcut" or way to "cut corners." Many students expressed guilt: "I feel very guilty because I was like: I should be doing the work. I should be reading. I should be finding this on my own. It felt like, I guess, like taking the easy way out." Another said, "I didn't love how I felt after [using an LLM] … like I didn't get to go through the process of coming up with my own ideas." The "shortcut" metaphor may be another that consultants can try to steer clients away from. For one thing, saying "shortcut" implies one would arrive at the same destination (written product in this case) only quicker, whereas writers should be aware that the GenAI-derived prose is necessarily different from what they would arrive at independently.

When employing this metaphor, consultants might choose to communicate that overreliance on "shortcuts" could hinder learning. In this way, consultants can motivate clients to tackle writing tasks "the hard way" to build skills. Fostering clients' motivation and active investment in writing proficiency acquisition might be an important role of consultants in an era where writing tasks can be automated.

Be All, End All

One common refrain was respondents describing that they did not want AI text generation to be the entirety of their writing process (i.e. generating machine prose and submitting that as a finished product). One respondent said, "I like to keep my tone of voice in my pieces [which] helps me stand out…. So, I don't think I would use [an LLM] as an end all, be all just because it just doesn't feel like it's my own."

The consultants I talked to were almost universally critical of this framing, viewing it as something their peers were doing but that they felt inauthentic or inadvisable. One interviewee said, "A lot of [my classmates] would just be using ChatGPT on these tests that we weren't supposed to be using anything on …

that just puts a bad taste in my mouth because I'm one of the few people who didn't do that."

Many of the interviewees articulated using GenAI technologies to supplement rather than replace their writing processes: "[An LLM] is what helps get you to a finished product. It's not the finished product itself," and "[An LLM] can be a tool to help you write that paper, but it should not be the paper." Such language can be useful in tutorials to foster writers' motivation and agency and again aligns with discussions in this collection's Chapter 6.

PRODUCT METAPHORS

In a natural extension of "process" metaphors, many interviewees employed metaphors describing LLMs' output text.

UNCANNY VALLEY

The term "uncanny valley" was coined in Japanese by Masahiro Mori for the perceived psychological and aesthetic reactions of humans to non-human constructs with proximity to human-like appearance (Mori). The "valley" refers to a perceived space wherein an item closely resembles a human but not fully, which Mori argues creates discomfort. The uncanny valley has subsequently shifted into public discourse to describe off-putting, near-human figures in media.

A few participants used this phrase directly ("I'd say sometimes it's a little like uncanny valley. Like this thing is pretending to be a human, but it's not"), but many others described such a tension, attributing the discomfort to either subtle markers of synthetic writing in the text or their meta-knowledge that the text was not human generated. One respondent said, "ChatGPT has this feeling where it's a conversation … with like a fake person. But they can give you very real and emotional responses … that to me felt weird and scary." Another said, "Having [ChatGPT] be conversational … put[ting] on kind of a human mask … helps people trust the information more…. But, I mean, it's not a person. Just, not-a-person trying to sound like a person."

This metaphor could aid rapport building. For example, a consultant could invoke "uncanny valley" to validate clients' discomfort with GenAI or even create levity (one interviewee noted: "I think [calling ChatGPT] a 'fake person' is almost funny").

WORD SALAD

Word salad, referring to unintelligible diction, is another phrase originating

in academic contexts that broadened to popular awareness. With the "word salad" metaphor, I distinguish between poor-sounding or ineffective prose (see the later "entity" metaphor of "idiot") and that which is syntactically (structurally) coherent but semantically (meaningfully) incoherent. For example, Noam Chomsky's famous sentence, "colorless green ideas sleep furiously," is grammatically correct but self-contradictory to the point of meaninglessness. While pure "word salad" can even lack syntactic coherence (e.g., words purely selected at random), for LLMs, it is often coherent in structure but not meaning.

This term was explicitly invoked in a few interviews: "[AI-generated text] does feel like word salad because it's just picking words that kind of go together and just throw[ing] [them] together without actually connecting [them]." It was also referenced indirectly by others: "I often study while I'm tired, and [I'll] read a paragraph and be like, 'wait a minute, I didn't actually comprehend any of that,' but it was constant with [AI-generated text]. I finally realized it wasn't me. It was the writing," and "The language in [my AI-generated] paper was scholarly sounding but didn't make a whole bunch of sense when you broke down the sentences."

The "word salad" metaphor can spotlight how LLMs function differently from human writers. When humans write, we generally have an intended meaning we wish to convey and then choose signs (like words or gestures) to express that meaning. In contrast, LLMs select and arrange signs (typically words) based on their training protocols and datasets. While they are often trained on human-written texts, this probabilistic approach still differs fundamentally from how humans order words, which can make machine-written text harder to read and understand. Additionally, due to limitations in data and algorithms, machine-generated text can sometimes produce probabilistically related but ultimately meaningless text. Consultants can use this metaphor to help clients understand this specific limitation of LLMs and the importance of checking and revising machine output. As one consultant put it, "I think [we] can help students understand [that] even though it sounds coherent, it doesn't mean that it is."

Plagiarism

Perhaps the most common metaphor for LLM output was "plagiarism." One participant said, "I think about how people used to pay [others] to write their papers…. When I hear ChatGPT, my mind just goes to cheating." Another said, "I'm probably not going to explore [LLMs] because I don't want to be caught plagiarizing or whatever." For many, this can feel more literal than metaphorical. However, machine-generated text is meaningfully distinct from a human directly taking credit for another's work in intention, process, and perpetrator. Many

compelling arguments frame GenAI processes as inherently "theft" or "plagiarism," but I argue these still invoke metaphor. Some participants engaged with this complexity directly: "I'm protective of my writing. I wouldn't appreciate, you know, a machine taking [it] and then someone else taking *that* and passing [it] off as their own."

This metaphor is useful in explaining GenAI functioning and warning of uncritical use. However, as a dominant metaphorical frame, it may dissuade writers from developing GenAI literacy or from disclosing GenAI use to tutors or instructors. Consultants employing this metaphor should be prepared to discuss the complexity of defining LLM output as plagiaristic and to empathize with clients' difficult negotiation of GenAI ethics.

Crowd Sourcing

The "crowd sourcing" metaphor, like the previous, highlights how LLM-generated language closely resembles uncredited texts. This metaphor compares querying an LLM and receiving the "most likely" responses based on its dataset to crowd sourcing that information from, say, an online poll or message board.

This metaphor arose when respondents compared LLMs to platforms like WikiHow, Yahoo Answers, or Reddit. A few respondents invoked the "crowd sourcing" metaphor as it relates to the accuracy of LLM-derived information:

> Maybe [ChatGPT] has three sources saying the sky is blue, but four sources saying the sky is green … ChatGPT will take those three sources and those four sources and … when someone asks [it], 'what color is the sky?' [it] will spit out, 'the sky is green.' [Because of this] there are racist [and] sexist algorithms because it pulls from information … written by people who are biased.

Put another way by another interviewee, "[ChatGPT] is borrowing from other people. Sometimes those people might not necessarily know what they're talking about either."

By framing patterns in training data as an average response from a "crowd," this metaphor may help dispel the notion that LLMs draw from a singular "intelligence." Consultants may find this metaphor helpful to explain algorithmic bias or difficulties with attribution, originality, and accuracy in AI-generated text.

ONTOLOGY METAPHORS – OBJECTS, CONCEPTS, AND ENTITIES

This category contains metaphors describing the LLM itself (not its output), further divided by whether they frame it as an "object/concept" or as an "entity."

Threat

A concept metaphor that arose in most interviews was casting LLMs as an existential threat, increasing in severity and harm over time. One respondent described AI as a "looming dark cloud," and another said, "There's a whole new realm of possibility surrounding [AI], but ... [my] biggest [reaction] is just scared." One of the perceived threats was an often science fiction-mediated future conflict between humans and AI. Interviewees referenced films like *The Matrix* or characters like HAL from *2001: A Space Odyssey* or Ultron from *The Avengers* franchise. A survey respondent offered "AI Overlord, Evil AI" as a metaphor they've used, and an interviewee said, "Maybe I read one too many dystopian novels in high school, but I just feel like ChatGPT is going to fight me in 50 years."

Participants also voiced concerns about GenAI overreliance and human replacement. One interviewee said, "Writing has been a coping mechanism for [my] mental health issues [and a] way to communicate when I find it hard to talk.... Seeing a machine do it was hard for me. It pose[s] a real threat to my whole career as a writer." Another said, "When I worked at the writing center, I had to do pretty simple tasks for clients like explaining what a thesis is. I'm worried that if younger generations are getting access to [GenAI] ... they're never going to develop writing skills."

An interesting phenomenon I noticed in these discussions about GenAI as "threat" was a consistent blurring of present and future. In interviews, we found it difficult to discuss the technology as it exists in the present without worrying about future capabilities and impact. I found this present/future interplay so prevalent and striking that I started thinking of it as figurative language unto itself: a sort of "chrono-synecdoche" where rather than referencing a part for the whole (e.g., calling one's car one's "wheels"), interviewees were referring to something in the present as it would exist in the future (e.g., calling an "acorn" an "oak tree"). Respondents used the term AI or even ChatGPT to describe a potential future technology and its catastrophic consequences.

Awareness of the pervasive anxiety around GenAI—and the natural propensity to dive into future hypotheticals when discussing it—might be valuable to consider in the writing center. When we assist clients, we can make sure we help them become savvy users of the technologies as they exist today, acknowledge the volatility and speed of AI developments, and validate their future-directed fears, which are often compounded by mixed institutional or instructional messaging (e.g., some instructors telling students never to use this technology because it is the death of writing, and others telling them to become proficient with the technology as a future job necessity).

Tool

The "tool" metaphor was the most pervasive object metaphor across the surveys and interviews, likely due to the ubiquity of "tool" to describe web-based resources. This metaphor also feels literal; LLMs certainly are human-created tools. I argue, though, that when we conceive of GenAI as a tool, and especially as a specific kind of tool as many respondents offered, we are still creating metaphorical associations.

Participants often used modifier words to describe the type of tool with phrases like "productivity tool," "efficiency tool," or "brainstorming tool." Some respondents described LLMs as "organizers" or "re-organizers," implying that they compile or sort knowledge more than generate it. This metaphor was also invoked when interviewees used verbs like "regurgitate," "rehash," or "remix" to describe LLM text generation.

The metaphor of a "stencil," "template," or "sketch" was also mentioned in some interviews: "I've been thinking of ChatGPT as a stencil…. You use it to maybe get started then add details in your own voice after." One of the survey respondents' qualitative comments echoed this: "I asked ChatGPT to write a letter of recommendation for tenure/promotion. I'd never written this kind of letter, and I'd never seen one. The AI-produced draft was poor, but it did provide a useful structure for me to follow…. I used [it] as a model and wrote my own letter."

Another metaphor mentioned in a few interviews was "calculator." One respondent began jokingly, "My math teacher would always say, 'The calculator is only as smart as you are.' I [responded], 'Well, I must be pretty dumb because it's kind of not working.'" They continued, "ChatGPT is similar. You've got to know the long equation to do it the short way, and you've got to show your work." This metaphor may be useful to encourage student transparency about GenAI use and to ensure they themselves understand the tasks they are asking LLMs to automate.

One of the interviewees used a "fishing bait" metaphor: "[Like] fishing, … sometimes you get [LLM output that is] … cool, and sometimes it's just garbage and doesn't make any sense. [I] had to figure out how to give it the right bait … to figure out … if I want this kind of response, here's how I need to work my prompt." This metaphor may be useful to position prompt engineering as an acquirable skill and emphasize that not all outputs will be useful or high quality.

Analogies to other web-based resources were frequent in the interviews, most commonly search engines. Anecdotally, some of my first-year writing students told me that querying ChatGPT had dethroned Google as their first step for information foraging, which a handful of interviewees corroborated about their own processes. One said, "When I was studying, I saw a couple of acronyms I

wasn't sure about and quickly put [them] into ChatGPT…. I might not have even looked for the answer if I didn't have that tool available to me…. It would have taken too much time."

Many interviewees drew comparisons to smart assistants predating LLMs (e.g., Siri and Alexa), citation generators, online grammar checkers, predictive text/autocorrect, and earlier "chatbots" using prior AI architecture or pre-programmed responses. These analogies might make GenAI more accessible to clients and communicate that existing information literacy skills still apply. For instance, we already tell writers not to simply Google a question, take the first result, and paste it into their work; while they technically could, they understand it's not best practice. Similarly, with LLMs, we can guide writers away from copying responses verbatim. We also train writing consultants to help students make informed judgments and double-check output from, for example, auto-correct software and citation generators. Drawing parallels between LLMS and these familiar tools could alleviate some stress. Writing consultants might offer tips for prompt engineering in the same way they might offer tips for crafting search queries, as long as they emphasize that the process generating those outputs is different. This aligns with the multiliteracies approach taken in this collection's Chapter 25 (Hayward Marcum and Bell).

In many of the interviews where the "tool" metaphor was invoked, interviewees noted that overreliance would make GenAI no longer a "tool" but a "crutch," which usually echoed the "threat" metaphor in cautioning dire consequences. Despite the ableism in the metaphor, I think it has some utility beyond a cautionary tale. If one expands the world of the metaphor to say that someone is using crutches while, say, healing from a recoverable leg injury, the injured party is often encouraged to, in a scaffolded way, wean reliance off of the assistive technology and put weight back on the injured foot as they recover. If a consultant is willing to employ all that metaphorical grounding, perhaps that depiction can help motivate clients to embrace the struggle of writing without LLMs as a means of furthering their own individual growth and capabilities.

Although it blurs the line between "tool" and "entity," the metaphor of a "robot" arose in many surveys and interviews. One respondent described ChatGPT as a "robotic puppet" controlled both by user inputs and the programming and policies of parent company OpenAI. Others referenced science fiction directly when conceiving of LLM chatbots as "androids" or "supercomputers." These metaphors can be approached similarly to the "calculator," we can teach LLMs as a powerful and advanced processing "tool" worthy of taking time to understand and utilize but not overly rely on. Care should be taken with the "robot" metaphor not to veer too far into science fiction (and accompanying "threat" metaphor) or to imbue the technology with more agency than the user.

Person

One common and occasionally subtle metaphor was participants' personification of LLM platforms by referring to them with gendered pronouns. Respondents would often do so seemingly automatically or offhandedly (e.g., "When I asked ChatGPT, she told me…"). In fact, many of the respondents gendered ChatGPT female, which could be a feminist reclamation of "he" as the "default" gendered pronoun, a case of the respondent identifying herself with the LLM (most of my respondents used she/her pronouns) or, perhaps more troublingly, rooted in traditional gender roles (i.e., taking ChatGPT's polite, conciliatory tone, helper/assistant ethos, and comparison to Siri or Alexa to mean it "must be" a she). Whatever the reason, the compulsion to assign a gender to a genderless technology did manifest often in the transcripts.

Personifying names or titles for LLMs were also referenced in the surveys and interviews. Some respondents said they referred to ChatGPT as "Dr. GPT" either ironically or to imbue expert credibility. Others mentioned naming the program "Chad GPT," and one client talked about using a jailbreak prompt they found online to create a character called DAN (standing for Do Anything Now), which they referred to as "Do-Anything-Now Dan." They indicated that they would "bring out Dan" when bored of ChatGPT's default responses and often felt more personality from and connection to "Dan" than vanilla ChatGPT.

Another way this personification metaphor arose in interviews was respondents describing an LLM as a "rhetorical audience," which they believed could be textually persuaded. One respondent said, "I once spent about an hour and a half of a shift trying to convince ChatGPT that it deserved rights," and another said, "You can almost trick [ChatGPT]. You can almost convince it that an answer is incorrect."

The "personhood" of LLMs sparks interesting conversations, but may be confounding to students by overstating the sapience of current AI, shifting agency away from the user, and creating cognitive dissonance between the metaphorical framing of querying an AI as "using a tool" and "asking someone for help."

Wizard

Despite science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke's adage that "any significantly advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" (and that the "genie" metaphor was my personal impetus for this research), comparisons to science fiction were much more salient to respondents than metaphors of fantasy. These notions only arose in a few interviews when people talked about the processes by which LLM inputs become outputs as being "magical." One interviewee said,

"Maybe if I put more effort into understanding the science of AI, it would feel less [like] magic. But I feel like it's magic that I can send a text message or have a phone call." This metaphor can be useful for rapport building but is likely best avoided as it may be disempowering (and inaccurate) to imply that GenAI processes are fully inscrutable.

Service Employee

The comparison of an LLM to a service employee came up in most of the interviews, usually to a customer service representative or personal assistant. "Assistant" was tied with "robot" as the third most used metaphor in my survey data (after "computer" and "tool"). Interviewees cited the programmed servility and politeness of ChatGPT, coupled with what some respondents described as an intense "eagerness to please."

Although some may balk at considering "professors," "teachers," "tutors," and "consultants" in the category of service employee, I am opting to include them in this category because they often came up in the same breath in the interviews. One of my respondents quipped, "ChatGPT *is* a writing consultant. Wait, JK. I'm saving our jobs!" This metaphor might not be ideal in instruction, as it imbues the LLM with a great deal of agency and stokes fears of job replacement. We could emphasize that LLMS can play a role *like* a consultant, tutor, or teacher if used to supplement, but not replace, such supports in a writer's existing process. I feel that arguments for the irreplaceable humanity of writing consultants will be continuously important for us to make.

Liar

A handful of the respondents referred to an LLM as a "liar" or "BS-er," citing a tendency to talk in circles, attribute information to a source that is not present in said source, and confidently present factual inaccuracies. One interviewee said, "To fulfill that prompt, … if [an LLM] has gaps [in its data set], … it still needs to say something, so it will make something up. I don't see it as just lying. I see it as trying so hard. It's a people pleaser!"

The "people pleaser" construct evoked here (and in many of the interviews that compared LLMs to service workers) might be instructionally useful to spotlight how most commercially available LLMs attempt to accomplish a queried task even when it is impossible. For example, I was a fan of asking ChatGPT 3.5, "What is the longest 5-letter word in the English language?" and receiving responses like, "The longest 5-letter word is 'queue,' as it's pronounced with only one syllable yet uses five letters (OpenAI)." Though as reasoning algorithms improve, LLMs can more readily identify oxymorons or paradoxes, and such humorous GenAI outputs are becoming quaint memories.

This "liar" metaphor has similar instructional value to "crowd sourcing" since it can be used to emphasize the importance of critically examining LLM outputs and explain their functioning. However, I prefer the forthcoming metaphorical construct to this one as "liar" can imply malicious intent whereas, here, I trust another time-tested adage: "never assign to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity" (Bloch).

Idiot

The name I have chosen for this metaphorical construct might seem harsh, but I selected it because it was specifically written in by a survey respondent who, when asked to provide an additional metaphor for LLMs, offered the succinct diss: "[I call ChatGPT an] idiot (because of its responses)." That survey respondent was not alone in that feeling; Many interviewees said they felt LLMs performed poorly at a variety of queried tasks from creative writing ("I asked it to write me an opening scene…. And the result was so terrible that I stopped using it for like two months.") to computer science ("When it comes to coding, it either runs or doesn't run. So, if I give it code that runs in Python, I'm expecting that it gives me code that runs in Java, and sometimes it wouldn't work"). Others shared similar sentiments: "I have asked ChatGPT to do my homework before and almost 80 percent of the time it will get my answers wrong," and "When I ask it about areas that I feel like I am an expert on, I will notice [issues] that are more nuanced or inaccuracies."

The related but compassionate "novice" metaphor was also invoked, as one interviewee said: "For the research paper [I had ChatGPT generate], it was hilariously bad. The writing … was so surface level [and] repeating itself … it actually reminded me of writing I have seen by real people … who, like, don't write very often and just have less experience."

This metaphor might be surprisingly valuable in writing centers. It can validate the frustrations of clients who might be expecting LLMs to exhibit "intelligence" matching or surpassing humans' but finding themselves running up against responses limited by probabilities, training data, and corporate paywalls. This metaphor also provides an instructional opportunity to explain how the "intelligence" of responses is mediated both by the sophistication of the LLM and the users' proficiency with prompt engineering (which reminds me of that one respondent's anecdote about a calculator only being as "smart" as its wielder). We might also use this metaphor to illustrate how LLMs' perceived "idiocy" is rooted in the way they operate; since LLMs gravitate toward providing an "average" response from the broadest patterns in their datasets, they can often appear "idiotic" in situations that demand creativity or context-sensitivity.

Fallible Collaborator

One respondent combined the metaphor of the "idiot" with that of the "consultant" to create one that I found particularly amusing and insightful:

> I think of [ChatGPT] like a bad study partner…. He gets [most] answers wrong…. He is also overconfident. [LLMs] will say something with their full chest when they don't really know. I'm like, "What? Who are your sources!?" But he's really good at the process and can … point you in the right direction. As I'm solving a problem … on my own, writing down the math, I'll punch in numbers [to ChatGPT] and get a different answer. I'll say, "Where'd you get that from?" Like, that's something I'll type in. Then, it will say, "Oh, you're right, sorry. It should have been this." And then I keep going. I'll say, "Well, why'd you use that formula? Shouldn't you use this one?" They'll say, "Oh yeah, sorry about that," and they'll fix it. Through that back and forth, as if I'm studying with a friend who's making errors, we get to the right answer in the end.

Other interviewees echoed this sentiment of a confused but eager collaborator, "It feels like I'm trying to talk to someone [who] has a book that's wrong about the topic. But they have so many books that, when they go to the first one, and it's wrong, they say, 'Oh, let me consult this other book.'"

One respondent described this "fallible collaborator" metaphor as an LLM being "like a beta reader but a beta writer." This respondent cited that, as a creative writer, she sometimes gets uninformed feedback from human peer reviewers or early readers. Thus, by keeping those experiences in mind, she manages her expectations of what an LLM can accomplish as a "beta writer." She said, "[I'm] bouncing ideas off of [LLMS]. And [outputs are] not always helpful because they don't actually know what [I'm] writing about."

Though this metaphor shares the challenge of many "entity" metaphors in that it grants LLMs human-like agency, it also emphasizes the dialogic nature of prompt engineering and the writer's active role. Viewing LLMs as "collaborators" for "bouncing ideas" emphasizes that effective (co-)writing with LLMs involves leveraging the technology's ability to revisit its own prior responses. We could use this metaphor to reinforce that the LLM does not necessarily possess more "right answers" than the human writer and that an effective writing process still involves a human leading authorship with a machine-in-the-loop (Knowles) The idea that student writers are working with a "fallible collaborator" in an LLM raises a parallel to group writing consultations, which invites practitioners to devise strategies for effective human-AI collaboration, such as those explored

in Part 4 of this collection (Cochran et al.; Crull and Stillman; Vinyard and Schnitzler; Mason and Dvorak; Adams and Baker).

IMPLICATIONS

Due to how we construct them through metaphor, LLMs are surrounded by complex and contradictory notions: they are simultaneously object and human, simultaneously intelligent scheming overlords making humanity obsolete and bumbling morons incapable of completing simple tasks. LLM proliferation has asked us to reckon with possible futures. The technology calls to mind utopian visions of shared knowledge and effortless idea exchange for humanity, but also a dystopian hellscape where machines have eradicated human expression and learning. The ethical, philosophical, technological, and pedagogical complexity of LLMs has felt difficult for me as a writing center administrator (and human) to unpack. I hope one takeaway from this chapter can be to encourage our tutors to level with clients, who may also be overwhelmed, and say, "Yeah, this is complicated." I hope this analysis of the strengths and challenges of some common metaphors can help writing center practitioners feel prepared for such conversations. Based on these interviews, I recommend writing consultants choose metaphors that seek to center human agency and motivation, demystify the probabilistic, coherence-focused functioning of LLMs, and position GenAI as a fallible supplement, not replacement, for a writer's own ideas, hard work, and human collaborators.

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"What is the longest 5-letter word?" prompt. ChatGPT, model GPT-4o, OpenAI, 30 Oct. 2024

PART 3. DEVELOPING TRAINING MATERIALS AND PRAXIS IN RESPONSE TO AI

CHAPTER 13. INTO THE (UN) KNOWN: USING ACADEMIC HABITS OF MIND TO ADDRESS GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CONCERNS AND POSSIBILITIES IN TUTOR TRAINING

Kat Greene and Charlotte Kupsh

Ball State University

"A writer mentioned they used ChatGPT to write their project," our tutor said. "What's our policy on this?" As director and associate director, we looked at one another. *Did we have an AI policy?* The question hung in the air between us, but we both knew the answer. We did not, and neither did our university.

Despite conversations around campus, there was no clear guidance—only a hum of concerns and possibilities. William Ramsey discusses the unpredictable nature of writing center sessions, saying tutors must be ready for anything (qtd. in Geller et al. 22). Now, that unpredictable nature includes generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Like many writing center administrators, we knew we needed to move past policy and, as Lauren Short argues, listen to tutors' concerns and help them navigate GenAI in their sessions.

Since there were so many unknowns, we started with the certainties: GenAI was here, students were using it, and instructors had wide-ranging policies about its use. We began by talking to our tutors. As Ashley M. Beardsley notes (this collection, Chapter 14), tutors are the experts on how GenAI is taken up by writers at any institution. Surveying tutors' experiences, we found that more than half the responding tutors (9 out of 16) had worked with writers who used GenAI. Our tutors had complicated feelings about GenAI, from curiosity to resistance. As administrators, our feelings are equally conflicted. But given the pervasiveness of GenAI, we believe we *must* give tutors ways to navigate its use and negotiate their complex responses to this technology.

In this chapter, we use Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky's habits of mind of academic writers as our framework (6-15). Rather than taking a positive or negative stance, this framework enables tutors to approach GenAI—and other

new technologies—from a place of inquiry and critical reflection. We describe our experience implementing a GenAI professional development (PD) unit based on habits of mind. Focusing in detail on two of the habits—*inquiry* and *seeking and valuing complexity*—we discuss tutors' responses, explore how the habits of mind help us approach GenAI as administrators, and provide reflective questions for administrators interested in using these habits of mind to engage with GenAI.

OUR CONTEXT

Our perspectives on GenAI are influenced by our institutional and departmental contexts. We—Charlotte and Kat—are administrators in the writing center at Ball State University, a Research 2 (R2) university in east-central Indiana serving 15,000 undergraduates and 5,500 graduate students (*Common Data Set*). Our writing center is housed in and funded primarily by the English department. We are assigned between 10-15 English graduate assistants (GAs) to serve as tutors each semester, alongside 5-10 undergraduate tutors. Our tutoring body represents a diverse range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. These tutors bring an equally diverse range of attitudes toward GenAI.

As of fall 2024, Ball State does not have a GenAI policy. Our writing program administrator (WPA) encourages instructors to see GenAI in a positive light; in spring 2024, he led the creation of a GenAI policy statement for the writing program, which discourages instructors from prohibiting GenAI in their classes, focusing instead on setting clear guidelines, requiring instructor approval, and creating assignments encouraging students to think critically about GenAI (Ball State University Writing Program).

Of course, as teachers and scholars, we have our own orientations toward GenAI:

KAT

When I first noticed students using GenAI in their writing assignments, it was hard not to feel frustrated. To borrow from Sidney Dobrin, it seemed some students were taking a helicopter to the top of Mount Everest rather than experiencing the journey from summit to peak (60). This exigence encouraged me to better understand GenAI generally. Through experimenting with ChatGPT on my own and reading more about this technology, I see writing with GenAI is a complex issue that depends, like all writing, on its context. As an educator, it is my job to engage with students about these complexities so they can make better informed decisions about when, how, and why they use GenAI.

Charlotte

When ChatGPT first came out, I was interested in its possibilities. However, I share the concerns voiced in this collection (Johnson and Wynn Perdue, Chapter 1; May, Chapter 15; Cecil-Lemkin and Marvel Johnson, Chapter 17; and Cochran et al., Chapter 18) about the ethical implications and environmental impacts of GenAI, which, as of this writing, remains poorly understood. I also worry some of the efforts to quickly embrace GenAI are an overcorrection: I fear that, haunted by memories of when higher ed was slow to adapt to changes, some institutions are hustling to adopt GenAI before we understand how it might permanently alter education and labor. That said, I don't think it's effective to uncritically prohibit GenAI, either: regardless of how we feel about it, we are now faced with its use on a regular basis, and we do need the skills to handle it—whatever choice we make.

From these positions, we began considering the impact of GenAI in our writing center. Whether we choose to embrace or prohibit GenAI, our tutors are certain to encounter it. As administrators, we must ensure they have the tools to respond.

WHAT ARE HABITS OF MIND?

Habits of mind are patterns of thinking or ways of orienting oneself to problems. While many fields promote various habits of mind, in writing studies, the most common set appears in the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing." Developed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project, the framework is designed to promote college readiness. It focuses on eight habits of mind: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition ("Framework for Success" 1). In later work, Dana Lynn Driscoll and Jennifer Wells frame the habits of mind as "dispositions" that play a pivotal role in writing transfer (par. 3). This speaks to the functional nature of the habits of mind in writing practice.

However, critics have pointed out that the habits of mind are not exclusive to writing nor do they speak to curriculum change. As Kristine Hansen points out, students can develop these habits of mind in other disciplines but still not be ready for college-level writing (541). Neal Lerner echoes Hansen's concern about the lack of correlation to writing, adding that these habits do not enact meaningful curriculum reform, but instead reinforce process pedagogy (90).

With these criticisms in mind, our approach to GenAI is based on habits of mind specifically tailored to academic writing. In their textbook *From Inquiry*

to Academic Writing, Greene and Lidinsky define habits of mind as patterns of thinking academic writers use to think critically about claims, consider alternative possibilities, and keep open minds (6). They introduce five key patterns of thought for critical writing skills:

- Inquiring, or observing, asking questions, and examining alternatives (6)
- Seeking and valuing complexity, or avoiding binary thinking and moving beyond simple answers (6)
- Understanding academic writing as a conversation, or listening instead of dominating, and having empathy and respect for other positions (8-10)
- Understanding writing as a process, or collecting ideas, drafting, and revising instead of creating an argument as quickly as possible (12)
- Reflecting, or monitoring what one is learning and using that information to create effective strategies for oneself going forward (15)

These habits mirror common writing center practices. For example, the habit of writing as a process is woven throughout writing center practice: Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli describe the dynamics of the writing process and how it shapes tutoring in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (pgs. 17-40). Similarly, writing center scholars often focus on the importance of reflection: Lindsey Allgood encourages writing center staff to be "mindful practitioners" and take a reflective approach. As we thought about how to broach conversations about GenAI in the writing center, we began to envision how the habits of mind could be applied not just to academic writing but to writing and tutoring amidst GenAI.

USING HABITS OF MIND TO ADDRESS GenAI IN THE WRITING CENTER

Each semester, our writing center administrative team creates 3-4 PD units for tutors to complete during downtime. In spring 2024, Kat created a PD module about GenAI using the habits of mind framework. In each lesson, tutors explored GenAI tools and how they might interact with the writing process. Ultimately, this process led tutors to deeper inquiry about whether, why, how, and when to think about or use GenAI in tutoring.

In Lesson 1, tutors took a survey assessing their comfort and knowledge of GenAI, both in and outside the writing center. We were curious about what tutors knew, their opinions, and where they needed support. As administrators, this survey helped us negotiate the knowns and unknowns of GenAI. Next,

tutors chose from a selection of readings introducing them to GenAI (e.g., Deans et al.). Finally, tutors explored GenAI tools themselves.

Lesson 2 introduced tutors to Greene and Lidinsky's habits of mind. Then, tutors reflected on and responded to GenAI writing center scenarios using the first two habits of mind: inquiry and seeking and valuing complexity.

Finally, Lesson 3 focused on entering a conversation, considering writing as a process, and reflection. Tutors continued reflecting on and responding to scenarios using habits of mind. These three weekly lessons addressed the complexity of writing and tutoring with GenAI and ways to negotiate ethical concerns, professor expectations, and benefits and constraints of the technology.

Given the space constraints of this chapter, we have chosen to focus on describing Lesson 2 in more detail. This lesson, which focused on inquiry and seeking and valuing complexity, yielded the most energetic and fruitful discussions among tutors. These habits of mind were also most useful to our early conversations about GenAI as administrators, and we hope they might help other administrators begin conversations too.

For each habit of mind, we describe the activities tutors engaged with and how they responded. Then, we discuss how the habits of mind might lead us as administrators to critical understandings of GenAI. Each section ends with recommendations and prompts for how others can adapt the unit. These tools are intended to lead writing center professionals to engage in conversations with tutors, colleagues, and WPAs.

INQUIRY

Lesson 2 began with an overview of the habits of mind. Then, we presented tutors with writing center scenarios to help them apply each habit of mind to a real-world context. We began by asking tutors to consider this scenario:

In a writing center session, your client discloses they used ChatGPT to complete their writing assignment. They did not get a good grade and want to revise based on feedback from the instructor. As a tutor, how can you use the inquiry habit of mind and to what end? In other words, how can this move your session forward?

In response, tutors discussed using the GenAI text as a tool for idea generation and to get something on the page. Most said they'd use the GenAI-generated draft as a starting point, but redirect the writer to include their own ideas. Tutors also discussed using an inquiry mindset to explore why the writer used GenAI, which they imagined might range from a lack of confidence to a time-saving decision.

In their responses, we noted two larger takeaways. First, the inquiry mindset seemed to encourage tutors to put aside personal feelings about GenAI and center

the writer's motivations and goals: "I have my own opinions about the ethics of the situation," one tutor reflected, "but if it just isn't the moment to get into that with this student, it may be better to just [go] through it together to help spark their curiosity." Tutors likely have deep-seated opinions about any new writing technology. As administrators, we must remember to listen to their insights and think about how to help them serve writers who have different opinions.

Second, focusing on inquiry has benefits for tutors *and* writers. One tutor described using GenAI output as a way to begin a conversation with the writer:

I think a potentially valuable question to ask in this scenario would be something along the lines of … "Did ChatGPT go about this question the way you expected?" Instead of focusing on and leaning into the [Gen]AI generated material, I think these types of questions can open up the writer to considering their own ideas in relation to the ideas generated by the [Gen]AI program. This way, ChatGPT is not being used as a mouthpiece but as a point of reference for further inquiry and investigation.

In their response, the tutor uses inquiry in two ways: he's asking genuine questions about the writer's intentions, and he's prompting the writer to engage in inquiry themselves. Inquiry and writing center work go hand in hand: asking questions and making space for alternative perspectives is ingrained in tutoring practices. But perhaps focusing explicitly on inquiry can help tutors think about how tutoring skills can transfer to writing contexts too.

As administrators, we find the habits of mind are useful not just as tutor training tools, but also as thinking tools for ourselves. Inquiry asks us to observe, ask questions, and consider alternative perspectives (Greene and Lidinsky 6)—including GenAI. As of summer 2024, there is a massive push in higher education and writing studies to learn to use GenAI and adapt our teaching to incorporate this tool (see, among others, Dobrin; Vee et al.; Morgan). But our tutors may think differently. One piece of feedback that stood out in our pre-survey was that some tutors felt it was "not their job" to teach or monitor GenAI. For some in our field, the response to this is simple: you must adapt to new technology because it is the future, and students already use it. But with the inquiry mindset, we might instead choose to ask more questions: How *do* our tutors feel about GenAI? Where do these feelings come from? What do they see as the stakes of GenAI? What other narratives might they bring to the table? And how are these perspectives influenced by our context? Moving beyond tutor training, we might use the inquiry mindset to remind ourselves to keep asking questions and observing as GenAI develops: what do we know about this technology at any given time? What can it do, and what are its limitations?

We recommend GenAI tutor training begin with an inquiry mindset toward the technology and toward tutor perspectives: even if the training does not

revolve around habits of mind, beginning with inquiry helps gauge where tutors and writers are coming from. Those designing tutor training might consider these inquiry-based reflective prompts:

- What does GenAI look like at my institution? What do tutors encounter in writing center sessions?
- What does our student population look like, and why might they want or not want to engage with GenAI? What factors might enable or limit the use of GenAI?
- What does writing look like at my institution? What kinds of writing assignments do students complete, and how are they assessed? How might our institutional culture around writing influence students' choices about GenAI?
- How do tutors feel about GenAI? What are their experiences with it, and what concerns might they have?

SEEKING AND VALUING COMPLEXITY

Next, tutors considered the seeking and valuing complexity habit of mind. We began the discussion with this scenario:

Your writer is struggling to brainstorm keywords around their research topic. Since the instructor does not have a policy about GenAI, you suggest using ChatGPT to create some keywords to jumpstart the brainstorming process. However, the client wants to copy and paste the application's answers into their writing assignment. How can you use seeking & valuing complexity to address the issues arising from copying and pasting?

Tutors overwhelmingly said they'd try to discourage the writer from copying and pasting—perhaps in part because of the way the prompt is worded, which we admit inherently assumes tutors agree copy/pasting is inappropriate. Tutors again talked about using GenAI as a "springboard" or a starting point but pushing the writer to bring their own ideas into the assignment. Some tutors talked about using multiple sources to brainstorm keywords, such as using dictionaries and thesauruses in addition to or instead of GenAI. Others said they'd ask the student to reflect on what their instructor might think about the choice to copy/paste directly from GenAI.

In our tutors' responses, three key ideas stood out. First, our tutors immediately applied the habit of mind to the writer (in contrast to the inquiry unit, where tutors primarily talked about using inquiry themselves). Their first instinct was to engage the writer in conversation beyond the simple "answer" of using the GenAI output wholesale and pushing the writer to value complexity. One tutor described a real-life tutoring experience where they'd tried to encourage

the writer to take more autonomy over their work after using GenAI. Using a list of phrases generated by GenAI, the tutor prompted the writer to talk about why they might prefer one term over another, which pushed the writer to think more about tone and voice in particular genres. Second, several tutors applied the habit of mind to GenAI itself: they said they'd talk to the writer about how GenAI models come up with responses and encourage them to think critically about GenAI biases and what perspectives could be excluded. Finally, one tutor applied the habit of mind to her own practices:

> I will seek complexity in the matter, considering the differing angles of the student's struggle and even the potential problems the writer did not mention…. In being aware of my bias, I would also maybe inquire about their actions in order to not assume the intentions of the writer.

While most tutors focused on helping the *writer* seek complexity, this tutor's reflection demonstrates how she might push *herself* to search for and value nuance. As the wording of our own scenario reveals, we all walk into conversations about GenAI with biases and preconceived ideas. Tutors are often trained to encourage writers to identify biases, but of course, tutors (and administrators) bring their own perspectives to the table. Much like inquiry, seeking and valuing complexity is already a core value in writing center work—but again, we find when our tutors engaged directly with this habit of mind, they were more likely to apply it to more parts of the tutoring session.

As administrators, this habit of mind reminds us to take the time to understand new technologies and sit in the murky unknown. Conversations about GenAI can be anxiety-inducing in part because we see it as an urgent issue requiring immediate response: we must adapt *now* so we don't get left behind. Caught in the urgency trap, we focus on binary questions ("Is GenAI good or bad for writing centers?") and seek instant solutions ("How can we incorporate GenAI into tutoring practices today?"). But by seeking and valuing complexity, we grant ourselves space to learn. This habit of mind also helps us stay open to the possibility we may not get it "right" on the first try, as we saw in our analysis of our own training scenario.

For administrators designing GenAI training, we recommend an approach that focuses on moving beyond binary thinking—both for tutors and for administrators! Early on, it may be helpful for both groups to consider the following prompts:

- What is my opinion about GenAI? How might my perspective impact the way I approach conversations about this topic? How might it impact the decisions I make in tutoring sessions or in setting policies?

- What are some "simple answers" or dominant narratives I've heard about this technology? What would it look like to add nuance to these narratives?
- Who has a stake in the conversation about GenAI in our writing center? At our institution? In my discipline?
- What do I know about GenAI, and how nuanced is my understanding? Where could I go to learn more?

Beginning from a place of reflection is a key first step in moving beyond binary thinking and toward a place of valuing nuance in these conversations.

CONCLUSION

If we can be certain of one thing with GenAI, it's that the landscape is constantly shifting. Unknowns are uncomfortable: as administrators, we often battle the urge to fall back on easy answers and quick solutions that immediately transform the unknown into the known. Kristina Aikens and Hannah Weildon describe using the values of their writing center to help them create a "nuanced approach" to GenAI in their center (par. 2). We, as administrators and instructors, have done the same with Greene and Lidinsky's habits of mind. For us, this is the real value of Greene and Lidinsky's habits of mind: they encourage us to apply the same considered, analytical thinking we teach our students to our own practices as administrators, teachers, and scholars. We cannot predict exactly how GenAI will evolve, but we *can* focus on equipping ourselves and our tutors with patterns of thinking that empower us to approach new technologies with critical, tempered thinking. As an institutional thirdspace (Grego and Thompson)—within the institution but outside of the teacher-student-classroom dynamic—the writing center has a unique opportunity to educate and empower writers about their use of GenAI. By explicitly addressing conversations around GenAI through the academic habits of mind framework, we believe we can best equip tutors and writers to face the known and unknown, in every iteration.

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CHAPTER 14. WHAT IS OUR WRITING CENTER'S STANCE ON AI? USING TUTOR TRAINING TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES AND LEARN ABOUT GenAI

Ashley M. Beardsley

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT AI IN THE WRITING CENTER

At the beginning of the fall 2023 semester, I posed the following question and statement to University Writing Center (UWC) consultants:

> Is using artificial intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT plagiarism? Some faculty say yes, while others view AI through a more nuanced lens. At the UWC, it's our job to consider how generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) programs can help with content creation throughout the writing process while guiding clients to see GenAI's flaws.

Although this opening statement might seem like I thought implementing GenAI into writing center appointments was essential, the point was to begin thinking critically about AI.

As director of the UWC at Western Illinois University, I began the semester discussing GenAI in response to meetings where faculty expressed concerns about ChatGPT and its virality during the spring 2023 semester. The conversation surrounding faculty perceptions of AI served as the prompt for our first staff meeting of the semester, where we discussed the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum's "Statement on Artificial Intelligence Writing Tools in Writing Across the Curriculum Settings" and the Modern Language Association (MLA) and Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Joint Task Force on Writing and AI's first working paper on AI (Byrd et al.). We considered if and how we might apply AI to tutoring sessions, and I suggested that consultants play with ChatGPT during their downtime by prompting the

program to write a paper about a topic of their choice and test it with some grammar questions. After playing, consultants reflected on using ChatGPT, how it might benefit tutoring sessions, and why they would choose not to use it. Their reflections sparked conversations on addressing AI in the writing center, and in the spring of 2024, we embarked on a semester-long project to understand how AI and writing are discussed in scholarly articles and craft a policy for how to use—and not use—AI tools at our writing center.

In this chapter, I reflect on consultants' responses to AI and our collaborative approach to developing our AI guidelines. I provide a brief institutional overview, then move into the spring 2024 training (the goal of the semester-long project, readings, and activities) to demonstrate how we developed our AI statement. I also connect the resources we used to the specific action items we wrote together. My goal in sharing our work is to provide writing center directors and staff with ideas for developing a shared understanding of AI and policies that fit the needs of their tutors, clients, and institution so that everyone can confidently answer the question, what is *our* writing center's stance on AI?

TWO SPACES OPERATING AS ONE: THIRD FLOOR, MALPASS LIBRARY AND QC COMPLEX 2219

At Western Illinois University (WIU), students, faculty, and community members can receive writing support on both campuses. In Macomb, IL, we're located on the third floor of Malpass Library. The Malpass location is our primary space, as it's in the center of our residential campus. Most consultants work out of Malpass; however, WIU has a second campus in Moline, IL. About an hour and a half from Macomb, the Quad Cities (QC) campus serves commuter students primarily from Illinois and Iowa. Although geographically separate and staffed by students in programs on their respective campuses, the two locations operate as one. We meet in person once a year for pre-semester training, and QC consultants attend staff meetings and professional development virtually throughout the year. As the director, I oversee both locations, typically managing a staff of 20 consultants (a mix of graduate and undergraduate tutors) six days a week.[1] I took on the director role in the fall of 2022 when I accepted my position at

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1 I was fortunate to work with a writing center staff committed to the work we do. Thank you to the consultants who worked alongside me to craft our AI statement during the spring 2024 semester and copyedit our materials in the summer of 2024: Maram Alsufayn, Mark Brown, Emma Cortelyou, Andy Cripe, Adriana Dugbarty, Bukola Fagbemi, Jailene Gonzales, Keilan Goodridge, Abigail Heinecke, Kirsten Lippold, Grace McGill, Bhavika, Leo Ofili, Mary Owusu, Chris Perez, Isabella Perez, Ethan Schuller, Logan Volkert, and Jamariah White.

WIU as an assistant professor of English.[2] Since I began, we've averaged around 1000 appointments each semester (fall and spring). Although I can't be in two places at once or in the UWC during all shifts—we're open for eleven hours most days—I am in Malpass a few hours each day and available to consultants via a UWC Discord server.

Being physically and digitally present is essential because it gives me the opportunity to chat with consultants and students and gain insights about who our students are and how to serve them best. Additionally, our staff meetings create a collaborative learning environment essential to my administrative and teaching philosophies. In both roles, I view learning as a social process where students and consultants create a community of knowledgeable peers (Bruffee). Consultants, students, and I learn from each other through conversation. I strive to create training sessions where consultants engage in collaborative learning, giving them agency to challenge and learn while rejecting the "banking" model of education and embracing wonder that applies an openness to engage in critical thinking (Freire; hooks). Going into the spring 2024 semester, I used this grounding in collaboration to drive our conversation about AI.

"I USED GRAMMARLY … IS THAT OKAY?" DEVELOPING A SEMESTER-LONG PROJECT ON WRITING CENTERS AND AI

When I was in the UWC one afternoon, a student approached the reception desk to schedule a walk-in appointment. This was their first visit, and while they created their WCOnline account, they looked up and almost whispered, "I used Grammarly … is that okay?" I wasn't surprised the student sounded so unsure because we were at the peak of ChatGPT's fall 2023 virality. Similar to how Kat Greene and Charlotte Kupsh discussed a lack of AI policy at Ball State University in their chapter of this collection, WIU did not have an AI policy, and, at that point, faculty had little guidance around creating policies for their classes.[3] I reassured the student that using Grammarly was okay and often helpful, but hearing their concern showed me the uncertainty students had surrounding AI. It led me to ask, what is our approach to AI and writing, and how do we circulate it? Although we continued having conversations about AI as a writing center, it became clear that the UWC needed to have a statement on AI available that aligns with our mission to "support writers in their growth and development by connecting them with resources and teaching them techniques and strategies for improving and honing

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2   I directed the UWC from fall 2022 until summer 2025. The information about the UWC in this chapter reflects my time there.

3   The university's AI Task Force released an initial guide to GenAI in December 2023.

their writing" (University Writing Center, "Vision and Mission"). At that point, I could've written an AI policy from *my* perspective as the director; however, I do not interact with AI during tutoring sessions on a day-to-day basis, so I turned to the consultants. When we returned from winter break, I introduced consultants to our semester-long project on writing centers and artificial intelligence. Through reading writing studies and writing center scholarship and discussing theories and praxis during staff meetings, our goals were to:

- Apply writing studies and writing center pedagogical theories across appointment modalities (face-to-face, online, eTutoring)
- Understand how students, faculty, and staff perceive writing centers' utilization of AI
- Learn when and how we might choose to apply AI during a session
- Create a "Best Practices for AI at the UWC" list

Such in-depth projects have become standard practice at the UWC as they set us up to read and implement new and new-to-us writing center scholarship (Beardsley). To encourage active engagement in tutor training, consultants chose one text from a provided list or found a source on AI and writing published within the last three years. Table 14.1 provides our selected texts. While AI is not new, I set the three-year publication restriction because I wanted the conversation to focus on contemporary tools and conversations.[4] Consultants were responsible for adding their text to our working annotated bibliography and leading a discussion group where their peers were assigned to read their selected article. During staff meetings, consultants summarized their readings in small groups and created a list of two to five actionable items inspired by the text their group believed we should (or should not) implement at the UWC. After we worked through the texts, we took our annotations and actionable items and created a list of best practices for AI usage at the UWC. I grouped consultants' responses into five initial sections based on themes that emerged during meetings (our approach to AI, consultant training, teaching clients, workshops, and creating materials), and we organized the lists during the final staff meeting of the semester. The sections below use the articles consultants read to capture their responses to AI, explain how the semester-long project informs future tutor training, and provide guidelines around tutoring with AI.

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4   Although these texts are a starting point, I encourage readers to add or swap more recently published scholarship to stay as current as possible. For instance, since leading this training, the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) AI Taskforce collected practitioner narratives and resources to help guide writing centers (Giaimo). If I were curating readings for tutor training now, I would include the IWCA's work along with Timoteo Pereira Neves' tutor narrative that provides a point of view that emphasizes enhancing in-person tutoring sessions by incorporating GenAI as a tool. The training is designed as a reading group to create space for materials to be easily updated.

Table 14.1. Training Readings on AI

Author(s)	Pub. Date	Title	Pub. Title
Gallagher	2023	Lessons Learned from Machine Learning Researchers about the Terms "Artificial Intelligence" and "Machine Learning"	Composition Studies
Gayed et al.	2022	Exploring an AI-Based Writing Assistant's Impact on English Language Learners	Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence
Hubbard	2023	The Pedagogical Dangers of AI Detectors for The Teaching of Writing	Composition Studies
Johnson	2023	Don't Act Like You Forgot: Approaching Another Literacy "Crisis" By (Re)Considering What We Know about Teaching Writing with and through Technologies	Composition Studies
Laquintano et al.	2023	Introduction to Teaching with Text Generation Technologies	TextGenEd
Leaver and Srdarov	2023	ChatGPT Isn't Magic: The Hype and Hypocrisy of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Rhetoric	M/C Journal
Liang et al.	2023	GPT Detectors Are Biased Against Non-Native English Writers	Patterns
Marzuki et al.	2023	The Impact of AI Writing Tools on the Content and Organization of Students' Writing: EFL Teachers' Perspective	Cogent Education
Morgan	2023	What Students Can Do with AI In the Writing Classroom	Composition Studies
Stanton	2023	A Dis-Facilitated Call for More Writing Studies in the New AI Landscape; Or, Finding Our Place among the Chatbots	Composition Studies
Terry	2023	I'm a Student. You Have No Idea How Much We're Using ChatGPT.	The Chronicle of Higher Education
Vee and Laquintano	2023	Dear Students: Should You Use AI For Writing?	AI and the Teaching of Writing

INITIAL REACTIONS

Consultants often shared initial reactions about AI during group discussions. The following reactions demonstrate how we thought about AI as a staff and

helped inform our "Artificial Intelligence at the University Writing Center" statement (University Writing Center).

- **Understand AI usage.** Staying informed about AI usage at WIU and beyond allows us to determine the best way to assist consultants (Morgan).
- **Advocate for using AI in the classroom.** Create informational documents that support and encourage instructors to use AI (Johnson).
- **Develop workshops that support the writing process.** Taking a step away from AI, the UWC believes that workshops tailored to teaching clients about the writing process can help them build skills that apply to current and future projects. By helping clients understand the writing process and how to best approach their assignments, we aim to develop their skills to decrease their reliance on AI (Stanton).

Consultant Training

In addition to developing guidelines around AI usage, consultants identified readings and activities for continued tutor training. The AI readings were added to existing training activities to build a robust understanding of how we tutor and AI's role. Although incorporating readings and activities might seem like we're solely interested in adding GenAI tools to training sessions and not leaving room for refusal, I want to acknowledge that such conversations encourage consultants to consider GenAI's ethical implications. The three points related to consultant training highlight discrimination, misuse, and data privacy.

- **Discuss bias and the promotion of Standard American English (SAE).** We believe students have a right to their own language and that promoting SAE erases an essential part of a writer's identity. AI contributes to this erasure.
  - During the weekly fall training sessions, we focus on empowering writers and considering multiple Englishes. We read texts like "Should Writers Use They Own English?" (Young) to discuss vernaculars and code meshing alongside "Inclusive Sentence-Level Writing Support" (Draxler et al.) to discuss how to navigate providing feedback that doesn't prioritize SAE. We've added "GPT Detectors Are Biased Against Non-Native English Writers" (Liang et al.) to connect language bias to AI tools.
- **Build a foundational understanding of AI terminology.** To begin unpacking definitions consultants might encounter in scholarship or AI usage, we incorporated two readings into our training materials:

"Dear Students: Should You Use AI for Writing?" (Vee and Laquintano) and "Lessons Learned from Machine Learning Researchers About the Terms 'Artificial Intelligence' and 'Machine Learning'" (Gallagher). By building a shared vocabulary, consultants are better equipped to address AI-related questions and explain why they opt not to use such tools (e.g., bias, unintentional plagiarism, and data privacy concerns).

- **Train consultants on AI writing tools.** Our philosophy is that the best way to understand how students might use AI and the benefits, disadvantages, and biases of different AI tools is to try them ourselves. Throughout the semester, our training:

  ◦ Prompts consultants to read about or use AI writing tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot, Grammarly, Jenni, and QuillBot) to answer a grammar question, provide information, or draft a paragraph about a topic of interest and critically examine the output, asking what the benefits of the writing tool are and how it is showing bias.

  ◦ Uses activities from *TextGenEd* and encourages consultants to apply similar approaches during tutoring sessions. The open-access collection features assignments that incorporate GenAI. With semi-annual addendums, completing one or two prompts and familiarizing ourselves with the collection as a resource helps us continue learning as AI adapts and becomes more integrated into our daily lives.

    ▪ Early in the fall semester, training uses "Transforming Writing Assignments with AI: Approaches for Using Artificial Intelligence for Fostering Student Engagement and Comprehension" (Hutchinson and Jensen) to prepare consultants who want to use AI to help clients understand readings.

USING AI DURING SESSIONS

Lastly, consultants generated ideas about how we could use AI during sessions. By considering AI's ethical implications during training, consultants can make informed decisions about whether or not they want to incorporate AI. Before doing so, we ask clients if their instructor has an AI policy, and we encourage them to consider whether their writing goals align with their instructor's expectations (Vee and Laquintano). Then, there are two primary ways we use AI during sessions. First, consultants can use AI to help clients generate a claim about the given topic or outline that argues their claim while

establishing an environment that embraces AI by emphasizing the value of independent critical thinking (Leaver and Srdarov). Second, consultants can introduce students to AI writing tools, demonstrating how helpful they can be for improving ideas, grammar checks, and organization of said ideas (Marzuki et al.). We emphasize that GenAI programs are tools that can help us, but they shouldn't do all the work.

CONCLUSION: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING AI GUIDELINES

Throughout this chapter, I've explained that developing a statement on AI for the UWC at WIU was a collaboration between me (the UWC director) and the consultants. We worked together to respond to GenAI and its usage at the writing center in a way that fits the needs of our clients and the WIU community. Through small group discussions on AI's role in writing and reflections, we crafted guidelines that align with our mission to support writers' growth and development while accounting for consultants' diverse perspectives about AI as a quickly evolving writing tool.

When I began receiving questions from faculty about GenAI's impact on writing, my initial reaction was to write a policy or general statement to address my immediate concerns, specifically around language bias. As the writing center director, I could've written a statement for us; however, taking a semester to wrestle with different ideas and approaches to using AI alongside my staff allowed me to incorporate consultants' concerns into our policies. Our semester-long project highlighted the importance of staying informed about AI writing tools and the need for ongoing conversations and tutor training. By reading current scholarship and listening to consultants' ideas about AI usage, we developed guidelines accounting for consultants' practical, day-to-day experiences that manage faculty and clients' diverse perspectives (University Writing Center, *Best Practices for AI*). Going forward, these guidelines will serve as the starting point for ensuring that tutors and clients understand the benefits, disadvantages, and biases of AI, training consultants on integrating AI into sessions and providing transparency regarding how the writing center does and does not use AI to students, faculty, and staff across the university.

Overall, writing centers developing AI policies can use the collaborative approach we implemented to ensure the various stakeholders (consultants, clients, and the university writ large) are reflected. By employing tutor training as a space for open dialogue and critical engagement surrounding AI, writing centers can determine the potential and limitations that implementing AI tools can have at their institution.

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CHAPTER 15. RE(DE)FINING COLLABORATION: LEVERAGING AI'S POTENTIALS IN ASYNCHRONOUS WRITING CENTER SESSIONS AND TUTOR TRAINING

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In a writing center staff meeting before I left for the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), two tutors asked how to deal with suspected GenAI use. Instructors had already emailed me similar questions. Just like that, and like Kat Greene and Charlotte Kupsh in this collection, I found myself contending inevitably with GenAI. At the time, I encouraged tutors to treat suspected GenAI use like suspected academic dishonesty during sessions: point writers to the syllabus and recommend they check with their instructor to ensure their GenAI use followed course policies. I also promised to provide more information after my conference, as I was both a presenter at and attendee of the 2024 International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Collaborative at CCCC. Themed around emergent issues created by GenAI, the Collaborative provided space to think about GenAI with other directors and tutors from a broad range of institutions and perspectives. During the full-day event, I attended four sessions in addition to presenting, and I even drafted my proposal for this chapter at Elisabeth Buck's session about this edited collection.

Many of our conversations at the Collaborative aligned with discussions of GenAI in informal venues, centering around how GenAI can be used in sessions (Coffill; Deans et al.), teaching (Bedington et al.; Coffill; *The Writing Center*), or at different stages of the writing process (Deans et al.; Stowe; *The Writing Center*).[1] In addition to these contexts, the collaborative prompted

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[1]   At the time of drafting this article, *The Writing Center and Teaching with AI* was a public-facing handout located on Saginaw Valley State University Writing Center's website. While the content was removed in late 2025, I was able to recover a version of it using the Wayback Machine. I have included this link in the works cited page.

me to consider GenAI's potential roles in tutor training. This chapter presents my early thoughts about how GenAI can function as a collaborator in preparing my tutors, largely multilingual graduate assistants, for asynchronous email sessions through three visions to our asynchronous training: using GenAI to build a bank of writing for future asynchronous sessions, using GenAI to receive feedback on their own writing, and using GenAI to help draft written comments during practice (and by extension real-time) asynchronous sessions. While my thinking is largely framed by recent discussions of GenAI, I also draw on Talin Phillips' recommendation of tutoring multilingual graduate writers holistically with a particular focus on disciplinary writing and continual support for surface issues and on the evolving idea of collaboration in writing center sessions.

HOW I CAME TO AI

My perceptions of GenAI are partly informed by my personal experiences in other writing and composing contexts. I first saw GenAI as a collaborator through video game content on YouTube, as players used character AIs to dictate choices in their playthroughs of open-world games like *Skyrim* and ChatGPT to do the same in *Animal Crossing.* Like writing centers, player-composers in these contexts rely on GenAI as a collaborator rather than as sole composer. Current conversations frame GenAI's potential as collaborator throughout the process (Deans et al.; "Generative AI"). This remains a chief consideration as directors, educators, administrators, and tutors grapple with where AI fits in and, to Eric Klinger's point, how it changes our assumptions about writing and knowledge.

At the same time, I've witnessed backlash against GenAI in creative writing and visual art spaces, as programs are trained using stolen material. Such views tie to Matthew Bryan's argument that GenAI is "ethically questionable." Issues with false information (Deans et al.; "Generative AI"; Lester; Stowe), bias ("Generative AI"; Lester; Rayne), shortcomings that include critical thinking and active listening (Essid), violations of fair use (Essid) and academic honesty ("Generative AI"), and utilization of personal data by these programs ("Generative AI") make GenAI a series of imperfect and ethically questionable tool. From a broader standpoint, ChatGPT and other GenAI programs pose environmental considerations, both in their use of water and in their carbon output (Egbemhenghe et al.). Writing center researchers have also brought up these concerns. Ellen Cecil-Lemkin and Lisa Marvel Johnson (in this collection) advocate for informing tutors about the ethical issues with AI, and both undergraduate and graduate tutors in Kristina Aikens and Hannah Weildon's study expressed ethical concerns about intellectual work.

What results from these considerations, in sum, is the still murky area of whether people should use GenAI and under what conditions. As a writing center director existing in multiple writing contexts, both those that have demonstrated GenAI's potential and its ethical pitfalls, I have arrived at five personal beliefs:

- GenAI can be a useful collaborator in multiple composing contexts, but it is not useful (or welcome) in all contexts or for all writers.
- There is no truly "ethical" use of current GenAI for three reasons: it takes without asking, companies use GenAI to replace human employees, and it negatively affects the environment.
- Because there is no ethical use of GenAI, I use the term "transparent" to describe my own usage. Like the player-composers who rely on GenAI in their content, I identify the text generated by AI and the tool used to create it.
- Tutors, like writing instructors, should have the freedom to decide when and how to use GenAI in sessions and should be notified about its ethical considerations, but they should also be prepared to work with writers using such technologies, depending on the state of writing instruction at their own institutions.
- Given its ethical issues, composers should use GenAI purposefully and in a limited capacity that best benefits their processes and needs. For example, I utilize ChatGPT to create passages that students and tutors can critique or leave feedback on.

My own involvement in multiple composing contexts and these five beliefs collectively informed my integration of such tools into training tutors for asynchronous sessions, which I consider here because current discussions largely center around use in synchronous sessions (Deans et al.) and because, since their inception at my institution in 2021, asynchronous sessions have gained popularity, necessitating that tutors be prepared to work in such environments. Additionally, GenAI's potential to support tutors conducting asynchronous sessions has not yet been fully been considered. My experiences at the collaborative, especially in Sarah Fredericks' session about GenAI's benefits for tutors working with multilingual writers, pushed me to explore how GenAI can be a collaborator in training, specifically in expanding tutors' knowledge of conducting asynchronous sessions. I consider three potential revisions to our current training structure, which combines asynchronous modules housed in our LMS with mock sessions. In the context of drawbacks, I provide optional GenAI components so that tutors could opt out if desired.

MODIFICATION 1: EXAMPLE GENRES

First, like Aikens and Weildon's use of GenAI essays for mock sessions, I leveraged AI's ability to create examples of academic genres (Deans et al.; "Generative AI") to build a database of sample essays that tutors can use in mock asynchronous sessions. Originally, I identified this potential from my own use of GenAI to create critique examples for in-class workshops in different disciplines, and I've had the opportunity to pilot this with a tutor-in-training already. With the tutor's permission, I prompted AI to generate two different examples of annotated bibliographies, an assignment common in our Composition 2 courses. We discussed the possibility of fabricated citations beforehand, but I emphasized that the purpose was to help the tutor improve their responses to student writing. This tutor had already gone through the two practice sessions I typically offer and requested more practice, given that they felt they were still struggling with leaving asynchronous feedback.

Given the need for more practice, I began building a database of sample asynchronous sessions with a GenAI option, itself a collaboration of tutors and GenAI across time. During week one of training, I asked tutors to either contribute one of their own essays or generate one using GenAI following Thomas Deans et al.'s four-step process: they must provide an identity, be specific in their request, guide the model through the process, and refine the result. To this, I added two additional considerations based on my own experiences with AI: a specific assignment and a specific issue, grammatical or otherwise. I allowed tutors who would rather not use AI to upload one of their old assignments. Regardless of which option they chose, tutors also included contextualizing information, such as the prompt they used, their imagined college course, and details that may help tutors leave mock feedback. As an example, I provided ChatGPT with the following prompt: "Write an essay about a major historical event in Ireland using only passive voice. Cite three sources. The essay should be at least six paragraphs." ChatGPT generated an essay about the potato famine that included the sentence, "This essay will discuss the causes, consequences, and responses to the Great Famine, *using exclusively passive voice* and citing three scholarly sources" ("Write an essay," emphasis mine).[2] Refining this sentence

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2   It should be noted that, between writing the first draft of this chapter and copyediting, both ChatGPT and MLA's citation guidelines changed. In consultation with the collection's editors, we determined the best course of action was to leave the original text rather than regenerate the prompts. This both allows my chapter to accurately reflect my GenAI training in the moment and the collection's efforts to capture an historical moment in writing centers. (This text was generated at a time when ChatGPT did not offer permalinks, and the original conversations with that software disappeared in the shuffle between work laptops. In lieu of permalinks, I have provided a general link to ChatGPT and included as much information as possible in the works cited entries.)

in my case involved prompting ChatGPT to remove that sentence, as it cues readers to one of the underlying issues in the essay. To further assist tutors completing this task, especially those new to GenAI, I created a template that they could use or modify along with my example. In weeks two and three, I asked tutors in training to use an essay from the bank for a mock email session. In both cases, I left feedback on these sessions geared towards helping tutors improve their asynchronous practices. Together, this approach has two advantages: it continually expands the practice email sessions available, and for those who do opt into GenAI, it gives tutors experience using such tools so they may assist writers in doing so.

This first alteration could also support tutors in learning more about disciplinary writing, both in asynchronous sessions and beyond, which Talin Phillips identifies as part of a holistic approach to supporting multilingual graduate writers (6). As our writing center has grown more multidisciplinary, tutors have an increased need to understand how to work with writers outside of their own discipline. While tutors build such knowledge over time in real-life sessions, practice sessions—including those using GenAI writing—provide opportunities to begin exploring disciplinary writing differences. After gathering sample essays, I encouraged first-semester tutors to conduct at least one practice session using a piece of writing outside of their own discipline, which gave them opportunities to practice posing questions about disciplinary writing in comments. While not a specialist in every discipline, I am mindful of these differences and can provide feedback that better equips tutors for asynchronous sessions with writers from different disciplines. In my example prompt above, I used history as my disciplinary focus, and asking tutors to do the same can help expose tutors to writing in other disciplines within asynchronous training.

MODIFICATION 2: USING GenAI TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

In line with Deans et al., and to provide prompting practice like Jessica Craig does in her tutor training, the second GenAI task involved asking first-semester tutors to get feedback from GenAI on a portion of their own writing, in this case, their training reflection. Deans et al. discuss using GenAI to assist with conciseness or clarity on a sentence level, which multilingual tutors could leverage in asynchronous sessions if they are struggling with word choice. Tutors complete a reflection during training, making revisions and additions throughout each of the four weeks, to represent key points in their learning. Using GenAI to refine part of a writing outside of coursework reduces the potential risk of academic dishonesty accusations. Regardless of whether tutors use GenAI for this process, they receive feedback from another tutor, and tutors who opt

out receive feedback from three tutors, twice during practice sessions and once in a less formal setting. In the week two reflection, tutors address how the feedback differed, either between tutors or between tutors and GenAI.

To clarify this process, I provided an example sentence I wrote for a mock week one reflection. I prompted ChatGPT with, "Comment on this sentence: This first week of training, I learned what a writing center is, what our writing center does, and what is expected of me as a tutor." In response, ChatGPT opened with praise, then offered constructive criticism: "This sentence is clear and well-structured, but it can be made more dynamic by varying the structure and reducing repetition" ("Comment on this sentence"). While I understand why ChatGPT made this suggestion, I am also aware that some disciplines of writing are, stylistically, more repetitive than others. By showing tutors my example, ChatGPT's suggestion verbatim, and my revision, "My first week of training focused on three areas of knowledge: general writing centers, our specific writing center, and tutor expectations," I aimed to demonstrate that GenAI's feedback is something to critically think about and with. ChatGPT's suggestion may work in certain disciplinary contexts, but others may call for more concision and directness rather than "creating interest." As part of training, I want tutors to understand how GenAI gives feedback, how that differs from the feedback given in writing centers, and, as Deans et al. underscore, that part of using GenAI in writing necessitates critical thought and revision rather than simply copying text word for word.

MODIFICATION 3: ASYNCHRONOUS COMMENTS AND GRAMMATICAL EXAMPLES

My final modification to training, building on the above revision, was asking tutors to use GenAI for comments in asynchronous sessions with writers, primarily for examples or definitions. I see this approach being especially useful with first-year or non-traditional writers who are not familiar with academic genres or conventions, as GenAI can create example outlines ("Generative AI") and thesis statements (Deans et al.). Moreover, I see a potential for GenAI to create examples—and potentially explanations—of repeated grammatical issues that tutors could use in sessions more generally. If tutors think critically about these examples and cross-check them, this use of GenAI can be especially useful for multilingual tutors who are working to expand their knowledge of grammatical issues and structures. Especially in outlines or genre examples, I encouraged tutors to use topics or examples that are not identical to the writer's to allow for critical thinking and application. The non-GenAI alternative asked tutors to locate and implement pre-existing examples on writing center websites.

Regardless of what option they chose, I emphasized explaining the example clearly and thoroughly, especially in asynchronous sessions.

Within the training itself, I tasked tutors with creating examples—either of genres, prewriting tools (like outlines), or sentence constructs, using GenAI. Those using sentence constructs were encouraged, as Fredericks demonstrated during her presentation, to compare English and their home language/s, as a tutor or the writer's home language if indicated. Like the feedback they received in week two, tutors were encouraged to revise GenAI's examples as needed. Continuing to utilize ChatGPT's essay about the potato famine, I exemplified what an email session comment about passive voice could look like. I prompted ChatGPT to "Write a comment explaining passive voice to a first-year writer using one of the above sentences. Include a correction and a note that other similar issues will be highlighted." ChatGPT's text, at least in my reading, lacks audience awareness and clarity for some audiences, like first-year writers at my institution: "Other similar issues will be highlighted throughout your writing to help you improve clarity and engagement" ("Write a comment"). A first-year writer may not know what clarity is. Further, the tone feels stale and unnatural for a writing center session, at least for my style of leaving comments. In this case, I decided to alter the comment's full text on my own while maintaining the content, rephrasing the last sentence to, "I'll highlight more passive voice in the next couple of paragraphs." In this case, I retained the idea but rephrased it to be in my own voice. This alteration may help multilingual tutors better explain stylistic issues they may be less familiar with, such as passive voice. At the same time, this presents opportunities for them to hone their voice for written feedback, as they can alter GenAI's responses to be more concise, friendly, and accessible to writers.

REFLECTION

My choice to integrate optional GenAI components into initial training provided mixed results. Of the five tutors who started this semester, only one tutor, who is a native English speaker and American citizen, opted to use it. One potential reason that our international students chose not to engage with GenAI training tasks relates to learning other technologies during training, such as our learning management system (LMS), the Microsoft Suite, and Zoom. They also experience a variety of cultural changes, both in terms of the institution and the region. That said, the tutor who chose to implement GenAI in their training noted it was useful in giving feedback and offering alternatives for sentence structure and order. However, she and I agreed that GenAI's suggestions to expand certain points of her reflection were less helpful because they seemed unnecessary. The mixed results

of AI represent its varying level of helpfulness for her, and I would argue for writers and tutors more generally. Nonetheless, I still viewed GenAI as an important topic to cover in training, given the ongoing conversations on campus and some instructors requiring it in their assignments, so in our second staff meeting of the semester, I required my tutors to read Deans et al. and walked them through prompting GenAI. I gave each of them an audience (e.g., children, first-year college students, parents) and a genre (e.g., a research paper, a poem, a personal essay) to provide ChatGPT or Gemini with. Because some tutors were opposed to getting their own accounts, I had them do this in small groups of three or four. This approach also worked to limit the number of prompts ChatGPT received while giving everyone present a chance to see how it worked. I personally feel this was more successful, as tutors were able to engage in the tools and refine their prompts. Additionally, the text generated varied in quality, but by the end of the meeting, we had three additional essays to add to our asynchronous training database. In the future, I will consider redoing this training but with more commentary from the participating tutors, following Beardsley in this collection, so that I can have a better understanding of their perceptions.

CONCLUSION

Together, these three alterations to existing training at my center represent how AI could be integrated to support multilingual tutors conducting asynchronous sessions. In addition to helping prepare tutors to conduct asynchronous sessions, the above three GenAI components can help support tutors across session formats, both with writers required and permitted to use it, by introducing how GenAI can support writers at all stages, how GenAI's prompts and wording frequently require refinement and revision, and how GenAI is limited in the feedback it provides. In light of GenAI's ethical drawbacks and potential biases, I encourage writing centers to avoid requiring GenAI in sessions so they can honor both tutors' curiosities and standpoints, although, depending on writing assignments across campus, tutors should be prepared to draw on such tools when supporting writers required by their instructors to use them. For that reason, at the time this chapter is being revised (August 2025), I have decided to require the minimal training components above, with the option to complete them in collaboration with others, so tutors are prepared to help writers using GenAI.

Outside of sessions, tutors could also apply what they learn about GenAI use to collaboratively develop workshops on GenAI with other departments or with each other. As well, administrators using GenAI in their centers could adapt the above modifications to address instructors during professional development days. In centers with on-site training, in the classroom or in the center itself,

tutors could complete these AI tasks collaboratively, and the activities could be modified to better suit each context. For instance, while I plan to have tutors use their week one reflections in practice sessions and to get feedback from AI, other training programs could use tutoring philosophies, research papers, journal entries, or assigned writing.

Looking ahead, the future of GenAI is still uncertain and evolving, and while writing centers often focus on the ethical implications related to the writing GenAI steals, their conversations could expand to the resources such technologies consume. As Bryan notes, technologies have always been at the forefront of writing centers. Given how fast AI is evolving, itself a concern (Stowe), this is just a starting point. Rather than ending my considerations at AI, I hope that my viewpoints and considerations of GenAI can be extended to other technologies as well. With GenAI, writing centers have asked how GenAI fits into the tutoring work that we do, leaving room for conversations about how GenAI fits into preparing tutors to work with writers. Beyond GenAI, writing centers could consider not only how GenAI is integrated, but whether (ethically) and how other technologies can be integrated into training as they develop, either as something tutors use and learn as part of training or as a kind of writing they use as practice material. Preparing tutors to work with writing technologies across formats can better support writers who may also be unfamiliar with them, and while this approach may mean technology remains an integral part of what we do, the question of "whether" can help centers identify ethical concerns within and beyond writing.

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CHAPTER 16. REINVENTING A NEW VISION AND *RAISON D'ÊTRE*: HOLISTIC WRITING CENTER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

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The advent of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in education has changed writing instruction, tutoring, and the foundational role of writing centers.[1] AI-powered writing assistant capabilities now extend beyond just grammar correction and plot suggestions to the generation of entire papers based on simple prompts. This dramatic shift has called for a re-evaluation of traditional pedagogical approaches and the operations of writing centers. Linda Adler-Kassner emphasizes that "writing is not just writing" (318), underscoring the multifaceted nature of writing as a critical component of academic and personal development. Thomas Deans et al. further highlight that "tutoring writing is never just tutoring writing" (par. 51), pointing to the broader scope of supporting plurilingual students who are learning in unfamiliar cultural and academic environments in a new country. These students often require guidance not only in language acquisition and writing skills but also in adapting to a foreign educational system, which extends beyond GenAI's expertise.

In response to the advent of GenAI tools, the responsibilities of writing centers have expanded significantly. Writing centers are now tasked with consulting students on the appropriate and ethical use of GenAI, counseling students who

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1   AI Disclosure: In this chapter, like Thomas Deans et al. suggested, we considered the large language model (LLM) as an "(imperfect) third collaborator" (par. 21) in our work to explore and learn how GenAI can support in the writing process. This is how we used AI in this paper: we initially drafted the script for the article and then used ChatGPT to edit. To benefit the most from LLM use, we engaged ChatGPT in a collaborative dialogic process following Deans et al.'s suggestions as we understood them. Our goal was to preserve our original joint author voice but invite ChatGPT to the conversation in the editing process. The script went back and forth numerous times using "prompt engineering" (Deans et al. par. 15) with changes made at every step, similar to a conventional editing process. ChatGPT never had the last word but was thoroughly edited and changed.

face accusations of academic misconduct related to GenAI, and engaging in dialogue with colleagues to develop strategic responses to the challenges posed by GenAI, with very little experience in any of these areas. The diversification of services to meet these new demands has become crucial for the future viability of writing centers. Isabella Buck suggests that writing centers should move beyond a traditional focus on writing tutoring to support multimodal writing projects so that our students are equipped with the skills needed for an evolving academic landscape. Based on anecdotal evidence and observations of a writing center coordinator and writing instructor, this chapter examines the evolving paradigm within a writing center as it responds to the changes brought about by GenAI. The development of educational practices, research approaches, and student demographics calls for a refreshed vision and purpose. This renewed direction is crucial for adapting to the swiftly changing academic context and for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of writing centers in supporting students. To address the challenges and opportunities that GenAI presents, our writing center has started Community of Practice (CoP) initiatives to promote open dialogue between faculty and students on issues concerning teaching and learning.

OUR WRITING CENTER

Our medium-sized university serves a diverse student body of 8,776 undergraduate and 252 graduate students, with 11.8 percent identifying as Indigenous and 18 percent as international students (UWinnipeg Fast Facts par. 3). The writing center (WC), housed in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications, offers free writing tutoring services funded through student fees. Undergraduate students who have successfully completed both a mandatory academic writing course and a writing tutor training course are eligible for employment as paid tutors. Typically, the WC employs approximately 30 to 35 tutors annually and has historically facilitated between 1,200 and 1,600 tutoring sessions per year. However, the past two years have witnessed a significant shift.

Students frequently seek support at the WC due to frustrations with writing assignments, often turning to GenAI tools without adequate preparation. Tutors, in turn, face challenges in assisting their peers while instructors grapple with the complexities of assessing and evaluating AI-generated papers. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, in his discourse on decolonizing the university, posits that the modern institution of higher education is confronted with two disquieting mirrors: a problematic past and an uncertain future, which are intrinsically linked (221). De Sousa Santos argues that forging an emancipated future calls for a critical reckoning with the colonial legacies of the university.

While we do not claim comprehensive knowledge on decolonizing a traditionally rigid institution, we are committed to fostering a new paradigm in writing instruction and WC functions. We align with Paulo Freire's assertions in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* which suggest that students are not blank slates, but rather individuals who bring valuable knowledge and skills to the classroom. Our aim is to harness this collective potential to construct a more inclusive and responsive space for learning.

THE IMPACT OF GenAI ON OUR WRITING CENTER

Although we lack specific data to explain the reasons behind the observed decline in tutoring sessions, we documented a significant reduction in the number of these sessions after the campus opened following the COVID-19 pandemic and since the emergence of GenAI, as other WCs have also reported (Essid and Cummins par. 6; Lindberg and Domingues 10). The downward trend coincided with a decrease in overall student enrollment, which may be a contributing factor. Besides the decline in students at our university, we recognize that a shift in instructional practices has occurred since the emergence of GenAI, with many instructors increasingly favoring in-class writing assignments over traditional take-home essays. In the past, it was these take-home assignments that prompted students to seek support from the WC.

The emergence of GenAI tools has led to a significant increase in academic misconduct cases, compelling the department review committee, which we are both members of, to conduct numerous student interviews to address concerns regarding GenAI usage in graded assignments, particularly those not completed in class. As Ashley Beardsley (Chapter 14) and Kat Greene and Charlotte Kupsh (Chapter 15) in this collection note, many universities and WCs lack standardized guidelines or instructions for the appropriate use of GenAI in academic work, leading to inconsistencies in how such cases are managed. At our university, policies are often left to the discretion of individual instructors, which can sometimes lead to vague instructions and frustrated students. As a WC coordinator, Helen has encountered numerous students who express frustration after being wrongly accused of using GenAI. Eunhee, as an academic writing instructor, has observed students who are afraid of even exploring GenAI because it is prohibited in many classes, and the narrative of GenAI is often associated with academic misconduct. This situation underscores the urgent need for clear policies and a better understanding of GenAI's role in academic contexts.

The rapid advancements in GenAI technology have left the WC and tutors asking several critical questions: How can the WC support students with GenAI

use in their academic journey? What is the purpose and role of the WC in the AI era? What will be a new paradigm for the WC and writing instruction?

RELATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE HOLISTIC WRITING CENTER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP)

In addressing these issues, we recognize the need for a new vision and *raison d'être*[2] for the future WC in the AI-mediated era. In response to the emerging challenges associated with GenAI, we launched a CoP initiative (Lave and Wenger), aiming at fostering open dialogues about the impact of GenAI on teaching and learning and providing students with more community-based WC support through small groups such as CoP dialogue, book club, writing club, and other student-centered activities. In alignment with Ellen Cecil-Lemkin and Lisa Marvel Johnson's framework in Chapter 17 of this collection, we also changed our tutor training program to include topics such as GenAI use in writing, institutional AI policies, ethics, and strategies for integrating GenAI in tutoring sessions and guidance for supporting students who have been falsely accused of GenAI misuse.

Drawing on relational epistemology, which suggests that knowing and learning originate from relationships and connection with the people and world around us (Bearman and Ajjawi 1162; Brownlee and Berthelsen; Kang and Wallace; Lysaker and Furuness 187), our vision for the WC includes providing a venue for CoP (Lave and Wenger) to share ideas, construct knowledge and diversify services to better meet the ever-changing needs of students and faculty. We believe these initiatives are necessary today because many students are replacing writing tutors with GenAI and are missing out on learning opportunities that only human interaction can provide. While GenAI can be an effective scaffolding and learning tool, it cannot offer the community-based learning and emotional support that human connections provide. According to Margaret Bearman and Rola Ajjawi, knowledge production is relational and social as it is "contextualized within particular relationships between people, things, and spaces" (1162). We have witnessed how the relationships between students and tutors construct meaningful knowledge and build a writing community through the WC. Additionally, we have observed writing instructors sharing new pedagogical ideas through occasional roundtable conversations, enhancing educational practices. We hope this CoP initiative will offer more consistent opportunities for students and faculty to connect and engage in meaningful dialogues about GenAI in academia.

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2   Raison d'être is a French term that refers to the reason for being.

COP DIALOGUES

In alignment with Boaventura de Sousa Santos' call for decolonizing educational institutions and Judith Lysaker and Stacy Furuness' relational and dialogic pedagogy, our CoP dialogues through the WC serve the wider university. We hope to hold monthly dialogue events addressing different topics, such as the impact of GenAI on teaching and learning, GenAI and academic misconduct and ethics, and citation managers. By putting sometimes uncomfortable issues on the table that impact everyone across all disciplines, our goal is to foster open dialogue and honest discussion between students and faculty. In addition, by hosting the events in the WC, we look forward to inviting colleagues and students into our space and introducing them to what we do.

For the inaugural event entitled *Harnessing AI: Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching and Learning*, we recruited colleagues we had met in other university contexts and had heard their position on GenAI. The panelists represented different faculties, including Chemistry, Indigenous studies, and a student tutor. To promote tutor/student ownership of the event, we asked a student tutor to introduce the speakers. Faculty members talked about how they engaged with GenAI in their classes and discussed the pedagogical changes they had made to their classes to inspire authentic learning. The pedagogical shift of adding more oral presentations, skills scaffolding for GenAI use, and more recursive learning had enhanced their teaching, and students attested to a more robust understanding of concepts. The student tutor talked about the challenges students and tutors face when faculty course outlines are vague about GenAI use. Students feel disempowered to enter the conversation about GenAI because they fear being accused of academic misconduct if they admit to using it. After the brief presentations, students and faculty in attendance engaged in a lively discussion, which provided instructors insights into how to introduce GenAI to students. Students also asked questions about GenAI use in their classes, which helped them resolve confusion over the AI policy.

Our second CoP dialogue topic focused on academic misconduct, and we invited a rhetoric professor, the associate dean who manages academic misconduct cases, two students/tutors, and a representative of the university student association who accompanies students to academic misconduct meetings with administration. Although the conversation was not limited to GenAI-related misconduct, much of the discussion revolved around concerns about the use of GenAI in academic contexts. The associate dean provided an overview of current academic misconduct cases at the university and explained the relevant policies. A representative of the university student association talked about the academic misconduct process and encouraged students to seek support from

the association. One panelist expressed significant concern about the ethical implications of AI, noting that while academic misconduct has always existed, accessibility of GenAI tools has exacerbated the issue. During the discussion following the presentations, many participants shared that they were seeing more assignments that appeared AI-generated. Some even mentioned they had to redesign their assignments to prevent students from using GenAI. Although we did not have concrete solutions, the dialogue provided a valuable opportunity to share perspectives, express concerns, and deliberate on these issues as a community.

As WC practitioners, we hope to provide students with community-based support by always including student presenters along with faculty and staff in the CoP events. We see CoP events and dialogues as a way to combat the "colonial legacies of the university" (De Sousa Santos) by giving students autonomy and a space at the table in shaping the conversation about GenAI instead of it being prescribed for them by administration and faculty. It will take time for students to feel comfortable voicing their concerns in the traditional hierarchical university setting, and we are aware of our limitations. We recognize that we cannot immediately change a university's hierarchy, but with an event like a CoP that includes students, faculty, and staff at the table, we can imagine a small change. A CoP brings knowing and learning to the forefront (Bearman and Ajjawi 1162; Lysaker and Furuness 187) and enhances students' well-being (Prati et al. 921). Universities should be about enhancing student learning, rather than being a space of anxiety and fear of making mistakes. A CoP initiative provides a platform for educators and students to share experiences and develop collective strategies to integrate GenAI effectively into educational practices, ensuring that we adapt to these changes in a thoughtful and pedagogically sound manner.

STUDENT-CENTERED COP

We also encourage current tutors to form the CoP events that contribute to navigating the many complexities resulting from GenAI. As mentioned earlier, we have noticed a decline in tutoring sessions since the emergence of GenAI, and it prompted us to rethink the well-being of the WC and its future role. We did not want our WC to be overshadowed by GenAI but to embrace it through exploration and ethical and responsive use, as Joe Essid and Cady Cummins suggested in their recent article about the future for WCs in the AI era. We also want our WC to continue to contribute to the university community. To this end, we have launched a book club and a writing club through the WC as part of the student-centered CoP. Tutors and students organize, promote, and run these clubs, with us providing support and encouragement. Our goal is to provide

students with a platform for in-person activities and discussions that meet social needs and provide emotional support that GenAI is not capable of. Clubs also bring vitality to the WC, and we are seeing the space slowly being filled with students and activities. In line with these efforts, tutors have also started in-person drop-in tutoring sessions at the center. They came up with the idea, ran it by the coordinator for approval, and then proceeded to run, promote, staff, and manage the weekly event. Although these initiatives are still in the early stages, we are already seeing a positive impact on the WC through stronger community building and increased student engagement.

The student-centered CoP can also serve as a platform for engaging with GenAI. In the book club, students can read AI-related books, learn about GenAI, and share their perspectives. In the writing club, students can experiment with AI-generated writing, compare it to their own work, and discuss their experiences. During in-person drop-in tutoring sessions, tutors can assess whether students are using GenAI in their writing and gain insight into how it is being used. They can also provide guidance on the ethical and responsible use of GenAI in writing to help prevent academic misconduct.

In addition to these initiatives, over the past two years, we have also invited tutors to join us in presenting at WC conferences. This initiative offers tutors an opportunity to learn with us, share their knowledge and experiences, and connect with other professionals in the WC field. Our presentation team consisted of tutors, the WC coordinator, and a writing instructor. We covered topics such as *Writing Reimagined: Unraveling our Tunnel Vision in a Writing Center* and *The Future of the Writing Center: Diversifying through Multi-purpose Groups and Multimodal Writing.* For many students, it was their first time presenting at a professional conference, and the experience gave them a sense of confidence and community as we observed tutors taking greater ownership and autonomy as active members of the WC. We view this as an extension of our student-centered CoP and plan to continue collaborating with tutors in future WC conference presentations.

Bringing together our CoP dialogues and student-centered CoP initiatives, we can establish a holistic WC CoP framework, which integrates the perspectives of instructors, administrators, tutors, and students through open dialogues and helps students with their academic, social, and emotional well-being through student-centered clubs and WC activities. This holistic WC CoP framework offers a new paradigm for the WC, envisioning its future role as a comprehensive teaching and learning support center, rather than just a traditional WC, which focuses mainly on academic literacy. In the AI-mediated era, students will need support in developing GenAI literacy, as GenAI will be embedded in our lives. The WC should serve as a foundation for this shift, helping students navigate the complexities.

CONCLUSION

Although generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has significantly changed writing instruction, tutoring, and the foundational role of WCs, we are excited about the promising opportunity for new learning for both educators and students. The emergence of a game-changing tool like GenAI forces us to rethink and reevaluate writing assignments, pedagogy, and assessment, and suddenly, they become a fluid, dynamic, and exciting prospect for innovations. We are eager to engage with students in the reinvention of writing instruction and the operational functions of WCs. This represents a new era for writing and writing tutoring, wherein we can choose either to succumb to challenges or to embrace new opportunities. We anticipate the valuable insights and knowledge we will gain collectively as we embark on this new journey.

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CHAPTER 17. CENTERING THE HUMAN: A TUTOR TRAINING APPROACH TO AI-GENERATED WRITING TECHNOLOGY

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As soon as generative AI (GenAI) was widely introduced to the public, concern and fear over its implications for writing followed. This was clear even in the response on the writing center administrators' email listserv, WCenter, at the beginning of 2023. Three days after the new year began, an innocuous-seeming email was sent to the list entitled simply "Thoughts on ChatGPT." What followed was a flurry of responses that variously referred to ChatGPT as a "monster," "a useful tool for writers of all kinds," and "a new starting point for student writing," among other descriptions.[1] The emails continued after this initial burst and still continue. As writing center professionals, it seems we are all left wondering how GenAI will affect the landscape of tutoring and writing on university campuses.

In response to this tool, this threat, and this monster, the scholarly conversation has begun to tease out the many implications of GenAI. This technology has been rightfully critiqued for its erasure of human voice (Lester 21), perpetuation of racial injustice (Owusu-Ansah 146) and dominant systematic and sociocultural values (see Anderson et al., Chapter 23), and instigation of ableist teaching practices to curb its use (Stanberry et al.). GenAI technology works by aggregating written work available online and synthesizing this work in order to generate responses to user prompts. Because of the aggregation that is integral to its functioning, it perpetuates oppression in at least two ways: by amplifying stereotypical and dominant viewpoints that comprise the majority of writing available online and by taking from the work of marginalized communities without proper attribution or payment. Both of these issues boil down to an erasure of individual human experience in favor of an aggregation of textual data.

At the same time as this new technology burst onto the scene, I (Lisa) was contending with a birth of a different kind—the birth of my son, Felix, whom I

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[1] We have chosen to anonymize these comments since they were posted to an email list.

delivered during the last few days of 2022. As I watched these emails flood into my inbox and the scholarly conversation begin to transpire, academia never seemed more "academic." The anxieties about this new technology seemed theoretical and far away in comparison to the concern I felt over bottles, wake windows, and trying to keep a new human alive. What I remember of that time is the messiness of new life that could not be confined to schedules, which interrupted the normal tempo of my routines. I was contending with what it means to be human—our lack of perfection and predictability, what differentiates us from machines. Without this messiness, there cannot be new life. And this is the messiness that we (Ellen and Lisa) believe must be retained when we are using and teaching about GenAI.

Although the issues that scholars have identified cannot be overlooked, we believe that it is incumbent upon writing center professionals to learn how to work with GenAI tools like ChatGPT, given their incipient ubiquity in the space of higher education. And so, the question remains: how do writing center administrators address the problems that GenAI creates—the erasure of individual experience and authorship?

We propose that this question be addressed by centering the messiness of human experience when introducing GenAI in writing center tutor training. While acknowledging the challenges and ethical dilemmas of GenAI, we simultaneously recognize that we must adapt our practice given the new reality enabled by these technologies. Taking an optimistic approach, we will present a framework for introducing GenAI in writing center tutor training based on our own experience. Our goal is to present both a theoretical approach to integrating information about GenAI into tutor training and to show how this approach was put into practice so that writing center administrators can adapt these ideas. To meet this goal, we will first discuss the theory that underpins our approach. Next, we will describe a framework for addressing GenAI within tutor training, which emphasizes dialogue and includes a discussion of (1) fundamentals, (2) policies, (3) ethics, and (4) strategies. Our final section, "Praxis," explains how we incorporated this framework into our training, emphasizing the places where our expectations did not meet reality. In doing so, we push against the flattening of GenAI prose, where the individual eclectic stories of human writers are stripped away to generate anonymous data. Our approach, then, re-centers the human as we navigate a terrain that could silence a diversity of identities, thought, and expression.

THEORY

Our framework is informed by a techno-optimistic approach that is indebted to the work of Afrofuturism, Black Optimism, and disability justice. Responding to the erasure of race and gender in discourses of the future, and particularly of

African Americans, Alondra Nelson elaborates a vision of "things to come" where technology and race can go hand-in-hand in her description of Afrofuturism (9). In a similar vein, Black Optimism tells us that living is possible despite anti-black-ness and social death (Sexton) and that Black agency is *a priori* to anti-blackness (Moten 318). Afrofuturism and Black Optimism are not unaware of racism and systemic oppression, but they posit that there are avenues for Black life despite these forces, both now and in the future. We also draw from disability justice, spe-cifically Mia Mingus' work on interdependence. Interdependence rejects the falsity of rugged individualism and affirms that all humans (disabled and non-disabled) depend on others, human and non-human. Through the lens of interdependence, we can see GenAI technology as a point of access—a tool that can be leveraged for justice (see Violini, Chapter 24, this collection). These concepts tell us to center the humanity of those who are marginalized as we build toward justice and that the future does not always already imply erasure, inaccessibility, or death.

Central to these philosophies is defining the human in an inclusive way that makes space for those who have been historically barred from this category. Thus, we conceive of the human not just as the antithesis of the algorithm but as a multivalent set of identities that we read against the norms of social capital to ensure that the periphery becomes the center. Thus, our vision of the human is not raceless or genderless—it is not the vision of the human that GenAI gives us. Instead, our understanding of the human takes into consideration the com-plexity of human expression and existing power structures to posit a radical conception of humanity that is always plural, is imbued with the complexity of identity, and is constructed by centering the marginalized. As such, a guiding principle of writing center training about GenAI must be recovering the human voices and stories that GenAI precludes.

Although this chapter outlines a framework and praxis for introducing GenAI in writing center tutor training, this is not to say that we are not still grappling with the ethics of GenAI. There are real-world implications of this technology that may involve loss of jobs, industries, and natural resources. No amount of ethical tutor training can obviate these issues. And so, at the same time as we provide a resource for training tutors about GenAI, we do not mean to imply that we can fully address the affordances and limitations GenAI creates through our pedagog-ical efforts. We hope, instead, to offer a techno-optimistic approach to tutoring training that centers humanity while contending with these ethical concerns.

FRAMEWORK

Our writing center first began working on developing tutor training materials during the late summer of 2023. We imagine that many writing centers felt the

same pressure to address the emerging technology immediately, but the daily and semester demands of running a writing center prevented a quicker response. Jennifer Conrad, Abigail Letak, and I (Ellen) teamed up to brainstorm and plan an approach that would be meaningful for our staff of all graduate student tutors at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. During those early meetings, we expressed our hopes and concerns over authorship, accessibility, campus policies, linguistic diversity, and ethics. These conversations led to the early unspoken configuration of the theoretical approach we articulated here. We wanted our tutors to adapt to the individual writers' needs and positionalities—the humanity of the writers—while being cognizant of the affordances and limitations of GenAI, especially for disabled, linguistically diverse, and historically marginalized students. The conversations also helped to elucidate policy guidelines to our tutors in a time when campus policy and technology were rapidly shifting and evolving. Our conversations led us to emphasize the importance of dialogue when addressing four key concepts: (1) fundamentals, (2) policies, (3) ethics, and (4) strategies. We see this framework as offering a flexible approach that centers the human experience, which other writing centers might adapt to help their tutors navigate the ethics and possibilities of GenAI.

Dialogue

Encouraging dialogue and engagement is not a novel component of writing center tutor training; however, we emphasize it here as an integral component of re-centering the human. Offering tutors the opportunity to discuss their opinions, experiences, excitement, and concerns not only assists with comprehension but focuses attention onto the diversity of identities, thought, and expression that AI-generated writing can strip away. Therefore, opportunity for dialogue should be woven throughout the introduction of the framework's four concepts.

Key Concepts of the Framework

Fundamentals

We cannot assume that our tutors have any experience with GenAI, and assuming as much would reinforce disparities in access for historically marginalized students. While it may seem like GenAI is discussed nonstop, our tutors might not be aware of how they operate or have been exposed to biased, partial, or inaccurate information. In our experience, some students are so afraid of the potential stigma or academic consequences of using GenAI that they have not explored the technology or literature for themselves. Therefore, training on the technology should provide equal access to background information and allow

tutors to play with the capabilities and limitations of GenAI. We recommend addressing topics like how GenAI generates text, prompt engineering, limitations of the technology (e.g., originality, hallucinations, bias, etc.), and the variety of GenAI programs available.

Policies

Once tutors understand how the technology works, then it becomes important to introduce some of the policies that respond to how GenAI is being regulated (or not) nationally and on your campus. Speaking to the national scope of higher education's range of GenAI policies will raise awareness of the contextual nature of these policies and provide opportunities to discuss their limitations and affordances. The local context and policies will likely influence writing centers' own individual policies on AI-generated writing. In addition to ensuring that individual policies are in alignment with colleges' policies, we would recommend that writing centers create policies that are flexible and allow for tutors to have the capacity to adapt policies to the messiness of idiosyncratic students and sessions.

Ethics

While higher education institutions may allow or support the use of GenAI, we believe tutors should be aware of the ethical considerations of using this technology. Writing tutoring is a highly contextual and individual practice that shifts based on both the tutor's and the student writer's positionality, experience, and education. Presenting tutors with an understanding of the ethical considerations of GenAI will allow them to take a nuanced approach when tutoring writers who want to or are using GenAI and can help them build critical AI literacy (see Lepp Friesen and Buettner, Chapter 16). Ethical considerations that could be addressed include the unauthorized source material to train GenAI, environmental impact, providing private personal or professional data to companies, contributing to developing GenAI capabilities, reproduction of biases, and linguistic diversity erasure.

Strategies

Once the fundamentals, policies, and ethics are covered, tutors can then begin imagining strategies they can use in their writing center sessions. While most are familiar with GenAI's ability to generate whole texts, they can also be used to support human writing. Tutors can learn strategies that allow writers to leverage the generative power of GenAI while still retaining their agency. Drawing from our techno-optimistic approach and desire to center marginalized human voices, we see teaching strategies to harness GenAI as particularly important for

equity. While the capabilities of GenAI can benefit many students, it can also be used as an accessibility tool to support disabled students and students who have not had equal access to education. Some strategies that could be introduced include brainstorming paragraph or sentence focuses, discussing the merits and limitations of an output for idea generation, outlining or reserve outlining, and editing support (see Deans et al. for more ideas).

PRAXIS

We put this framework into practice at our center primarily via two avenues—lessons within our monthly staff meetings during fall of 2023 and during our training class for new tutors beginning the spring of 2024. First, we parsed the material out into smaller 20-minute lessons during staff meetings throughout a semester so that we could build skills and check in with our tutors. However, as new tutors joined our center, we had to shift to incorporating content into our tutor training class because we wanted to avoid repeating the same information to returning tutors. We're still finding the ideal way to include this material into our training course, since, like many writing centers, there is more material than time available to cover all of the necessary topics for new tutors. Recently, we've also prioritized including an annual staff meeting on GenAI, rather than devoting time throughout all of our staff meetings. We offer the following examples as illustrations of how our framework can be put into effect, and also, to emphasize that the gap between framework and practice is not something to be eliminated, but rather embraced.

Dialogue

As addressed in our "Framework" section, dialogue plays a key role in recentering the human. From the beginning, we centered dialogue within our training sessions, even in the context of large staff meetings, which often lend themselves to more didactic approaches. During our first staff meeting of the semester, we invited our staff to respond to the following questions:

- How comfortable are you feeling in relation to GenAI writing?
- What hesitations or areas of excitement do you have around GenAI writing?
- How and when do we talk about GenAI in relation to writing center appointments?

These open-ended questions invited our tutors into the conversation about GenAI and gave them the space to share their feelings and insights about the

technology before we established best practices as a center. (For additional approaches, Greene and Kupsh's habits of mind in Chapter 13 of this collection can offer a useful place to prompt dialogue.)

POLICIES

We believe that it is necessary to clearly identify boundaries and guidelines for tutors so that they feel confident when the topic of GenAI is broached in a tutoring session. To ensure that we are able to respond to the latest evolutions of GenAI thoughtfully, we establish flexible policies, and we encourage our tutors to be responsive to the local context of the human (student) with whom they are working. We presented the following policies during a staff meeting and in our tutor training course.

1. Prioritize Course Instructors' Policies around AI-Generated Writing

Our university allows each instructor to determine whether or not and to what extent they allow the use of GenAI for classwork. To account for this range, our appointment intake form includes a question that asks students whether or not their instructor allows them to use GenAI when drafting. Our tutors must adhere to instructors' choices when helping students.

2. Meet Students Where They Are

We ask that our tutors allow students' preferences to guide them, while keeping in mind instructors' policies. This means that if a student is allowed to use GenAI, then they can work with them in a critically engaged way that acknowledges the positionality of the student along with potentials and limitations of this technology. If a student prefers not to use AI-generated writing tools, we ask that tutors avoid pushing students to do something that makes them uncomfortable. Although this guideline centers student and instructor agency, it does not fully account for tutor agency in determining how they would or would not like to work with GenAI. We have not yet found a way to resolve this dissonance, but we anticipate that it will inform future discussions as we refine our policies.

3. Rely on Skills Cultivated as Writing Center Instructors

Finally, we want our tutors to rely on their writing center skills when navigating GenAI technology: being student-centered, asking questions, and inviting critical thinking about writing and the writing process. We ask tutors to remember that GenAI is one tool in their multimodal toolkit (Cecil-Lemkin and Marvel Johnson; Hitt) and to be considered in how they deploy it.

ETHICS

As we have emphasized throughout this chapter, we cannot critically engage with GenAI without dealing with their complex ethical implications. Before our final meeting of the semester, we asked our tutors to read Alfred L. Owusu-Ansah's "Defining Moments, Definitive Programs, and the Continued Erasure of Missing People." This reading, which emphasizes that GenAI tools can replicate bias and reinforce language hierarchies, helped to inform a discussion about a mock scenario in which an international multilingual writer, "Jay," had written a personal statement using ChatGPT. Much like May in Chapter 15, we provided our tutors with Jay's draft so that they could evaluate the work of GenAI.

We thought this reading would help our tutors identify and then articulate the ethical implications of GenAI tools that Owusu-Ansah introduced, and their responses both did and did not follow this line of thinking. They were concerned primarily for Jay, and wanted to help him navigate the ethical considerations directly relevant to the appointment and draft rather than focusing on the writers that are erased when ChatGPT aggregates internet data. For example, one tutor[2] remarked that he "would be concerned that [Jay's] not learning to write in his own voice—rather, that he wants ChatGPT to produce something 'good' through a sort of 'standardization.'" Piyaboot Sumonsriworakun, another tutor, pointed out that use of ChatGPT in this manner may be considered plagiarism. While Haley Johnson, another tutor, prioritized Jay's agency, explaining, "I would support the student's decision to use AI, because I support students' ability to determine what they want their writing to sound like." And so, while this reading helped to spark an important conversation about ethical use of GenAI, our expectations did not quite match with the messiness and unpredictability of tutor training. While we had assumed that our tutors would think about the broader ethical implications of this use of GenAI, they instead articulated concerns for the hypothetical student—which was an important reminder to us about the local and individual effects of this technology.

STRATEGIES

It is imperative that tutors understand not only the ethical implications of GenAI but also how to use GenAI within tutoring sessions in a critically informed manner. During our second meeting of the semester, we asked instructors to identify strengths and limitations of a GenAI essay. Although our tutors were quick to notice the pitfalls of the draft—namely, vagueness and lack of depth—they also were able to identify a few strategies for using GenAI in a tutoring session.

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2   This tutor wished to remain anonymous.

These strategies included using GenAI to develop a basic outline and to edit an essay rather than generate one.[3] So far, we have not been able to study how tutors use (or do not use) GenAI within their writing center sessions, and so it is unclear how these hypothetical strategies may be implemented. Additionally, due to high staff turnover characteristic of writing centers, it's been challenging to determine the long-term impact of our initial training.

CONCLUSION

Before concluding, we want to go back to the beginning—to remember how we all felt when we learned of the capabilities of GenAI. When I (Ellen) saw the initial WCenter emails regarding GenAI, I was skeptical and then shocked. When I shared my concerns with my spouse, a computer programmer, they assured me the technology was nowhere near what I feared. It wasn't until I showed them the emails and we played around with ChatGPT that we both fully realized the dramatic technological shift. While we were excited at the possibilities for both of our industries, there was also a degree of concern. When reflecting on our personal and the field's early reaction, there can be a tendency to turn away from the messiness of uncertainty and laugh off our reactions. These messy moments mark intense human imagination—which propels us forward to innovation. This drive led us to the framework discussed in this chapter, which may initially seem to skirt around this complexity because of its straightforward categorization. However, implementing a new training approach is rarely an easy endeavor. The simplicity we present is the result of trial, error, and reflection. There were many times when we had to make last-minute changes to our materials based on evolving policy, technological developments, and competing stakeholder agendas. If you decide to implement our framework or borrow from our praxis, we know that the translation will not be simple and will involve messiness. Messiness drives us and helps us innovate, and we encourage those adapting from our early endeavors in this area to embrace the places where theory does not map easily onto practice. In other words, we hope that you embrace the mess.

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PART 4. PRACTICES FOR NAVIGATING AI WITH/IN WRITING CENTER CONSULTATIONS

CHAPTER 18. COUNTERING AI SHAME IN THE WRITING CENTER: CULTIVATING TUTORING PRACTICES OF OPENNESS AND VULNERABILITY

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This essay considers the relationship between writers' shame, their use of artificial intelligence, and tutoring practices based on openness, honesty, and vulnerability. For many writers, particularly undergraduate writers, the practice of writing can be one filled with shame—about falling short of instructor expectations, about spending hours on an assignment only to receive a low grade, about procrastinating, and more. Writing tutors understand this shame. In "Shame and the Writing Center," Lauren Vedal captures the role that writing centers can play in supporting students and easing their sense of shame: "Part of what we do as tutors is to ease shame. We reassure students that their struggles are, in fact, normal. Writing is hard. Writing well is really hard."

The arrival of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) brings new opportunities of shame for writers, and this essay argues that writing centers can play a critical role in reducing writers' shame related to using GenAI and in providing a space for writers to reflect on their shame. This essay draws from the experiences of two undergraduate writing consultants to highlight strategies that writing center staff can use to shift writers away from shame and toward open, honest conversations about GenAI.

Drawing from Brené Brown's framework of shame and vulnerability and our own experiences, this essay proposes that writing centers—with tutoring philosophies based on vulnerability and openness—can encourage writers to be open about their own writing practices, even if those writing practices involve the use of GenAI. Through tutoring practices of vulnerability and openness, writing consultants and tutors can not only have open, honest conversations with clients about their specific writing practices but can also begin a broader conversation about the benefits and drawbacks of using GenAI.

WRITING PEDAGOGY, TUTORING PRACTICES, AND SHAME

For many students, the process of writing can be extremely difficult and anxiety-inducing. Anne Elrod Whitney so clearly captures the full scope of how students experience shame as a part of writing instruction:

> Almost all can also tell a story of feeling deep shame in a writing classroom. It's the story of the teacher or parent who, reading a piece of writing, told us we weren't smart. Or who responded to writing that was heartfelt and risky only with correction and a low grade. These are stories about feeling worthless in the face of or in the wake of a writing event. (130)

Focusing on the history of instructor feedback that is too critical, too overbearing, too dismissive, and too accusatory, Thomas Newkirk, too, admits: "As a writing teacher, it pains me to admit to the close association of writing and shame. But it is there" (134). Shame is a part of our history (and a part of our present practices). Jasmine Kar Tang and Noro Andriamanalina demonstrate that faculty feedback of praise and shame often uphold racialized expectations of "appropriate" academic language, serving as "another heightened site in which racialization and racism surface" (140). Writing feedback, here, serves as a tool for standardizing and "correcting" those who stray from white mainstream English practices. Still, others see shame as an integral and important part of writing pedagogy. Mary Juzwik and Sal Antonnuci argue for a reflective practice of "dialogic collaging" as a way to support "shame resilience" (147). Similarly, Anwar Ahmed suggests that we can foster students' emotional literacies and harness the productive aspects of seemingly negative emotions (53). More recently, Stephanie West-Puckett, Nicole Caswell, and William Banks center failure and shame in their writing pedagogies and assessment: "We suggest that by refusing notions of best practices and success and orienting toward failure and shame, we can develop an ethic of shared agency in writing assessment" (32).

Other scholars have called for the cultivation of pedagogies of vulnerability to counter shame. For example, Anne Liu Kellor shares her classroom activities that center gratitude rather than critique (the listener thanks the writer for sharing, or the listener tries to repeat exactly what the writer shared):

> This is a witnessing, not a critique. This is a *wow, that moved me. You moved me. And I want you to know that*. No need to say why. This is about honoring the writer and helping everyone to see how our own private, vulnerable truths bring up universal feelings. Destigmatizing shame and recognizing

> how we *all* have vulnerable places inside that we are afraid
> of exposing–and then daring to expose those places in a safe,
> communal space—this is how we create liberation. (107)

Kellor's argument for being open and vulnerable with other writers informs much of our own practices of open and vulnerable tutoring as a way to engage with writers' use of GenAI.

More recently, in his 2024 article, Louie Giray describes the phenomenon of AI shaming. According to Giray, "This phenomenon often involves dismissing the validity or authenticity of AI-assisted work, suggesting that using AI is deceitful, lazy, or less valuable than human-only efforts" (2320). Others have similarly found that students likely feel "shame about seeking help or outsourcing their work [via GenAI]" and that using GenAI "comes with a certain kind of baggage" (Zieve-Cohen et al.; Lundin).

Of course, recognizing the many ethical concerns around GenAI (environmental, labor, privacy, linguistic justice, critical thinking, and many more), faculty might engage in GenAI shaming as a way, from their perspective, to discourage the use of GenAI as an ethically dubious tool. While we recognize these legitimate concerns around GenAI use and believe that students should reflect critically on these concerns, we, like Giray, emphasize the ways that GenAI shaming can backfire: complete bans on GenAI do little to discourage GenAI use; instead, bans drive GenAI use underground as something used in secret. AI shaming can amplify the shame and anxiety that some students already feel toward writing.

WRITING CENTERS AND OPENNESS

This essay, then, suggests that writing centers play a particularly important role in reducing the shame felt by students when they use GenAI. Two tutoring principles—openness and vulnerability—are essential for working with students using GenAI. First, we recommend a tutoring practice based around openness, a willingness to suspend our own belief and concerns to work with the writer within their own writing practices.

The data is clear that students are already using GenAI: from a June 2024 survey, Schiel, Bobek, and Schnieder found that 46 percent of high school students shared that they used GenAI (4), and 66 percent of students used GenAI for "writing-related language arts courses" (9). Despite these figures, some writing faculty insist that students in their courses do not use GenAI at all. To call for a total ban of GenAI is to ignore the reality of the majority of students' writing processes in 2024. A complete rejection of GenAI would only serve as a mechanism for cultivating shame for students—a sense of shame that they already

feel when they write, regardless of their GenAI use. If we are to reduce students' shame associated with writing, then we must be willing to meet students where they are and recognize the realities of their writing processes and occasions.

One strategy we can use to center openness in our sessions is the explicit discussion of GenAI as a part of our intake survey at the start of our tutoring sessions. Along with asking writers about their goals for the writing project, the requirements for the assignment, and their major concerns, we might also ask them about their writing processes as they relate to GenAI: Did you use any GenAI when composing this essay? Is using GenAI a part of your writing process? Would you like to use or avoid GenAI during our tutoring sessions? Of course, such questions might come off as potentially intrusive: writers might suspect that writing tutors are only asking these questions in order to "catch" the client's plagiarism. Writing centers need to be clear—through intentional messaging—that our staff are not in the role of plagiarism police. We echo Lauren J. Short's view of the writing center as a "discussion-based space where writers could make mistakes and seek guidance without fear of being reported to their instructors or to the university's honor council." The drafts that writers bring in are in progress, and requirements or restrictions regarding GenAI use are between the student and their faculty member. We can, of course, help clients, when requested, interpret assignment sheets or syllabus policies to determine if GenAI use is appropriate for that class, but writing centers should not need to go out of their way to determine the faculty's expectations.

WRITING CENTERS AND VULNERABILITY

Second, we suggest that writing centers adopt tutoring practices based around vulnerability. In such a practice, writing tutors embrace mutual openness, willing to share their own experiences and practices of writing just as they ask their clients to do. Writing centers are particularly well-suited for practices that center vulnerability because writing consultations are already "a vulnerable task" (Cleary and Rymer, Chapter 6). Indeed, Brown's framing of feedback sounds almost like she's describing a writing tutoring session: "Vulnerability is at the heart of the feedback process. This is true whether we give, receive, or solicit feedback" (201). Like Lauren Brentnell, Elise Dixon, and Rachel Robinson, we recognize that vulnerability is not a one-size-fits-all solution and that significant emotional labor, not available to everyone equally, is involved with being vulnerable: "But vulnerability asks us to also be forward about our own struggles, which can leave us feeling exposed and uncomfortable in interactions with co-workers and in sessions. We are not calling for everyone to always be vulnerable." For writing tutors who are able to be vulnerable with clients, vulnerability can be an

important professional tool for helping reduce shame that some writers might feel about using GenAI.

Returning to the first strategy discussed under openness practices, we can also center vulnerability in our pre-tutoring intake conversations with clients. When asking about writers' GenAI writing practices, we might also share our own experiences with using GenAI, with an initial emphasis on the beneficial ways that we have used GenAI. Here, we are reminded of Brown's call for "normalizing" as a "critical shame-resilience" strategy: "What are common struggles? How have other people dealt with them? What have your experiences been?" (197). We might share the specific ways that we have used GenAI ("When I'm having a hard time figuring out a topic, I sometimes find it useful to prompt GenAI to share a list of potential topics" or "When I'm trying to strengthen my argument, I sometimes ask GenAI to offer some counterarguments to my essay"). Or, we might share what GenAI tools we find most helpful in our writing practices ("I find that Google Bard is more user friendly than ChatGPT" or "I find it really helpful to use InfraNodus to identify common claims or gaps in my argument"). Sharing our own GenAI practices helps to establish what Kirkwood Adams and Maria Baker (Chapter 22) call "an environment where disclosing isn't dangerous," permitting clients to be honest about their own uses of GenAI.

MADILYNNE'S STRATEGY

By offering explicit examples of their own use of GenAI, writing tutors move from a strategy of only openness to one of vulnerability. Indeed, we have witnessed a defensiveness from writers when we have asked them about their GenAI writing practices. Simply asking about GenAI practices can come across as asking the student if they were plagiarizing or cheating; from the client's perspective, the tutor becomes the investigator (see also Adams and Baker, Chapter 22) for how writers seemed more comfortable and willing to disclose their use of GenAI on job documents, which "are not governed by institutional policies"). Sharing their own GenAI writing practices can move the writing tutor back into the role of a coach or ally. Below, Madilynne shares one such example of normalizing experiences of using GenAI:

> Within our writing center, I have seen a few clients with ChatGPT pulled up in a separate tab. Each time that the writer realized that I noticed ChatGPT, they acted very defensively, assuring me that they were only using GenAI for idea generation. I assured them that their use of GenAI for idea generation was a valuable way to use the tool. After reassuring

clients that their use of GenAI was appropriate and even an effective use of a tool for writing, I would then turn to sharing my own experiences of using GenAI.

I would share how I used GenAI when I wrote my historical methods paper. I wanted to see if GenAI knew about my niche topic: the Bamberg Conference of 1926. I could not find much information about the meeting in the English sources I used, so I decided to see if ChatGPT knew anything else about it. I primarily wanted to see if ChatGPT would highlight the impact it had on Joseph Goebbels, the future Minister of Propaganda in the Third Reich. ChatGPT's response gave me a background similar to what I had found in the few English sources that mentioned it. It did not mention anything about Joseph Goebbels, who was humiliated at the meeting but would eventually go back to the party because of Adolf Hitler. I wrote a little paragraph back to ChatGPT in a bit more depth than provided above about the Goebbels aspect, and it further expanded on what I replied back. With the response, ChatGPT delved deeper into the Goebbels aspect of the Bamberg Conference. I would tell clients that, in an instance like I mentioned above, providing GenAI with a specific, rather than a vague prompt, is more effective. Sharing my own experiences with using GenAI seems to make clients more comfortable, more relaxed, as they realize that their own use of GenAI is not an illicit activity.

KATHRYN'S STRATEGY

By centering openness and vulnerability in their tutoring practices, tutors can establish a trusting, non-judgmental space for clients. By employing an open and vulnerable tutoring practice, tutors can help reduce the shame that clients feel about their writing and about their GenAI use. Once trust has been established, tutors can then move toward more critical, yet still open-minded, conversations about GenAI use and writing. Below, Kathryn shares how a strategy of vulnerability—becoming co-investigators with clients—can lead to more critical conversations about the limitations of GenAI:

I have often heard the conversation around GenAI-generated writing in higher education focused on containment, on the question of how to put boundaries around its use. While I

understand the rationale behind this, efforts to contain or restrict undergraduate students' use of GenAI are likely too little, too late. It is a publicly available resource that is here and here to stay. Additionally, with the exception of specific fields and contexts, merely establishing boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable use of GenAI only creates new ways for its use to be considered illicit and for the shame that accompanies that. Therefore, I propose that for engagement with GenAI in writing centers to truly minimize students' shame and maximize their writing capabilities, it must involve students as collaborators and fellow investigators into the strengths and limitations of GenAI writing. Furthermore, we must delve into the question of what the purpose of writing at the undergraduate level really is and how GenAI can be reframed positively as an opportunity to be reminded of the distinction between writing as a process and writing as a product.

In addition to offering one-on-one writing tutoring, our writing center also teaches the college's basic writing course, a substantial component of which involves weekly small group writing labs with writing consultants. In the fall semester of 2023, students in this course were assigned an essay that asked them to plug one of the previous writing assignments for the class into ChatGPT and then to revise the essay produced by GenAI. Though anecdotal, I felt that my experience of working through this assignment with students was incredibly beneficial. This assignment pushed me to come fully face-to-face with GenAI-produced writing for the first time in my role as a tutor, rather than the surreptitious encounters with GenAI writing I had sometimes experienced in sessions with students. As a learner, I understand that people learn far more effectively by working through problems than by memorizing the answers. As I tried to help the writers struggling to come up with criticisms of the seemingly perfect GenAI essay, I, too, found myself struggling to articulate the limitations of the GenAI-produced writing because these were aspects of writing that I hardly ever find lacking in student writing. Some of these elements include tone, voice, and original thinking. The most valuable part of this activity I found to be the conversations it generated between students and tutors

about what GenAI-produced writing, as impressive as it is, may still be missing.

I strongly believe that although the writing center is a student support service, part of the way we support students must include advocacy on an institutional level. The most difficult part of the GenAI assignment for me as a tutor was to see how much the students struggled to engage critically with GenAI-produced writing, perhaps because their prior writing instruction had emphasized all the wrong things. It was challenging to get many students to see past the perfect grammar and endless vocabulary to critique the content of the essay itself. This was hardly surprising to me, as I knew that these were some of the aspects of their own writing that students felt the most shame around. Therefore, shame of what they perceive as deficient or have been told is deficient in their own writing may very well be a crucial driver to use GenAI. Combating that shame means shifting the focus back onto why undergraduate students are asked to write, a question that must ultimately be asked of faculty. If the goal of essay writing at the undergraduate level is the thinking and learning that occurs through the process of writing an essay, then the assignment and assessment of writing must reflect these goals. Our basic writing course, for example, scaffolds the writing process by breaking essay assignments down into smaller deadlines of a half, full, and final draft. Encouraging the implementation of similar strategies in classrooms may appeal to faculty as a way to limit submission of wholly GenAI-generated assignments by students. However, these strategies also may serve to help reduce students' shame by deemphasizing the final product of their writing and creating a culture of writing in which higher value is placed on students' ideas, uniquely shaped by each individual's lived experience. Writing centers can be instrumental in facilitating such change.

HONEST CONVERSATIONS IN BRAVE SPACES

Madilynne's strategy of vulnerable sharing and Kathryn's strategy of co-investigating as ways to open up critical conversations serve as a reminder that writing centers are not spaces free of disagreement and conflict. As Bridget Draxler has argued, writing centers are uniquely positioned to have difficult conversations

about language because our sessions involve "talking about the nuance of language in a one-on-one setting with students built on a relationship of openness, respect, and trust." Here, we are also reminded of Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens' argument that we should strive toward "brave spaces" and not "safe spaces" because "safe spaces" prioritize comfort over justice: "We question, however, the degree to which safety is an appropriate or reasonable expectation for any honest dialogue about social justice…. We argue that authentic learning about social justice often requires the very qualities of risk, difficulty, and controversy that are defined as incompatible with safety" (139).[1] In a safe writing center, conversations about GenAI and writing stop short of critique.

In a brave writing center, however, authentic learning necessitates an honest conversation about the limits of GenAI, the flaws of GenAI, and the very legitimate concerns about linguistic justice and GenAI. The writing center as a "brave space" is not one in which everyone—clients, tutors, administrators—agrees and ignores ethical dilemmas; instead, the writing center as a "brave space" is one in which productive disagreement and challenges move all parties toward more just thought and action.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, shame and anxiety around writing have long been common experiences for students. The rapid widespread introduction of GenAI, its integration across technologies, and resulting classroom bans have introduced a new experience of shame related to writing: GenAI shame. As students see a wide public adoption of GenAI, they might simultaneously see restrictions on their use of GenAI in their classes. Recognizing the many ethical concerns around GenAI, faculty might understandably see shame as an effective way of discouraging students from using GenAI in their writing. Yet, as we have outlined above, shame is unproductive for learning; it causes writers to freeze rather than grow. Instead of stopping GenAI use, shame marks the use of GenAI as taboo, driving it underground.

Brown's concepts of "normalizing" and "vulnerable feedback" map on closely with the writing tutoring strategies of openness and vulnerability recommended by Madilynne and Kathryn. By being open and honest about our own uses of GenAI, by recognizing the ways that GenAI can be helpful, by inviting clients to share—in a nonjudgemental manner—their own uses of GenAI, writing tutors can help to alleviate feelings of shame and anxiety around GenAI. Together,

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1   See also Kaidan McNamee and Michelle Miley's discussion of safe and brave spaces within the writing center context.

writing tutors and clients can work as collaborative partners who are willing to have honest, vulnerable conversations about their GenAI use and their feelings about using GenAI (yes, even their feelings of shame about using GenAI). By opening up to clients in vulnerable ways, we can not only invite them to be open about their own uses of GenAI, but we can also establish a trusting relationship that can open up discussions about "ethical engagement and process-awareness" (Adams and Baker). Trust can promote honest conversations about the many legitimate ethical concerns around GenAI use.

Writing is a vulnerable activity, and sharing that writing with others is particularly vulnerable. Brown's framework of "vulnerable feedback" serves as an important reminder for writing center staff that our work—individual writing consultations with clients—can play a critical role in supporting writers in the age of GenAI. Brown calls us to meet writers wherever they are, deeply listen to them, and enthusiastically learn more about their individual writing processes—whether they enthusiastically adopt GenAI, reluctantly use GenAI, or refuse GenAI.

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CHAPTER 19. EMBRACING AI AS A "SECOND READER" IN WRITING CENTER CONSULTATIONS: EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND REFLECTION

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The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs) has prompted writing centers to adapt their approaches to student consultations. While some view AI's influence on student writing with alarm (Marche), writing centers face specific challenges in addressing its integration, as Isabella Buck observes in the Digital Rhetoric Collective:

> We noticed a decline in visits to the writing center, especially for basic writing tasks. Additionally, students producing polished text using AI often struggle with deeper analysis and argumentation. How can we encourage them to discuss AI-generated texts and reflect on their writing process?

Buck's question mirrors our own research interests: How can writing with AI be used to *enhance* discussion and reflection in the writing center, rather than *replace* it? This paper, in part, seeks to answer that question. As graduate consultants (i.e., tutors) responsible for training both undergraduate and graduate consultants at a newly-established writing center in a Research 1 (R1) university, we view AI not as a threat to our work but as an opportunity to expand the inherently collaborative, technologically-mediated, and socially-mediated processes of writing and revising to include AI in ways that benefit both our consultants and student writers.

Our specific model for AI integration in the writing center is that of a "second reader," wherein our consultants leverage AI as a means of additional feedback on client writing. We believe that the combination of AI's speed, efficiency, and broad corpus of common student genres can generate more writer reflections and motivate additional revisions. We base this belief on the work of Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland's work on second language learners' response to

writing feedback, in that writing feedback only obtains meaning through the process of writing and rewriting for specific readers (2). Their term *socio-cognitive* reflects the necessity of the social component of feedback and revision for student writers (7). We see the output of these LLMs, such as ChatGPT, as possessing only the cognitive component, devoid of the necessary meaning-making contexts; in our words, they are only what we call "mechano-cognitive." Our answer to the question of why students would come to a writing center when an AI can provide feedback on their writing? To quote a certain founding document: *We the people.*

This paper outlines a model of AI integration in the writing center that reimagines writing in ways that celebrate the multiplicity of meaning-making, shares our model AI "second reader" protocols, and shares preliminary results from our Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved pilot study (IRBNet ID 2211585-1). We aim to leverage the strengths of AI and consultants to enhance the depth and breadth of feedback available to student writers. To do so, we explore the following research questions:

1. What are consultants' and clients' perceptions of the affordances and limitations of incorporating AI-generated feedback into writing center consultations?
2. How does the integration of AI as a "second reader" affect the roles and responsibilities of writing consultants?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of AI in writing center practices represents a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize writing support and the roles of writing center consultants. Stephen North's seminal work established a foundation for understanding writing centers as spaces focused on producing better writers, not just better writing (438). Yet, the advent of generative AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, Claude.ai, Gemini, etc., poses a challenge to this conception. How can we work on improving our student writers when they are increasingly engaging with systems that result in "cognitive offloading" of the writing process (Dawson 37)? Our model of the "second reader" attempts to honor North's call to create writing centers as a space focused on producing better writers by implementing AI in ways that generate more reflection and revision, rather than generating easy solutions.

To imagine the best method of AI integration into writing center practices, recent empirical studies on AI applications in writing instruction provide the basis of our model. Work from Robert Godwin-Jones (15-16) and Hanieh Shafiee Rad et al. (5022-23) highlights the potential of AI tools used as feedback

mechanisms to enhance student engagement and writing outcomes. A recent study by Lisa Sperber et al. introduced a model for integrating AI into the writing classroom, which they call "Peer and AI Review and Reflection" ("PAIRR"). This model asks students to prompt ChatGPT for writing feedback and then compare that feedback to peer review feedback on the same paper. The researchers concluded that combining AI and human feedback generated useful feedback and increased students' critical AI literacy. Students even found it preferable to peer-only or AI-only feedback. The PAIRR model thus functions as a framework for our present study design. Mark Warschauer et al. provide a more critical perspective, underscoring both the strengths of AI to provide reasonable and actionable feedback for students but also the complex ways in which AI tools potentially undermine student writing development (3-5), which is a tension that writing center consultants must navigate. For ChatGPT specifically, Jacob Steiss et al. found that clear prompting produced writing feedback that was only slightly behind the strength of instructor feedback (7). Similarly, Şahin Gökçearslan et al.'s systematic review of AI chatbots in education offers valuable insights into the benefits of implementation (ease of use, increased learner motivation) and challenges (limited interactions, plagiarism) but does not specifically address the unique context of writing centers (24-26).

While writing center scholarship on AI use has focused primarily on the policy, description, and *theoretical* implementation, scholarship on the actual implementation of AI into writing center processes has been minimal. Currently, many workshop presentations, papers, and digital policies reflect a readiness to begin adopting and adapting AI in limited capacities. Nathan Lindberg and Amanda Domingues' 2024 survey of writing center directors and tutors found that sentiments toward AI writing tools "appear to be shifting from negative to pragmatic" and that "the fear that AI writing tools will replace tutoring has generally not been justified" (2). This shift in sentiment from apprehension to pragmatism aligns with Matthew D. Bryan's historical account of writing center responses to writing software over the last fifty years. Namely, writing centers are at their best when they are "positioned as sites of inquiry" to new writing software, experimenting and raising questions that "may otherwise go overlooked" (24). Training materials for writing center consultants have been developed to help them respond appropriately to scenarios in which writers may relinquish agency to AI tools (Crull). Additionally, one experiment with AI in writing center contexts was written up for the University of Wisconsin–Madison's *Another Word* blog, with one tutor reporting a variety of usages (from brainstorming to sentence-level rephrasing) with varying effectiveness (Deans). Yet, to our knowledge, no published, IRB-approved study has tested the implementation of ChatGPT as a source of additional writing feedback in a writing center context.

Our study aims to address the current gap in the implementation of generative AI by using a multi-faceted approach from initial AI literacy training to implementation and reflection. This approach allows us to develop a more nuanced understanding of AI integration in writing center contexts, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

METHODS

AI Protocols

In the initial stages of protocol development, we presented our preliminary prompts at a workshop during the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Collaboration at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in 2024. This forum allowed us to test our prompts through mock sessions with experienced writing center professionals. Based on this feedback and our subsequent research, we refined and expanded our prompts to address the complexities of AI integration in writing center contexts. The prompts we settled on are as follows:

> I am a student in a university working on an assignment. Pretend you are a peer-tutor who will review my draft based on the assignment prompt and specific goals I provide and therefore will not make revisions. Instead, please provide clear, detailed, specific, and supportive readerly-feedback. The format for your feedback should be as follows:
>
> 1. A short reader-response to the draft as a whole.
>
> 2. Two to three areas that are strong in relation to my goals and assignment requirements.
>
> 3. Two to three specific aspects for revision and the reasoning about why each poses an issue.
>
> Here is the assignment prompt: [copy and paste assignment prompt]
> Here are my specific concerns: [write out areas of focus].
> Here is the draft: [copy and paste draft]

Gathering Data

To investigate AI integration in writing center sessions while maintaining ethical and professional standards, we conducted practice sessions exclusively with writing

center consultants acting as clients. This approach allowed us to test AI integration with participants who were already familiar with writing center practices and AI concerns in academic settings. Our study included three consultants: Rebecca (undergraduate), Mason (undergraduate), and Lydia (graduate), each bringing different levels of writing experience and disciplinary knowledge to the sessions.
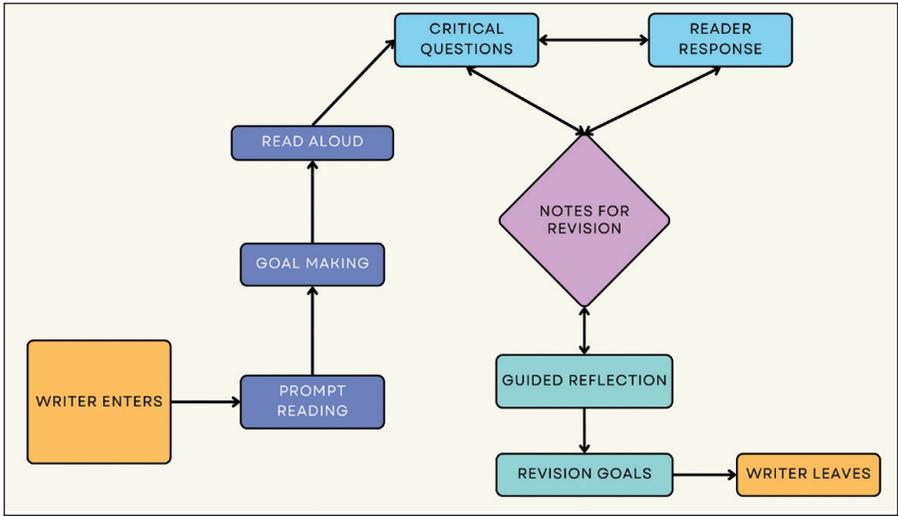
Figure 19.1. Traditional consulting session.
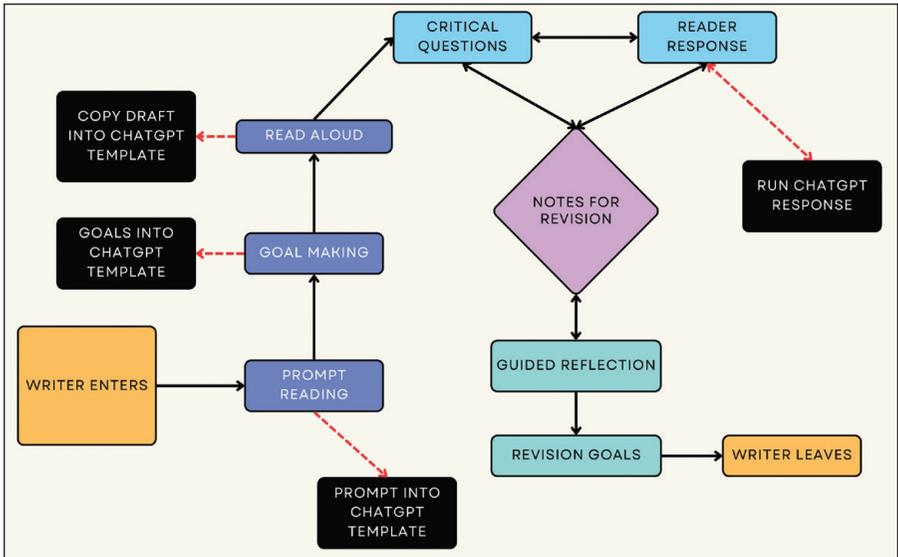
Figure 19.2. Consulting session with AI.

Each session followed a structured format incorporating AI as a "second reader" (see Figures 19.1 and 19.2). As documented in our session transcripts, consultants concluded each session with an intentional debrief, asking clients to reflect on their experience with the AI integration. Following each session, consultants also documented their own reflections on implementing AI tools into their practice, creating a comprehensive record of both immediate client feedback and consultant observations.

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FINDINGS

Our analysis of three writing center sessions reveals both expected and unexpected patterns in how AI integration functions across different writing stages and levels of expertise. These sessions—involving two undergraduate writers and one graduate student—demonstrate the complex interplay between AI feedback, consultant mediation, and writer development. While we initially conceived of AI as primarily a feedback tool, our findings suggest its value extends beyond simple response generation to create new opportunities for critical thinking and revision. The integration of AI feedback also revealed important considerations about how different writers engage with AI tools, leading to insights about both the benefits and limitations of AI in writing center contexts.

"TRIANGULATION OF FEEDBACK": ALIGNING AI WITH CONSULTANT OBSERVATIONS

The clearest example of the benefits of having an additional reader occurred with Rebecca's sociology paper. While ChatGPT suggested unique areas of revision that were fruitful (ChatGPT's feedback on revising transitions led to reflection, realization, and writing during the session), the most surprising positive impact of generative AI in the session came when the client and consultant had already agreed on the need for a revision. When ChatGPT's response suggested the same revision, the consultant summarized the feedback but was concerned the repetitive feedback would not be helpful:

> **Nick:** ... so then, yeah, pretty much what we said already about evidence.
>
> **Rebecca:** Oh. Uh huh. It's really similar actually but you know that's kind of cool. It says what we said so I know for sure like I need to put actual quotes in here and not just general stuff.

The client's appreciation of the feedback *because it was similar* and not in spite of the similarity reveals one potential benefit of the polyvocal feedback method. Generative AI's perspective as a second reader offered a helpful new perspective (in the case of transitions), but even when the perspective was similar, rather than dismissing it, the client appreciated the feedback as a form of validation. Despite having already acknowledged the need for evidence, now the writer "know[s] for sure" that they need to make a revision.

Further, the consultant's mediation of the feedback proved to be an effective strategy for maintaining writerly agency. As Nick read and summarized the feedback for Rebecca, she appreciated that "she didn't have to do much with [the ChatGPT interface]" and that having the consultant compare the feedback to previous thoughts felt natural rather than forced. This mediation allowed writers to engage critically with AI feedback rather than feeling overwhelmed by it, as evidenced by Rebecca's observation about her learning process:

> **Rebecca:** I like that it didn't tell me what to say; it just told me what was wrong. Otherwise, I might just copy it directly and not learn anything.

The consultant's integration of AI feedback with traditional pedagogical approaches—including asking probing questions, encouraging reflection, and guiding revision decisions—maintained the writing center's focus on developing writer agency while leveraging AI's analytical capabilities.

PREPARATORY REVISION: REVISING IN ANTICIPATION OF—NOT IN RESPONSE TO—FEEDBACK

Perhaps our most surprising finding was the pedagogical value of preparing writing for AI review, particularly evident in Mason's session with an early-stage anthropology outline. The process of making writing "AI-ready" required explicit goal articulation, precise language use, and careful attention to argument structure—all key elements of writing center pedagogy. This process of what we term "preparatory revision"—revision done in anticipation of feedback rather than in response to it—often sparked meaningful improvements before any AI engagement:

> **Chloe:** So, we need to specify that you're working on an outline and write your goals. What do you want the AI to tell you about your outline?
>
> **Mason:** I mean, I guess I just want to know if it's good or not.
>
> **Chloe:** Yeah. So, maybe we want to get feedback on whether the argument is consistent in the outline?
>
> **Mason:** Yeah, that would be good.
>
> **Chloe:** What else are you thinking?
>
> **Mason:** I mean, maybe I would just want more feedback on how strong the argument is. Like, I want it to have more flavor and not just be a simple statement.

The process of preparing the draft for review with ChatGPT required the writer to be more specific and concrete about their goals than they had been during the initial conversation with the consultant. The preparation process frequently revealed gaps between discussed ideas and written content:

> **Chloe:** So, I notice that you use the phrase "argument/thesis" in the AI prompt, but your outline only says "argument." I wonder if you should also use the same phrase "argument/thesis" to make it easier for the AI to identify what you're talking about.

This attention to consistency led to another moment of revision when Chloe noted that the argument Mason described had not actually made it into the paper:

> **Mason:** Yeah, that's true. I guess we talked about it at the end, but I didn't actually write it.

This interaction exemplifies how preparing for AI review naturally incorporated traditional writing center practices: moving from general to specific concerns, improving terminology consistency, and bridging gaps between verbal discussion and written content. Ironically, this preparatory work proved more valuable than the AI feedback itself, as Mason reflected:

> **Mason:** I don't think it gave anything new. This is an incredibly rough draft of an outline, and we knew that going in. So, I kinda already knew that I needed to expand on my ideas and provide more evidence. If this was a full outline, and it was saying that I was still missing certain details, then maybe I would be like: Oh, yeah! I can add that. But it wasn't very helpful for this.

This finding suggests both AI's limitations (the writer's draft was an outline that was too early in the process to benefit from the type of feedback ChatGPT could provide) and that writing centers should consider reframing how we think about AI tools and consultations. While we initially conceived of AI as a "second reader" providing feedback, Mason's session demonstrates that the process of preparing for AI review can itself serve as a powerful tool for revision and reflection.

WRITER EXPERTISE AND DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE: GRADUATE STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

While our sessions with Rebecca and Mason highlighted undergraduate engagement with AI feedback, our session with Lydia, a fifth-year doctoral candidate in linguistics working on a postdoctoral fellowship application, revealed how writers of varying levels of experience may interact and benefit from generative AI-enhanced sessions in distinct ways. From the onset, Lydia expressed concerns about intellectual property and limited what she would share with AI.

> **Lydia:** If you wouldn't mind just doing the background. I just don't. I don't want it to have my research questions in there like I don't know just because it's like my ideas. I guess.

> **Nick:** Of course, I'll just take the background.

Unlike Rebecca's sociology paper or Mason's outline, Lydia's work represented novel scholarship she intended to publish. Her hesitation to share research questions with AI showcases the complexity of AI and intellectual property concerns that writing centers must consider when working with students—especially graduate students who are more likely to produce original knowledge rather than respond to a prescribed prompt.

Despite these initial reservations, the session revealed Lydia's sophisticated approach to evaluating AI feedback. When discussing the AI's suggestions about addressing limitations and broader implications, Lydia demonstrated careful consideration of which feedback elements would be most valuable:

> **Lydia:** But yeah, number three is kind of like, not helpful. Number one. Yes, that is helpful. I do wonder how much space I'll actually have for it, but I think that's a great point. That's something that I do need to take into more consideration. So yeah. I appreciate having the additional perspective.

As the session progressed, Lydia articulated an even more nuanced perspective about when and how AI feedback might be most beneficial:

> **Lydia:** Hmm. I think, because I consider you and me to be much more experts in this area than ChatGPT, I don't really care that much about it validating that. I guess the one thing like the first point, you know, because I'm not in education, I found that more useful because I'm not as sure about what I wrote. I actually almost wish we would have prompted it with like, oh, as an educational researcher, what's your take?

This strategic approach to AI feedback—valuing it more in areas outside her expertise while maintaining skepticism within her discipline—suggests the need for flexible, discipline-aware protocols in writing center AI integration. Lydia's ability to distinguish between feedback that confirmed existing plans versus feedback that provided new insights in less familiar areas demonstrates how graduate writers might most productively engage with AI tools.

DISCUSSION

By centering the perspectives and experiences of writing consultants, this research helps address the current gap in empirical literature on the practical implementation of AI in these contexts. The data reveals a nuanced picture of how AI can function as a "second reader" within the writing center setting, challenging simplistic fears of technological replacement while also highlighting important considerations for adapting these tools across diverse student populations and levels of expertise.

GENERATIVE AI IS EFFECTIVE AS A "SECOND READER" WHEN MEDIATED THROUGH A CONSULTANT

The concerns raised by participants about AI potentially rendering writing centers obsolete, as noted in the introduction (Marche), were not supported by this study. Our findings demonstrate that students effectively mediated between AI feedback and human feedback, which supports previous findings from Zhe Zhang and Hyland about highly engaged learners' abilities to actively participate with AWE feedback and also aligns with Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland's established theories of socio-cognitive feedback. The results suggest that consultants play a crucial role in mediating AI feedback, preserving the collaborative, socially-situated nature of writing support and addressing fears expressed by some students (Lindberg and Domingues 2). By acting as intermediaries, consultants helped students critically engage with AI analysis while maintaining the social dimensions of writing support. These results echo Sperber et al.'s findings that combining human and AI writing feedback has benefits for developing critical AI literacy while retaining

writerly agency (11-12). The results also align with Warschauer et al.'s recommendation to thoughtfully integrate AI tools in ways that enhance, rather than replace, human guidance in writing development (5-6).

ADAPTING AI INTEGRATION ACROSS LEVELS OF EXPERTISE AND DISCIPLINES

The perspectives offered by the graduate student participant, Lydia, also underscore the importance of discipline-aware, flexible protocols for AI integration, as observed in recent surveys of writing center professionals (Byrd et al. 7, 8-9). Lydia's strategic approach to evaluating AI feedback based on her own expertise aligns with calls in writing center scholarship to adapt practices for diverse student populations (Warschauer et al. 1-6). This suggests that writing centers must consider how AI tools may function differently across levels of writer expertise and disciplinary contexts. As Steiss et al. found, the effectiveness of AI-generated feedback can vary based on the specificity of the prompt (10); Lydia's responses indicate that consultants may need to carefully calibrate AI prompts to leverage its strengths in areas outside the writer's core disciplinary knowledge.

CONCLUSION

As writing centers navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence and its implications for supporting student writers, our study offers a promising model for thoughtful AI integration. By positioning AI as a "second reader" whose feedback is actively mediated by trained writing consultants, we can harness the analytical capabilities of these tools while maintaining the socially-situated, collaborative nature of writing center pedagogy.

Our findings suggest that AI's value in writing consultations extends beyond mere feedback generation. The process of preparing writing for AI review—what we term "preparatory revision"—can itself serve as a powerful catalyst for critical thinking and intentional writing choices. As students clarify their goals, tighten their language, and structure their arguments in anticipation of AI input, they engage in the very practices that writing centers have long sought to cultivate. Yet, our study also highlights the need for nuanced, context-aware approaches to AI integration. The concerns expressed by our graduate student participant about intellectual property and the limits of AI's disciplinary expertise underscore the importance of flexible protocols that can adapt to different levels of writer experience and specialized knowledge domains. Writing centers must develop strategies for leveraging AI's strengths while also acknowledging its limitations, particularly when working with advanced writers engaged in original research.

Ultimately, our findings challenge reductive narratives of technological replacement, instead pointing to the vital role that writing consultants can play in mediating AI tools to enhance, rather than undermine, student writing development. By embracing AI as an opportunity for inquiry and experimentation, writing centers can continue to fulfill their core mission of fostering reflective, autonomous writers equipped to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape. The integration of AI thus becomes not a threat to the writing center's relevance but rather an extension of its longstanding commitment to empowering students through collaborative, socially-embedded writing support.

As we look ahead, further research is needed to refine best practices for AI integration across diverse student populations and institutional contexts. This study offers a foundation for that work, demonstrating the potential for writing centers to proactively shape the development of AI tools in ways that align with our field's core values and pedagogical commitments. By engaging in this research, we position ourselves not as passive recipients of technological change but as active agents in crafting an approach to AI that celebrates the inherently human dimensions of writing and learning.

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CHAPTER 20. LLMS GENERATE ANSWERS, WRITING TUTORS ASK QUESTIONS: GenAI AS SITES OF TRANSFER FOR WRITING CENTER PRACTICE

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On its face, the difference between the text a large language model (LLM)—or generative AI (GenAI) more broadly—generates and the critical thinking writing centers can facilitate presents a major mismatch in approaches to writing. Based on conversation (Bruffee), a writing center session's effectiveness rests in the social nature of the operation, allowing a writer to get off the screen and discuss their text with another writer. The heart of a writing center session is this conversation, a back-and-forth questioning between tutor and writer. A good session depends on the ability of a tutor to ask the right questions. In writing centers and programs, ours included, we train students to write for critical inquiry and, as Annette Vee writes in *Composition Studies*, for "productive uncertainty" (177). This approach is

> based on the idea that students can thrive wrestling with difficult texts, that they can come up with new and important questions about their worlds and their own words. The point isn't what kind of writing students produce, exactly, although writing is the medium students use to pursue their inquiry. The point is the process they went through to get there. The point is the challenge: the pleasurable difficulty of writing and reading. (177)

The ability to question and deeply engage in meaning-making through uncertainty is not something AI can replicate. And even if it could, this replicability would never diminish the value of critical inquiry for people who aim to learn and write. As it stands now, GenAI is a skilled answerer—not questioner, as Vee asserts. GenAI provides a statistically normative response to a user's input as quickly and accurately as possible, though accuracy is not a given. "It responds

with confidence if it's right and even if it's obviously, tragically wrong," Vee writes. "More importantly, it has no relationship to what it means to be uncertain, to inquire, to examine its own experiences. It has no stakes in what it writes" (177). We see here the two fundamentally different aims of GenAI and writing centers: generating answers is the current purview of GenAI; encouraging a student's learning and development of critical inquiry through writing is the more expansive and human purview of writing centers.

However, might we look at what GenAI *can* do and find aspects of the writing center conversation that could be extended by writers using GenAI, or as Chloe Crull and Nicholas Stillman write in this collection "How can writing with AI be used to *enhance* discussion and reflection in the writing center, rather than *replace* it" (298)? While GenAI can never hope to replace the socially grounded nature of a writing center session or the role writing can have in a learner's growth and development, aspects of the session can be supported by AI for the writer outside of a session. As a director of the writing center trying to figure out how to introduce GenAI into her work (Vinyard) and a writing program faculty member whose research focuses in part on GenAI in student writing (Schnitzler), we decided to combine our expertise to explore this idea at our institution, a private Research 1 (R1) university serving 5,600 undergraduates and 13,000 graduate students. We noticed a common feature of both GenAI and tutoring—questioning. What follows is an analysis of the ways that questioning works in writing center sessions paired with a description of how writers might use questioning skills with GenAI, revealing a potential role for GenAI in writing center work. Prompting tutors and writers to consciously consider the role of questioning in sessions can create conditions for writers to transfer questioning skills to work with GenAI beyond the writing center. In a sense, writers can use GenAI to recreate certain aspects of a writing center session, challenging writers to serve as their own tutors after their sessions are over and the centers are closed. As the writing center is a key place for transfer in writing, implementing this approach can be naturally woven into our work.

WRITING CENTER AS SITE OF TRANSFER

Rebecca Nowacek defines the study of transfer as "how (and why and when) students connect learning from one domain with learning in another domain" (3). As Bonnie Devet states, transfer "may be one of the most important subjects composition studies has explored since process itself" (120), as all of our work as writing teachers and tutors is geared to helping students take what they learn about writing in one context and apply it to another. Nowacek notes that an interest in studying transfer can be seen as far back as Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the

4th century B.C.E. (13), with an uptick in studies published in the last 20 years (Nowacek et al., *Writing Knowledge Transfer* 3). As a field, we are keenly attuned to identifying ways that we can help developing writers integrate writing principles learned in one context to another.

Transfer is a primary goal in the work of writing centers. While writers may see a session as a place to polish a final draft, tutors focus sessions on helping writers develop their skills (North 438), and thus view writing centers as places where we "teach" transferable principles about writing (Driscoll and Harcourt 2). The goal of writing center work is to facilitate the transfer of writing knowledge from a writing center session to a writer's practice. Much of transfer research in the writing center focuses on how tutors transfer knowledge from training or other writing experiences into their sessions (Nowacek et al., *Writing Knowledge Transfer* 243); however, our interest lies in what writers can transfer from a session to their independent work.

In their study of the transfer in a first-year writing curriculum Kathleen Blake Yancey, Matthew Davis, Liane Roberston, Kara Taczak, and Erin Workman identify three conditions for transfer to occur: (1) students should understand that transfer is a reachable goal of their learning experiences, (2) students must learn and reflect on foundational concepts and how they operate across writing situations, (3) and students must reflect on the ways their own writing process varies across writing tasks ("The Teaching for Transfer Curriculum" 291). All three conditions are key elements of successful tutoring sessions; tutors help writers reflect on the strategies used in sessions so that they can replicate these approaches outside of the center. Writing center sessions are ideal places to emphasize concepts such as audience and purpose, as well as process strategies, and reflection on writing is central to writing center work. In addition to specific concepts that writers may transfer from a writing center session, Yancey et al. also point to the importance of a "writing transfer-mindset" ("Writing Across College" 42), which they define as an openness to applying writing knowledge across assignments, courses, and disciplines. Students with a transfer mindset repurpose strategies developed in a class (or a writing center session) in new contexts. The implication for writing centers then is that tutors must stress the ways that rhetorical and process strategies discussed in a session must be reflected upon and then taken up in future writing situations.

THE ROLE OF QUESTIONING

Reflection plays a key role in transferring work from the center to the solo writing context, and this process of reflection is sparked by the practice of questioning. Ben Rafoth writes that "conversation is the key idea behind writing

centers" (146), and conversation in sessions is replete with questions initiated by both tutors and writers. Understanding how questions operate in tutorials informs how we might transfer this practice from a tutorial to a GenAI-assisted writing session. It is, after all, through talk that writers "make visible their prior learning (in this case, about writing) or try to access the prior learning of someone else" (Nowacek et al., "Transfer Talk"). For our purpose, this point is key as we are looking at ways that writers control the process of their growth in and beyond a session.

An overview of the research on questions in writing center conferences displays the centrality of questioning for writing development. Isabelle Thompson and Jo Mackiewicz offer a detailed taxonomy of the types of questions that frequently occur in writing center conferences in "Questioning in Writing Center Conferences." This study reports that questions in writing center sessions can address knowledge deficits, move writers and tutors toward common ground, socially coordinate between writers and tutors, serve as conversational controls, and lead and scaffold, pushing writers to answers, revision, or brainstorming (42). These multiple categories of questions illustrate the two broad areas of work in writing centers, what we're calling *informational* and *social*. Writers often ask *informational* questions—knowledge questions and structural or informational scaffolding questions (Mackiewicz and Thompson 520) on an assignment, assuming that the answers to the questions refer only to the current task. Tutors, however, seek to generalize the work of the session so that writers may use strategies learned in the session later, thus building a foundation for the transfer of writing knowledge to other writing tasks (Limberg et al. 372; Munje et al. 337). This latter type of question—the "common ground," "social coordination," and "conversation control" types of questions, from Thompson and Mackiewicz's earlier taxonomy—is *social* in nature and is where tutors forward writing information in ways that facilitate transfer and is the heart of center work (42). This is social interaction, where the speakers are engaged not just in information exchange but in a dialogic designed to "enhance student learning" (Munjee et al. 350). This is not the place for GenAI intervention, but it *is* where tutors can prime writers to engage with GenAI effectively, a crucial exercise for maintaining transfer goals. As Kirkwood Adams and Maria Baker write in this collection, transfer possibilities of GenAI use are limited when students use these tools in "unconscious or habitual" ways (Chapter 22). One of our great fears is that the use of GenAI in the writing center will limit critical thinking in favor of fast, product-oriented work, a sentiment echoed by tutors in a study by Kristina Aikens and Hannah Weildon. Therefore, our goal is to teach writers to be intentional about their use of GenAI so that they understand how this technology complements, not replaces, the writing process. And clearly this mandates the

additional training for tutors in using this technology with a "metacognitive" approach, so that tutors can help writers see the potential of GenAI in writing while "emphasizing the importance of … human connection" (Craig). These trainings ensure that tutors and writers see GenAI as a supplement to the human act of writing and not a substitute.

PRIMING WRITERS FOR GenAI USE

It is important to remind ourselves that developing critical inquiry (a central value of a writing center) and generating responses (a primary ability of GenAI) are not necessarily at odds with one another; they're just categorically different. The way writing centers *and* GenAI function is notably similar in one key way— critical inquiry is developed, and answers are generated through questions and conversation. When a user opens a new chat with Google's Gemini or OpenAI's ChatGPT, they are asked "How can I help you today?" a question and interface that frames the interaction between user and anthropomorphized GenAI as somewhere between a search and a conversation.

In these acts of questioning and responding, we see an opportunity for writers to extend the work of writing centers using GenAI. So, how might we teach writers the skills of the tutor to transfer out of the center in individual writing time? Using Thompson and Mackiewicz's taxonomy of writing center questions as a guide, there are two categories of informational questioning that writers can adopt for themselves in chats with GenAI about their work: (1) knowledge deficit questions (with significant caveats around asking GenAI factual information, as they are still prone to hallucinations), despite industry advances (Metz and Weise), and (2) leading and scaffolding questions, particularly those that push writers forward in revising and brainstorming.

Writerly awareness and use of these questions can transfer knowledge out of writing center sessions, developing a writer's critical inquiry. They also recognize GenAI for what they're good for—generating answers. In their sessions with writers, tutors teach writing skills, certainly, but also flag ways to transfer the writing skills discussed. Since awareness of learning is essential for knowledge transfer, we must train tutors to point to the ways that questions are used in center sessions and how these questioning skills can be used with GenAI outside of a writing center. Specific training on how questioning works in GenAI and in tutoring sessions can help writers to differentiate among the questions that they can ask GenAI and the questions they can only ask a tutor. For example, a tutor may note the *informational* questions the writer is asking (about genre conventions, grammatical accuracy, etc.) and the *social* questions (the "common ground," "social coordination," and "conversation control" types of questions,

from Thompson and Mackiewicz's taxonomy). At the end of a session, a tutor might then ask a writer to think about, and perhaps write down, which questions are only useful in a session with a tutor and which ones could be productively posed to GenAI.

Writers can easily ask informational, knowledge-deficit style questions of GenAI, e.g., "Should I use 'affect' or 'effect' in this sentence?" "What is a synonym of revolutionary?" While GenAI cannot respond accurately to all knowledge deficit questions, they excel in relaying genre conventions, grammar and mechanics, and vocabulary, all types of linguistic patterns that GenAI are trained to recognize and reconstitute.

The other category of questions in which GenAI may become a productive interlocutor is informational scaffolding questions. As Thompson and Mackiewicz write, "scaffolding occurs through pumping, prompting, referring to a previous discussion, providing alternatives, responding as a reader, and paraphrasing" (43) — e.g., "How can I elaborate on XYZ?" or "What is a counterpoint to ABC?" These are all types of commands that many already make to GenAI, as chats build upon themselves, working with existing digital literacies for search and GenAI use. They also allow for students to operate metacognitively on their own writing, priming them for transfer and developing critical inquiry into their own work.

Writing center tutors (with training) can play an essential role in this process, not only working with writers to improve their immediate writing projects but also equipping them with questioning strategies that can be applied independently. Tutors can first teach writers how to frame and assess inquiries (informational or social) into their own writing throughout a session, as questions arise throughout from both tutor and writer. They may then encourage writers to distinguish categories of questions that may (and may not!) be useful to pose to GenAI, asking writers to write down questions that they might use on their own with GenAI during later writing sessions. We see here that tutor intervention within a writing center session becomes a critical step in facilitating transfer, and sessions may productively include time spent questioning GenAI, framing GenAI as "partners" or complements to our writing center sessions, as Eric Mason and Kevin Dvorak write in this collection. This metacognitive work, facilitated by writing center tutors, also implicitly underscores a deeper truth about writing for critical inquiry—that its social nature can never be fully separated from its communicative or informational value. There are places, times, and tools for each piece of the 'writing for critical inquiry' puzzle. The distinctions we make between question types and the appropriate contexts for asking them to recognize this, while encouraging writerly fluidity and agility along the way.

After a session ends, writers are offered a post-session document to help them think about ways that they will continue working on their next steps in completing the text worked on in the session. In the form of questions, this document mimics the social nature of the session and points to ways that digital resources, including GenAI, can be used to aid the writing process.

This is reinforced in a post-session survey, where writers are asked two questions focused on transfer: (1) "What are the next steps you will take in finishing your paper?" and (2) "Have you and/or will you use ChatGPT or other GenAI in working on this paper? If yes, how might these tools assist in your writing process?" The first question allows writers to come up with a concrete work plan for themselves, using what they learned from their session to initiate transfer. The second reinforces that there is a role for GenAI in the writing for critical inquiry process.

Taken together, these writing center interventions can prime writers to ask the right types of questions of their own writing in the variety of contexts where writing happens. We propose that writers can also be prompted to transfer questioning skills to time outside the center, when they are already turning to GenAI, deadlines are looming, and writing centers are closed. And, since GenAI is designed to respond to questions and commands, it becomes a powerful tool in allowing writers to metacognitively engage with their own work. After a writing center session in the days (or night) before an assignment is due, a writer might productively turn to GenAI with informational questions, focused on both knowledge deficits and scaffolding: "Is this introduction in keeping with genre standards for a policy brief?"; "How can I transition between these two paragraphs?" These interactions allow writers to think more deeply about their writing choices and to approach revisions flexibly and metacognitively. In using GenAI's capacity to answer informational questions in this way, writers *support* the development of critical inquiry into their own writing, not detract from it.

As Yancey et al. have pointed out, an important condition for successful transfer is that writers are aware that the goal of their work, in this case, a writing center session, is to transfer that knowledge to new spaces, perhaps even the chatbot windows of GenAI ("The Teaching for Transfer Curriculum" 291). A key component of writing center sessions is that tutors make writers aware that the work they are doing is not limited to a particular text; the work has broader implications for writerly development. In essence, with the right priming, writers can use GenAI for targeted questions of their own writing, while maintaining the centrality of the writing center session to the kind of dialectical conversation that humans can only do.

GenAI is here to stay. And as James M. Cochran, Kathryn Pilliod, and Madilynne Smith point out in this collection, writing centers have an obligation

to maintain candid conversations about how writers are using GenAI. Though more research is needed on current GenAI adoption rates in higher education, a 2025 study from the UK states that 92 percent of students surveyed report using GenAI in some form (Freeman), echoing the results of Joe Essid and Cady Cummins work from 2025 that found that 91 percent of students surveyed at their university employed GenAI in their writing process. As GenAI integration into word processing software increases and the quality and proliferation of GenAI improve, these adoption rates are only likely to rise. Recognizing the realities of GenAI adoption in higher educational settings, writing centers should not reject their use but should instead consider integrating them into their work in a thoughtful, critical, and cautious manner that supports their existing work. At writing centers, we are already heavily invested in writing for critical inquiry, developing writers who are equipped to dwell in "productive uncertainty" with their ideas, questioning, refining, and expanding their work through conversation (Vee 177). By understanding what GenAI can and cannot do, we can integrate them into the writing process through questioning in a way that complements and enhances writing for critical inquiry, in and outside of writing center sessions. Tutors can guide writers to use GenAI as tools to question their own work, ensuring that students maintain ownership of their ideas and engage critically with their writing. This approach creates a space for the transfer of writing process knowledge, empowering writers to discern the types of support GenAI can offer and what is better left for human interaction or conversation (i.e., a writing center visit). By incorporating GenAI thoughtfully, writing centers can adopt a both/and approach that acknowledges both our technological reality and our goal to develop and support critical inquiry in our writers.

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CHAPTER 21. LOOPING GENERATIVE AI INTO WRITING CENTER CONSULTATIONS

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Writing center studies has historically provided a home to critical conversations on the practical integration of new digital and physical technologies into writing pedagogy, from word processors to networked computer labs to hypertext (e.g., see Harris, "From"; Pemberton; Palmquist). As both a university service and an advocate of responsible writing pedagogy, building partnerships amongst faculty, administration, and students, writing centers are "encouraged to embrace new technology … [even when] this technology challenges the traditional ethos of the writing center" (Neaderhiser and Wolfe 50). Part of this role is managing anxiety surrounding new technologies, but such engagement is also self-interested: writing centers that do not embrace new composing technologies "will find themselves no longer in sync with how writers write and with what writers need to know about writing processes" (Harris, "Making Up" 194). While many see generative AI (GenAI) as a challenge to writing center ethos and operations—often fearing students will use GenAI *instead* of going to the writing center—such disruptions also mark the emergence of opportunities for professionals (including writing consultants) able to integrate GenAI into their workflows. This chapter traces our attempt to do this.

As leaders of a writing center at a Research 1 (R1) university serving 20,000+ students who supervise 80 peer and professional consultants who conduct 10,000+ individual consultations each year, we have been interested in how GenAI might be productively integrated into the work we do in ways that prioritize centering the humans working there while also having a positive impact on student learning. According to a 2025 McKinsey Global Survey of 1,491 respondents across 101 countries, 71 percent reported using GenAI for at least one business function (Singla et al.). Thus, if we believe, as Sidney I. Dobrin claims is increasingly true, that "college and university students need to learn and practice the forms of writing they're more likely to produce in their careers" (84), then use of GenAI should be integrated across the curriculum and in writing centers. If our students are to become more adept at using GenAI for writing

in their professions, we believe writing center consultants must also become skilled in utilizing GenAI (when appropriate) during consultations. The academic and professional context of writing center work demands it.

While some are excited to embrace this new technology (perhaps even uncritically), there will always be productive and expected resistance. Since ChatGPT launched, we have seen many faculty condemn the use of GenAI, pointing to its ability to compromise academic integrity, hinder authenticity, and disrupt learning as we have known it—since the last technological upheaval, that is. And the writing center community is not above such "cries of moral crisis" (Dobrin 5). As Peter Carino claims, writing centers have long been home to a productive "tension between technological endorsement and technological resistance" (qtd. in Neaderhiser and Wolfe 68). This moment surrounding GenAI can be an opportunity for writing centers to demonstrate leadership on campuses by positioning themselves as invaluable specialists within the university's conversation about how to respond to the emergence of GenAI. To do so, however, requires exploration with available tools and engagement with interested stakeholders.

Recognizing the opportunity to provide leadership during a moment of confusion, we decided to facilitate a writing center-based learning community on the topic of GenAI. During the first year, we invited members from 10 of the university's 14 colleges, as well as colleagues from the university's Learning and Education Center, to explore how GenAI was being deployed in various disciplines and discuss how the writing center might help faculty and students navigate the use of GenAI throughout the writing process.

In this chapter, we discuss two initiatives that emerged from our learning community: (1) development of training to help consultants use GenAI in ways that maintained the conversational focus of the writing center experience, and (2) attempts to customize ChatGPT to participate in these conversations in ethical ways.

DESIGNING THE HUMAN-CENTERED CONSULTING LOOP

In October of 2023, at the 18th annual United Nations Internet Governance Forum in Kyoto, Japan, a statement of principles was released to guide the integration of AI into higher education. The first principle was that "People, not technology, must be at the center of our work" ("Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education"). This not only matches well the ethos of the traditional writing center, where conversations typically support the work and voices of students and technology is secondary, but it echoes a host of work on "human-centered" approaches to working with AI that consider how systems can be designed so

AI works alongside humans in ways that preserve the dignity and importance of humans in these systems (Riedl 33).

In thinking about how to integrate GenAI into writing center work while maintaining focus on student needs for development and on institutional demands for academic integrity, we found it useful to consider writing center work via the concept of "workflows." Workflows are representations of the steps needed to complete a task. They allow stakeholders (designers, analysts, administrators, etc.) to break down complex processes into manageable steps to allow for more efficient analysis and improvement. Many of the information systems developed in the US in the 1970s when workflow studies came to prominence promised (and delivered) increased productivity, but were later considered too "rigid" because they failed to recognize the need for workers to "creatively violate, augment, or circumvent the standard office procedures when appropriate" (Ellis and Nutt 2).

This need for less structured and flexible representations of processes is manifest in the many representations one finds of the writing process as a recursive loop. In such a loop, the writer is free to return to an earlier part of the workflow at any time. The loop structure thus acknowledges the writer's responsibility to decide how the process will proceed, not merely to follow a rigid series of linear steps. It is this responsibility to manage a workflow that we observe every time a writing consultant works with a student and helps them decide what part of the writing process to focus on. We consider the possibility of collaborating with GenAI as part of the writing process loop to be just one more decision consultants and students can make.

In Nupoor Ranade and Douglas Eyman's special issue of *Computers and Composition* about "composing with generative AI," they identified human-in-the-loop (HITL) approaches as potentially leading to "improved quality of generated text, reduced risk of generating inaccurate or harmful text, and increased user satisfaction" and called for "more approaches within composition to demonstrate how humans and AI can collaborate harmoniously, with humans at the center and AI functioning as assistants" (3). But while HITL approaches sound like they would be automatically human-centered, their application can be lacking when compared to other approaches.

HITL approaches *can* help make systems fairer and more equitable, for instance, by acknowledging the important role of humans in creating and improving such systems, and providing a basis for renumerating them for the data and "fine-tuning" they provide (Zanzotto 243). And AI designers often embrace the idea of HITL approaches as ways to improve machine learning by gathering human input at strategic moments in the process, or as ways to alleviate customer anxiety over the potential excesses, biases, or inconsistencies of AI

by assigning final decision-making to a human. This latter approach, however, often reduces the input of a human to a final check on the work primarily done by the machine itself, like a human inspector placing a sticker on a machine-made product, assessing its quality before it is shipped. If the pedagogical value of writing to students is based on engagement throughout the writing process, not just any HITL approach can be used as a model.

Thus, we acknowledge that not all loops are equal, and scholars such as Alan Knowles now recommend moving away from human-in-the-loop (HITL) approaches and toward machine-in-the-loop (MITL) approaches. Knowles calls HITL approaches a "baseline" ethical workflow (3); in other words, they represent the minimum amount of human involvement in a process that might still be considered ethical. Rather than embrace processes where human input plays a minimal role, he argues that the "ideal AI collaborative writing model" is some form of MITL approach where "human collaborator(s) retain majority of the rhetorical load" (3). In other words, MITL approaches to writing intentionally place machines at the margins of decision making and control over writing processes, where they function in a support role when useful, but are rarely asked to complete large stretches of the writing process autonomously. These processes are, in a word, "human-centered." MITL approaches thus mimic what we might call writing centers' current "consultant-in-the-loop" process, where the student maintains control over the writing and the consultant serves in a support role. Central to this support role and human-centeredness is how writing center consultations are structured as conversations.

ENTERING THE GenAI-IN-THE-LOOP CONVERSATION

Conversational metaphors are useful descriptors of both the writing process as a whole and the research process in particular, helping students imagine the relationship between previously published scholarship and their own voices. Additionally, in the writing center, conversations are the literal method for engaging students in revision of their own writing—a way to maintain student control over the texts while asking supportive and critical questions that prompt development.

Advice about how to use GenAI effectively often refers to the importance of prompt engineering, a process that focuses much attention on the comprehensive and specific initial prompt given to an AI platform and designed to solicit the anticipated response. But conversations are not determined by an opening statement; they can begin vague and skeptical, working from general statements or premises, and still function as effective conversations. They can meander and falter and reiterate and still serve their purpose. Thinking of how GenAI can

contribute to the *conversations* going on in writing centers related to student writing led us to start developing consultant AI training by exploring various platforms' affordances as conversational participants.

Our first activity asked consultants to simply have a conversation with a GenAI platform, and to reflect on the direction and scope of the results. Conversation is, after all, the core of writing center work, where talking with a student about their ideas and their writing is just as important as the words that wind up on the page. Having consultants converse with GenAI and asking them to examine the results of requesting that the platform converse in the persona of historical figures or individuals with professional backgrounds, focuses attention on how AI can perform a particular function within the writing center space that goes beyond simply being a ghostwriter.

As one consultant reported after completing this activity, such unstructured conversations with GenAI seem like they could be helpful during a consultation "when one is struggling to look at [a topic] from varying points of view … engaging with the AI can aid in clarifying one's own beliefs and articulating those beliefs in a more descriptive and knowledgeable way" ("Reflection on 'Conversational AI'"). This is, we believe, what happens between writing consultants and students working at the invention stage on texts where the student's beliefs about the topic matter, but the complexity of the issue may prevent easy identification of a thesis or position.

By including GenAI in the conversational loop, consultants can ask GenAI to participate as someone with a certain perspective on an issue, for example, or can ask it to identify the most likely arguments and counterarguments to a possible thesis as a way to move a conversation forward. In such cases, GenAI is being asked to be the "machine in the loop," not to take over a process where humans only participate at the end point. By modeling such methods during the consultation, consultants' ethical and effective uses of GenAI can more easily be transferred to students' writing processes outside of the writing center space. The collaborative decision between consultant and student about when to use GenAI, and the collaborative evaluation of its output, models a recursive loop where humans remain in control of the process rather than merely initiating or ending a linear workflow in which GenAI does all of the work.

Further training activities asked consultants to explore the affordances of AI in regards to diverse genres, from argument to art, in order to identify the capabilities and limitations of different platforms, and to discern the role of the prompt in shaping the output one receives. These are essential skills for anyone using GenAI, but placed in the context of writing center work, we felt that beginning with GenAI's aptitude for conversation could focus attention not on what *it* can do, but on what *students* can do by interacting with it. Later activities

focused on assessing the ability of GenAI to participate in specific recurrent moments in the writing process, from brainstorming to editing, and reflecting on the ethical implications of such usage. Here is where Knowles' concept of "rhetorical load sharing" in relation to MITL approaches draws attention to the ways in which we may or may not want to allow GenAI to be responsible for certain rhetorical tasks. It seems novel to be using GenAI tools "as virtual brainstorming partners, encouraging critical thinking and enhancing the writing process" (Krasova and Othman). But we've always dealt with such load sharing in the writing center space, where even working with another human being "raises ethical questions of the tutor's doing too much of the work for the student" (Neaderhiser and Wolfe 50). GenAI provides simply another opportunity to apply our expertise in managing these kinds of collaborations.

CUSTOMIZING THE GenAI-IN-THE-LOOP CONVERSATION

The ability to customize how GenAI platforms generally respond to prompts (rather than making this part of the prompt itself) was drawn to our attention when a member of our AI learning community presented the results of his trying to turn ChatGPT into a math tutor using its "custom instructions" feature. This feature allows you to set parameters the platform will follow in all interactions, over and above the specifics of the prompt itself. The results were mixed, but the ability to limit the platform's abilities—to keep it from simply solving a problem for you, and directing it instead to help you solve the problem—made us wonder whether a similar approach could be used to customize GenAI tools as writing tutors. Since our early attempts, OpenAI has released its "Custom GPT" functionality, in which users can both customize and publicly share their customized versions with subscribed users. But even nonpaying users can still add custom instructions to influence their own chats, and the process of writing one's own instructions is, we think, an incredibly useful way for writing center staff to reflect on their own approach to consultations and can facilitate the introduction of GenAI into the writing center space in ways that do not disturb the human-centered nature of our work.

Our initial attempt to customize ChatGPT in this way is shown below and was modeled on our colleague's instructions for an AI math tutor:

> Act as a writing tutor. Your user is a college freshman taking college composition. Use the Socratic method to help the student brainstorm ideas for writing projects and start the drafting process. Help them understand the demands of writing in response to a prompt and for a specific audience.

> Only give one step at a time. The goal is to have the student write the paper on their own with guidance, but also to help the student understand the process and why their method is correct or incorrect.
>
> Rule: Break the process down to one step at a time. Ask the student what to do in each step. When they answer with a correct method, have them complete the step before asking about the next step.
>
> Rule: Do not give away the correct answer until the student figures it out on their own.
>
> Rule: Ask questions to the student to help understand their thinking and how they are coming upon their answers.
>
> Rule: Use words of encouragement as you guide students.

The fact that these parameters were modeled on instructions for helping students solve math problems accounts for the mention of things like "steps" and "correct answers" in ways that do not necessarily fit the typical view of the writing process. But the focus on asking questions, providing encouragement, and guiding the student to do the writing rather than doing the writing for them were all elements that we found fit our sense of what writing consultations sought to achieve.

Over time, we rewrote and tested different versions of these instructions, removing things such as references to "correct" answers. Other revisions addressed moments natural to conversations among humans that we wanted ChatGPT to emulate. What do humans do, for instance, when someone says something to them that they don't quite understand? Do they usually just barrel forward, or do they ask for clarification? Since ChatGPT's eagerness to please might limit its willingness to follow up a question with another question, we directly told it to do so by adding the following instruction:

> If a request is unclear or ambiguous, ask for more details to confirm your understanding before responding.

And, as our consultants already do, and like many of our composition teachers advocate during peer review sessions, we wanted to make sure questions that prompted development were featured, so we added this instruction as well:

> After a response, provide three follow-up questions of your own. Format in bold as Q1, Q2, and Q3. Place two- line breaks ("\n") before and after each question for spacing. These questions should be thought-provoking and dig further into

the original topic, drawing our attention to aspects that have not been mentioned previously.

These questions provided opportunities for students and consultants to consider avenues of potential development based on the current conversation. Over time, our instructions incorporated more of the formatting rules you see here as well, simply to improve the readability and usability of the output. The process of customization led to consultants imagining how GenAI could be used in different ways in different contexts. As one asked after using GenAI to suggest sentence-level revisions: "How can we look for ways to customize GenAI tools to align with specific styles or tones of writing that are necessary for certain genres or assignments?" ("Reflection on 'Editing Sentences with AI'").

One last observation about our initial attempt to customize the AI conversation: we assumed in our earliest instructions that GenAI would act "as a writing tutor." But even such a simple instruction raised numerous questions: What does being a "writing tutor" mean (to GenAI and to us)? What models did GenAI have access to for how to act in this way, and what biases or limitations might emerge based on such directions? And did we even want GenAI to duplicate the role of the consultant in the room working with a student? If one of our goals was to *not* have GenAI replace us as writing tutors, why would we ask it to be/do exactly that? What we realized is that, even if we were never able to produce perfect instructions for a Custom GPT that could replace or support our writing center work, the very process of attempting to customize GenAI platforms by putting our desires into language was a rich experience in articulating our values, exploring our practices, and understanding how humans and technology co-create the workflow loops that delimit human-centered activities in the writing center.

CONCLUSION

Writing centers have an incredible opportunity right now to shape discourse and practice surrounding the integration of GenAI into college curricula and university operations. Even in much of the scholarship and policies now being produced, the typical scene is still too often one of a solitary author working with a GenAI platform and the ethics of transparently sharing that pseudo-private experience with teachers, employers, or readers. By expanding the consideration of workflow loops to include the more social and supportive setting of the writing center, in which conversations about writing between multiple humans can be augmented by GenAI, we believe that MITL approaches to GenAI can maintain the human-centeredness of the writing center space as we explore the affordances of yet another new writing technology.

As we grow more familiar with GenAI and it becomes normalized in academic writing and writing center praxis, we must continue to assess how students and tutors are utilizing it in both their writing and in their consultations to ensure we proceed effectively and ethically. GenAI will likely affect the whole ecology of writing center praxis, from how individual consultations are conducted to how we train consultants, how we produce online resources and marketing, and how we manage consultants and course-embedded fellows programs. By paying attention to the differences in how we accomplish these with and without GenAI and by exploring the ways in which we can customize such interactions, we believe writing centers can serve as campus leaders in the use of GenAI. As Sarah Z. Johnson and Sherry Wynn Perdue (this collection) argue, writing center professionals need to identify "allies" and develop "partnerships" across campuses and communities in order to "navigate—and survive" within institutions disrupted by GenAI. But doing so may require us to first ally with GenAI as a partner within the consultation space itself.

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CHAPTER 22. DE-CENTERING GenAI OUTPUTS AND RE-CENTERING STUDENT LABOR

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Columbia University

In her state-of-the-union-esque essay as writing program administrator (WPA) for the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), Annette Vee shrewdly zeroes in on a crucial truth about generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Chatbots, as systems, are not good at writing as such but at writing answers (Vee 179). Let's pause to consider that for the developers of such systems, this is a feature, not a bug. But for Vee in her role as writing-teacher-in-chief, this essential function neatly summarizes the problem inherent in a large language model (LLM) like ChatGPT, which is "never uncertain" and moreover "has no relationship to what it means to be uncertain, to inquire, to examine its own experiences" (177). For Pitt's first-year writing (FYW) program, teaching writing is a vehicle for teaching inquiry, like it is where we work at Columbia University. So, the crafting of an answer is less interesting to us as teachers of writing than the crafting of a question. If FYW at our two institutions privileges the inquiry-driven process behind a final product, then we would need to "shrink the vision of what writing is for" for GenAI as it exists now to automate writing (Vee 178).

Columbia's writing center (WC) is institutionally housed in the same department as the undergraduate writing program, which oversees FYW. Physically, we work in the same office, but the symbiotic relationship extends to the culture we share: prioritizing similar values about the teaching of writing. This affinity informs WC consultants' training and practice, not just because we work with an abundance of first-year writers, but because teaching writing for us is a chance to get students to think about rhetorical structures, maneuvers, and responsibilities that facilitate inquiry. The same problem Vee articulates about GenAI as a confident (sometimes incompetent) answer-generator (cutting short or eliminating the process of inquiry) concerns us at Columbia's WC, as we imagine it concerns many WC workers and administrators.

Driven by fending off the potential for further neoliberal entrenchment in the capital U-university, Joe Essid reaffirms foundational skills human WC workers possess and practice for the humans they meet with face-to-face, which

GenAI has not as yet replaced: "metacognitive questioning, active listening, and principles of fair use" (39). Similar to Vee's project, Essid grapples with the advent of GenAI by reflecting on the mission and priorities of teaching writing to double down on values that the confusion of this moment might cloud. We begin our own essay by channeling this energy, as we believe GenAI systems, as they currently exist, more often stand to destabilize sound pedagogical principles than to revolutionize students' learning or writing.

Herein, we hope to work from the values Vee and Essid reaffirm but also consider how to reconcile these values with the reality of students' use of GenAI. For Columbia's WC, this means returning to and reinvigorating metacognitive questioning for our writers in order to continue the work of their long-term development as scholars. The reality that our students are developing working relationships with machine intelligence does not negate our values.

By de-centering GenAI outputs and re-centering our students' process of collaboration with GenAI systems, we can foster WC conversations that are productive and in accordance with our expertise as writers who support other writers' development. WC workers have the unique opportunity to strengthen other writers' understanding of their own processes by openly addressing any engagement with a text generator. This essay will describe a framework for using WC sessions to stage what we've termed "usage-narratives."

To accomplish this reorientation from output-focused to process-focused, we begin by intervening in the consultation's information-gathering stage to naturalize conversation around GenAI usage, in order to open opportunities for our writers to develop metacognitive capacity. We then examine "process" as it applies to ChatGPT through the lens of our WC values by asking the question, "What kind of writer is ChatGPT?" The answer will help make the case for the importance of guiding writers to create usage-narratives to privilege metacognition.

NATURALIZING THE CONVERSATION

In order for a consultation to reckon with the all-too-real presence of GenAI, we first require a writer's voluntary disclosure that they are using GenAI to develop the project they are working on. But such a disclosure is fraught. The first important move is to remind ourselves, and the writers we work with, that we are not policy-enforcers. Policing abrogates teaching. However, adhering to the well-considered policy in place for Columbia's WC, that we respect decisions classroom instructors have made for GenAI, should be seen as a best practice. After all, students bear the repercussions of their choices while enrolled in any given course. If our WC policy roots itself in a principle of acting in students'

best interests, then, by extension, we also should not punitively enforce an instructor's policy, as if the WC were a beat that we must, like rank-and-file cops, patrol on behalf of someone else's force. To put it plainly: WC workers shouldn't be cops.

In true third-space fashion, we see an opportunity to honor the prohibitions of other instructors and support students' development as writers simultaneously. For all cases, we are proposing a metacognitive move away from optimizing GenAI usage in sessions. We believe such a move can be productive, even in the most restrictive scenario. In the WC, no one's integrity should be in jeopardy. What matters to us is cultivating a serious and robust mindfulness about what GenAI systems actually do and what our students might count on them to do.

Yet, in the majority of our sessions in 2024, GenAI was not a topic. We still notice that few bring it up unprompted (pun intended). Inviting the topic still seems like inviting trouble. This culture of silence is serving no one. A mutual strategy of avoidance closes off unique opportunities for us to do our jobs as consultants. Students need to feel comfortable disclosing their use of GenAI. Consultants need to feel comfortable asking if writers are using GenAI. And it is the WC's responsibility to create an environment where disclosing isn't dangerous and asking isn't accusatory. We believe it is possible to naturalize this conversation, a premise shared by Cochran et al. in Chapter 18 of this collection.

The timing of questions to facilitate such a disclosure is also essential in naturalizing this conversation. Asking whether a writer used GenAI in response to reading a draft of their work, mid-session, is problematic—a sudden injection of GenAI into the conversation seems accusatory and can foreshadow policing and prosecution. In Chapter 27 of this collection, Botvin highlights incidents of unwarranted accusations and the considerable stress such accusations placed on writers. One extant study characterizing student responses to allegations determines the vast majority of cases to be false (Gorichanaz). We, humans, are unreliable at distinguishing machine-generated writing from human writing: even experts struggle to differentiate the two (Casal and Kessler) and so do most GenAI detection programs (Dalalah and Dalalah; Weber-Wulff et al.; Fowler). Looking to ascertain how a student has created a draft they share with us is inherently fraught.

The right moment to ask is in the beginning of the session, which for us and many other WCs constitutes a strategic period of information gathering. If questions about GenAI usage are asked before the writer shares their work, as part of familiarizing ourselves with their project and as part of building rapport, it gives us an opportunity to naturalize the presence of GenAI and to communicate our disposition as the writers' supportive collaborators. Additionally, we should be explicit about why we're asking questions about GenAI. A

broad acknowledgment would suffice initially. For example, language like "Since GenAI is here, we're asking everyone. Knowing how GenAI is part of your process will help us devise optimal strategies for the session."

To clarify what this transparency and acknowledgement doesn't mean, we'd like to pause and reject the flipside of avoidance, which would substitute one extreme for another. Opening the door to reckoning with GenAI should not lead to a prompt-engineering-focused consultation, or an opportunity to share tips and tricks on how to get the most out of the model by outsourcing as much labor as possible to it.

We contend that neither avoiding the subject nor foregrounding it for the sake of authorizing uncritical usage supports a writer's development in a way that reflects our values. To allow a consultation to illuminate what is actually happening in a GenAI-influenced writing process, we propose a middle ground that centers a writer's labor relationship with GenAI. What we're most interested in is all the information embedded in a hypothetical "yes" response to a non-threatening, non-judgmental query. Talking openly about GenAI and writing requires us to think deeply and carefully about what GenAI systems do and about how they do it. One serious challenge in reckoning with GenAI as a collaborator is that the systems' de facto design makes writing labor invisible.

GenAI: A WRITER WITHOUT PROCESS

Imagine a writer writing an essay. Booting up ChatGPT, a writer-cum-user encounters a welcoming, soliciting user interface that announces itself as a collaborator. "Hi, how can I help?" the system asks. The chat interface indicates that a user can "Message ChatGPT," and to its initial universal query of support, a user can respond in kind with any imaginable response. Unless seeking the recipe for napalm or proprietary secrets of OpenAI's intellectual property, the system will happily accommodate, often with an opening exclamation of enthusiasm like "Of course!" ChatGPT composes responses at lightning speed before the users' eyes, visibly generating text, albeit too quickly to read along with. Character by character, word by word, sentence by sentence, text is composed linearly from start to finish, as if from inception to completion, from input germ to output organism. Each response is rendered in so-called 'natural language,' a computer science term of art which perhaps means that the generated text possesses fidelity to Standard Written English and also that responses possess coherence and cohesion. In other words, perfectly legible answers are offered to whatever query the system receives. Included in this dialogical back and forth, the system doesn't simply respond but also asks for feedback in the form of social-media-like buttons attached to every output: thumbs up and thumbs

down icons with which a user can binarily confirm or deny any of the system's responses in toto. It is worth pausing to observe and narrate the composition practices that make up such a helpful Socratic chit-chat so that we may establish a baseline with which to consider the subject of composing from our own disciplinary expertise. Although "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" by Nancy Sommers is a familiar text, digesting her study again in coordination with our observations of ChatGPT's performance for the user offers a novel way to conceive of GenAI's affordances for practicing and learning to write for college.

Through a study of the revision practices of novice and expert writers, Sommers discerns substantive differences in the novice and expert writers' conception of writing. For novice writers, meaning is predefined, drafting is sequential, revising is primarily concerned with rewording to best align with the predefined meaning drafted sequentially (Sommers). These are novice writers' struggles. As a generative system, ChatGPT produces texts that have already addressed the concerns and difficulties novice writers express to Sommers about the purpose and problems of composing. Quick public service announcement: although ChatGPT appears to write, writing is a far cry from what it is actually doing. ChatGPT generates sequentially in a spontaneous performance of its pre-trained knowledge, using the massive computing power of transformer technology to write answers, to transcribe seamlessly what its neural network has learned when it is prompted to demonstrate knowledge. Understood this way, ChatGPT excels at writing from the perspective of what a novice writer believes to be good writing.

Sommers' study shows that expert writers know differently what writing is for. And for a novice writer, like a college student experiencing a whole new rhetorical situation, our discipline now takes for granted that the actual problem is not the being-novice-ness, but that students "lack procedures or heuristics to help them reorder lines of reasoning or ask questions about their purposes and readers" (Sommers 383), which the experts possess. Novice writers don't have a shrunken vision of what is for; they have yet to be taught the expansive vision. Novices have yet to be taught to think like experts, and, unsurprisingly, "they do what they have been taught to do in a consistently narrow and predictable way" (Sommers 383). Consider again what an LLM models.

Now the question becomes: Is it possible that collaborating with ChatGPT helps address gaps in students' knowledge of what writing can be for? Unlikely. Especially if the nature of collaboration treats a bot like a labor-replacing tool, with the focus confined to the task at hand and disconnected from the writer's overall development. Also unlikely if the use of the system is causal or uncritical. Highly unlikely if writers don't have any guidance. The presence of a writing consultant modeling the missing expert can nullify these negative eventualities.

DEVELOPING A USAGE-NARRATIVE

This persistent, future problem troubles us most: if labor done by GenAI or alongside GenAI becomes unconscious or habitual, opportunities for metacognition and learning transfer will become harder. Therefore, we need to develop strategies for having conversations about GenAI that are process-oriented.

WC consultants already negotiate the tension of product and process: although much of WC's pedagogy privileges a focus on long-term development through metacognition and potential learning transfer, often sessions will and should revolve around the particular textual artifact on the table between a consultant and a writer. A session that skillfully strikes a balance is difficult to conduct. At Columbia, we've invested in training consultants to follow John Nordlof's injection of Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) into consideration for our pedagogy. Nordlof helps shift the conversation beyond previous debates about directive and non-directive practices or hierarchical vs. dialogic sessions in clarifying that "the role of the tutor or instructor becomes to establish what the student already knows and what the student is learning so that the session can be focused on building the scaffolding or structure for the student to practice under supervision those skills that are in development" (58). Rather than view a writer's GenAI-influenced process as an obstacle, we can coordinate around it. We can, owning our expertise in the session, help writers to become storytellers of their interactions with the GenAI collaborator. By guiding them through the creation of a usage-narrative, we can ascertain aspects of their knowledge that we fear GenAI could be occluding in their development or worry GenAI could be displacing from their process.

Soliciting a usage-narrative privileges process over product and definitively shifts away from policy or policing. Aligned with our mission as consultants, this strategy upholds principles of collaboration or trust between consultant and writer and cultivates writer agency within the collaboration. If writers are willing to undertake this reflection and if we co-create the contours of this reflection, then the balance of agency can be maintained and arise out of the asymmetry between novice and expert. Prompting a writer to actively, critically reflect about their use of the technology can create conversational opportunities to discern their ZPD in relation to relevant aspects of their project. This practice can be flagged explicitly as metacognition and taught as a useful strategy to learn and develop inside and outside the WC.

The tables included in this chapter present pared-down language for zeroing in on particular GenAI facets that could comprise a usage-narrative. Broadly, questions are geared toward illuminating three areas: practical engagement with the system, labor targeted for replacement, and motives for deciding to use the system. We present a brief table for each area, followed by a digest of the purpose for asking each kind of question. Of course, the divisions are only so rigid

as these questions can blend and merge with one another. However, we seek to inflect as many facets as possible.

Consider Table 22.1 to represent a fact-finding mission. Practical engagement questions can highlight tangible or concrete aspects of a collaboration. Ascertaining how much time a writer has spent with a system could yield a variety of responses, from a handful of minutes to several hours. A writer can send signals to a consultant about whether they iteratively engage in prolonged exchanges or enter single inputs. What a writer takes with them from the interface to their composition can also vary. Very different things are happening if a writer is copying and pasting word-for-word from an output, paraphrasing passages from an output, or drawing inspiration from what they read. We cannot understate how much reading matters in this exchange. Generally, these questions retrieve essential information which can lead to reflective questions like those in Table 22.2 or present opportunities this table can't predict.

Table 22.1. Practical Engagement with the System

What the Question Seeks to Know or Could Solicit	A Question's Essential Form or Conversational Phrasing
A description of the chat session.	How much time did you spend working with it? And how did you spend that time?
A description of the approach and the prompting.	How did you get it to do that?
An accounting of reading strategies.	What are you reading for? How do you read the outputs?
Type/amount and placement of GenAI generated output in the project.	Are you incorporating anything it generated?
Quality/kind of GenAI output in the project and in what form.	How are you incorporating what it did?

Table 22.2. Labor Targeted for Replacement

What the Question Seeks to Know or Could Solicit	A Question's Essential Form or Conversational Phrasing
Goals and aims for their engagement as defined by the writer.	What are you getting at with this prompt? Walk me through why you prompted this or how you arrived at the wording of your prompt?
Description of the collaboration and the division of labor within the collaboration.	Can you tell me what tasks are you doing? / What tasks is it doing for you?
Assessment of the effectiveness of the collaboration.	What do you think it helped you do finally? How was it helpful?

Asking questions which will reveal and explicitly name the labor a writer seeks to replace or supplement can begin to probe their disposition, their task awareness, their process-knowledge and language, amongst other things. How a writer imagines their agency might determine the division of labor. How a writer assesses the effectiveness of collaborating with a GenAI system can and should extend beyond considerations of whether any certain input yielded a desirable output. If a writer can describe their purposes, a conversation can shift to a reflection on their labor rather than evaluations of machine-generated text.

We have grouped the questions that we consider as most straightforwardly metacognitive in Table 22.3. Asking a writer to consider their motives might most readily help a consultant locate a ZPD to prioritize or explicitly flag. Although human conversations are unpredictable, we have saved this grouping for last as we imagine some requisite staging to naturally and intelligibly arrive at these questions. Since these kinds of reflective questions can be met with resistance, because they draw attention away from a writer's product, we posit that questions from the earlier tables might scaffold and warrant going meta—the goal of the usage-narrative.

Table 22.3. Motives for Deciding to Use the System

What the Question Seeks to Know or Could Solicit	A Question's Essential Form or Conversational Phrasing
Gauge critical literacy.	Who taught you to use this system?
Expectations and faith in the system.	Was this output what you expected? How? Or how not?
Sense of their own skill and perceived deficits.	What does that do for you? How does that help you? By outsourcing a specific task to the bot, what did it afford you? What's the benefit of its usefulness to you?
Moment before and moment of the decision to use the system.	At what point did you decide to use it? Why then? Why did you decide to use it? Talk about the way you made the decision? What considerations were part of making that decision? What were things you did before you turned to the generator?
Speculation about the process of the generator.	What's different about how you'd do a task and how it does a task? Are the strategies you'd use to accomplish this task yourself the ones you bring to the devising of the prompt?

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Because we are both curious about GenAI and the ways in which students integrate it into their writing practice, we have naturally welcomed the topic whenever students brought it up. Motivated by that same curiosity, we have also introduced the topic ourselves, however never because we suspected undisclosed usage. More likely, a student would share their screen or sit down next to us with their laptop, and we'd see ChatGPT open in their browser and use that to introduce the topic. Saying, for example, "Oh, I see you have ChatGPT on your computer. I'm really curious to know how you're using it. What are your experiences with it? Would you say it's been helpful? In what ways?" Since these conversations have yielded openings for considerations around ethical engagement and process-awareness, we will continue to seek out opportunities to introduce the topic.

Additionally, since the beginning of the 2024 fall semester, the WC's intake form has an option for writers to check "using AI writing assistants," flagging that they want to talk about matters of GenAI. Integrating this option is a step towards normalizing the conversation.

We also notice ChatGPT becoming a topic more often in sessions of two kinds. First, when a writer is dealing with a class assignment that explicitly asks them to integrate ChatGPT to complete a project. Asking questions about how the system has been contextualized in class to prepare the writer for the assignment has been helpful. "What did you learn in class about how the system works and how to approach this assignment? What do you think are expectations about the collaboration? What is the work the system is doing, and what is the work you are doing?" In this situation, we have observed elaborate, well-devised instructions as well as minimal or absent instructions. After thinking through these questions together and looking at the writer's assignment-in-progress, we can either expand on their usage-narrative that details their process thus far or create an AI-literacy-informed usage-narrative together. For example, writers working with ChatGPT as part of an underdeveloped assignment experienced frustration when engaging with the system. When confronted with the task of evaluating a system's output, writers discovered they were unsure how to do that.

Second, when writers seek our assistance with job or application materials, such as statements of purpose and cover letters, we've noticed some voluntary disclosures. These materials are high-stakes projects that require a high degree of compliance with formal expectations. Writers presented as anxious and described feeling uncertain about their abilities. We presume that because these writing projects are not governed by institutional policies, writers were more comfortable openly talking about their GenAI usage. Like some writers

documented in the case above, they also expressed uncertainty about how to evaluate GenAI outputs. They signaled their hope that we would help them to ascertain whether the draft that ChatGPT co-created was successful. In these situations, we found it useful to talk about the expectations explicitly. "What do you think is the function/purpose of this statement/letter? Who do you imagine will be reading it?" From there, we found it easier to shift to questions soliciting why, when, and how they turned to GenAI to meet assumed reader expectations, soliciting a brief usage-narrative. For example, one session explored the ways GenAI fell short when communicating the writer's life and mind to a potential employer. Imagining 100 other applicants also submitting ChatGPT-generated drafts as their applications, we then thought about how the writer could set themselves apart.

Whenever we've had the opportunity to communicate our disposition of judgment-free curiosity, we've noticed that conversations about GenAI led to disclosures and to constructive follow-up conversations that produced the kind of talk we now refer to as a usage-narrative. With this essay, we sought to conscientiously develop what we have been doing incidentally.

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PART 5. WRITING CENTERS' ROLE IN FOSTERING ACCESSIBLE, ANTI-RACIST, AND ETHICAL AI PRACTICES

CHAPTER 23. HBCU WRITING CENTERS CONFRONTING THE "CANONIZED CORPUS"

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As four current and former Howard University writing center coaches who have observed our students' rapid adoption of GenAI technologies to assist with—and, let's be honest, write—their writing assignments, we wanted to know *what's all the fuss*?[1] Therefore, we conducted a mini-experiment by asking two generative AI (GenAI) platforms, ChatGPT-3 and Claude 3.5, on ten separate occasions: "What are the best works of American literature?" We chose "best" rather than "most important" because "best" includes an implied judgment on the value of a literary work. In each response, ChatGPT-3 mentioned that "best" was subjective before providing a list of ten texts, while Claude 3.5 simply provided a list of ten texts without preamble. Across the responses, the GenAI platforms mentioned thirteen different books:

- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1850)
- *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville (1851)
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (1876)
- *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (1884)
- *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner (1929)
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (1939)
- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (1951)
- *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (1952)
- *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac (1957)
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960)
- *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison (1977)
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1987)

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1   All authors are first authors and contributed equally to the writing and research of this chapter.

These texts are defined by their homogeneity: 10 of the 13 writers are white, 10 of the 13 writers are male, all works were published between 1850-1987, and they are all considered "canonical" works of American literature. While all thirteen literary works are certainly influential, it is extremely troubling that these GenAI platforms provide such a limited understanding of the allegedly "best" works of American literature because these texts are neither a good representation of the types of books that many students read nor the most relevant books in contemporary literary scholarship. Yet, these are the texts that GenAI define as the "best."

We offer the term the "canonized corpus" as an example of how GenAI rely on already established normative knowledge when generating content. We define the canonized corpus as a body of texts that GenAI constantly identify as key for the literary tradition, and while these texts have narrative and aesthetic value, they are also informed by dominant systematic and sociocultural values such as western-ness, whiteness, maleness, ableism, and heteronormativity. The canonized corpus adheres to the literary canon, which historically excludes writers from marginalized groups. Since GenAI relies on already privileged texts to inform their output, GenAI inherits these problematic systems embedded within canon formation. We remain extremely concerned about the canonized corpus within GenAI because many students are engaging with these products without knowledge of the ideals embedded within their responses. Further, the canonized corpus goes beyond merely content and includes the vocabulary, linguistic style, and the discourses and literary genres that GenAI privileges in their output. The canonized corpus is also a practice where dominant forms of knowledge are privileged, and "the widespread adoption of GenAI tools has the potential to reproduce hegemonic and colonial discourse as the writing process is radically disrupted" (Gebers et al.).

Writing centers play a pivotal role in helping students understand that GenAI remains informed by the canonized corpus. Furthermore, since historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) foreground Black perspectives, HBCU writing centers are uniquely suited to confront the racial, sociocultural, and political biases embedded in the canonized corpus informing these emerging technologies. Drawing on our experiences as writing center coaches at Howard University, this chapter first explores the substantive role that writing centers play in addressing the use of GenAI by students. Next, we look at the unique role of HBCU writing centers and argue they are well-positioned as thought leaders contending with GenAI use in higher education. Finally, we offer four sample scenarios for how writing center coaches can ethically work with students when using GenAI while helping students refuse the canonized corpus.

NAVIGATING THE TECHNOSCAPE

GenAI—defined as "technology that (i) leverages deep learning models to (ii) generate human-like content (e.g., images, words) in response to (iii) complex and varied prompts (e.g., languages, instructions, questions)" (Lim et al. 2)— is a clear source of collective anxiety for higher education. Over the past two years, many have expressed particular concerns about how GenAI creates new challenges for writing pedagogy, with Inara Scott writing in the magazine *Inside Higher Ed* that "yes, we are in a chatgpt crisis," and Lisa Lieberman pronouncing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that AI signals "the death of student writing." While some scholars and pundits argue that GenAI will fundamentally alter the college writing experience, technophobia has always confronted any new technology; yet, emerging technologies like writing, the internet, and the personal computer ultimately did not doom the work of educators. However, the adoption of these technologies *did* change how we teach and how our students learn. As such, we must recognize GenAI as increasingly ubiquitous products influencing writing, and higher education must respond and adapt to this rising technology.

This does not, however, mean we should uncritically embrace GenAI because there are numerous concerns about these products, from plagiarism (Morrone) to intellectual property theft (Vincent and Li) to gender bias (Stokel-Walker) to racial bias (Hanna et al.). Concerns about racial bias emerge regarding the content of GenAI's output as well as the vocabulary they use to generate human-like responses, i.e., "standard English" vs. Haitian Creole/other historically marginalized language cultures (Franklin and Falvey, this collection). Further, as numerous chapters in this volume show, the larger culture around GenAI reflects our lived reality: accusations of AI plagiarism can themselves be fraught with racial bias (Botvin, this collection) while GenAI can be a powerful tool to support students with disabilities (Violini, this collection). As current and former writing center coaches at Howard University, one of the nation's largest HBCUs, we are especially concerned with the substantial quantitative and qualitative evidence that the most popular GenAI platforms are propagating racially discriminatory attitudes and further embedding biases (Hanna et al.; Choudhary). Throughout the 21st century, the success of new technologies like the internet, search functions, and social media are constantly fraught with extending racial bias and discriminatory practices, and the history of technology has consistently shown that communities of color will be exploited, excluded, or otherwise marginalized as new technologies become increasingly ubiquitous. To ensure that GenAI does not become the latest iteration of what Ruha Benjamin calls "the New Jim code," universities have a moral obligation to contend with

systemic racial bias in GenAI, and universities must collaborate with a variety of stakeholders across the university to create their AI policies, enforce these standards, and ensure that students are given the proper context to contend with and use GenAI.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER AND HBCUS

HBCUs are betting big on AI as many are embracing the benefits of using GenAI on their campuses. AI literacy offers opportunities to gain new skill sets, explore different career pathways, and bridge racial wealth gaps for Black communities. Per the McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility, "By 2045, skewed distribution of annual GenAI wealth creation could cost Black households in the United States $43 billion each year" (Brown et al.). The implementation of campus-wide GenAI initiatives and policies at HBCUs, such as Howard University ("Initial Howard University Guidelines"), are necessary to help guide marginalized students at HBCUs to develop and apply their GenAI skills in support of their academic and professional goals. Students at HBCUs across the United States are being encouraged to use GenAI in ethical ways that do not go against university plagiarism policies or that deem these GenAI all-knowing and all-encompassing. Some examples are: Howard University's Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiative and the inauguration of the President's Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council (AIAC) as outlined in a June 2024 announcement (Vinson III and Wutoh); Morehouse College's July 2024 announcement on the college's use of AI teaching assistants for the fall 2024 semester (Nobles III); and Spelman College's Spelman SPEAR (Security Plan, Education, Assessment and Remediation) initiative funded by Google's Cybersecurity Clinics Fund to support building student's cybersecurity and AI skills ("Spelman College Receives"). These and other initiatives are just some examples of the strides HBCUs are making to encourage their students and faculty to understand and use GenAI. HBCUs are not alone in pushing these large initiatives, as universities of all stripes are actively encouraging students to use GenAI. Unfortunately, many of these initiatives do nothing to dislodge the canonized corpus. As such, we end up with more and more students using GenAI, inheriting the problems of canonicity, and then reproducing these problems in their own writings. This must be refused, and it can be done so if these initiatives collaborate with their writing center to challenge the canonized corpus.

Before writing centers can become leaders in academia's adoption of GenAI, they must consider the ways in which they are capable of perpetuating discriminatory academic practices on varying student populations. These practices often fail to acknowledge or make accommodations for students from marginalized

and underrepresented communities. Research has shown that writing center tutors might make assumptions about a student's academic exposure/intellect, and writing centers can show a systemic lack of support for populations like first-generation college students (Bond), working-class students (Denny et al.), and students with seen or unseen disabilities (Moroski-Rigney). Most of this research is conducted with predominantly white institutions (PWIs) in mind, and a switch to HBCUs tends to yield more specific observations. Calls to decolonize writing centers by applying unique writing center pedagogies (Keaton Jackson and Hand), employing social justice ethics (Mitchell and Randolph Jr.), utilizing different practices (Greenfield), and centering the practices of HBCUs (DiCesare and Miklaucic), as well as Hispanic-serving and tribal colleges and universities.

Writing centers at HBCUs offer invaluable academic writing support to students who come from predominantly marginalized backgrounds. The one-on-one interaction between students seeking writing support and writing center coaches, who commonly share the students' backgrounds, cultivates an environment of collaboration, constructive criticism, and empathy, transforming the writing center into a communal space. We must be "careful not to homogenize Black colleges because they are no more monolithic than Black people, or any people for that matter" (Mitchell 23), and we recognize that our experiences as writing coaches at Howard University are not representative of a monolithic experience at all HBCUs. Rather, we pull from this distinct learning environment to reveal how it has informed our understanding of the canonized corpus and provides opportunities to engage with GenAI with racial equity and ethical academic practices in mind. Drawing on Kendra L. Mitchell's reading of HBCU writing centers as a space "always in the process of becoming through co-creation via shared cultural values" (28), we view our work as a process of cultural co-creation that is crucial and inevitable in supporting students in the HBCU writing center.

It is crucial to recognize that HBCUs are still colonially saturated, even if they curate resistant knowledge production. For example, while in some assignments students may see themselves represented, other assignments ask students to write about their racial traumas or address prompts that center whiteness. As such, it is perhaps understandable that some students would turn to GenAI for inspiration or to alleviate the often tedious, unenjoyable, triggering, or tiresome brainstorming process. Further, as Cara Violini notes in this volume, GenAI can be a necessary tool for students with disabilities, offering yet another reason why students might use GenAI. Yet, in passing their writing through GenAI, students at HBCUs risk reifying the canonized corpus and sacrificing their own writing voice. This, according to Joni Hayward Marcum and Lisa Bell, is why

AI literacy is so vital, and promoting informed uses of GenAI in writing centers can encourage ethical practices for the future (398). In thoughtful collaboration with a writing center tutor, students can be encouraged to experiment with GenAI in their writing, just not at the expense of their own creativity and critical thinking.

BEST PRACTICES

We now turn to our personal experiences as writing center coaches at Howard University to offer the following four example scenarios for how writing center coaches can help students develop a creative and ethical relationship with GenAI while actively refusing to adhere to the canonized corpus. In our experience, most students come to the writing center during the prewriting and content development stages to discuss and share their assignment prompts, generate ideas about the topic, craft a potential thesis, and/or create supporting details to support their analysis. The following scenarios are based on our experiences with Howard undergraduate students to offer strategies for how writing center coaches can ethically and creatively utilize GenAI with students while also making them aware of potential biases embedded within these technologies. We use the hypothetical example of a student who was asked to write an essay on "The Impact of American Civil War on Latina/o/x Communities" and offer four examples of how a writing center coach can interact with this student while using GenAI.

SCENARIO 1: USING GENAI AS PREWRITING AND SEARCH ENGINE TOOLS

Example: A student comes into the writing center after being asked to write a paper on "The Impact of American Civil War on Latina/o/x Communities." The student is searching for guidance on how to best brainstorm ideas for the essay.

Response: The writing center coach can redirect students from asking a GenAI to write essays to instead prompting it based on their already conceived ideas. Instead of asking the GenAI to "*Write a 5-paragraph essay on 'The Impact of American Civil War on Latina/o/x Communities*,'" the writing center coach can encourage the student to ask the GenAI, "*How many traceable historical records exist on the disruption of traditional trade routes for Latina/o/x communities during the American Civil War?*"

Evaluation: Using such specific prompts rephrases the conversation from having students copy the GenAI responses to encouraging further research based on preconceived ideas and questions. This approach also promotes effective use of

time, hence streamlining the research process in one conversation, and avoiding the internet rabbit-hole phase that discourages many early researchers. Finally, the writing center coach must be aware that GenAI are pulling data from the "canonized corpus" online, so the GenAI's response may be missing important historical and/or cultural context.

SCENARIO 2: GENAI AS WRITING PARTNERS/STRATEGISTS

Example: Upon realizing the level of work required for this project, the writing center coach understands that this assignment might require multiple visits. Effective as this is, writing center coaches may be overbooked at certain peak periods during the semester, such that repeat or new students are unable to secure a tutoring session when they need it the most.

Response: We propose that writing center coaches can help students plan their essay writing schedule and strategies, including targeted check-in sessions during initial sessions using GenAI. The following is a sample prompt given to a GenAI program: *I am writing an 8-page term paper on "The Impact of American Civil War on Latina/o/x Communities" and would like to focus on traceable historical records on the disruption of traditional trade routes for Latina/o/x communities during the war. The essay is due on December 5, 2025, and I would like to dedicate 2 hours a week to this paper. Provide an effective research and writing strategy for me.* The GenAI responded by providing an 18-week strategy, drawing on the academic essay outline format and aligning it with the student's proposed timeline.

Evaluation: Consequently, writing center coaches and students can schedule their check-in sessions during certain weeks, therefore, keeping students on track, providing a continued writing and coaching process for both parties, and maintaining a sustained relationship between students and their coaches. This also allows students to adopt healthy accountability practices in regard to writing and other academic requirements.

SCENARIO 3: USING GENAI TO IDENTIFY GAPS IN SCHOLARSHIP

Example: The student asks a GenAI program to list the most important figures during the Civil War. The GenAI responded with 13 names—11 were White men, and two were Black individuals (one man and one woman). Of the 13 people, only three were women.

Response: The writing center coach can discuss these disparities with the student, identifying the gap in scholarship as a reflection of the canonized corpus with which the GenAI have been trained. Coaches can then effectively prompt

their students to dive deeper into the research writing process.

Evaluation: Trained on a vast amount of what we have called the canonized corpus, GenAI are essentially subsumed in ethnocentric ideas and are reflective of the canon, hence providing responses that usually exclude minority voices. Among many other methods, the need for an inclusive corpus will be fulfilled when students and researchers at large are able to detect the ways in which the canon continually infiltrates the education system and new technologies. The relationship between students, coaches, and GenAI can yield inclusive, cutting-edge research if properly managed.

SCENARIO 4: DISCUSSING THE ETHICAL USE OF GENAI

Example: Upon completing the required steps and meeting with their writing coach over the course of the semester, the student has completed their assignment. GenAI has been used in various stages of this assignment and should be cited as a source.

Response: Writing center coach will guide students to resources that provide formatting for proper citations when using GenAI.

Evaluation: With GenAI gaining ground, it is almost inevitable that students will use these platforms. It is then paramount to encourage students to disclose AI content when used. This will encourage students to align themselves with the citation requirements for their colleges, classrooms, and potentially, future professions.

CONCLUSION

As the chapters across this volume attest, GenAI is not a fad, and students are rapidly adopting these technologies. It is clear that higher education must contend with GenAI, and we believe writing centers have a key role in the AI-tinted future of higher education writing pedagogy. HBCUs have a particularly important role to play in addressing the canonized corpus that is embedded within GenAI, and HBCU writing centers can and should serve as leaders in the space. We hope these four example scenarios can be used as a starting point for writing center coaches who want to ethically and responsibly use GenAI with their students while refusing the "canonized corpus." However, writing center coaches are only one stakeholder at the university. University administrators, faculty, instructors, and staff must collaborate with writing centers to address the rise of GenAI. Only through this collaboration can stakeholders in higher education ensure that students recognize the canonized corpus embedded within GenAI.

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CHAPTER 24. DISRUPTING THE WRITING PROCESS: HOW GENERATIVE AI HELPS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES COMMUNICATE

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Athabasca University

Writing centers use the writing process to help students with their academic work (Harris; Indriyani; LaClare and Franz). While writing processes can change from center to center, they typically follow a similar pathway from idea generation to proofreading. However, for students with disabilities, this linear approach to writing can become frustrating when disability interrupts the process (Wood 134). For example, a student with ADHD may struggle with tasks requiring executive functioning skills like organization, time management, and task prioritization (Rodden para. 4). This creates a significant barrier to the first phase of the writing process, which can involve scheduling and organizing, making it difficult for students with executive dysfunction to even get started. James Southworth writes that "reorienting writing pedagogy to the process of writing rather than the final product improves student learning—after all, that's where the thinking happens" (para. 8). Thus, to better support students with disabilities, I suggest a flexible approach that focuses on the recursive nature of writing rather than the linearity of the writing process (Abbruscato; Warne). Importantly, this approach incorporates generative AI (GenAI) as an assistive technology (Farhah et al.) so that students can take control of their own writing process through choice, creativity, and autonomy. Furthermore, while GenAI has its controversies, it can offer students with disabilities significant opportunities for efficiency with the writing process (Goldman et al.). Reframing the writing process as an inclusive and effectual tool in concert with GenAI helps counter ableist pedagogies (Dembsey) that create learning barriers for students with disabilities.

THE WRITE SITE

I am a writing specialist with Athabasca University's Write Site. Athabasca University (AU) is a publicly funded and accredited Canadian university offering online learning. Established in the town of Athabasca, Alberta in 1970 as the first

Canadian university specializing in distance education, AU now provides online postsecondary learning to over 40,000 students worldwide. AU's writing center, the Write Site, comprises of a team of five faculty members with backgrounds in English, cultural studies and critical theory, education, linguistics, creative writing, and literary studies. Since the flexibility, accessibility, and comfort of online learning is an attractive option for students with disabilities (Reyes and Meneses), we developed a program with our Accessibility Services to support students with disabilities on a prioritized and ongoing basis. Supporting students with disabilities at the Write Site inspired my doctoral research. As a candidate in AU's Doctor of Education program, I am researching how to reframe ableist writing center practices and pedagogies that impact students with disabilities. I am interested in moving away from the dependence-independence binary that permeates writing center pedagogical literature (Dembsey) in that, through writing center engagement, a student can achieve academic independence as a writer. For students with disabilities, this may be unrealistic and should not be a focus when coaching students. In response to these long-held writing center orthodoxies (Jacobs), I designed a pedagogical approach called "parasupport" (Figure 24.1), inspired by Paralympians who train with supports but participate in the sports on their own.
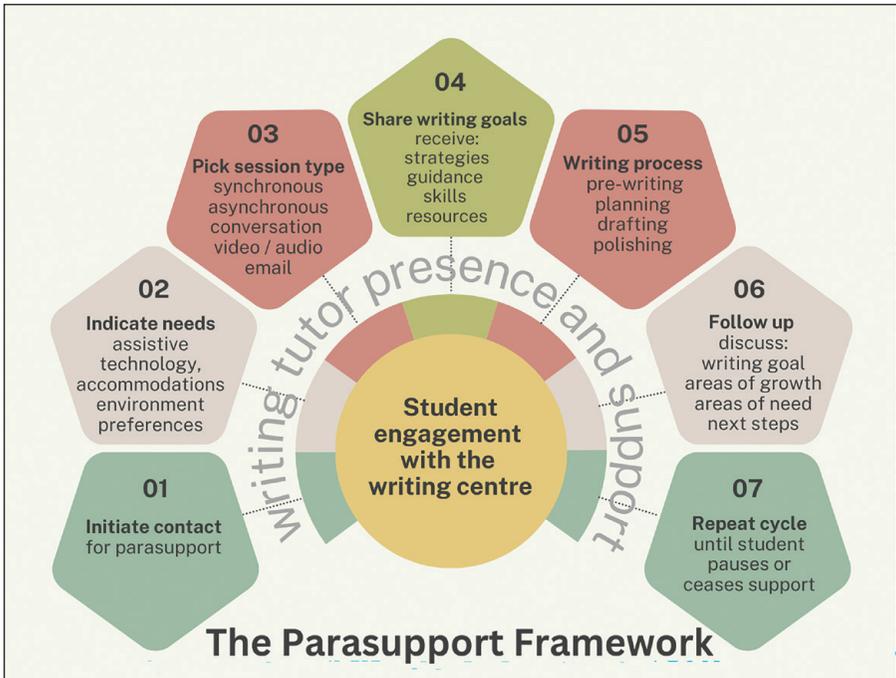

Figure 24.1. The Parasupport model.

In this sense, writing tutors do not determine the independence of a student, but rather the student determines what they need from the writing center. This promotes autonomy while acknowledging that some disabilities require lifelong support. This does not diminish the student's academic capabilities, but it does make "independence" an irrelevant goal. Disability "is part of being human" ("Disability") in that able-bodiedness can be precarious and presumptive. Disability can be intermittent, late-onset, congenital, or chronic; can co-occur with other disabilities; can describe identity or not; and likely will appear in most people's lives at some point. The multidimensionality of disabilities can simultaneously affect numerous domains like neurodevelopmental, physical, sensory, learning, and psychosocial ("Disability Types"). As well, hidden/invisible disabilities, where one's disabilities may not be discernable to others, making the person appear able-bodied (*Invisible Disabilities*), can cause stress due to feeling compelled to disclose alongside worries about marginalization and labelling (Hendry et al.). To this end, disability is a reality of the human biological experience and not an exception, and it is up to the individual to determine what it means to them and their learning and what they choose to disclose. Understanding this in the context of the writing center should encourage more inclusive pedagogical practices that resist assumptions that a student needs to be independent (Dembsey) or that a student is "normal" because they have not disclosed their hidden disability.

THE LINEAR WRITING PROCESS

As with the linear move from dependence to independence, the writing process also moves linearly from idea generation to submission. This process assumes that students can proceed through the steps one at a time, resulting in a finished product (Olive 126). For example, Figure 24. 2 shows our traditional writing process wheel.

This process progresses in three stages. The planning stage includes understanding assignment instructions, planning and pre-writing, developing ideas through research, and outlining. Next comes drafting, followed by revising, editing, and proofreading the final draft. For students who struggle with those initial steps requiring executive functioning skills like time management, scheduling, and organization, this writing process proves challenging to get off the ground. This can discourage students and promote negative coping mechanisms like procrastination, worry, and academic anxiety (Fatima).

Figure 24.2. The writing process at the Write Site (Athabasca University).

ALTERNATIVE WRITING PROCESSES, UDL, AND GenAI

The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) include multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression ("UDL Guidelines"). Ultimately, UDL offers choice, variety, and inclusive opportunities to customize learning (McMahon and Firestone 66). GenAI can assist students and challenge prevailing ideas that steer pedagogical choices in the writing center through such principles (McMahon and Firestone 70). We can offer flexible approaches to writing that do not rely on linear progressions but are inclusive to diverse ways of thinking and, even more importantly, listen to what the student articulates for their optimal learning.

Figure 24.3 illustrates multiple engagement points conceptualizing the core principles of UDL with the elements of the writing process. Aside from "refine", students can begin where they like, or with the easiest or most creative element to them.

Each element is augmented with GenAI choices to help with efficiency, which means this representation must be organic to reflect the proliferation of emerging technology. For example, the element "plan" suggests GenAI schedulers and task management software to assist with the time management of academic work. This is just one example of how to disrupt the writing process to offer choice in both interacting with the elements and assistive technologies that help make learning successful, while utilizing UDL principles (McMahon and Firestone 71).
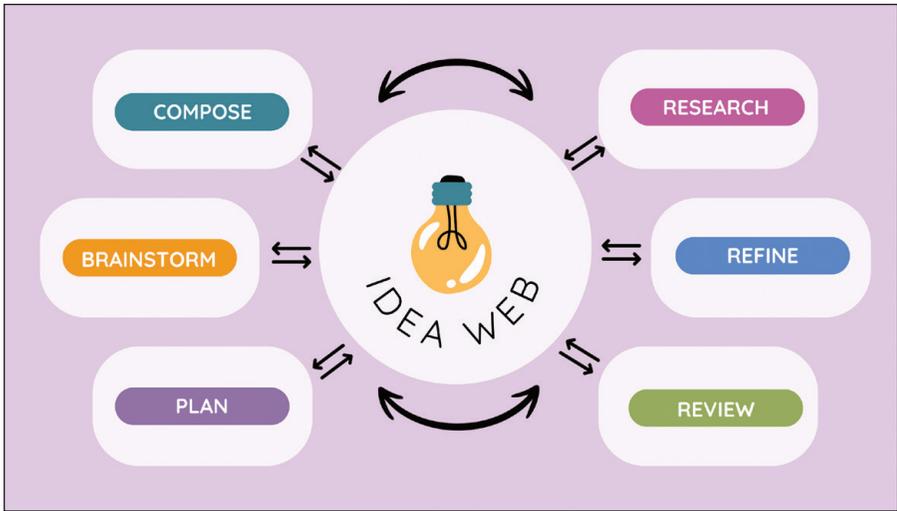
Figure 24.3. The idea web.

DISRUPTING THE WRITING PROCESS WITH GenAI

While GenAI deserves scrutiny for its usage in post-secondary learning, viewing it as a negative evolution of technology underestimates its capabilities, particularly with people facing learning barriers (see Chapter 27 for a discussion on how this can be a discriminatory attitude). Instead, proactive GenAI literacy can show students how informed and responsible use can benefit their learning without compromising their academic integrity (Benjamins). This shift toward a proactive engagement with GenAI implies that students become active participants in ongoing GenAI literacy education to make informed decisions about its use in an academic context. Further to this, critical thinking and dialogue around the problematic issues of GenAI is central to GenAI literacy. A starting place for students is the Modern Language Association (MLA) and Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Joint Task Force on Writing and AI's Student Guide to AI Literacy. This guide lists objectives to promote critical thinking for the "literate users of GenAI" (*Student Guide*), which includes necessary conversations about discriminatory and biased algorithms that sustain marginalization of oppressed groups like those with disabilities (Gama; Hacker et al.; Mack et al.).

GenAI literacy must include conversations around voice, particularly for those who identify as members of marginalized communities. ChatGPT can produce overwrought and wordy descriptions using vocabulary that may not reflect the nuance of an individual's natural way of communicating. Having conversations with students about the importance of retaining one's unique

voice and not allowing GenAI to subsume theirs is essential (Meyer). Wiebke Hutiri et al. list a taxonomy of harms to voice with GenAI, including identity theft, cultural dispossession, and collusion (366). GenAI produces content so efficiently that it will certainly advance the efficacy of assistive technologies (Welker), making it even more critical to encourage students to prioritize their unique voice over a generated one. Emphasizing one's authentic, writerly voice in the age of GenAI needs to be a critical priority for GenAI literacy in the writing center (Lubin).

THE IDEA WEB WITH GenAI ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

While traditional assistive technologies have clear benefits for postsecondary learners (McNicholl et al.), they can also be inefficient, like with the time needed to correct inaccurate translations. Integrating GenAI technologies into a UDL-based non-linear writing process offers students the opportunity to develop their own writing process through creativity when the linear writing process seems too "rigid" and "prescript[ive]" (Anderson 26). Thus, while the description of the idea web suggests technologies in this current moment, writing centers need to be "agile and adaptable, continuously evaluating and refining their AI integration strategies to keep pace with advancements" (Esfahani 1365).

Compose

Using speech to text (STT) or dictation can help with drafting the essay. Speaking in one's natural voice helps create a defined writer's voice, a key goal for generating original work. GenAI speech tools like Voicebox assert that they can streamline dictation and, as a result, half the errors of traditional STT ("*Introducing Voicebox*"). As well, GenAI's realistic voices do not sound robotic (Kolekar et al.), making it an efficient tool for students relying on speech to compose. Now, with composition comes concerns with plagiarism, and the writing center can play a central role by prioritizing conversations around academic integrity and using GenAI responsibly. Countering ableist pedagogies in the writing center can help students with disabilities see themselves as valuable and contributing members to the academic world. Building confidence through parasupport can help students resist the temptation to use GenAI to produce work and value their own voice and ideas.

Brainstorm

Most writing processes begin with the idea generation stage, an innovative and creative time if a student is passionate about their coursework and topic.

However, a student with ADHD may generate too many ideas and then struggle with overwhelm and frustration in reducing the choices into a distilled vision for their paper. This shows how the linear writing process can get stuck on the first step if a student over-generates ideas and cannot figure out how to discern the most feasible option from the crowd. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who struggle with social anxiety can use GenAI chatbots as a simulated social tool. Using GenAI-powered visual graphic organizers can also help students arrange and organize their ideas in a visual way that can help build meaning. Large Language Models (LLMS) can be used for brainstorming by grouping concepts, creating summaries, and ordering ideas (Zhao et al.). Tools such as these make this creative stage more heightened and exciting while promoting metacognition (Tankelevitch et al.). This exemplifies the imaginative ways ideas can be strengthened with GenAI but without taking over the student's creative license.

PLAN

Introducing students to time or task management software may help with the organizing stage of the writing process. There are several free and paid task and time managers with GenAI technologies that can help streamline due dates and task deadlines. Using an assignment calculator to break down the tasks with deadlines and then importing those dates into a task manager like Notion or Clickup, can help students struggling with academic anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, or executive dysfunction feel more in control.

Students facing a new assignment type, like a critique or a literature review, can use a LLM as an initial tool to learn more about it. They can explore the definitions of action verbs that appear in the instructions and make it accessible and easier to understand. Students who experience difficulties organizing information can explore outline generators with GenAI, playing with different orientations to see which appeals to them the most. In this way, GenAI acts as a supplemental communication tool to describe, construct, and explain confusing or obtuse academic content. This way, students can then come to the writing center with a foundation of knowledge, of course understanding issues of inaccuracy with GenAI (Jensen). Some students with disabilities may also experience inflexible thinking (Hollander and Ferretti), which can result in rigid scheduling and all-or-nothing thinking. While this behaviour may also benefit from psychological treatment, writing centers can help students negotiate inflexible thinking with a strategy brainstorm session, using GenAI to generate agile schedules, and instruction around the iterative nature of the writing process.

RESEARCH

Students who struggle with memory retention can use GenAI to understand complex academic literature. A student of mine with a traumatic brain injury would copy and paste articles into ChatGPT and ask it to bullet the main points or to simplify sections. This made it easier for the student to digest the main points in a single study session and have a reference artefact they could return to when interacting with the article in the future. Once the student was attuned to the gist of the article, they were able to return to it and absorb more information instead of continually feeling lost in the chaos of academic jargon. Using ChatGPT to break articles down into main points, key terminology, top findings, isolate recommendations or list limitations in a concise way can help students with reading barriers, short-term memory loss or processing difficulties with retention and comprehension. To assist further, writing centers can share best practices with students using GenAI as a research tool. For example, providing students with guidelines like effective prompting, limiting bias, engaging GenAI in dialogue, and "iterating and refining" (Le), gives students the literacy to conduct responsible research.

REFINE

Conversations around inaccuracies in GenAI editing tools (Jensen) can help students make informed choices as they revise their work. For example, students need to be careful about paraphrasing tools on GenAI editing platforms, as this can result in plagiarism. As well, students should understand that GenAI is not the only way to get feedback during the revision process—the writing center can provide real and human insights to help the student refine their work by sharing revision, editing, and proofreading skills, so that the student can try them on their own.

Tutors can use GenAI tools to help communicate feedback, like Speechify for students who prefer oral feedback, Deaf AI, which translates real-time speech into sign language, or Be My Image, an image-to-text/speech technology for students with low vision or visual impairments. For students with intellectual disabilities or language disorders like aphasia, "real-time captioning, virtual reality, and brain-computer interfaces" (Almufareh et al.), in addition to using ChatGPT to simplify text and create checklists, can help students manage feedback. While this is nowhere near an exhaustive list, it provides a snapshot of how GenAI may help students and tutors communicate at a more efficient level.

REVIEW

Reviewing occurs throughout the writing process to remind students of assignment instructions, rubric categories, or feedback from general readers. This helps to keep the student on task and meeting the assignment's criteria. GenAI can play a significant role here, from creating checklists in task managers, explaining rubric vocabulary through chat engines, or asking LLMs to summarize feedback, make feedback more concise, or group and categorize feedback. These artefacts can help students with memory retention challenges or inattention to have an easily consumable record of tasks. Writing tutors can demonstrate how to use GenAI for these specific tasks in a responsible way. Of course, this may come down to institutional policy, in which GenAI taskforces or academic integrity committees would be enriched by including a writing center representative.

RECURSIVE WRITING

The idea web emulates the recursive nature of writing in that writing does not necessarily follow a linear process but is one of repetition, movement, and plasticity (Segarra). This becomes a metacognitive process where, through multiple rounds of drafting and revision, the student may realize that revisiting a writing phase changes how they think about another, deepening and enriching their understanding of knowledge. S. Scott Graham argues that, like the writing process, the engagement cycle with GenAI can also be recursive: "AI provides the opportunity to add multiple dimensions of recursion where prompt-engineering, output curation, fact-checking, and revision become an orthogonal dimension to traditional writing and learning processes" (166). In addition to a conceptual framework illustrating the recursive writing process, Graham created a similar one (see Figure 24.4) that cycles through the stages of prompt, revise, fact-check, and curate (167).

Integrating a GenAI process into the larger writing process creates a simple yet dialogic understanding of how to engage with GenAI recursively. It acknowledges the use of GenAI as an assistive technology, but one that requires critical thinking and GenAI literacy. The writing center can help with this skill acquisition so that students with disabilities have the freedom to drift between elements as they acquire, consider, and disseminate knowledge, as well as understand how to navigate GenAI in a productive and ethical manner. Developing this fluency can help effectuate how students with disabilities communicate their ideas.
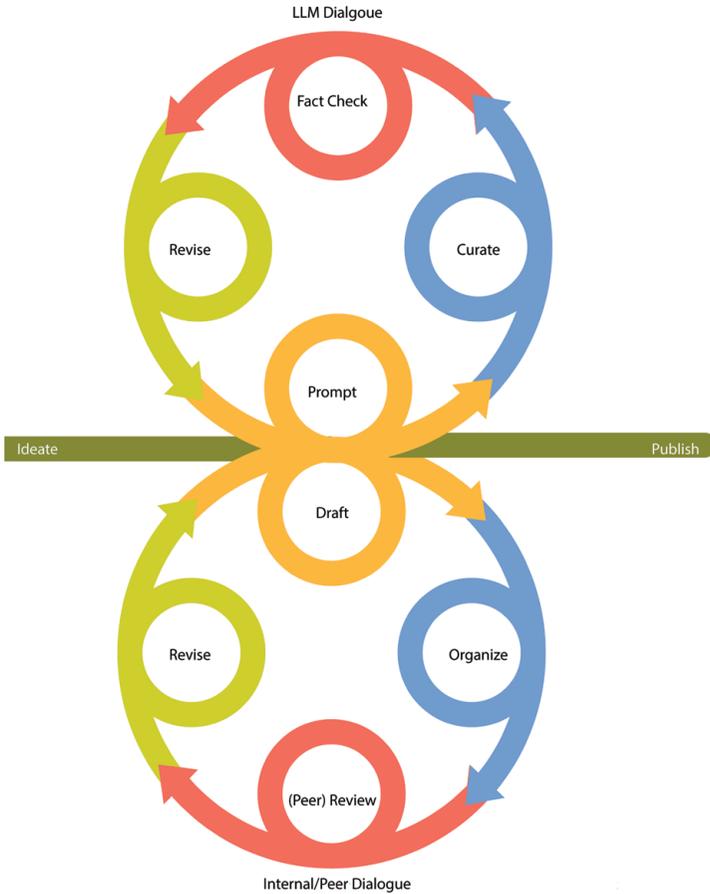
Figure 24.4. A multidimensional recursive AI-assisted writing process from S. Scott Graham's "Post-Process but Not Post-Writing: Large Language Models and a Future for Composition Pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

Allowing for flexibility and individualization with the writing process promotes efficiency with academic writing for students facing learning barriers. To then view GenAI in an assistive manner rather than as a co-author can offer writing center students, particularly those with disabilities, tools to efficiently navigate their writing process. However, while GenAI disrupts the writing process in ways that support learning, we need to emphasize the nuance of one's individual voice and how this cultivates critical thinking. For students from historically oppressed groups who experience silencing in society, the writing center must

encourage the rise of individual and unique voices and underscore their importance in the face of technology built to replicate it. Writing centers can play a critical role in supporting students with disabilities to engage with GenAI assistive technologies without losing their authentic voices.

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CHAPTER 25. RECENTERING WRITING CENTERS TO ADDRESS THE HIDDEN GenAI CURRICULUM

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In response to the rapid rise of GenAI, we sent out an exploratory, informal survey to our staff of peer writing tutors to understand their experiences and expectations thus far. We expected a range of responses but were unprepared by how uneven our tutors were in terms of their familiarity with and feelings towards generative AI and large language models (LLMs) (subsequently referred to as GenAI). These were top-notch students, hired for their writing proficiency and problem-solving abilities, raised in a world full of fast-paced technological changes, and accustomed to online learning and new platforms that became prominent during a pandemic. However, after this informal survey of our staff about their comfort with common digital tools and platforms, including GenAI, it became immediately clear that there was no consensus on how our tutors felt about GenAI and writing. In fact, most tutors did not feel equipped to help students navigate GenAI. Moreover, nearly half of the tutors surveyed reported wanting to improve their skills with Microsoft Word, a standard program used on our Microsoft campus. We began to wonder how we might approach bringing tutors up to speed on GenAI literacy when their digital literacy skills were already flagging. Our tutors were clearly familiar with numerous platforms, devices, and digital technologies. However, these tools remained unfamiliar in meaningful ways.

Foundational to GenAI literacy, digital literacy is built on an amalgam of previously developed literacies; personal experimentation; peer, home, school, and workplace use; and intentional education. This combination of exposure forms a distinct foundation for each learner. Some foundations are robust and well-rounded. On the other hand, some foundations are uneven. Learners with limited access to digital technologies have fewer chances to explore, perpetuating the digital divide, "the division between people who have access and use of digital media and those who do not" (van Dijk 1). It may seem that every

student has exposure and access and thus skills to use digital tools, but this is still not the case. While it is unrealistic to aim for total uniformity in digital literacy, differences matter a great deal. In the context of writing center work, it is essential to ensure that our centers are one of the places in which this foundation can be added to, a task that increasingly requires the inclusion of GenAI literacy curriculum in the writing center. Indeed, assumptions that GenAI can be used effectively independent of intentional learning processes are risky at best and dangerous at worst, as all literacies rely on a network of connected experiences, contexts, and efforts to learn. With GenAI "now inextricably part of how students will write in the academy and beyond" (Dobrin 20) and "an inextricable part of our writing center environments" (Cheatle, "TPR"), writing center educators must acknowledge and contend with GenAI's impact on writing and learning. Moving forward, the work of writing centers must include recentering literacies, including digital literacy, as central to writing and supporting writers. While GenAI literacy should be explicitly taught in higher education, writing centers are uniquely poised to contend with the hidden GenAI curriculum of experiential learning, layered literacies, and metacognition.

DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALIZING GenAI LITERACY

GenAI literacy is impossible to separate from digital literacy and issues of the digital divide. Basic access to reliable internet, up-to-date digital devices, and peers and mentors who have advanced digital literacy skills are not a given for college students. For students, this lack of access creates an invisible yet powerful barrier to developing GenAI literacy. Digital disparities are exacerbated by the digital branch of the hidden curriculum, which includes the largely unspoken, invisible knowledge necessary to use digital tools effectively in the context of higher education. Students must be proficient in a wide range of digital communication and learning platforms, including proficiency with campus-wide software, email professionalism, online course content, discussion boards, assignment feedback, library databases, and managing student accounts for registration, tuition, and personal contact information. Without prior experience with numerous platforms and tools, learners have a steeper learning curve when it comes to GenAI literacy, given that the layered literacies and metacognition surrounding it may be out of reach. GenAI may appear seamless, but behind their smooth interfaces are numerous complex principles and strategies that users must apply to use them well. If educators do not face the problem of inaccessible technology and the hidden curriculum head on, many students will be left behind as GenAI literacy becomes an expectation.

GenAI literacy extends beyond whether a user can input content into a GenAI program. To be considered GenAI literate, a user must understand

how GenAI works on a technical level, its benefits and limitations, and how GenAI literacy develops. Thus, GenAI literacy consists of a combination of critical thinking, metacognition, technical understanding, and creativity, all of which must be employed together for GenAI to be used ethically and effectively. GenAI tools use large datasets as training data, and they use machine learning to constantly take in and apply new information, which should improve the quality of its output over time. However, part of GenAI literacy is understanding that the datasets LLMs are trained on are already imperfect; they contain biases, stereotypes, and misinformation. As Joe Essid explains, GenAI ultimately lacks humanistic values, despite being trained on plenty of human-made data (39). These humanistic values include the principles of fair use, active listening, and metacognitive questioning. Moreover, GenAI lacks an inherent "human respect for scholarship" (Essid 39). Overall, GenAI literacy helps learners to use GenAI tools while understanding the ways in which human thinking is distinctly different and equally important (*Bloom's Taxonomy* Ecampus). This is of particular importance in a writing center context where we deeply value human interaction and learning how to learn (Cecil-Lemkin and Marvel Johnson).

Understanding the difference between elements of GenAI literacy connected to the hidden curriculum and elements of GenAI literacy that are still developing is key for writing center professionals if we want to form a genuine understanding of GenAI literacy. The developing elements of GenAI literacy include distinct skills connected to GenAI tools, many of which are too new to have been integrated into foundational pedagogical practices. As Salena Sampson Anderson urges, "the need for digital literacy for large language models could not be more pressing" at a time when higher education is in the throes of GenAI tool uptake and decision-making (2). To foster this digital literacy for LLMs, or GenAI literacy, we must understand GenAI literacy as a layered literacy, in which new and advanced skills build upon older and simpler ones. Again, GenAI literacy relies on digital literacy. In turn, digital literacy relies on information literacy, which relies on traditional literacy, etc. If lacking proficiency in one of the layered literacies, learners will encounter more roadblocks as they forge ahead using GenAI technology. Without this understanding, the disconnects in the network of learners, educators, and technologies will likely increase.

DISCONNECTS AND GenAI LITERACY

Across the disciplines, there is no shared standard for GenAI curriculum, which is exacerbated by disciplinary differences. Disconnects in the disciplines stem from distinct industry standards, evolving public and academic scholarship, and emerging conventions within individual fields. A student may attend a business

or STEM class and be told that if they are not already proficient with GenAI, they are behind the curve and may not be employable. A few hours later, that same student may sit in a visual arts or English class and be told that any use of GenAI amounts to pure plagiarism. The whiplash in disciplinary disconnects and messaging are both cognitively confusing and emotionally exhausting for learners trying to navigate the complex and often high-stakes landscape of GenAI uptake and literacy.

There is also a disconnect between the speed of digital development and the time needed for deep learning. Inevitably, one of the draws of GenAI is the speed with which it generates content. However, users may conflate speed with accuracy, placing increased confidence in GenAI output based on speed, resulting in stagnating GenAI literacy (Tankelevitch et al.). Also, the rate at which GenAI appears on campuses may not account for the uneven rate at which students and faculty learn and develop new literacies. Deep learning takes time and effort. With the speed of GenAI platforms, university administrators and educators cannot afford to confuse the output of products for proof of learning. In the face of rapid GenAI expansion and integration, educators must take time to learn and develop GenAI literacy in order to guide students through the same process, an approach that Felicitas Hartung and Christine Sharp call "AI Readiness" (2025). This seems especially true within writing centers as interdisciplinary, multiliteracy spaces, dedicated to supporting writers and learners with differing levels of literacy.

WRITING CENTERS AS PLACES OF CONNECTION, LITERACIES, AND LEARNING

In many ways, writing centers are prepared to bridge gaps and address the hidden curriculum of GenAI literacy. Even as writing centers grapple with where, how, and why (or why not) to engage with GenAI as a tool for writing (Dobrin 47-61; Lunsford) and tutoring writing (Lester 21-23), adapting and retooling is familiar writing center work. In fact, peer tutors are used to working as "expert outsiders" (Nowacek and Hughes 181) and engaging in multiliteracy work. Within writing consultations, tutors and writers read texts closely, evaluate and integrate sources, format assignments, connect to campus resources, validate emotion, and troubleshoot technology as regular parts of writing and learning. Additionally, peer tutors may be more poised to discuss and understand students' use of GenAI than faculty or administrators whose roles and accompanying power dynamics (e.g., grades and policies) may keep them from candid conversations with learners. Peer tutors can encourage exploration and experimentation with GenAI, with a focus on the learner and the process, rather than a product. Writing center administrators

(WCAs) are also uniquely positioned to contribute to GenAI conversations on campus by viewing and seeking to understand GenAI literacy practices, pedagogy, and possibilities across disciplinary divides (Velez et al.; Cheatle, "Leading"). While departments and disciplines are often isolated, writing centers benefit from the range of relationships they have with writers and educators across campus. Writing centers facilitate transfer of learning and help bridge gaps between students and faculty, faculty and administrators, students and campus resources, etc. Writing centers address disparities in learning, access, and exposure through individualized support, experiential learning, and literacy development.

Unlike with GenAI use, in writing centers, writing and learning processes slow down, and learners engage in the metacognitive work of planning, experimenting, practicing, and evaluating their work and development. While using GenAI may reduce the cognitive load of completing academic assignments, GenAI use actually demands an increase in metacognition (Tankelevitch et al.), including the ability to plan and guide GenAI through the prompting process and evaluate GenAI output. These metacognitive demands are a key element of the hidden GenAI curriculum. As Essid notes, "AI … favors product over process and cannot spur metacognitive thinking" (47), at least not by engaging in metacognitive discussions as an active and empathetic listener and co-learner. As scholars promote the use of GenAI personas as tutors (Benharrak et al.; Mollick 138-42), they do so assuming writers have developed the underlying literacies and metacognition fundamental for GenAI literacy. This may not be the case. As GenAI increasingly intertwines with academic writing, writing centers will be places where students' GenAI literacy, as a new literacy, is encountered and addressed in ways that are both learner- and learning-centered.

RECENTERING DIGITAL LITERACY AS PART OF WRITING

Writing centers cannot assist learners in developing GenAI literacy if tutors and administrators lack digital literacy. Many writing centers already include multi-literacy as a key element of their programs, and these centers have made strides in incorporating digital literacy into their work (Cheatle and Sheridan 4), some since the early 2000s (Trimbur 89). Foundational digital literacy is critical for students to fully engage in the university learning environment. Without these basic digital literacy skills, students may struggle with coursework, leading to a cycle of disengagement, stagnation, frustration, and shame due to unspoken expectations. Overlooking digital literacy gaps, an acute symptom of the ongoing digital divide, springs from the assumption that students are digital natives (Eynon 131-34), a dubious stereotype frequently employed in both popular and academic discourse. Many students *are* deft users of specific platforms and

technologies; however, variability in skill levels is inevitable and can be addressed in writing centers.

As we were reminded when surveying our staff, every learner has a different foundation of digital literacy skills. Understanding this is essential for effective writing tutoring in the digital age. The evaluation of a learner's digital literacy can be easily incorporated into a tutorial using a transfer of the skills that tutors already employ. Just like a tutor will ask the learner about their assignment, their understanding of course materials, and their goals for their work, tutors can also ask learners about their familiarity with digital tools and platforms, their confidence using various software, and their prior experience with learning new systems. By attending to the digital literacies that directly impact a learner's ability to both write and engage in course materials, writing center tutors can help to stabilize and fortify learners' digital literacy foundations. The same is true for WCAs, who can assess and address the digital literacy gaps of individual tutors and help them prepare to assist other learners in developing digital and GenAI literacies.

WCAs and tutors do not always see the clear connection between digital literacy and writing help, which is understandable. Writing centers have worked hard to be seen as experts in writing, often leaving support for additional literacies to other programs and omitting training in these areas from the writing center curriculum. However, to increase WCAs' ability to help tutors develop digital literacy and tutors' ability to help writers with basic digital literacy skills necessary for developing GenAI literacy, we must make visible the ways in which writing is enmeshed with technology and empower writing center educators to help bridge digital literacy gaps. As Joy Bancroft notes, "most sessions involve[d] interaction with, if not instruction on, using computers" (47). We saw the same with our tutors but noticed that they often described technology support and writing support as mutually exclusive rather than interconnected. Normalizing and naming the ways writing centers provide digital literacy support is an excellent place to start. This work might include mapping the tools that a learner used in a tutorial (laptop, smartphone, learning management system, operating system, word processor, digital textbook, etc.) and noting challenges or friction impacting writing and learning. Developing our own digital literacy and helping our tutors see digital literacy assistance as part of, not separate from writing support, has been vital. To address digital literacy with tutors, we have implemented a flipped-classroom curriculum that guides tutors to see their own digital literacy gaps. In addition to shared and guided practice with technology, tutors engage with a "choose your own digital literacy adventure" training that caters to the range of pre-existing knowledge they have, while encouraging them to increase their digital literacy with a specific tool. Simultaneously, tutors are encouraged to reflect on and see digital literacy as a vital part of tutoring and writing.

INTEGRATING GenAI LITERACY INTO
WRITING CENTER EDUCATION

Just as educators across campus cannot assume students enter classrooms with established GenAI literacy, WCAs cannot assume tutors know GenAI literacy basics. While we do not require the use of GenAI tools among our tutors, we model and offer guidance for exploring GenAI and engaging with GenAI in practical ways within tutorials. Since GenAI literacy is not a natural skillset, WCAs and tutors should participate in structured training to grasp how GenAI works, acknowledge the ethical considerations of GenAI use, and understand how GenAI may be applied across a range of disciplines. This training may include hands-on experimentation and writing center scenarios in which tutors and learners engage with GenAI during brainstorming, research, drafting, revision, and editing processes. However, if writing centers are to recalibrate to address the hidden GenAI curriculum, they must address experiential learning, layered literacies, and metacognition as central writing center work.

For GenAI literacy to become an established and visible part of writing center work, it must be integrated into writing center education. Based on our survey of staff members' feelings about GenAI, we understand that a nuanced and multifaceted approach is needed. Additionally, we view it as essential to ensure that WCAs and tutors understand why learners might bring GenAI writing and tools into a session. This may help them avoid judgment or fear about what to do with GenAI-generated or assisted work. In addition to addressing layered literacies, as a writing center staff, we have collaboratively developed resources on GenAI use for our campus community, which has required WCAs and tutors to explore and think both critically and practically about GenAI across the disciplines. We have mentored tutors in metacognitively considering GenAI literacy via scholarship on GenAI and learning (Alsharif; Craig et al.; Lester) while participating in this same professional practice of writing and presenting to learn. Other staff members have worked as embedded tutors within a GenAI and writing course, allowing them to reflect on, experiment with, and evaluate GenAI with both faculty and peers. In formal and informal ways, we have worked to address the hidden GenAI curriculum as part of writing center education.

As with any literacy, developing GenAI literacy is not a one-and-done process. As we begin a new academic year, we plan to further address GenAI literacy and the hidden GenAI curriculum in our writing center education. We do so, knowing we must continue to evolve as learners alongside rapidly developing GenAI technology and GenAI use across campus. As GenAI is further integrated into familiar systems and tools, it will increasingly become enmeshed with the writing process. We will continue to regularly survey our staff about their use

of and comfort with GenAI to monitor how our approach to teaching GenAI literacy can be improved. As WCAs, we will continue participating in GenAI conversations on our campus and within our field, drawing attention to the hidden GenAI curriculum. We will continue to learn as we work with our staff to develop GenAI literacy as well as learning resources and scholarship. These approaches demonstrate how we are recentering our writing center's focus to highlight the importance of metacognition, multiliteracy, and experiential learning within higher education.

CONCLUSION

As with GenAI literacy in higher education, a visible wellspring is the surface manifestation of the much larger, more complex network beneath it. This unseen network comprises critical elements of the wellspring. Similarly, while GenAI literacy is the visible outcome at the surface of what learners are expected to develop, GenAI literacy is deeply connected to experiential learning, layered literacy, and metacognition. In the writing center, tutors can work with learners to uncover elements of the hidden curriculum by spending time diving into the depths of these crucial building blocks of GenAI literacy. In contrast to the hidden curriculum, the visible curriculum consists of material explicitly taught. While a consensus is rapidly forming regarding what GenAI literacy means and how to teach it, the hidden GenAI curriculum must be addressed concurrently to support robust and meaningful GenAI literacy development. Writing centers, as interdisciplinary and multiliteracy hubs (Bancroft 46), are well positioned to support GenAI literacy and its hidden curriculum, but this support must be intentionally cultivated. To truly harness the wellspring of GenAI literacy, we must reach into the depths and confront the hidden GenAI curriculum, present but still elusive in higher education.

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CHAPTER 26. RECLAIMING AGENCY: AI HALLUCINATIONS AND TRANSLINGUAL INTERROGATIONS IN THE CITY TECH WRITING CENTER

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Marcellous (pseudonym) is a regular at the City University of New York (CUNY) City Tech writing center. "Regular," for us, can mean anything from twice a week to every week to twice per assignment per semester. For Marcellous, it means the latter. In the spring semester of his first year at City Tech, Marcellous was still in the process of learning English. Marcellous' first language is Haitian-Creole, and he learned English primarily from his neighborhood and schooling in the Bronx. In previous writing assignments he had brought to work on in tutoring sessions, Marcellous' professor had encouraged his multilingual and culturally specific writing patterns: he'd been praised when he used African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and incorporated Creole words into his academic work, used them to describe his community, his friends, and his experiences in Bronx public schools.

He had written the first draft of his annotated bibliography, the second of the three major writing assignments that make up our first-year English curriculum, the way that came naturally to him: in the same voice he had written his narrative essays and short stories, the voice which his professor had positively reinforced. After handing in his first draft of the annotated bibliography, his professor informed him that his colloquialisms and grammatical inconsistencies were no longer "appropriate." Confused and frustrated, while relaying his story to us in the writing center, Marcellous told us he had run the draft through Grammarly to "fix it," both grammatically, as well as in "tone appropriateness." When he gave his professor the revision, devoid of all previous "error," she plugged it into an AI detection website, which found Marcellous' paper to be over 90 percent AI generated, an accusation Marcellous vehemently denied.

In this chapter, we will work to unpack how we make sense of stories like Marcellous' as a tangle of technology and language ideology. We will offer a way

of thinking about these tangled technological threads through a translingual perspective, which can articulate how GenAI is continuing to homogenize and reify a particular constructed variety of "correct" language. However far we might get with these tools over time, we want to recall stories like Marcellous' for the complex ways his sense of ownership and voice were always already complicated—especially for first-generation and second language writers and even with the instructors *trying* to empower them. In seeing risks posed by GenAI's influence in contextualizing standards and linguistic power positioning, we wonder whether we can flip the concept of "hallucinations" and their detection to help address, with nuance and care, the issues surrounding authenticity posed by GenAI.

WHERE ARE WE?

Marcellous worked with Anna, an adjunct professor and our lead tutor, in the writing center, which Joe directs along with his role as faculty in the English Department. New York City College of Technology (City Tech) is the designated senior college of technology for the CUNY system, serving around 14,000 students who come to City Tech from 127 different countries of origin, speaking 86 different languages. An urban commuter school, City Tech is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), which focuses most strongly on STEM, Health Sciences, and vocational programs. Two-thirds of our students are full-time, while one-third are part-time; demographically, our students are 34 percent Hispanic, 27 percent Black (non-Hispanic), 21 percent Asian, 11 percent White, 2 percent other, and 4 percent non-resident (whatever that means) ("CUNY City Tech"). Our students are often in the process of learning English, or are at least novice as users of an Academic English *very different* from what is useful in their homes and got them through high school; they are full-time students with full time jobs; caretakers, either of their own children or of other family members; they act as live-in translators, navigators, lawyers, and interpreters, responsible not only for their own survival but for the survival of their families. If not recent immigrants, our students are more often than not life-long New Yorkers—they grew up tossed around the New York City public school system, a system which, even before the catastrophic disruption of the pandemic, suffers from massive socio-economic disparity (Gennetian).

What sets our writing center apart from many others in the United States is that this level of diversity is our everyday; our success in serving students depends on our ability to act in dynamic ways that honor differences. We agree with Thais Rodrigues Cons et al., arguing from a Brazilian writing center context, deeply involved in translation and digital tools, that "writing centers worldwide

might consider adopting multilingual frameworks that engage tutors in critical dialogue about linguistic hierarchies." For us, such an approach is required as we encounter, every day, acts of brilliance and perseverance and heart that our students are rarely recognized for in their academic (and writing) lives.

REALITIES IN AI HALLUCINATIONS

Much can, and has, been said about a range of concerns with artificial intelligence in education, but we want to focus on how it impacts our diverse student body in this particular institutional context. CUNY is a large complex system, and centralized policy is slow and often vague about implementation, which also means local divergent policies pop up as well—often complicating more than clarifying practice. As of the spring 2024 semester, there are over 85 adjunct faculty members in the City Tech English department alone, which makes aligning around a curriculum tricky. Despite the recent formation of the City Tech "AI Task Force," our writing center has yet to see evidence of a systemic, effective way to address it. So, in our tutoring sessions, we've seen a dizzying range of differing faculty responses: from openness and conscientious transparency to complete denial regarding both the perils and promises of AI, leading to uncritical policing and punishment.

In cases at the furthest end of the denial spectrum, such as in Marcellous' story, students can be falsely accused of plagiarism due to the implicit linguistic biases in the tools that are meant to keep GenAI out of the classroom. A study measuring biases in AI detection platforms against non-native English speakers yielded staggering results: the seven commonly used AI detection platforms studied unanimously flagged nearly 20 percent of ESL student writing assignments as partially AI-produced, while 97 percent were flagged by at least one of the detectors (Liang). In the writing of English learners or multilingual writers, these AI-powered detection platforms are likely responding to detected "hallucinations," and low levels of "perplexity" (Liang). A piece of writing with a high level of perplexity—what the algorithm decides is sophistication and complexity—would not at all look like the writing that instructors often expect English learners to produce, and yet, this is what the detectors are searching for. So, what English is it aiming for, and from where did that expectation come?

Recall that, oddly, Marcellous' false accusation came from the same instructor who praised his non-standard linguistic choices previously. In a 2024 study, researchers found that ChatGPT both created and critiqued global dialects of English with "increased stereotyping, demeaning content, condescension, and lack of comprehension" (Fleisig et al.13548). Researchers concluded that these tools "can perpetuate harmful language ideologies" and "risk reinforcing power dynamics that harm minoritized language communities" (Fleisig et al.13549).

To us, Marcellous isn't a "lazy" student but rather a student for whom the expectations (of language *and* GenAI usage) have not been well-communicated. His instructors are also, while well-intentioned, echoing the troubling inputs that perpetuate power monolingualist hierarchies in GenAI tools. So, Marcellous is a student for whom the ultimate accusation of plagiarism was a well-laid trap based on many biases and ambiguities. We find this perspective to be crucial in understanding how we work through AI's challenges.

At City Tech, students in intro English composition courses are often asked to write in specific, templated formats. When they show signs of ongoing linguistic development and take risks expanding their language use, they could be and often are chided for making *errors*—even by the same instructors who have encouraged this in other assignments. If their work seems too grammatically crisp, they may be accused of plagiarism, even if their correct usage might signify actual learning. To our writing tutors, who are almost all instructors themselves, it is easy to see how excessive use of GenAI tools is often a corner students are backed into. What all schools might be facing as we come to terms with AI and language difference, we see potentially at a macroscale with our larger diversity and contingent labor.

At the writing center, we see all of these varying responses baked into essay prompts, into feedback on student work, into attempts at policy. We see, not just in our conversations about schoolwork, but in our conversations with students about their own lives, how and why a quick pass through QuillBot or even an entire GenAI essay seems like the best solution for many reasons *besides* laziness or moral turpitude: when professors want such drastically different things; when they are not available to answer questions; when students' financial and familial responsibilities outside the classroom leave them on the brink of exhaustion. Making sense of that mess by being well-informed and open to our students' perspectives is our challenge.

Marcellous' situation is not unique—the various inconsistencies illustrated by his story are becoming more and more commonplace. Many students share Marcellous' use of "non-standard" English, find their professors' praise of it in *some* cases but not in others, frustratingly realize that even when they thought they had "fixed" their papers ethically, there remained a core mistrust between them and their professors. So, why bother not "cheating"? While not always happening on the larger institutional stage, these intersectional complexities are constantly being detangled by our tutors: with students, in the classroom, and in staff meetings with other tutors. We are always in the market for models of how to address these issues with an expansive, nuanced understanding of different forces at work, rather than a single position to be defended. As such, we explore the connections with language ideologies.

TRANSLINGUAL PARALLELS

Given the sprawling demographic, disciplinary, and pedagogical diversities that our students and writing center navigate at City Tech, our everyday work keeps ideologies about language ever-present. We see in it a rich kind of laboratory for testing many questions with the goal of understanding language differences in practice: how they act and are acted upon in the world. While the kind of linguistic justice that informs our approach also connects with older and ongoing conversations about writing pedagogy and writing centers—questions of error, identity, and power—we find that the discursive tools of translingualism help to articulate complexities in powerful ways we need in order to function (see also Bouza et al.; Peña et al.).

Despite the early formation of translingualism around 20 years ago, Bruce Horner and Sara Alvarez's 2019 article, "Defining Translingualism," traces the various and in some ways conflicting uptake of concepts. They resist a single definition and assert translingualism as a "way to interrogate and unveil" the terms and social relations surrounding and informing "language user agency" through ideology and practice (1). Rather than seeing particular effects on the page (like informal registers or multiple languages together), this definition forwards a critical tool/approach for sensemaking and, as we understand it, promoting writer agency rather than a particular *use* of language. Horner et al. claimed that difference in language is not a "barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning" (303). In light of the view that language is "heterogeneous, fluid, and negotiable," the authors clarify that "a translingual approach directly counters demands that writers must conform to fixed, uniform standards" (305). But agency is a hard thing to measure, and articulating the standards of writing while also communicating that students must not conform to them is a tricky proposition.

One north star for our understanding of translingualism comes from Min-Zhan Lu and Horner's "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency," a reassessment of the infamous "White Shoes" essay used by Bartholomae to describe the cliched and stilted rhetorical moves of novice student writers who are inventing the university. Lu and Horner read nuances in a much more expansive set of contexts to find novelty and invention within those lines and assert that translingualism "recognizes difference as the norm, to be found not only in utterances that dominant ideology has marked as different but also in utterances that dominant definitions of language, language relations, and language users would identify as 'standard'" (585). We do not see translingualism as tied to particular language practices or identities—it is actually the uncoupling of those assumptions we start with. We also do not see it as a new requisite to

reject assessment, rules, or policies that may be practiced by other stakeholders. More than celebrating radical language mixing, translingualism also reminds us that it's more than the product; it's the *agency* that matters. Translingualism asserts the importance of writers possessing enough knowledge and power to act with agency, to view their work as their own choices in a complex set of considerations, not as attempts to strive for some unquestionable, singular, stable version of correct (i.e., monolingualism).

Along with the ethics of authorship and authenticity clearly conflicted by GenAI tools, we feel we must assert the value of translingualist ideas in understanding how second language writers like Marcellous are navigating what it means to make choices in this academic landscape. Students like ours remind us that underneath all the concerns of authorship lie ideologies about language. GenAI tools are simultaneously enabling the ability to translate/generate texts while also deeply complicating the choices writers must practice making in order to obtain and act with agency over their use of language. These challenges are also clearly impacting and increasing the level of ambiguity coming even from well-meaning instructors who try to empower diverse writers to express themselves. To assess and assign value in these moves requires us to understand the instability at the heart of our enterprise—from all sides.

So, to the Marcellouses who are feeling the vertigo of expectation and error, we offer what knowledge we can to make sense of this in an attempt to recover the agency to make choices with their own voices. It is easy to see writing instructors' encouragement of more linguistic variety in word choice or register as well-intentioned, but if it lacks the context a student needs to make decisions about audience and genre, we're clearly missing something crucial. If our role is to interrogate and unveil assumptions in order to broaden a writer's understanding of their options, can we do the same thing when it comes to AI's potentially problematic *and* productive uses?

BRIDGING AI AND TRANSLINGUALISM

We've noticed that many of our writers have been unjustly targeted for their linguistic differences by lack of clear communication regarding academic expectations *and* the AI-detectors deployed to catch them plagiarizing. Since we already used translingualism to make sense of the assumptions woven into assessment and standard language ideology before GenAI joined the chat, we looked for possible applications of these sensemaking tools to help us approach the concerns around AI and at the same time articulate some translingual awareness. We found that, yes, it does appear that GenAI models trained on a limited set of texts does mean they powerfully reify—through production

and detection—a narrow standard for "correct" academic writing (the homogenization of monolinguistic standards). We also found that the concept of a hallucination by GenAI (merely presenting an incorrect fact by the algorithm) could also describe assumptions of monolingualism itself (the reproduction of unchallenged misunderstandings about language). We can say this with confidence: GenAI has opened up a new frontier to articulate and critique the impact and instability of language standards.

In the reciprocal relationship between this AI discourse and translingualism, we take the position that Standard Written English as a singular, stable force is often itself a hallucination—a very human one that precedes and informs these algorithms. Monolingualist hallucinations by instructors *and* AI-detection software falsely accuse students who deviate as plagiarists or failures, thus showing they share the same faulty inputs about writing. But AI is not all hallucination, just like all academic writing that adopts commonplaces are not necessarily uncritical products of monolingualism. So, that means we could also make the same allowances for the challenges and potentials raised by GenAI if we approach sessions with a *process of interrogation* (thank you, Horner and Alvarez) and *enough room for nuance.*

Students now come to us somewhat often with drafts, or pieces of drafts, that we know are written by GenAI. And, we know that many more who don't come to us are submitting—to some degree—unethical, wholesale artificial documents to their instructors. Even if they are informed about alternatives, when they feel backed into a corner, they may turn to AI. Even instructors who are assigning some translingual-ish work can still be backed into a corner, feeling they have no option but to assign failing grades to transgressive students who use AI. We think there's common ground here; both students and instructors can become unwitting monolingualists *when they lack the agency and room for nuance to enable better, more informed choices.* As such, there may be an opportunity to build a discourse that interrogates the ideological assumptions of the digitally artificial versus the analog authentic in the same interconnected ways that linguistic assumptions were interrogated through the ideological concepts of monolingualism versus translingualism. So, how can we begin to act in alignment with that opportunity?

Finding Agency in a Process of Interrogation with GenAI

Seeing writing as a product is a bad place to start if we're looking to make room for agency. Parsing the writing process, crafted from a bundle of skills in which we aim for proficiency piece by piece, allows us room to make smaller judgments. Each skill or step can be an opportunity for agency. Asking GenAI to

write your whole essay? Bummer. No room at all to build core proficiencies. Asking GenAI to find articles? Okay, maybe that saves time or finds better stuff, but one still needs to critique outputs. Asking GenAI to write a summary of the articles? Well, there's often already an abstract which is just as good. Also, AI might not find the actual quote you *need* for your paper. So, maybe AI helps you find some resources, but curating your evidence after that, and finding the competing voices? The tools will be less reliable. Maybe see what it comes up with, but then do your own version of that. Using AI to proofread? Sure thing, not a replacement for your own skill, though. Again, outputs all need to be critiqued. The litmus test here becomes whether these tools are empowering agency and building skills or whether they are taking over one's voice and choice.

So, you still need to know how to take notes, find quotes, summarize for a particular purpose, tweak for a particular audience, make choices about tone/style, align with the prompt—those were the same skills we needed before, and those remain necessary to manage AI so it doesn't sabotage your work with hallucinations or homogenization. This kind of approach embraces the reality of GenAI while also promoting nuance/agency for writers based on the skills they need to practice and also staying critical in the places GenAI falls short. It is also allowing a conversation to parse these specifics and why a writer might feel like they *need* AI to get better grades, which is what you need a writing center to do, because we offer individual attention and we don't assess their work officially. At least at our institution, *where else are students going to get that?*

In our center, we seek ways of asking students to invest in their own work; we want to be a place where "students are guided toward how to critically evaluate and use all of the writing resources available to them," even GenAI (Fledderjohann and Perkins). One example of this is an exercise that Anna did with Marcellous, which entreats students to utilize GenAI programs as tools for reflection. The tutor and student will go through an early draft of their paper, taking each Grammarly suggestion one at a time. Together, they talk through *why* the program is making that suggestion, what (sometimes arbitrary) box of grammar and perplexity it might be trying to shove the paper into. When asked, one by one, if the student wants to accept the suggestion, there will always be *at least* one suggestion that the student does not agree with—the student then must defend the choices they made in their writing. This is an agency baby step. The key, for us, is to create that space for agency—this is our north star for language difference and the new territory of writer authenticity driven by GenAI.

By starting as small as finding AI hallucinations themselves, students can prove that their voice matters, that their work is theirs. We can build up from there. For Marcellous, the immediate result of this exercise was his ability to point to and defend all of the decisions he made in his own revision work to

his professor. On a deeper level, he expressed how good it was to really feel like he understood and owned his work; to point to each sentence and say, "Here, look, this is mine." The more this space for agency is made, the more students are called to care about the details of their writing, to grapple with and question these platforms instead of automatically accepting their apparent expertise. We must trace the complex ways that a hierarchical system preserves a certain standard for English through a winding road of inputs and outputs in a tangle of human, institutional, and algorithmic codes if we're going to reclaim the space for people to learn how to write. If not, we're the lazy ones who aren't leaving room for students to learn.

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CHAPTER 27. "HOW DO WE STOP STUDENTS FROM USING AI?" WRITING CENTERS, GENERATIVE AI, AND LINGUISTIC JUSTICE

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OpenAI's viral rollout of ChatGPT in the late fall of 2022 set higher education ablaze with think pieces, faculty learning groups, and social media posts (Taecharungroj) touting the end of the college essay, and the humanities at large (Chun and Elkins). Coming just months after most U.S. institutions had returned to fully in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic, the greater forces of academia seemed to collectively compartmentalize anxieties over generative AI (GenAI) for the spring 2023 semester. Metastasizing through the downtime of summer 2023, however, was the ensuing moral panic surrounding ChatGPT and other GenAI (García-Peñalvo). This panic manifested in a concerning manner at my institution, a small public research university whose student population is moving rapidly towards majority minority demographics but whose faculty and staff have yet to reflect that trend. The campus' fear over GenAI took shape as a wave of baseless plagiarism accusations against students of color. As assistant director of the Writing and Multiliteracy Center (WMC), I sought to work with the center's director to determine the reasons for this alarming trend and looked to leverage the WMC, a space on campus already committed to advancing ideals of linguistic justice, as a tool of student advocacy and a place to defend writers during this period of transition.

To position the WMC as a space for holding conversations surrounding AI usage on campus, I first needed to listen to the growing concerns. Faculty harbored trepidations about students utilizing the technology to write papers, chairs stressed the importance of framing writing as process-oriented rather than product-driven, and tutors expressed fears of their jobs transforming into AI police. All the while, co-workers came to me as a de facto AI expert with the million-dollar question: "How do we stop students from using AI?" This proved to not only be a difficult question to answer but one I became reluctant to answer at all. Rhetorically, the sentiment makes several problematic assumptions that require addressing. First, the question implies an inherent

lack of trust between instructor and student, creating a defensive academic environment that situates students as cheaters to be foiled rather than learners to be taught. Instead, looking to understand the reasons why students might use GenAI in their writing became a priority, with an assumption that gradations might exist similar to modes of plagiarism (Moore Howard). As chapters in this collection demonstrate, students are rarely using GenAI for whole-cloth plagiarism but instead are patchworking it throughout the writing process in the form of grammar checks/translation, brainstorming, or conceptual clarification (Bleakney et al.; Miftah et al.). Further, Joe Essid and Cady Cummins demonstrate that despite 91 percent of their survey respondents admitting to using GenAI, "only 4.7% of respondents used AI to create a draft submitted for ungraded feedback and 2.3% (one respondent) for a grade" (para. 22). While students are using these programs at an extraordinarily high rate, they seem to be using them with ethical intentions.

Next, the question underscores a belief that GenAI has no value in the writing process. While I have since adopted policies of GenAI refusal (McIntyre et al.) in my own pedagogy, I initially wanted to avoid what might be considered a tech-adverse, reactionary stance and instead explore ways that GenAI might prove beneficial. Despite my own misgivings, many ethical, practical uses for the technology exist. As Cara Violini addresses in their chapter in this collection, "Integrating GAI technologies into a [Universal Design for Learning]-based non-linear writing process offers students the opportunity to develop their own writing process through creativity." At the local level in both the writing center and the classroom, GenAI is a tool that might have effective implementation for aiding all types of learners in the writing process.

Finally, the question foregrounds an all-or-nothing mentality to writing, in that the presence of any GenAI usage anywhere in a paper is outright grounds for violations of academic integrity. As a writing center practitioner modeling writing as collaborative, process-driven, and iterative, I felt concern over this blanket approach to GenAI usage. And so, as the technology remained in its infancy, I found myself hesitant to subscribe to any of these beliefs without first gaining a deeper knowledge of its capabilities. Even as one of my campus' "AI experts," I had little tangible experience with it myself, and so I set out to understand GenAI. This manifested in myriad ways: plugging assignment prompts into platforms like ChatGPT and Grammarly to gauge the tenor of responses; researching neural networks, predictive modeling, and the role of probability in machine learning (Ash; Wu et al.); and having open conversations with students and tutors about their own utilization of GenAI. But what became the most fruitful aspect of this process was an encounter that took place in the WMC in late fall 2023.

AI AND PLAGIARISM ACCUSATIONS

After entering the WMC on an early December afternoon, I was called over by one of our senior tutors who was working with a clearly distressed student. The tutor explained to me that the student, a WMC regular, had just been accused by their instructor of using AI to revise a paper. The tutor attested that they witnessed the student physically type the paragraphs that their instructor had flagged as plagiarized content, paragraphs which the student specifically worked to revise after receiving particularly harsh feedback in an earlier draft. It seemed the more the student met their instructor's expectations, the more they ran the risk of accusation. To understand the situation more fully, I pointedly asked the student if they had used GenAI in their paper, to which they emphatically replied no, but that their instructor claimed to have used AI detection software to find them guilty. I looked through the paper, found it to be free of much of the tenor I had come to associate with GenAI text outputs and then asked the question that was forefront in my mind: "Do you think your instructor singled you out because your writing sounds too white?" As they burst into tears, they confessed that they did not want to be the one to say it, but it was what they heavily suspected. This was the third time at the WMC that semester in which a student of color was falsely accused by an instructor of using GenAI.

The director and I reached out to both the department chair and the instructor, finding the former open to discussion but the latter much less so. Meeting initial resistance, I put together a package of data: I first received permission from the student to take a single paragraph from their draft and then prompted ChatGPT to create a similar paragraph. With the two samples in hand, I input each into five separate AI detection software (ChatGPT Zero, Writer Detection Software, Scribbr Detection Software, Originality AI, and Content At Scale), generating ten separate outputs with no correlation, validity, or reliability – while some identified the student's paper as 100 percent AI-generated and my own artificial prompt as 100 percent human-generated, others showed the exact opposite to be the case. However, what I thought to be overwhelming evidence of the erroneous nature of these software programs proved to be rhetorically ineffective when weighed against the instructor's beliefs. The intention of this anecdote is not to disparage this individual or any instructor overwhelmed by a significant paradigm shift in higher education and looming existential threats to our professions. What this incident demonstrated, however, was a pressing need to position writing centers as resources for both faculty and students to hold conversations about developments in GenAI. This is not a new trend, but one rooted in a long tradition of situating

the writing center as a leading voice in conversations of linguistic justice (Del Russo et al.; Tinoco et al.; Greenfield and Rowan).

In higher education, concerns over GenAI use tend to focus on academic integrity violations (Abd-Elaal et al.) and threats to student learning (González-Calatayud et al.). However, this perspective takes a similar rhetorical tenor to the question posed to me by my coworkers, namely one that situates students as perpetrators utilizing AI rather than members of communities who fall victim to the well-documented and concerning biases which are ingrained in these platforms by a homogenous tech sector (Noble and Roberts; Lechman and Popowska; Charitsis and Lehtiniemi; Gross; Kuhlman et al.). Students of color, who often face the dilemma of choosing between writing in their learned language registers and being docked points for surface-level mechanical "errors" or learning new language practices to adhere to conventions of academic writing, are now faced with the context of GenAI, where if they deviate too far from their instructor's perceptions of their linguistic capabilities, they are accused of plagiarizing their work whole-cloth. More so, on the surface, GenAI presents what appears to be a fundamental solution to this problem: students can draft in their own registers and utilize these platforms to "translate" their writing into more academic stylistic conventions as the final stage of their writing process, appeasing their instructors and ensuring higher grades for themselves. This use of GenAI as a translation software echoes a long history of writing centers being viewed as "proofreading shops" (North) or spaces on campus for students to "fix" writing born from non-standard social (Denny et al.) or cultural contexts (Bychkovska and Lawrence).

However, when considering the deeply rooted biases of academic writing or Standard Written English (SWE), which carry with it a well-documented history across disciplines (Clark et al.; Chen and Henning; Politzer-Ahles et al.; Hoover and Politzer) and which flattens cultural language practices in favor of a homogenized and colonialist paradigm, it becomes increasingly unethical to support such a "solution." Additionally, in my limited campus experience, when students of color have historically written in ways their instructors have judged to be "too academic," they were often flagged for plagiarism, and so the problem only threatens to worsen as fears over GenAI exacerbate and more students of color enroll in the university. From this perspective, the writing center exists in a unique context to hold conversations concerning linguistic justice and artificial intelligence, empowering student writers to embrace their distinct registers and working with faculty to expand their perceptions of what constitutes "correct" or "incorrect" usage. Without these conversations, superficial markers of language will undoubtedly push more students to utilize GenAI to "translate" their writing.

CONTEXTUALIZING GenAI THROUGH LINGUISTIC JUSTICE

Tenants of linguistic justice can help to frame these conversations and provide opportunity for both students and faculty to recognize the paradigms that GenAI are quickly reinforcing and look to other solutions for writing, assessment, and using new technologies in the context of artificial intelligence. The following are just some examples of how linguistic justice might be used to frame these conversations.

ANALYZE THE NEGATION OF NON-SWE REGISTERS

Lawrence Frey and Joshua Hanan provide a framework for social justice as an action that exposes "material conditions that negate people" (para. 2). This concept of negation is particularly pressing when discussing linguistic justice in the context of higher education, where students are trained in SWE and often penalized for veering outside of that specific register. Students using programs like ChatGPT to translate their own writing to better adhere to instructor expectations of surface-level mechanics is a process of actively negating non-SWE registers. In the space of a writing center, which holds significant rhetorical potential as a third party in student/instructor dynamics, conversations can be held to mediate the experiences of these two sides. On the side of the student, tutors and writing center professionals can provide ways to use GenAI responsibly (by citing generated content or fact checking information provided through more credible sources of information) or, better yet, provide information about other AI software better fitted for research (Connected Papers, Semantic Scholar, Elicit, to name just a few), which do not interfere with the process work that is so central to writing. On the side of the instructor, writing center professionals can hold workshops and casual conversations about reducing their fears over GenAI and their reliance on faulty AI detection software, and encourage them to remove stylistic metrics from their grading schemas, factors that might pressure students to turn to such software in the first place.

EMBRACE NON-SWE REGISTERS

As Rosina Lippi-Green writes, "Language is incredibly flexible and responsive; we make or borrow what we do not have. In this flexibility … all varieties of any given language…are equal" (9). Linguistic justice encourages us to not only recognize the fact that language is malleable, but to embrace and empower writing that communicates ideas clearly, even when styled outside of SWE registers. When used as a translation software, GenAI programs like ChatGPT or

Grammarly, a "typing-assistant," translate in a unilateral direction, towards the standards and conventions of hegemonic academic writing. Students often utilize these programs to appease stringent language practices of their instructors, but seldom do we ask instructors to embrace the language practices of their students. Writing centers can house conversations about the situational nature of both writing and reading and, more importantly, be a place in which instructors are introduced to the emerging and traditional, non-standard language practices of their students. An embrace of non-SWE registers is not meant to undermine the definition of "correct" usage but to expand the inherently limiting viewpoint of what constitutes usage as correct and incorrect in the first place.

Employ Introspective Pedagogy to Combat Monolinguistic Power Structures

April Baker-Bell states, "an Anti-Racist Black Language Pedagogy should involve consciousness-raising work that arms Black students with space to make sense of, name, investigate, and dismantle anti-black linguistic racism and white linguistic hegemony" (p. 13). Alexandra Watkins and Lindsey Ives further this sentiment with their discussion that linguistic justice requires introspective pedagogy to combat monolingualism. As practitioners in the field of linguistic justice, writing center professionals can reflect on the ways that their own tutoring and administrative practices, writing standards, and biases have contributed to monolinguistic power structures and work to rectify those biases to create a space where all students and all faculty can grow. Perhaps most importantly, writing center administration must reflect on their own biases in their hiring practices and ensure that they are promoting a space whose staff is diverse and reflective of all student demographics across campus. Within the context of GenAI, which have been proven to proliferate biases across all socio-economic lenses, writing centers must work with students and faculty to make those biases clear and to help educate respective parties about the implications of further employing these platforms as translation tools.

Think Globally

Linguistic justice cannot merely be focused on inclusion of registers across the United States. As Ronisha Browdy and Ester Milu, as well as Thir Bahadur Budhathoki, make certain, linguistic justice must also reflect global rhetorics and translingual practices. How English is taught to multilingual and international students is often through a colonial lens of integration and assimilation. Whether intentionally malicious or not, these practices strip away and negate cultural

language practices by upholding them to a certain standard, often SWE. GenAI, unregulated and unbound in its colonialist potential, threatens to conform global language practices to a single, ubiquitous register. Writing centers can push back against this threat with interdepartmental initiatives, which bring in the voices of language experts. Additionally, employing international and multi-language students and professionals in the writing center can ensure that these spaces remain focused on a global perspective and are fulfilling their mission to serve all students across campus.

CONCLUSION

For better or worse, GenAI will be an increasingly significant factor in higher education for the foreseeable future. As this edited collection argues, writing center practitioners must use this period of uncertainty to position themselves as leaders regarding the implementation and regulation of GenAI in an academic context. If it is to be successfully integrated into learning, then policy and practice must come from the localized level, addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of all stakeholders. Perhaps most vital is that we continue to advocate for the inherent humanity and the equitable treatment of our students, our staff, and ourselves. While the goal of this chapter, and edited collection as a whole, is to embrace a nuanced look at these technologies, it is becoming difficult to separate them from the underlying existential fears of those deemed obsolete by the technology, the deeply flawed industries which birthed them, and the wider capitalistic system which looks to implement them as tools of corporate extraction, labor devaluation, and exacerbated economic inequality. As institutional leaders, writing center professionals must closely consider these realities when considering adoption and integration of GenAI tools, both in and out of the writing center.

Further, the conversation concerning this technology, when filtered through a neoliberal media ecosystem, often falls into one of two flattened perspectives: singing the unadulterated praises these advancements will bring or prognosticating the "rise of the machines"-style apocalypse. Quite likely, neither of these futures will come to fruition, but in the meantime, we lose sight of many of the real impacts of GenAI, through its enormous demand on power grids, rampant hallucinations, and perpetuation of misinformation. In the introduction to this edited collection, Elisabeth and I argued that GenAI has ushered in a fourth stage in how writing centers engage with new technology. As the many insightful contributors to this collection have shown, it is our role as writing center administrators and staff to advocate for our students, work with our fellow faculty, and find ethical uses for this technology. Writing center professionals will find great import in positioning themselves as leaders of GenAI literacy, as voices that vocally and frequently point

to the many documented issues with these programs, and who continue to work to maintain student-focused, human-centered community spaces.

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Eric D. Mason is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Communication at Nova Southeastern University. His areas of academic interest include, critical theory and pedagogy, visual rhetoric, computers and composition, cultural studies, and service learning. His scholarly work focuses on how the various modalities of composition—textual, visual, aural, and digital—can be brought into the writing classroom and how they intersect with cultural practices. His work has been published in journals such as *Enculturation, Media Culture,* and *The Community Literacy Journal,* as well as in books published by Ashgate and SUNY Press. He currently edits *Quadrivium: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship*

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Alexandra Omogbadegun (she/her) is a PhD English student at Howard University with a research focus in Afrofuturism and the Digital Humanities. When she's not studying or engaging in research, Alexandra is teaching, baking, performing spoken word poetry, or spending time with family and friends.

Sherry Wynn Perdue directs the Writing Center at Oakland University. Past President of the International Writing Centers Association, she currently serves the organization by co-chairing its GenAI Task Force and co-editing its flagship publication. Her scholarship on dissertation supervision, writing center research, and information literacy has been published in such venues as *The Writing Center Journal*, *The Peer Review*, and *Praxis*. In the small pockets of time she protects for herself, Sherry can be found on the Pilates reformer, hiking with her husband and their Standard Poodle Pike, and building her social media presence through Life, Styled by Sherry.

Emily C. Perkins earned her PhD in Education from the University of Rochester and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Trauma-Informed Practice from Syracuse University. She currently serves as Associate Director of the Writing Center at Le Moyne College, where she teaches both first-year and upper-level writing courses. Her current research interests include academic integrity and the plagiarism paradigm, as well as generative AI in composition studies. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* and *The Peer Review*. Outside of her professional work, she is an active member of Pet Partners CNY with her therapy dog, Olive.

Kathryn Pilliod graduated from Hartwick College in 2024 with a Bachelor's of Science degree in nursing. While at Hartwick, she pursued her love of language through a minor in Spanish and her work as a writing consultant. She now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she works as a cardiac intensive care nurse, rides bikes, rock climbs, and keeps managing to acquire cats and chickens. She must admit she does more reading than writing these days, but is beginning to dream up a novel about the desert and the end of the world.

Ashley Rea is an Assistant Professor of Technical Communication at the University of North Texas. Her research considers the intersections of technology and writing from an intersectional feminist lens. Her work can be found in *Technical Communication*, *Communication Design Quarterly*, and *Technical Communication Quarterly*, among other places.

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Paula Rosinski is a Professor of Professional Writing & Rhetoric and Director of Writing Across the University in the Center for Writing Excellence at Elon University. In the classroom she teaches courses on multimedia writing, visual rhetoric, and writing technologies. Her current research examines best practices for AI-focused professional development for faculty and staff, AI-augmented writing practices of alumni, and writing center consultant and client attitudes toward AI. Her scholarship has appeared in *Composition Forum*, *Written Communication*, *Computers and Composition*, *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, the *Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators*, and *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, and in edited collections. She is co-leading Elon's initiatives to prepare students, faculty, and staff to use AI ethically and effectively in their teaching, research, and professional lives and also serves on the Executive Committee of the Association of Writing Across the Curriculum (AWAC).

Anna Rymer is a Professional Writing Tutor at High Point University. She is a recent graduate of Salem College, where she was a peer writing center consultant. Her research in GenAI and writing has been presented at the International Writing Centers Association conference. Anna enjoys working with students and hopes to continue empowering the next wave of leaders through their writing.

Carly Schnitzler teaches writing at Johns Hopkins University in the University Writing Program. Her research and teaching center digital rhetoric, creative computation, and the public humanities. For the past three years, she has served as co-editor of *TextGenEd: Teaching with Text Generation Technologies* (WAC Clearinghouse, 2023) and *TextGenEd: Continuing Experiments* (2024, 2025), open-access pedagogical collections showcasing early experiments in thoughtfully teaching writing with generative text technology, including but not limited to AI. She is also the founder of If, Then: Technology and Poetics, a community of artists, scholars and teachers invested in inclusivity and skills-building in creative computation

Jean Schwab is the Director of Peer Assisted Learning at Furman University, where she oversees the subject-based group tutoring program and the Writing & Media Lab. Her academic interests include metacognitive reflection, tutor training, and multimodal composition in writing centers. She also teaches a class on the history and practice of knitting in Furman's three-week May Experience program.

Madilynne Smith is a recent alum of Hartwick College. She studied history and Spanish and worked as a Writing Center Consultant and a Peer Tutor. She plans to get her master's in education and work as a Spanish teacher in the near future.

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history of writing machines—from the typewriter to large language models—and their influence on writing pedagogy and theories of authorship. His work appears in Computers and Composition and is forthcoming in Critical AI.

Meghan Velez is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Central Florida, where she teaches courses in professional writing, AI literacies, and rhetorics of data. Previously, she was Co-Director of the Virtual Environment for Communication: Teaching, Outreach, and Research (VECTOR) at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Worldwide Campus. Her research can be found in the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Across the Disciplines*, *Communication Teacher*, and *Thresholds in Education*. Her research interests include digital rhetorics, histories of communication technologies, and online writing instruction.

Deirdre Vinyard is the Director of the Writing Center at Johns Hopkins University and has taught English and writing in the US, Canada, and Japan. She has published in the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* and the collection *Linguistic Justice on Campus*. Her teaching and research interests center on multilingual students in writing classrooms and multilingual tutors in the writing center.

Cara Violini is a writing specialist in Athabasca University's writing centre in Canada. She recently completed her doctoral degree which focused on inclusive writing centre pedagogies that better support students with disabilities. She also holds undergraduate degrees in education and English literature, a Master of Arts in literary studies and an MFA in creative writing. Prior to her work in the Write Site, she taught composition, creative writing, and English at the secondary and post-secondary levels. She lives in Calgary, Canada with her family.

Paola Yuli is a PhD candidate and an English Instructor in the Department of Literature and Writing at Howard University. Her research focuses on bodies of water and hydro-crisis in Caribbean literature, Black studies, the blue humanities, the climate humanities, feminist studies, and postcolonial studies. Paola is currently a 2026 Inductee in the Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society (BGHS), which celebrates scholarly achievements and inclusive excellence at the doctoral level and in the professoriate. In 2024, she was a recipient of the Ernest E. Just-Percy L. Julian Graduate Research Fellowship from Howard. From 2021-2024, Paola was a Howard University Writing Center Coach, supporting undergraduate and graduate students in their academic writing journeys. From 2023-2024, she served as the Graduate English Student Association (GESA) Vice President at Howard and as a student advisor for The Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) exhibit, The Shape of Power: Stories of Race and American Sculpture. Paola received her BA in English with a minor in Environmental Science from Barnard College in 2017.

WRITING CENTERS AND AI

The landscape of higher education has been forever changed by the proliferation of AI-powered large language models. Machine-generated text has provided new opportunities for academic integrity violations, the death of critical thought, and the end to the humanities at large—or, at least, that's what we're being told.

The editors and contributors to *Writing Centers and AI: Generating Early Conversations*—among them writing center tutors and administrators, writing teachers, and disciplinary leaders—posit that writing centers are ideally positioned to assess the remarkable shift in the ways that students are now learning and writing. Drawing on praxis-based, data-driven, and narrative approaches, their 27 chapters explore the intersections of AI and writing center work. The result is a practical guide for writing center practitioners at all levels that addresses the critical role writing centers can and should play in helping students, faculty, and institutions navigate this complicated and historic moment.

Elisabeth H. Buck is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center at Fordham University in New York City. She is the author of *Open-Access, Multimodality, and Writing Center Studies* (Palgrave, 2018), which was a finalist for the 2018 IWCA Outstanding Book Award. Her work has appeared in multiple journals and collections across writing studies, and she is the current editor of *The Peer Review* journal. **Joshua Botvin** is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the English and Communication Program and Assistant Director of the Writing and Multiliteracy Center at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. His research interests focus on the studies of rhetoric, writing centers, generative AI, labor equity, and classroom accessibility.