Communication Center Journal
Vol. 6, No. 1, 2020

Bridging the Digital Divide: Telephone Tutoring at the Center

Amy Nejezchleb
Bellevue University

"Sometimes it seems easier to invent a new technology than to start a conversation"
— Sherry Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation*

Picking up a phone is easy. Many think a Zoom session would be easier. In effort to board the wave of new virtual technologies, we denigrate the telephone as an older, less rich data carrier. The determiner "rich" is semantically slippery, though, because it suggests poorer and fewer data. In actuality, the phone is richer both in the amount of meaning conveyed as well as the amount of data that is transferred over the phone. More than this, the telephone is something that most everyone has access to, even if they do not have great internet availability or connectivity; even when the new technology fails, unless a powerline or tower goes down, people can still place a call. Understanding this in a time like the pandemic is especially revelatory.

The Coronavirus has laid bare what unequal technology access looks like in the United States. Conversely, the phone's consistency and richness offers college students a way to bridge the digital divide. According to Neaderhiser and Wolfe (2009), from 2004-2006 several writing centers were busy adopting online forms of tutoring, with 91% tutoring through email, 6% through phone, 2% through Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and 3% through online (p. 61). Still, in their study, the phone superseded VoIP and online digital formats (Neaderhiser & Wolfe, 2009). The irony of returning to old technology like telephony is not lost on communication centers in 2020, yet if everyone is to access education equitably, the modification of a phone number to call helps tutors meet underrepresented student populations where they are.

This essay will explore the demographics of telephone tutees in a writing center via a year-long study I carried out from 2018-2019 to understand why having a number to call helped a writing center reach specific populations (Nejezchleb, 2020). The essay will trace the academic needs of these populations for communication centers to help grapple with why the phone may mesh well for students at a distance, for those with busy work schedules, and for historically marginalized populations. At a distance, the phone or two-way audio session can instill traits similar to face-to-face tutoring and works similarly to the videoconference session but with benefits of its own. Finally, I will offer my own training strategies to supplement existing tutoring formats with telephone services in writing and communication centers. I will argue why the phone should prompt educators to rethink their assumptions regarding what it means to be online, how learning should take place, and who has access.

Literature Review

Considering above discussions of old and new tools, a history of technology use in the writing studio is worth capturing before examining communication center studies. Archives of the *Writing Lab Newsletter* (WLN) and *Praxis* show us how writing

center professionals have focused on evolving technologies as tutoring tools. In the 1970s, autotutoring became one emphasis of technological aid (Veit, 1979). Many of the labs sought resources for underserved students to use independently. Mary Epes (1978; 1979) discussed a software package developed by Exxon Education Foundation that she used at CUNY (p. 1). In part, self-instructional computer and audio resources were implemented on campus to improve students' English skills. In addition to autotutoring, there was television software. Gaylene Rosaschi reported in 1978 that Brigham Young University used a television-computer program called the TICCIT system that taught students grammar and mechanics (p. 4). More common references describe grammar hotlines, but these call-in services did not reference tutoring by telephone (Neuleib & Scharton, 1982; Devet, 1987). In fact, until the 1980s, Marguerite Murphy's quip about "our callers" was the lone reference to the telephone, and her students were calling *to find* the writing center building at Georgia State University (pp. 1-2). In a 2009 article, Neaderhiser and Wolfe delved into whether institutions experiment satisfactorily with new tools available via synchronous online tutoring, and in one part of their study, they examined VoIP and phone formats in face-to-face online tutoring. While the focus was on a variety of formats, they provided useful notes on phone tutoring: particularly, phone may be easier to use than text-based chats. Without screen-sharing options, though, they observed conversation suffers from a single lack of reference (p. 56). More recently, scholars have explored mobile assistance technology in edu-software development, connecting students with writing centers through applications (Calton, personal communication, April 20, 2018; Calton, personal communication, April 21, 2018; Calton, 2016). Notwithstanding mobile aids and phone that accompanies synchronous online tutoring, studies that focus on telephony in writing and communication centers as a technology in its own right are still emerging.

Two recent side notes on the phone in writing centers give pause for why old but simple tools are left in the wake of sexy technology like Zoom rooms. In their *The Working Lives of New Writing Center Directors*, Caswell et al. (2016) provided a book-length multicase study of how a writing center professional eliminated her institution's "egregious" habit of telephone tutoring (p. 33). Most of the tutoring was conducted face to face, with the exception of a small number of sessions conducted over the telephone, and according to Caswell et al., she was eager to embrace online tutoring (p. 31). Elsewhere, the phone's suitability for particular student populations has been acknowledged. In an email to a writing center e-mail correspondence list, Josh Hutchison wrote, "After years of trying to push videoconferencing and/or using chat apps, I have found that most of my distance students really just want to talk on the phone if possible […] and it's a technology everyone understands and can access" (personal communication, October 6, 2017).

In a similar vein, communication center studies examined the telephone as a supplemental technology to online services. Alyssa Davis (2012) focused on text-based chats through Gmail in her communication center, and a phone option was available through Google Drive's application. Davis found that phone conversations assuaged the lag time that occurred when students were unfamiliar with Google chat software during online sessions. Also, when students were less efficient typists, they used phone conversations to by-pass lag time during

text-based chat sessions (p. 224). Students were not alone in discovering that phone technology bridges the gaps which appear in learning new digital technology and effective reading, writing, and speaking. Likewise, tutors felt more connected to students when they held phone sessions despite feeling more isolated online initially when using text-based chat alone (p. 223).

Scholarship with a communication-center focus delved deeply into online formats and available technology, and a review of that scholarship is helpful here. Martin et al. (2017) discussed augmented reality, virtual reality, and other specific technologies that presenters may wish to utilize when communicating or speaking in public spaces. McIntyre and Hall (2017) looked at what online services were available in communication centers, including real-time and submit-and-respond varieties of online assistance; they concluded that more centers must avail online services (of the real-time variety). Raising the typical complaint of older technology as "digital dinosaur," Schwartzman (2013) analyzed text-based synchronous online chats in a mixed methods study (p. 661). Schwartzman delayed the assumption that "richer media" offer superior educational outcomes to consider the advantages less rich media can provide. Text-based chats can offer a "gateway to deeper relationships" (Schwartzman, 2013, p. 661).

In the same way, a host of writing center studies considered the benefits of online asynchronous and audiovisual synchronous tutoring, proffering models by which to engage in tutoring technology (Hewett et. al, 2019). Breuch and Racine (2000) and Breuch (2005) prepared thoughtful discussions on the benefits and implementation strategies for online tutoring (p. 245). In 1997, Blythe agreed that face-to-face methods should not simply be transposed onto networked computer technologies while Coogan (1998) and Monroe (1998) described tentative models for asynchronous tutoring (p. 101; *passim*; pp. 10-16). Monroe (1998) revisited the principles of the writing center tutorial in reference to directive tutoring and surface-level errors—topics that seem "to trouble tutors the most" (p. 16)—specifically within contexts of new media and online tutoring. Three years later, Wolfe and Griffin (2012) resumed Neaderhiser and Wolfe's (2009) initial research by offering insights on how the medium of technology has affected the writing center tutorial. In their 2014 article, Dortin and Ries reasoned that online tutors must remain flexible while working with students, whether through email, audio, or visual capabilities, similar to what Bell (2020) asserted in her blog article within *WLN*: *A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*.[1]

Hewett (2002; 2015b) collected many foundational studies on online writing instruction, including Mick and Middlebrook (2015) who cite the connectedness of the educated participants as the most important principle to consider among differences between asynchronous and synchronous modalities (p. 134). How the technology maintains the principles of writing center work while upholding the medium's idiosyncrasies must be discussed and evaluated, something Michelle Eodice (2005) captures brilliantly:

> Does this technology address or improve access? Does this program promote collaboration or contribute to an invasion of privacy? And finally, the most important question to ask, perhaps, when assessing the technologies at work in your writing center is this: Is learning happening? (p. 4)

Eodice's (2005) heuristic can be applied to technology, both new and old, even if online tutoring has received more focus throughout the years. For example, Martinez and Olsen (2015) prepared an analysis of online writing labs (OWLs) as a special concern of online writing instruction. To Martinez and Olsen, OWLs are integral sites of access when online writing instruction is offered at an institution; moreover, successful labs are accessible to all students, focus on the writer instead of the written product, provide tutor training, and avail pedagogically valuable technology to those who tutor and are tutored (p. 185).

Research on Audiovisual Technology Outside the Center

Studies outside of communication and writing centers scrutinized differences among audio-visual and phone technologies. Isaacs and Tang (1994) compared a small team's in-person interactions with its videoconferencing and telephone use. Their findings showed that video "adds or improves the ability to show understanding, forecast responses, give non-verbal information, enhance verbal descriptions, manage pauses[,] and express attitudes" (p. 63). Yet they were quick to point out that the video transmission depends upon instantaneous audio, which can become out of sync. While Isaacs and Tang (1994) indicated that video helps when trying to quell tensions, it is not as effective as face-to-face collaborations. As equally important, Bradner and Mark (2001) discovered that collaboration improves when using one-way video, two-way video, and application sharing, but individual performance suffers; indeed, "a continually 'open' communication channel via application sharing or video may be a detriment to performance" (para. 7). It suffers from the perceived effects of a social presence; meaning, one can notice a collaborator's presence in audiovisual technology even when a person cannot see the collaborator, and it is more apparent when cognitive tasks are involved (para. 7). Neaderhiser and Wolfe (2009) also noted that there are few discernible benefits to video over voice-only communication tools in the workplace (p. 56).

Fish et al. (1992) examined interdepartmental graduate students' use of audio-visual conferencing to see how it contrasted with face to face and telephone. Participants ranked the audio-visual system with in-person and telephone communications. While face-to-face communication outranked audio-visual and telephone in most categories for its level of appropriateness, telephone was seen to be more appropriate when exchanging confidential information, scheduling meetings, asking questions, staying in touch, and exchanging time-sensitive information. Audio-visual and telephone were seen to have the same or nearly the same level of appropriateness when resolving disagreements, negotiating or bargaining, and making commitments. However, audio-visual communication was seen to be more appropriate than telephone when graduate students were explaining difficult concepts, getting to know someone, generating ideas, making decisions, exchanging information, and checking project status (p. 44). All three studies focused on participants who were homogenous students or small teams located in the same organization, in the same region, and in a comparative level of life experience as the others. Differences in age, region, or motivation might augment users' openness to telephony when generating ideas and explaining difficult concepts at a distance.

Notably, Yergeau et al. (2008) explained how older forms of tutoring "haunt" sessions with audiovisual

technology (AVT) (p. 3). Videoconferencing is likened somewhat to telekinesis (for the rare user):

> …one goal of AVT conferencing involves the student's ability to "look through" the interface and transport himself into the content of the computer screen—the real space presented via the chat window, the real space on the other side—we also acknowledge that we cannot fool users into believing that they are actually engaging in conversation identical to f2f or that they will, at all times, forget the physical existence of the webcam, the chat window, the task bar, or the computer's beeps and groans. ("interface," p. 2)

Since that interface distance never entirely disappears, "AVT conversation perhaps best exemplifies cell phone dialogue, where users ask one another, 'Can you hear me now?'" Very few users may experience technology *transcendence*: "AVT users tend to speak louder and more vigorously emphasize the visual aspects of communication—gesticulations and facial movements" (Yergeau et al., 2008, "interface," p. 3). Put simply, videoconference sessions can cause one to use nonverbal gestures because of the interface's interruptions. Yet if two-way audio is deployed through AVT, one would feel more like they are on the phone. Thus, it makes sense that some savvy students might bypass the newer technology altogether to simplify the experience and be more efficient.

Modalities

In this section, an overview of the familiar formats of technology (videoconference, written review, and telephone) used at my institution is provided as well as how the tutor uses it. I also indicate how the format might be altered elsewhere. In the videoconference, students meet with a tutor (called a consultant at my institution) through a software application (at my center, WCONLINE and, when requested, Zoom) and use their computer webcam and audio to discuss their work, allowing for further delimiting of technology to audio only, to video only, or to one-way audio or video. In the latter cases, the host might be on camera while the participant chooses to remain invisible behind a creative overlay or black screen, listing their name; alternatively, the participant may be visible but unintelligible to the consultant, having muted their microphone. In software applications like Zoom, the consultant can share their screen to lead the student through an artifact. A whiteboard may accompany the audio-visual technology where student and consultant can seamlessly view the written essay simultaneously as one finds in WCONLINE. Similarly, a chatbox provides a platform for quick written responses, even alerting the consultant if the audio-visual technology fails.

In the online written review, the student attaches their written draft to the appointment of the WCONLINE platform. The consultant accesses the paper, provides marginal comments, and then uploads this file to the appointment for the student to access at the close of the session. No meeting between consultant and student takes place, so the student only has the written comments to guide them through their revisions. Likewise, the consultant only has the written artifact and cannot guess what the student was trying to communicate. Modifications are often introduced, including adding the text-based chat at the beginning of the appointment to determine the student's needs or screencasting the consultant's formative comments, but such technology is not currently used at my institution.

An older synchronous mode, the phone requires either the student or consultant to call in and begin the appointment. At my center, the student calls at the beginning of the appointment and lets the consultant know how they wish to proceed on the call. They may decide to have an informal conversation where they discuss articles they have read, testing out concepts or verbally paraphrasing theory with the consultant. They may share their written or creative work ahead of time through email, attach the file to the appointment, or provide none at all. If they do share their work, they may read or perform the work aloud or listen as the consultant reads it to them. The manner in which the students use the phone goes beyond the scheduled appointment, so impromptu calls to the center are not included in this essay's definitions of telephone appointments at this time. In contrast, telephone sessions scheduled as follow-up appointments to online written reviews are included. At my institution, consultants remain flexible to student needs to ensure all methods of learning take place.

What's Old Is New Again: The Current Integration of an Existing Study

From 2018-2019, students at my institution chose the phone when other technology formats were available in the writing center. As students who were studying from a distance, they had access to synchronous videoconference (replete with one-way video, two-way video, and two-way audio capabilities) and asynchronous written online review. Since some students lived in the surrounding metropolitan area, they could come for in-person appointments. The research pursued in this project was the direct result of students' preference for the phone.

In a study carried out at Bellevue University, Nejezchleb (2020) showed what participating students thought of tutoring via phone in contrast to the videoconference and the written review. Three specific findings emerged, including 1) the phone has distinct advantages over other technologies, 2) the phone works as well as videoconference, and 3) the phone can be used in addition with the online review for more effective learning. The purpose of the study was to understand which students were calling in and why. The demographics from the study helped to identify different populations of students who used the phone at my institution, their educational backgrounds, economic status, and internet connectivity.

Methods

Nine participants (see Appendix A) were non-traditional students who were working professionals, aged 35 and older, earning degrees online or in a blended model when residential programs were unavailable due to the college's course offerings or because of hectic schedules. Degree-seeking, they sought a new profession when an initial occupation was no longer suitable, or they opted to update their skillsets while gainfully employed in professions for which they were well-suited. Other participants sought to change professions to better provide for family or as a result of being injured on the job. Participants came to college via non-traditional paths and had parents who generally had earned some or no education. Four were men and five were women, and they represented most levels of income, including the lower income level ($31,000 or less) and the upper-middle income range (>$130,000). Two were non-native English speakers who were naturalized and had been speaking English for more than seven years. Seven were native English speakers. Two

were African-American, one was Canadian and a descendant of South American heritage, and six were Caucasian. Two were graduate students and seven were undergraduate students, but all self-identified as non-traditional students seeking online degrees. Participants resided on both U.S. coasts, in the Midwest, and in Toronto, Canada. Two of the nine had Internet that was less reliable as a result of geographic region; seven had reliable internet connectivity.

The procedure in the study is as follows. Participants who had scheduled telephone appointments on the university writing center's WCONLINE scheduling system were contacted and asked to participate in this study. Of 96 potential individuals contacted, 15 participants initially expressed interest in the project, six chose not to continue with it, three did not meet criteria to qualify, one no longer wanted to be considered, and two were unresponsive to emails and phone calls. The remaining nine candidates continued with the study and qualified because they had scheduled a telephone appointment between 2018-2019. Qualified candidates consented to a 45-minute interview.

Interviews were scheduled via Zoom or telephone, depending on the participant's preference. However, it was decided that the telephone was the most convenient way to conduct the interview. Some students did not want to use Zoom or other technology because of religious reasons or because of background interference from children being watched by the participant at home. Interviews were transcribed and notes were taken during the interviews to capture additional thoughts, feelings, facts, and insights.

Semistructured interview questions (Appendix B) were used to guide the interviews, which took place over a one-year period. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using *in vivo* coding methods (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, pp. 31-66). In this type of research, open-coding reveals patterns that emerge from the participants in their environment, and the patterns (group members' very words) come to form the repeat themes of phone tutoring. Using constant-comparison and self-reflection (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the data yielded an emergent picture of phone use among the participants.

Results

While the earlier study found the phone's 1) mobility and ease of use gave it distinct advantages, 2) efficacy was similar to that of the videoconference, and 3) use with asynchronous tutoring procured more effective learning than a written review alone (Nejezchleb, 2020), in this longer article four additional findings emerged from the year-long study that was carried out from 2018-2019. These findings capture the students' motivations for earning education online, shedding light on what populations benefit from phone tutoring now and in pandemic-era education realities. These additional findings are presented as themes in the next section.

<u>Theme 1</u>: Phone tutoring users come to college through nontraditional paths.
Unlike residential programs with 18-21 year olds, phone users arrive at college while engaged in other matters. As a result of other obligations, one participant thought, "college was a sideshow." For an IT specialist who participated in this study, "unpredictable, ridiculous work schedules" caused him to "walk away from classes at times." Caring for elderly parents caused a graduate student to walk away from his residential program. Alternately, some

participants enrolled after having enlisted in the military.

Theme 2: Online education is a common necessity. Oftentimes, the program of interest is available online only, and can be intimidating: "I have an old-school mentality and online is a challenge for me." However, some participants stated that online classes are convenient, helping to "cut down the driving time" particularly when "driving was a challenge." Moreover, online allows those "working for the federal government" or "corporate sponsorship" to study cost effectively, remotely, even while out of the country, and with manageable student-to-faculty ratios.

Theme 3: A college degree leads to promotion and a better career path. Three participants reported "updating skillsets" to remain "relevant to the modern professional environment" as the main reason for seeking a degree. Two others wanted "to advance with the company," "to move up," and "to provide more for […] family." Additional participants believed "having the degree [would] put [them] in a different category of […] more visibility," including the honest desire of more money. One remarked on her specific accomplishment: "My salary doubled when I started the MBA." Finally, users of the phone had found a career change necessary when circumstances were out of their control, with one admitting, "a concrete ball crushed many bones, and I [was] in the market for a career change."

Theme 4: Phone users have limited educational experiences and lack college mentoring from family. Four participants came from families where neither parent had any college. As a result of being in the military, either a mother or father of some participants may have completed technical education, "business school in the 1950s," or "cosmetology." Alternatively, a family member "received [a] degree when he was in his fifties" because being in the army "was a tough balance." In other cases, mothers had no college because they were managing the home and raising children, "a good Irish-Italian mom, a Lucille Ball."

Analysis and Discussion

These four core categories tell us that the number of participants who called into the writing center may not resemble traditional, residential students with whom educators are familiar. Instead, these phone users are raising children, taking care of parents, and working 40 or more hours per week. The nine who chose the phone in this exploratory study grew up in families where parents prioritized child-rearing, military deployment, or secretary and cosmetology positions that were available at the time. Some participants have been living on meager paychecks in areas where Internet is not expedient because of unlucky circumstances or in preference of remaining close with extended families. Others have excellent Internet connectivity and are making higher salaries than their professors, but they work to fit in 20 hours of study during the weekday evenings and another 16 hours on weekends, all after their 40-hour work week has concluded.

A striking point of analysis from this study is that distance-learning students with hectic schedules often work in tutoring support over a lunch hour. Workplaces may not permit videoconferences on company computer equipment in the same ways that they would permit phone use. Some students asked follow-up questions to asynchronous reviews on the phone while commuting. This is an unideal outcome, and consultants may want to encourage students to call back when they are not driving an automobile.

For at least two participants, the telephone offered a less intrusive function, subverting socioeconomic or socionormative status indicators, such as home environment, clothing, or number of children. The learners may have wished to obscure these factors to blend in with the mainstream. In households with lower incomes, the one computer can be in a room used by the whole family. Thus, the phone gives the student more flexibility (and privacy) than videoconference alone.

A final point of analysis from the study is non-native students (NNSs) who have naturalized (upwards of seven or more years of English learning) have found the phone to be easier when seeking out support. They verbalized their questions more efficiently on the phone when checking sentence-level issues without worrying whether correct grammar and mechanics were used. The same could not be said when writing their responses out on white boards with synchronous videoconferences or asynchronous reviews. Admittedly, two-way video offers visual cues when students' accents are particularly heavy, so NNSs and complex concepts may be better served by videoconference or in-person appointments, when available. Students themselves may long to blur socioeconomic standings through telephony while seeking assistance, thereby dispelling any desire to use newer technologies.

Further consideration is needed on whether those 35 years and older are using technology in the same ways that younger students are with ubiquitous, mobile technology. Long Term Evolution (LTE) is the standard in wireless data transmission whose access allows students a mobility and connectivity despite intermittent or limited internet connections that may hinder computer technology where they reside. Non-traditional students, like those aged 35 and older in this study, are familiar with telephony, and often choose it for their learning needs when first starting their coursework. More research can be performed regarding the users of residential institutions when compared to regional comprehensive online institutions like this one. Such research may yield ways that student populations are using technologies differently, providing further insight on whether modifications like the telephone improve access for all student bodies.

In light of this preliminary sample of phone users—including a participant who chose clinical counseling instead of medicine because residency permitted little flexibility to provide care for his aging mother—more research is needed on the ways adult education should restructure assumptions of higher education. Putting modifications like the telephone in place may help make room for experiences that differ from established institutional conventions. The demographics and backgrounds of the nine participants may give one pause in how remote education is meeting various needs. Taking such cultural categories into consideration, particularly in the reality of pandemic-era remote education, support centers would approach more reasonable modifications to make education equitable and just.

Expanding Existing Technologies to Include Telephony

At my center, the phone has benefits that are superior to computer audio. When someone moves away from the computer, it is difficult to hear them in the videoconference. The phone is easily portable; whether landline telephone, cellphone, or smartphone, the phone allows students to move around while discussing their ideas or writing with a consultant. The technology is richer in the amount of data it

transfers from communicant to recipient, so the conversation is easier to follow when compared to one-way audio conversations. Accents may be easier to understand on the phone when compared with audio-only modes of the videoconference session as a result of said richness. Experiences with students at my center reveal that students understand communications over the phone but struggle greatly when putting those thoughts into writing because of learning differences. Having the telephone as the initial format allows these students to feel more capable, fortifying their confidence for when comprehension is murky and arduous. Telephony also out-performs videoconference when it comes to consistency. Consultants turn to the phone at my center when videoconference connections freeze, bumble, or disconnect, or when students do not appear in the videoconference at the start of a scheduled video appointment. In these situations, students have been absent because they are struggling to access the videoconference technology.

Alternatively, there are cases when the videoconference is preferable to the phone. When someone has a lengthy and complex academic paper, a consultant has found it difficult to follow the student without the paper visible in front of them through a shared point of reference. Likewise, heavy accents benefit from visual cues and body language that are only visible in visual technologies. Students who require live, real-time supports (e.g., ASL users who are working with English-speaking consultants) will benefit from the videoconference or audio-visual technologies. When the videoconference does not provide for a single point of reference where both student and consultant can edit the artifact together, the phone session can suffice, both consultant's and student's eyes focusing on the file at hand on two respective devices.

Couple ease of use with emerging digital literacy, and the phone call acts as a bridge to the audio-visual technology. When a student is unfamiliar with the videoconference software at my institution, the student can call to start their session with the consultant. Then the consultant can walk the student through the steps to join the videoconference if the whiteboard would be more helpful. Eventually, as academic skills like speaking and writing become more effective, students choose the asynchronous online appointment because they understand how design and composition in the academy work, as opposed to when their skills were emerging. These points show that online tutoring must remain flexible for students' different learning needs and styles. Phone is one of many technologies that may be available to students who learn online, and individuals who do not have access to necessary technology or supports are left behind.

A Synopsis of Two Phone Models

Access to a phone number to call has been available since the 1980's at my center, but telephone appointments became available to students in 2016. Initially, tutors used a VoIP model to consult with students by phone. Last year, circumstances of the pandemic required my team to adopt a different model, and consultants began working with students through a device-based model. Both VoIP and device-based models are discussed more fully below, including benefits and weaknesses of either.

Before the COVID-19 Global Pandemic: VoIP Model

Prior to 2016, students called the center with their composition and academic research questions via our main phone line,

and front-desk staff or consultants directed them to WCONLINE and the available appointment options, online (either synchronous or asynchronous) and in person. A few conversations made it apparent that a telephone format was needed, and my center adopted telephone appointments with VoIP technology as a result. Such telephone connections were strong with few weaknesses in data transference.

The VoIP model was suitable to in-office work where consultants used university equipment and office space to facilitate their learning sessions. Logitech headsets were available in addition to Avaya phone handsets, enabling a consultant to type notes while working with a student in a phone session. Moreover, the headsets reduced strain on the neck and shoulders from the hand-held handset. At the beginning of a session, the student called into the center, and the front desk staff member routed the call to the specific consultant. The respective consultant was standing by, waiting for the client to begin their session. Pending availability, "walk-in" callers could obtain same-time assistance and be marshalled to an available appointment on the phone without delay. Students could even schedule telephone conferences when they had two or more group members involved on a single project. Telephone conferences ensured that everyone heard the feedback at the same time, so staff encouraged students to schedule a group telephone session in lieu of the online review prior to the pandemic.

After the COVID-19 Global Pandemic: A Devise-Based Model

Beginning in March 2020, COVID-19-related closures at the university obligated our center to switch to a device-based model through the use of iPhones. Such a flexible model ensured that every consultant could guide students remotely from home. I afforded each consultant the ability to decide whether they wanted the iPhone delivered through post or whether they wanted to pick it up on campus given the nature of the virus. Once the iPhones were distributed, a need for a centralized access point for the center's office voicemails was noted. The VoIP voicemail messages were forwarded to the center's central email account, and one of four scheduled consultants reached out to students whose voicemail messages in the inbox indicated a need for assistance.

The intuitive technology of the device-based model created unintended benefits. An unanticipated advantage was the iPhone's built-in conference option, making it easy to host a telephone conference with two or more students on a single project. The iPhone's conference technology is different from the VoIP model where consultants set up the conference by bridging the calls. In other words, consultants at my institution found the device-based model to be more intuitive for conference calls. An additional benefit was the device's ease of use for remote work. Devise-based models allow consultants to work at home whereas no available phone technology might deter consultants from working with students remotely. Likewise, without a phone number option available in remote settings, some students might be deterred from contacting centers with only virtual communication options, resulting in the loss of potential new users.

Several challenges emerged when outfitting a communication or writing center with the device-based model. The major challenge was located firmly in the way students contacted the center: the lack of access to a single point of contact. A student's voicemail message was forwarded

to the central email account, but a consultant's response was not as instantaneous as one found in the campus office. Another challenge resided in the types of staff positions. Students were not able to reach the front desk worker by way of the main phone number, a position funded by federal work study, nor the consultants, who have been situated at their own homes throughout the different geographical regions of the metropolis. Furnishing all workers at my university with the device-based model proved official and regulatory in ways that contrasted with residential office workers who were easily afforded with equipment. Federal regulations can hinder how the federal work study position is authorized outside of a residential campus. In March, the individual employed in the position was allocated 10 hours per week. While authorization for the individual to work remotely on administrative matters was permitted, authorization for her to interact with students at her home via a university-paid device was not. My consulting team was comprised of professional writers who consult, so there were existing procedures for the long-term use of phones outside of the office in place at my university. Another facet to consider, consultants were considered staff while the undergraduate front-desk worker was federally paid; hence, they stem from two different pools of money. My university budget provided for a minimum purchase of iPhones, and proposing to university administrators the need to outfit an undergraduate student with an iPhone was not been a battle I was willing to engage in, especially considering the quick nature of most decisions at that time.

Additionally, the consultants' ability to interact with students effortlessly, through that single access point, presented challenges. Quite simply, instantaneous conversations did not happen with the device-based model. A delay in the voicemail message registering with the email provider made it impossible to pick up the phone at the same time the call came through. Because of this delay, consultants focused intently on an online review or other administrative duty and missed voicemails coming through email. When the phone rings next to someone in the center office, consultants were unable to ignore the ring, even while completing other asynchronous work. Moreover, students could not just call the main hotline and reach whichever consultant was scheduled at the time. The device-based model would have necessitated a student knowing the cell number of the consultant or all consultants' phone numbers. In this respect, cell numbers were not immediately available to students because I wanted to prevent consultants from being called at all hours of the day on their work phones while they were not scheduled. A noticeable drop in telephone calls resulted when students had to wait a little longer for their calls to be returned. Instead, the majority of students have been scheduling their appointments online, and then they wait for the consultant to call the number they listed in the appointment form. After the pandemic, the question remains whether appointments will increase again after business becomes more normal.

Another difference in implementing the device-based model was that schedules could be unpredictable, completely booked or open, and consultants' openness to quick conversations with the coordinator or one another in the manner of informal training proved a learning experience of its own. I was in the vicinity to answer student questions or to assist if issues occurred with VoIP technology before remote work began. The dynamism that accompanies these interactions was a strength of the in-person

center. Where a consultant was situated as a result of remote work impacts their ability to exchange ideas effortlessly. Remote work delayed consultants' willingness to reach out via email, phone call, or text message, or their busy schedules precluded them from reaching out immediately. Out of sight was often out of mind. A few days might have passed before the consultant broke away and placed a call, wrote an email, or requested a Zoom session to troubleshoot their tutoring concerns with me. At other times, they jotted a quick email and received an instantaneous response when finding themselves with lighter schedules. Notably, my consultants hardly texted me with questions even though our iPhones have had that capability. Perhaps they saw it as bothersome or unprofessional, so this might be something worth analyzing further. The benefits that come with working in the same space among others to troubleshoot sessions were affected and, with that, the synergy of the residential office space.

Lastly, the device-based model is not as ergonomically adept as the VoIP model given the constraints of the workplace in the COVID-19 pandemic. Recall from above that the hand-held iPhone causes weariness in the consultants' necks and shoulders after sessions on the phone. Solutions to this problem include Bluetooth devices that sit near and are affixed to the ear as well as wireless or other varieties of headsets. Whatever the product, requesting duplicate equipment like that of the Logitech headsets when consultants may be returning to campus in a matter of months seemed hasty, particularly when small teams and budgets are a factor. Consultants at my university put their iPhones on speaker mode while working with students, but this audible mode impeded the richness of the data being transferred through the phone, particularly in the presence of nearby distractions or when cell call quality was poor. What's more, over the clicking of keys on a computer keyboard, it was difficult to hear what the other person on the line was saying unless one ceases their typing.

Training Consultants on the Phone

Training consultants to use the telephone is a natural process and can be completed while they learn other formats or as a separate process in stages, which is the case at my center. New consultants begin an eight-week training period at my institution where they read weekly articles in writing center scholarship, shadow veteran consultants, and complete reflections. After the first four weeks, they begin tutoring in person while I observe their work. They continue to read as they practice theory in sessions with students. Following the initial eight-week period, consultants are then introduced to videoconference and telephony, depending on their previous level of tutoring experience. After a twelve-week period where consultants have consulted with students in person and synchronously, consultants are able to review student work online asynchronously. I observe each type of session once per week, as the schedule allows. Ongoing monthly training takes place while consultants are employed at my center, and these have transitioned to Zoom sessions as a result of social distancing.

To observe and train consultants in telephone protocol is easier than videoconference. In part, this is because WCONLINE is the videoconference of choice at my center. Containing many benefits, WCONLINE allows the consultant to chat with the student, mark an artifact from a single reference point, and to see and hear the student via camera and audio. However, the platform does not allow for observations. The video snags when a third person joins the session, so it is not feasible

for group conferences either. This year, Zoom has been adopted as an alternative mode that students can elect in videoconferences, and I have selected it as the mode for AVT observations. Students simply inform their consultant in their appointment form or at the beginning of the session that they prefer Zoom. I notify consultants ahead of time that I will be observing their work; then, the student is informed in an email and by phone.

To observe consultants through the VoIP model in the residential center, I have requested the student's permission at the beginning of the session. Once granted, I can pick up the Avaya phone in my office, listen, and take notes, much like the consultant is doing in the session with the student on a second handset in the adjacent writing center. I listen for turn-taking by both consultant and student, for default behaviors of editing and proofreading, and for moments when students lack understanding but remain silent or offer one-word responses which the consultant does not catch in the silence. Following the observation, I transcribe the session, noting pertinent quotes for discussion in a follow-up meeting. I provide the consultant with a copy of the transcription and my analysis of the session where I mark areas for growth.

In the remote setting with the device-based model, there are some differences. Rather than in person, I notify a consultant via email that I will be observing a particular telephone appointment. The consultant first calls the student and requests their permission to be observed, similar to the VoIP model. Then the consultant bridges the call to me on the iPhone, pressing the "add call" button, dialing my cell number, and then pressing the "merge calls" button on the iPhone.

Either telephone model lends itself to conversation, and I have focused training on the student's engagement with the consultant. For students at my center, the phone is relatable, and a particularly amiable consultant and effective consultation can seem like a friendly phone call. In online asynchronous education, students have felt isolated, particularly when they are stressed. Couple this with my institution's open-access administration and commitment to historically marginalized students, and the recipe for isolation becomes particularly acute. I have found students are hesitant to connect with a professor whom they haven't met when they are struggling, and this may stem from the anxiety of being evaluated. In contrast, a friendly consultant who is offering suggestions eases what hindrances may prevent students at my university from reaching out for help. Students have contacted the center when they are stressed and hopeless, so the phone session with a consultant has acted as a cathartic call. The consultant listens to their concerns, gently pointing students to available resources if students are in need, while maintaining focus on the development of writing and speaking. Brainstorming is acceptable and encouraged (and the phone lends itself very well to this stage of the design or composition process), but consultants are trained to perceive differences between the prepared student who has read their material and has a loose plan for the session and the student who wants to rely on the smart consultant for answers or to vent repeatedly. That is not to say that all students are prepared to use the phone to work. I have helped consultants adjust their approaches to students who are unprepared for their phone appointments.

When students schedule a phone appointment, it can be easy for them to want to sit back and let the consultant do the work. Having answered questions with curt, one-word answers, a student's behavior can

cause less experienced consultants to default to proofreading or directive advice. Therefore, I have trained consultants to watch for directive, declarative statements, editing, and proofreading in their phone sessions. Since these behaviors appear ever-present in all center formats, I have asked the consultant to look for those areas where the student seems disconnected when a question is asked. I advise consultants to understand whether a student is answering the question fully or whether the student responded in *non sequitur*. If the student answers with a one-word answer, I direct the consultant to ask follow-up questions to elicit additional response. Consultants work to identify the questions that allow for an equal exchange between students and themselves in phone sessions: the open-ended questions that draw students out, make them eager to share their ideas on a given topic, or build their self-confidence in paraphrasing a professor's assignment description.

Consultants are sensitive to what creates a warm and engaging synchronous environment on the phone; they have been coached to avoid the temptation to move quickly because of an inability to see nonverbal cues. Consultants can look for other cues in the silence between their questions. Tone and turn-taking are examples of cues that consultants can look for on the phone. A flat "yeah" versus one with a heightened inflection at the end can indicate to the consultant when additional questions are needed or whether the student has understood a point made by the suggestions.

When consultants move too quickly, default to directive advice or proofreading, talk over a student, or display errors in their written reviews or client reports, I require them to write reflective papers. These reflections are meant to help them master a given skill. For instance, one consultant struggled with turn-taking, and he would interrupt the student or talk over the student while they were responding to one of the consultant's questions. As a training assignment, the consultant reflected on his subsequent sessions, having looked for examples where turn-taking was working effectively. Another consultant managed her time ineffectively because she identified every error in the paper in her phone sessions, causing one session to bleed into the next. In our follow-up meeting, I provided this consultant time-management strategies, including focusing on three major compositional problem areas, five rules pertaining to sentence-level errors, or three aspects of documentation that required assistance, depending on what the student requested in the appointment form. Then, I helped the consultant to view follow-up consultations as a way around the problem of the perfect paper. A consultant can encourage the student to schedule another appointment as opposed to putting the burden on herself to catch every problem. From these reflections, consultants extrapolate which warm and friendly tones, active listening, and focused strategies draw students out on the phone. Again, the goal here is not to strictly adhere to a static script but to ensure that each phone session provides flexibility for online students.

Conclusion

Several advantages to adopting the phone as one of several available technologies in a communication or writing center exist. The phone's richer technology can make conversations at a distance easier and more reliable. As Tim Kreider (2020) observed in his *New York Times* opinion piece, "The warm timbre of a human voice in your ear is more real, more present, than text on a screen. We need that now." Unlike

when one walks away from the computer, the phone allows a conversation of writing or speaking to continue wherever one moves; there's freedom in the format. The phone by its nature cultivates a personal connection between two individuals (or more in group sessions), and this trustworthy connection is palpable to the communicant and recipient(s). The phone is a tool that everyone understands how to use, so eminent, middle-class affordances like secure and affordable housing, accessible and reliable internet, and efficient transportation that form a digital divide in society are extended by availing telephony to students in a center. As students become more comfortable with their academic skills, they can transition from the phone to another technology. Having considered the benefits of phone tutoring, communication and writing center professionals might incorporate technology that works for young students who are overly familiar with social media. The device-based model discussed above is one way that the newer technology of the smartphone may upgrade existing virtual options for consultants working remotely. Residing outside the status quo of college student traits, those who are returning to college, busy adult learners, or at-risk learners are all populations who have benefitted from having a phone number to call. Rather than the single solution to reaching every student, the phone should be one of many assorted technologies available to students, a conspicuous, suitable answer to bridge the gap.

References

Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*, New York U P.

Bartunek, J. M., & Moch, M. K. (1987). First-order, second-order, and third-order change and organization development interventions: A cognitive approach. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *23*(4), 483-500.

Bell, L. (2020). Rethinking what to preserve as writing centers move online. *Connecting Writing Centers Across Borders: A Blog of WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*. http://www.wlnjournal.org/blog/2020/07/rethinking-what-to-preserve-as-writing-centers-move-online/

Blythe, S. (1997). Networked computers + writing centers = ? Thinking about networked computers in writing center practice. *WCJ*, *17*(2), pp. 89-110.

Borup, J., West, R. E., & Thomas, R. (2015). The impact of text versus video communication on instructor feedback in blended courses. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *63*(2), 161-184. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-015-9367-8

Bradner, E., & Mark, G. (2001). Social presence with video and application sharing. *Group '01*. ACM.

Breuch, L. K. (2005). The idea(s) of an online writing center: In search of a conceptual model. *The Writing Center Journal*, *25*(2), pp. 21-38.

Breuch, L. K. & Racine, S. J. (2000). Developing sound tutor training for online writing centers: Creating productive peer reviewers. *Computers and Composition* 17, 245-263.

Calton, Robert. (2016). *Development and Delivery of Mobile Learning for Composition Classrooms* [Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale]. Southern Illinois University Carbondale Morris Library.

Caswell, N. I., Grutsch McKinney, J., &

Jackson, R. (2016). *The Working Lives of New Writing Center Directors*. Utah State University Press.

Coogan, D. (1998). Email "tutoring" as collaborative writing. In E. Hobson (Ed.), *Wiring the Writing Center* (pp. 25-43). Utah State University Press.

Cranny, D. (2016). Screencasting, a tool to facilitate engagement with formative feedback?. *AISHE-J: The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *8*(3). 29110-29127. http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/291/497

Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry research design: Choosing among five approaches.* SAGE.

Davis, A. (2012). The implementation of computer mediated communication in communication centers. In E. Yook & W. Atkins-Sayre (Eds.), *Communication centers and oral communication programs in higher education: Advantages, challenges, and new directions* (pp. 217-230). Lexington.

Dortin, R. & Ries, S. (2014). From behind the screen: Best practices for online tutoring. *ECWCA*, 6-8. https://ecwcatest.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/ecwca-spr-15_interactive.pdf

Epes, M. (1978). The comp-lab project at York College of The City University of New York. *WLN*, *2*(7), 1-3.

Epes, M. (1979a). The autotutorial lab at the CCCC. *WLN*, *3*(8), 1.

Epes, M. (1979b). The comp-lab project: An experimental Basic Writing course. *Journal of Basic Writing*, *2*(2), 19-37.

Eodice, M. (2005). Do we really need that? Choosing technology for the writing center. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, 2(2), 2-7. www.praxisuwc.com/journal-page-22

Fish, R. S., Kraut, R. E., Root, R. W., & Rice, R. E. (1992). Evaluating video as a technology for informal communication. In P. Bauersfeld, J. Bennett, & G. Lynch's (Eds.), *CHI '92 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 37-48). Association for Computing Machinery, Inc.

Geller, A. E., Eodice, M., Condon, F., Caroll, M., & Boquet, E. H. (2007). *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community Practice.* Utah State University Press.

Hewett, B. L., Boeshart, M., Prince, S. & Nastachowski, B. (2019). Bridging the gap: Online writing centers and online writing tutoring. *ROLE (Research of Online Literacy Educators)*, *3*(1). http://www.roleolor.org/editorrsquos-introduction.html

Hewett, B. L. & DePew, K. E. (Ed.). (2015). *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction*. Parlor Press.

Isaacs, E. A., & J. C. Tang. (1994). What video can and can't do for collaboration: A case study. *Multimedia Systems*, *2*, 63-73. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01274181

Kreider, T. (2020, March 22). I just called to say…The phone is back. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/opinion/covid-phone.html

Madson, M. (2017). Showing and telling! Screencasts for enhanced feedback on student writing. *Nurse Educator*, *42*(5), 222-223. https://doi.org/10.1097/NNE.0000000000000385

Martin, J. C., Strawser, M. G., Apostel, S., & Martin, F. (2017) The Communication Center as a Transcendent Physical and Virtual Space. *Communication Center Journal*, *3*(1) 61-77. http://commcenters.org/content/05-journal/communication-center-journal-vol-1.pdf

Martinez, D. & Olsen, L. (2015). Online writing labs. In B. L. Hewett & K. E. DePew (Ed.), *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction* (pp. 183-210). The WAC Clearinghouse.

Maugh, C. M. (2012). The combined centers approach: How speaking and writing centers can work together. In Yook, E. & Atkins Sayre, W. (Eds.), *Communication centers and oral communication programs in higher education: Advantages, challenges, and new directions* (pp. 175-186). Lexington.

McIntyre, K., & Hall, A. (2017). Mapping the Landscape of Asynchronous and Synchronous Online Services in Communication Centers. *Communication Center Journal*, *3*(1) 92-103. http://commcenters.org/content/05-journal/communication-center-journal-vol-1.pdf

McKinney, J. G. (2013). *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*. Utah State University Press.

Mick, C. S. & Middlebrook, G. (2015). Asynchronous and synchronous modalities. In B. L. Hewett & K. E. DePew's (Eds.)., *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction*, pp. 129-148. The WAC Clearinghouse.

Monroe, B. (1998). The look and feel of the OWL conference. In E. Hobson (Ed.), *Wiring the Writing Center* (pp. 3-24). Utah State University Press.

Murphy, M. P. (1979). Publicity and success. *WLN: Writing Lab Newsletter*, *4*(3), 1-2.

Nejezchleb, A. (2020). Answer if you have callers: Telephone tutoring in the writing center. *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, 45(3-4), 9-16.

Neaderhiser, S. & Wolfe, J. (2009). Between technological endorsement and resistance: The state of online writing centers. *WCJ*, 29(1), 49-77.

Neulieb, J., & Scharton, M. (1982). Grammar hotline. *College English*, *44*(4), 413-416.

Rosaschi, G. (1978). Computer assisted instruction. *WLN*, *2*(7), 4.

Schwartzman, R. (2013). Reviving a digital dinosaur: Text-only synchronous online chats and peer tutoring in communication centers. *College Student Journal*, *47*(4), 653-667.

Schweitzer, L. (2017). The De-Centered Center: Embracing a Space that is Nowhere and Everywhere. *Communication Center Journal*, *3*(1) 147-156. http://commcenters.org/content/05-journal/communication-center-journal-vol-1.pdf

Thomas, S., DeVoss, D., & Hara, M. (1998). Toward a critical theory of technology and writing. *WCJ*, *19*(1), 73-86.

Turkle, S. (2015). *Reclaiming the Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. Penguin Books.

Veit, R. C. Are machines the answer? *WLN*, *4*(4), 1-2.Wolfe, J. & Griffin, J. (2012). Comparing technologies for online writing conferences: Effects of medium on conversation. *WCJ*, *32*(2), 60-92.

Yergeau, M. R., Wozniak, K., & Vandenberg, P. (2008). Expanding the space of F2F: Writing centers and audio-visual-textual conferencing. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 13(1). kairos.technorhetoric.net

Appendix A

Participant	Location	Gender	Multilingual (Y/N)	Race	Class	Tutoring Preference	Educ. Level (U/G)	Parent (Y/N)	Parents' Education Level	
									Dad	Mom
001	Suburb in Los Angeles, California	M	N	Caucasian	Middle Income	Depends on context	U	Y	Military Vet – bachelor's in his 50s	No degree Completed art classes in college
002	Bellevue /Omaha, Nebraska	F	N	Caucasian	Middle Income	Based on availability and schedule	G	N	High School Diploma Air Force Member	High School Diploma
009	Oneida, New York	M	Y	African American	Lower-middle Income	Telephone	U	Y	No formal education Farmer in Sierra Leone, Africa	No formal education Farmer in Sierra Leone, Africa
010	Omaha, Nebraska	F	N	Caucasian	Middle Income	Online Review	U	Y	High School Some college tech classes	high school
011	Northwest New Jersey	M	N	Caucasian	Lower-middle Income	Depends on context	U	N	Associate's	homemaker
012	Toronto, Canada	F	N(Y) (reads Spanish fluently)	South American-Canadian	Upper-middle Income	Videoconference	G	Y	Elementary education No high school	Elementary education No high school
013	Boise, Idaho	M	N	Caucasian	Lowest income (poverty level)	Telephone	U	Y	High school	High school
014	Omaha, Nebraska	F	N	Caucasian	Middle Income	In person or Telephone	U	Y	GED	High school and business school (1950's)
015	Arkansas	F	N	African American	Upper-middle Income	Videoconference	U	Y	Elementary education No high school	Degree in cosmetology

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. Why did you choose Bellevue University to earn your degree? (online program, word-of-mouth, diverse higher education institution, corporate sponsorship, etc.)
2. In what format are you pursuing your education at Bellevue University? In-person? Online? Hybrid/Blended?
3. Are you a part of a cohort? (yes/no)
4. What has prompted you to earn your education? What reasons do you have for pursuing your education, earning your degree? (e.g., promotion, more money, unhappy in current position, be one's own boss, requirement for current job, etc.)
5. Would you consider yourself to be traditional or non-traditional?
6. Were one or both of your parents college educated? (one/both)
7. Tell me about their education level(s).
8. How did you hear about the writing center?
9. How do you feel about your writing skills?
10. Why do you feel that way (refer back to answer from #9)?
11. Were you prepared to write at the college level? Why or why not?
12. Why did you choose to visit the writing center?
13. What are the different formats that one can choose to receive writing center assistance at Bellevue University? (in-person, videoconference/real-time/online interactive, telephone, or online writing review)
14. Have you received assistance from a tutor using any other formats or modes?
15. Which mode or format do you like best?
16. Why do you like that mode or format best?
17. What are the differences between the telephone and the videoconference?
18. Why did you choose the videoconference?
19. Why did you choose the telephone?
20. Do you consider yourself fluent in two or more languages?
21. What is your first language or most comfortable language when talking to other people?
22. Why is that (refer to #18)?
23. Tell me more about where you live.
24. Would that be more of a rural area or a metropolitan or populous area?
25. What is your internet service like? Is it reliable?
26. If not reliable, is that because you live in a rural area where internet is inconsistent?
27. Tell me a bit about your relationship with technology. Is it easy for you to use technology, or do you need someone to walk you through new technology?
28. Do you have beliefs that prevent you from using technology in particular ways?
29. If yes (#25), how are you restricted in your technology use?
30. Do you work full-time and earn an education in addition to that?
31. IF yes (#27), does your workplace require you to travel a lot?
32. IF yes (#28), do you find that it is difficult to find a time to sit down at the computer to receive synchronous (face-to-face) assistance?
33. (Re:#29) Would it be easier to work the tutoring session in as part of a break and on the telephone?

34. (Re:#29) Or would you find it easier just to receive comments from someone offline on your writing?
35. Do you feel that you would understand the written comments well? Why or why not?
36. Are you a parent?
37. Does being a mother or father while earning a degree make receiving assistance in the writing center difficult?
38. (#34) Why or why not?
39. Would tutoring via telephone make receiving assistance easier in the writing center as a result of having children?
40. (#31) Why or why not?
41. What is your race?
42. What is your gender?
43. What is your income/class standing? (Poverty-level, lower middle class, middle class, or upper middle class, upper class)
44. Do you have additional comments or reflections that you would like to add to this interview?

[1] Editors changed the name of *Writing Lab Newsletter* (*WLN*) to *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* in the Fall of 2015 with volume 40.