

Collaborative Assessment of an Academic Library and Writing Center Partnership: Embedded Writing and Research Tutors for First-Year Students

Maglen Epstein and Bridget Draxler

This article reports on collaborative research that assessed the impact of a joint library and writing center initiative: the Writing and Research Tutor program. This program provided an integrated model of academic support to underrepresented first-year students who were paired with a tutor trained in both writing and research support. The St. Olaf Libraries and the Center for Advising and Academic Support partnered with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment to ask: How can our services—and our data collection and assessment practices—align to foster student success? How can we collaboratively contribute to institutional efforts to improve student success? In answering these questions, we chose a small-scale pilot program and created mixed-methods assessments including self-efficacy surveys, written reflections, focus groups, and interviews with former tutors. The assessments provided opportunities for student reflection and metacognition and explicitly connected the results of our study to both national and local measures of success.

Introduction

Academic libraries operate in a complex ecosystem of value metrics. We measure our collections, services, and spaces for national comparison as well as to ascertain how we contribute to institution-specific goals. The 2017 *Academic Library Impact* report¹ urged a focus on matching library assessment to the institution's mission. The report also encouraged an exploration of how libraries might work with others on campus to foster student success. These collaborations necessitate jointly created assessments that can be shared with stakeholders on campus and contribute to the institution's other efforts to promote student success and demonstrate the value of the institution.

This report details collaborative research that assessed the impact of a joint library and writing center initiative: underrepresented first-year students were paired with a tutor trained in both writing and research support for mandatory weekly tutorials.² The researchers focused

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on a small-scale pilot project to realize an additional purpose of the study: to explore the process by which assessments can be collaboratively designed as well as mutually beneficial for both parties. The results of the mixed-methods assessments, which included self-efficacy surveys, written reflections, focus groups, and interviews with former tutors, provide an emerging picture of a unique library service. Additionally, the design of our assessment provides a model for illuminating the many contributions of the academic library in language understandable by multiple stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, and students themselves.

Background

St. Olaf College is a private liberal arts college located in Northfield, Minnesota. The St. Olaf College Board of Regents revised and approved the College Mission Statement in May 2016 to read: “St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.”³ A set of companion student learning outcomes—known as “STO-Goals”—further reinforce this commitment to the liberal arts and include self-development, broad knowledge, specialized knowledge, integration and application, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, vocational discernment, and responsible engagement.⁴ In a time of increasing competition for a shrinking pool of potential students,⁵ a strong mission and brand are important for St. Olaf to distinguish itself from other liberal arts colleges and continue to have strong enrollment numbers. In addition, changing student demographics are challenging small colleges to develop authentic ways to engage students with instruction that is not only mission-driven but also inclusive.

St. Olaf enrolls approximately 3,000 undergraduate students. In fall 2018, the student body included 20 percent domestic students of color,⁶ 43 percent students from Minnesota, and 10 percent international students.⁷ The average GPA of all incoming first-years in 2018 was 3.67 and the average ACT score was 29.⁸ Like many colleges across the nation, we have seen rapid growth in enrollment of underrepresented students; less than 20 years ago, in 2001, the entering cohort included 6 percent domestic students of color and 1 percent international students, whereas in the incoming class of fall 2018, 22 percent identified as domestic students of color and 9 percent as international students.⁹ In 2018, St. Olaf was awarded a four-year, \$800,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that launched the *To Include Is to Excel* initiative. This grant funded numerous projects on campus intended to support sustainable curricular efforts to engage and educate a new—and more diverse—generation of students. In addition, St. Olaf recently established a committee to investigate the retention of students year-to-year. While our retention numbers are high among comparison groups,¹⁰ we have gradually slipped from a high of 94.2 percent first-to-second-year retention in 2010 to 90.6 percent in 2017. Four-year graduation rates fell from a peak of 85.9 percent in 2008 to 81.7 percent in 2014, the most recent year for which data are available.¹¹

The Writing and Research Tutor program was developed in this atmosphere of providing inclusive support to retain students. We received a mini-grant from *To Include Is to Excel*, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation, to grow our own knowledge for doing this work as well as to develop training materials for tutors. We chose to pilot the program in a particular set of courses that were already providing supplemental writing and research training for underrepresented students.

For a number of years, our campus has offered two courses (Writing 107 and Writing 110) that help prepare students for the required First-Year Writing course (Writing 111). These courses are not sequential; instead, Writing 107 prepares ELL international students for first-year writing, and Writing 110 serves domestic students, typically low-income, first-generation, and/or students of color. Table 1 indicates enrollment by year for these two courses.

TABLE 1			
Student Enrollment in Writing 107 and Writing 110 during WRT Pilot Program			
	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Total First-Year Incoming Student Population¹²	786	809	806
Total Enrolled in Writing 110	32	37	41
Domestic Students of Color in Writing 110	24	26	34
Total Enrolled in Writing 107	*	28	40
International Students Enrolled in Writing 107	*	28	40

*In the program's first year, we piloted only Writing 110 courses.

Small class sizes (each section is capped at 15) create opportunities for faculty to give each student individualized support throughout the writing process, including feedback on multiple drafts of each formal essay and individual conferences throughout the semester. Because these courses already offered students robust, personalized instruction in both writing and research, we saw them as an ideal place to pilot an embedded writing and research tutor program.

Another perk of partnering with these courses was an already close relationship with both the research librarians and the Writing Desk. Faculty teaching these courses have historically included at least one library visit and have either encouraged or required students to meet with writing tutors. In addition, one section of Writing 110 each year is taught by the writing center director. At the same time, students did not always take the initiative to sign up for appointments with a writing tutor at the Writing Desk. Limited time in class meant that the research librarian did not get to work one-on-one with students to refine their research questions, locate appropriate sources, and evaluate the students' findings. We saw an opportunity to create an embedded tutoring program that would make supplemental writing and research instruction even more closely tied to the course priorities of process and personalized instruction.

In fall 2017, the writing center director and a research librarian jointly piloted the embedded Writing and Research Tutor (WRT) program to provide additional individualized writing and research support for incoming first-year students. The WRT program aims to support first-year students enrolled in these first-year writing preparation courses as they develop foundational skills in both writing and research. The program also serves as a development pipeline for highly motivated students who succeeded in these courses to become Writing and Research Tutors themselves. These tutors receive weekly training on essential topics in writing, research, and inclusivity: developing research questions, finding sources, synthesizing sources, revising drafts, understanding linguistic privilege, and practicing cultural humility, among others. They also receive support from the program directors and course faculty as they independently work one-on-one with students weekly throughout the semester. Between full-time staff and peer tutors, and in close partnership with the faculty teaching these courses, the library and the writing center are able to provide intensive, individualized support and mentoring.

The WRT program also provided a pilot program to explore how to collaboratively assess the impact of embedded writing and research tutoring on students. Library and Writing Center staff started our efforts with an assessment of the Writing 110 students and tutors. With approximately 40 students enrolled in Writing 110 each fall, the sample size is small and it would be impossible to delineate how much student growth can be credited specifically to the tutoring program versus the course itself or other first-year experiences, so we cannot offer statistically significant, causal data. However, this program provided a group of participants and peer tutors with which to launch our initial assessment efforts, allowing us to consider not just whether students showed growth in their abilities and confidence, but also some particulars of when, how, and why this potential development took place.

Literature Review

Scholarship on collaborations between writing centers and libraries testifies to a long history of working together. In 2005, Elmborg and Hook edited a series of case studies on these partnerships.¹³ Librarian Elise Ferer surveyed the literature in 2012 to map the forms that such collaborations take; she noted, "One of the most common suggestions from the literature was the training of tutors and/or writing center staff in library resources, research skills, and/or information literacy."¹⁴ A recent case study about a collaboration by composition faculty, librarians, and writing center administrators at Eastern Kentucky University described similar efforts to support information literacy development in first-year writing classes.¹⁵

A first point of contact between composition/writing center studies and information literacy is the idea of research as a process. This conception is prominent in the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*¹⁶ and resonates with the conventional understanding of writing as a process championed by scholars like Stephen North as early as the 1980s.¹⁷ Identifying the shared values between our areas of study and our professional fields offered an important way to then frame these synergies and shared values with students.

The pilot research described in this article arose out of a collaboration that was driven by these shared points of contact and was also inspired by a shared professional desire to improve student success. In particular, research has shown the positive impact of peer tutors on student retention. Studies have shown a connection between writing centers and improved student retention,¹⁸ between tutoring and student success at the community college level,¹⁹ and the positive effect of tutoring on the success of students who have not yet declared a major.²⁰ While some evidence is available to show that academic libraries have a positive impact on student retention,²¹ studies of this nature are often limited by the lack of individual-level library use data and the inability to make a direct causal connection with student success metrics. Although one recent article described three case studies of peer-assisted learning in libraries,²² there is a lack of widespread evidence showing the impact of undergraduate peer research tutors, suggesting that it is not yet a widely provided service. In choosing to provide course-connected or embedded tutoring, we also drew on evidence in the literature that supports this as a practice that promotes student success. In the literature on writing centers, conversations about embedding writing tutors have been going on for some time, evidenced by a 2014 special issue of *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* devoted entirely to the topic of course-embedded support.²³ While a 2012 review of the literature on embedded librarians suggested some evidence of the effectiveness of the practice,²⁴ there is not yet sufficient evidence that peer research tutors have taken on similar embedded roles.

Another shared point of contact between writing centers and libraries is a growing need for measurable outcomes and assessments. Nearly two decades ago, Martha Kyrillidou identified the increased use of “performance indicators” in higher education as a result of external pressures on institutions to justify their high cost.²⁵ Colleges and universities scrambled to find data that could show their value to a wide variety of stakeholders. As a result, there was a push to identify *library* performance indicators that could contribute to this institutional data. The challenges Kyrillidou identified primarily had to do with the unique nature of each institution—local policies and values make it difficult to compare data across institutions.

This drive to identify and quantify the library’s value has continued over the years and has risen to renewed prominence with the release of several recent ACRL reports. In 2010, Megan Oakleaf researched and wrote the ACRL *Value of Academic Libraries* report to help academic librarians “start a conversation” and “promote dialogue” about the value of the library within their institutions.²⁶ The 2017 ACRL *Academic Library Impact* report stated a goal to “investigate how libraries can increase student learning and success while communicating their value to higher education stakeholders.”²⁷ This dual mandate spurred our own work and led us to identify those areas where we felt assessment could serve a pedagogical purpose as well as speak to what is valued by stakeholders at our institution and at a national level.

Research on particular assessment methods provided direction for our own research design. Porter, Whitcomb, and Weitzer found that the proliferation of surveys directed at students can lead to survey fatigue and an increase in nonresponse rates.²⁸ Instead, our design is based on research focused on critical reflection as both a means of assessment and student learning. Ash and Clayton pointed out that reflection is not just a measure of learning but an integral part of the process: “Learning—and understanding learning processes—does not happen maximally through experience alone but rather as a result of thinking about—reflecting on—it.”²⁹ In taking a reflective approach to assessment, our research builds on the work of composition scholars who have prioritized reflection and inclusivity in their own assessments including portfolio-based assessments,³⁰ reflection within online assessments,³¹ and reflective video portfolios.³²

An additional incentive to conduct our assessment in a way that is mindful of student autonomy and institutional values is the 2018 *Library Integration in Institutional Learning Analytics* (LIILA) report. This report provides guidance for libraries looking to join the growing conversation about the adoption of campuswide learning analytics platforms.³³ On our campus, these conversations are just at the beginning stages, so we have not yet engaged in institution-wide discussions of the ethical implications of a learning analytics system. Mindful of ongoing conversations in library scholarship about the ethics of learning analytics,³⁴ we chose to focus on developing student-centered, collaborative data collection methods that are connected to local and national measures of success. In this way, we anticipate bringing to future learning analytics conversations our experience connecting our assessments to the campus mission as a way to encourage our institution to carefully consider their data collection practices and choose only those data that provide a values-connected picture of institutional success.

Methodology

In this study, we used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze students’ own beliefs, engagement, and reflection on their writing and research skills. This mixed-methods approach helps to mitigate the challenge of studying a low-*n* population—in our case,

the cohort of students being studied was a small subset (less than 10%) of the entire first-year student population. Education researchers Newman et al. posit that a mixed-methods approach can allow researchers “to have greater confidence in the findings of studies of low-incident situations.”³⁵ They further conclude that quantitative data can be useful when measuring outcomes while qualitative data can help reveal the “meaning of lived experiences.”³⁶ We agree that effective assessment, like storytelling, is as much about making meaning as it is about measuring outcomes, and we have followed the advice of scholars like Albert to “triangulate” data from quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal data to tell a story of library impact.³⁷

Consistent with our mission as a teaching-driven institution, we prioritized assessments that were easily implemented and could provide meaningful information for how to better support students. By inviting students to reflect on their learning in the context of course-specific and institutionwide learning goals, we developed a metacognitive, student-driven, and mission-focused assessment that both measures and contributes to student learning and that connects learning analytics with assessment in a way that is novel, ethical, and reflective of our institutional values. In other words, we invited students to reflect on their own learning, developing metacognitive strategies within the assessment process itself, and then to intentionally contextualize that learning within our institutional mission. Many of our methodological choices outlined below—such as borrowing language directly from institutional mission documents, employing students as research assistants, and including self-reported data that would prompt metacognition—reflect these priorities and goals.

Institutional Data

First, we met with colleagues in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (IE&A) on our campus to gather initial institutional data in the form of pass/fail and retention percentages, which provided general, contextual quantitative information. These data allowed us to compare our sample with the general student body in terms of academic performance, demographic data, and use of tutoring services. Because of reliability limitations and privacy concerns, we chose to study the cohort of students rather than track individuals. This cohort-level institutional data provided helpful background information for us to understand the student population we were serving and studying. For instance, we learned that, among the students in the 2018 entering class, 22 percent identified as domestic students of color and 18 percent as first-generation,³⁸ while students in Writing 110 from 2012–2017 included 83

TABLE 2
Writing 110 Student Retention and Grade Information by Cohort

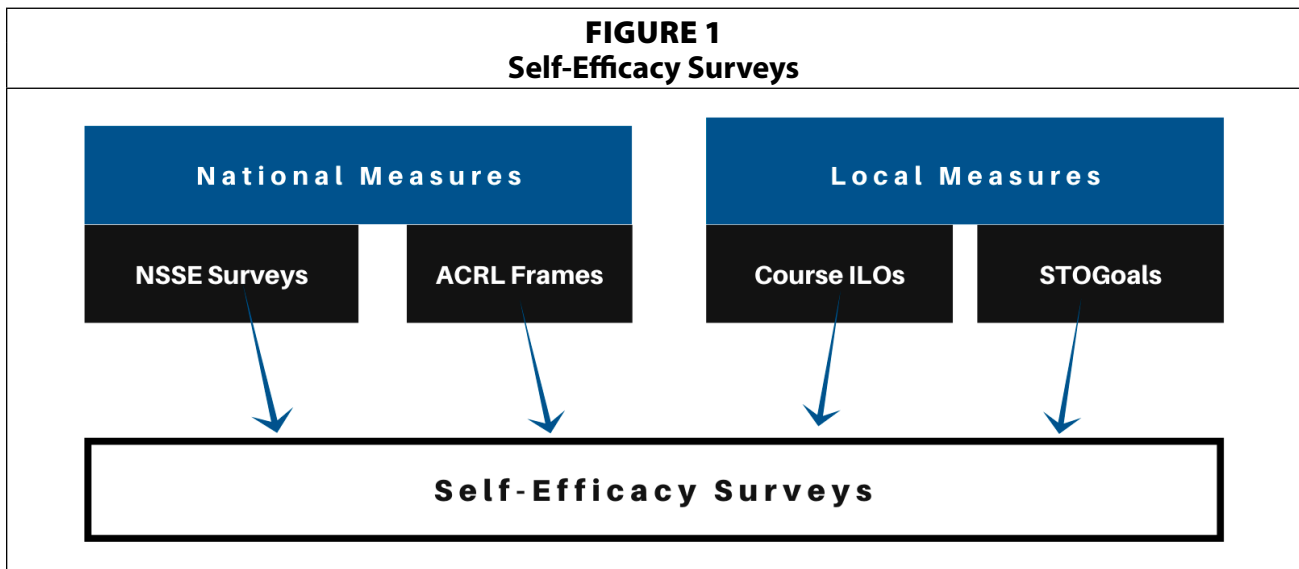
Year	Number of Students	% Passed*	% C or Higher*	# of Students Withdrew
2012	26	100%	88%	0
2013	24	100%	96%	0
2014	28	96%	92%	1
2015	31	100%	97%	1
2016	35	100%	94%	0
2017	32	100%	100%	0
2018	37	100%	95%	0

*Percent passed is based on students who completed the course. Students pass with a D or higher, but must earn a C or higher to enroll in Writing 111 (First-Year Writing).

percent domestic students of color students and 82 percent first-generation college students. Data provided by IE&A also gave us a starting point from which to understand the impact the writing and research tutor program had on student success in terms of grades achieved.

Self-Efficacy Surveys

A signature assessment developed for this study is a pre- and post-semester self-efficacy survey (see appendices A and B) administered to all students who were working with a Writing and Research Tutor. The survey measures self-efficacy—confidence in one’s ability to do something—for a number of typical research and writing tasks. We designed the survey to map onto local measures like our institutional learning goals and the Writing 110 course learning objectives. In addition, we also drew on goals from existing national standards like the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Experiences with Writing topical module³⁹ and the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.⁴⁰ These connections allowed us to measure student growth within the context of these goals and standards (such as expressing ideas with clarity, evaluating the credibility of sources, and so on) that are familiar to program coordinators, college administrators, and other stakeholders.



The self-efficacy survey provided quantitative data on the students’ perception of the development of their writing and research skills. We drew specifically on the example of self-efficacy surveys within writing center assessment by Schmidt and Alexander, who cite studies showing that “A student’s perceptions of her own competence, as opposed to her actual competence, often more accurately predicts her success in school contexts.”⁴¹ In this context, where student success and confidence are so intertwined, self-reported data can be an accurate predictor even without a direct assessment of the student’s current skills and abilities.

The self-reported model also created an opportunity to facilitate student learning within the assessment process itself. Mindful of the potential for survey fatigue, especially among underrepresented students at St. Olaf, the students completed the pre-semester self-efficacy survey as part of a goal-setting exercise with their tutor during their first tutoring session, and the post-semester self-efficacy survey as part of a reflection with their tutor on those goals during their final session.

The self-efficacy survey provided quantitative data about student skills, but it was limited by contextual unknowns; for instance, the data is correlational rather than causal, and some seeming “improvement” may be students’ growing ability to recognize discipline-specific vocabulary rather than the development of the skill itself. However, the surveys gave us baseline data to gauge students’ self-identified improvement areas that we could then use in concert with qualitative assessments to provide a more complete understanding of the program’s impact.

Reflection Essays

A final reflective essay (see appendix C) prompted students to review the St. Olaf mission statement and STOGGoals in the context of their learning and their work with a tutor, giving students an opportunity to develop metacognitive skills to assess their own learning and to frame that learning within the context of our institutional mission. We offered this assessment activity during students’ final tutoring session as a second reflective opportunity in the hope that it would provide qualitative data to contextualize the self-efficacy surveys, but the timing alongside final research projects contributed to a weak response rate, both in terms of the quantity and quality of student writing. Given these limitations, we imagine revising this component in future semesters to be a timed writing assignment, to include conversation with the tutor both before and after the writing process, or to be scheduled before or after the peak time for student research papers. However, we see this part of our assessment as a unique and valuable moment for students to more explicitly explore links between their learning and larger institutional values and goals, which will have particular resonance for the students themselves as well as college administrators.

Focus Groups

Additional qualitative data was collected from student and tutor focus groups (see appendix D). Writing and Research Tutors were asked questions about how the program impacted their own learning as well as their observations about the students they worked with. Tutors drew on the sustained relationships they had formed with students to identify with some specificity the growth and development in students’ learning. In separate focus groups, students who had been enrolled in Writing 110 or Writing 107 were asked how working with a tutor had impacted their writing process, research habits, and whether or not they were likely to seek out writing and research assistance in the future.

Including both students and tutors within this and other assessment instruments fit our goal of supporting student learning within the assessment program. We hired two writing and research tutors after the course ended to serve as student research assistants for our assessment initiative, giving them further leadership opportunities but also including key student perspectives on the evolution of our assessment design and implementation. For instance, the student research assistants helped develop the focus group questions, led focus group discussions, and coded focus group transcriptions. In this way, we offered particular students an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the direction of our assessments but also valuable experience with project design and development, mixed-methods study, and collaborative research.

Interviews with Former Writing and Research Tutors

Given the potential impact of this program on tutors beyond their time at the college, we also conducted interviews with former WRTs (see appendix E), which gave insight into how the program provided skills and experiences that tutors could take into their first jobs after graduation. During tutor training, we devoted one meeting to talking with tutors about ways to use their experiences as a WRT on resumes, on cover letters, and in job interviews and how to talk about the skills and experiences they had as transferable to the contexts of their individual professional goals. Following up with postgraduation interviews allowed us to track WRT's experiences applying for jobs or graduate school and also understand how their experiences as tutors may have benefited them as early professionals or graduate students. While this part of the study is likewise small and primarily anecdotal, it provides another angle from which to assess the value of the program for student learning. Because our student research assistants conducted the interviews, it also provided an opportunity for current and former WRTs to talk about their shared experiences and offer advice and insights.

Results and Discussion

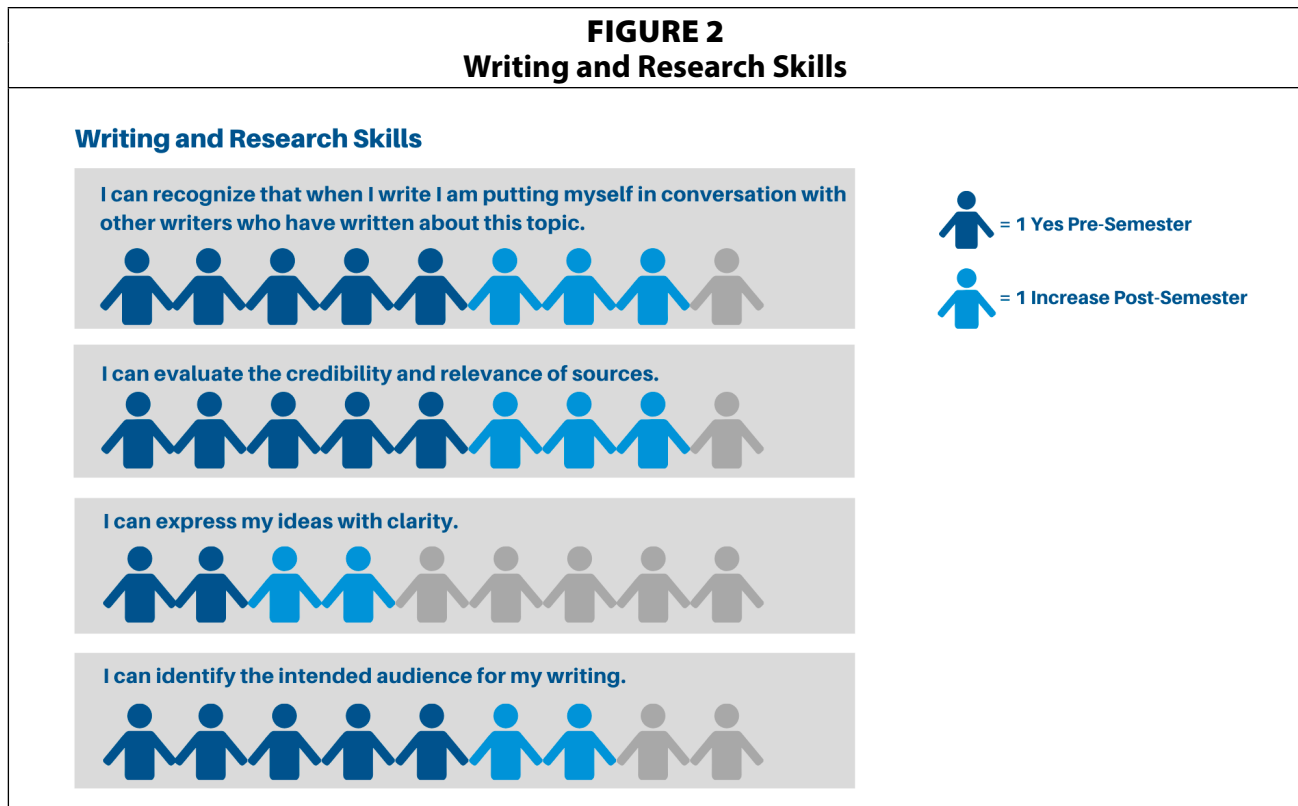
This mixed-methods research design allows us to tell a multifaceted story about the Writing and Research Tutor program. Four themes emerged: students improved their writing and research skills; students improved their writing and research habits; students and tutors built relationships that were at the core of their success; and the Writing and Research Tutor program serves as a key component in supporting the mission of our institution, including the STOGGoals.⁴²

Writing and Research Skills

Most obviously and also most directly tied to our goals, students reported increased confidence in understanding and applying various writing and research skills. On the self-efficacy survey, students reported increased confidence in the following statement: "I can recognize that when I write, I am putting myself in conversation with other writers who have also written about this topic." This statement echoes the ACRL Frame "Scholarship as Conversation" as well as one of the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for Writing 110, which states a goal of engaged reading, writing, speaking, and listening as part of an academic conversation. At the start of the semester, four out of nine participants responded affirmatively, and by the end of the semester, eight out of nine respondents indicated they did recognize themselves as writers in conversation with other writers (see figure 2). This particular question captured a skill at the intersection of writing and research, and student growth in this category may signal a benefit of integrating writing and research support.

Students also reported increased confidence in their ability to identify credible, relevant sources, building on a Writing 110 learning outcome (evaluating sources to support an opinion), an ACRL Frame (Authority Is Constructed and Contextual), and a NSSE survey statement (i.e. "Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed"). Eight out of nine participants indicated their confidence in evaluating sources at the end of the semester, as opposed to five at the beginning (see figure 2). Students also showed a developing ability to communicate their ideas clearly, one of St. Olaf's STOGGoals, with just two students responding affirmatively at the start of the semester and four at the end (see figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Writing and Research Skills



Framing these developing skills and abilities within these larger institutional and national learning goals helped us to contextualize student learning in important ways. For example, the NSSE survey asks how many times students have, during the last year, “Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.” In looking at the NSSE survey results for spring 2018, audience awareness is among the lowest scores on the NSSE writing survey across the board, but especially at St. Olaf—we are statistically significantly lower in this category than our peer institutions. St. Olaf scored just 2.7 out of 5, while our peer institutions scored an average of 2.9.⁴³ But, audience awareness is also among the highest gains between pre- and post-surveys for students enrolled in Writing 110—so it’s an area where our students are showing meaningful gains. The self-efficacy survey included five students who felt confident that they could identify their intended audience at the beginning of the semester and eight by the end of the semester. It is an imperfect and imprecise comparison—the NSSE data is for a different cohort of students, and the language is worded differently in both; NSSE is a likert scale while the self-efficacy survey is a simple yes or no. Being able to put our student gains in the context of an area for growth identified by NSSE has been a valuable way for us to talk about the importance of the Writing and Research Tutor program. It has given our assessment more context, and ultimately more meaning, to connect to larger institutional goals and data.

Focus groups and written reflections echo themes of skill development as well (see appendix F). For example, one student commented in a focus group on a change in their research process that they recognized as positively impacting their writing:

“I feel like my research process did change, just because I would, before class, I would just go to Google and go off like, just articles that weren’t the best articles

for the subject. But when we went to the research tutor, he was like, oh, here, we have a whole database where you can go and make specific topics, and whatever you're wondering, whatever time frames you want. So I feel like that really did change, and even now I use it, just because it's like, oh, you need academic articles, academic journals? Here they are. Do you need peer-reviewed, so then I feel that really, I focused more on articles that really did help my writing."

Other students, in the written reflection, added that their Writing and Research Tutor challenged them to develop transferable skills in writing and research:

"Working with a writing and research tutor has helped me to improve my self-development in terms of research and writing. They have help[ed] me become more aware of what sources are reliable and which is appropriate to the topic at hand. This has also given me a broad knowledge on topics I'm interested in. With that, I can even apply [this] research to other writing assignments assigned to me."

For these students, the skills they developed are things they recognize will carry forward to future papers and courses.

Writing and Research Habits

Another theme that emerged in our research related to the development of writing and research habits, including the willingness to use tutoring services in the future. On the self-efficacy survey question, "I can ask for help when needed (that is, from librarians, my professor, my tutor, and others)," all nine students responded yes on both the pre- and post-semester surveys, so we know this particular group of students was already predisposed to help-seeking behaviors. However, focus group conversations reiterated a growing sense of agency in developing effective habits of writing and researching. For instance, several students mentioned seeking tutoring as a new and important habit in their writing and research process:

"We had to do our research so I know now at any point in the future when I'm doing a research [project] I'll go to the Research Desk and just, the amount of time we spent in the library that was very helpful. I feel like now I know of resources that sometimes first year students don't notice the first time they come here."

In students' final reflection essays, when prompted to think about their own growth as writers and researchers, many of them likewise focused on the habits they developed instead of only skills:

"Ya I had improved a lots, in many ways, like this is first time me writing a research paper and I don't know how to write a research question but with the help of my writing TA now I knew how to write a research question. I can use the strategies or habit for every writing class."

“I learned my strategies and habits from my professor and writing books we used in class. These were consolidated in my mind by my tutor.”

These students are able to see not only the ways that they have developed strong habits, but also ways that those habits transfer to other courses and contexts. They also describe research and writing as collaborative processes, learning from their professor and peers but also their tutor who helped “consolidate” their learning.

Tutor focus groups echoed similar themes; in identifying an area of student success, one tutor noted students’ growing ability to see writing and research as a process:

“A willingness to edit their own work, ‘cause they come in and they’re just like, well I’m just going to write it and turn it in, but I think as the semester went on, and given it’s kind of built into the syllabus, you turn in a first draft, you edit it you turn in the second draft, but actually wanting to work on that first draft. I think that improved, for sure.”

This tutor noticed that what began as a structured course requirement—writing multiple drafts, getting feedback, and revising—became a habit, so that the student who had originally written one-and-done papers could follow this process with “willingness.” Consistent with the course goal to “engage in writing as a systematic process, using flexible strategies for generating drafts, responding to feedback, revising and editing,” this student developed not just skills and strategies for writing and research, but also transferable habits and frames of mind.

Relationship Building

The development of these skills and habits were, for many students, directly linked to the relationships they formed with their tutors. Tutors served many roles, as students noted in the focus groups, including that of a *peer*:

“I feel like I felt comfortable, and feeling comfortable is a very important part of having that relationship. Just because ... at first, I remember the first few meetings, it was awkward. Of course it’s gonna be awkward. But then as time went on, I was willing to ask questions. I wasn’t afraid to be like, oh, what do you think about this, I didn’t feel judged, it was more of a helping hand.”

a *guide*:

“They also helped us to find the way to improve our papers, they didn’t write our papers for us, because that’s what I was afraid of. Because, sometimes when people, like, try to help you, they just do stuff for you, and you don’t get the learning experience from that.”

a *translator*:

“The tutor was helpful the most when it came to understanding what [the] teacher

really wants to say. Because, my professor had very specific, good feedback. And sometimes it was not clear in what she really wanted to say.”

And a source of *inspiration*:

“When I’d go see my writing tutor, it was usually when I was totally drained and I had no idea what to write about, so going to go see people really gives me inspiration to write.... It’s really nice to just get that inspiration and other minds on the paper and what you should write about.”

These different roles, varying from intellectual to social to emotional, echo the multiplicity of roles the tutors also identified playing. Tutors, in focus groups, also commented on the importance of relationship-building in students’ developing abilities as writers and researchers, and they similarly commented on ways that their mutual trust and understanding facilitated depth, efficiency, and comfort in their work together:

“Being a [WRT]... I was able to look at all of these different pieces of work students had completed or adapted or was in progress of writing over the course of a semester and think about like, ‘Okay, so on these last two essays, I know this student really struggled with transitions so...’ So how can I really help set them up for success on this next essay?... That I could provide that depth of feedback was a really valuable lesson over the course of the semester.”

This comment reveals the degree to which this tutor saw their ability to be helpful tied to knowing the student and their work; other tutors mentioned that the enduring relationship made students “connected” and “comfortable,” which in turn could help tutors home in “on specific tasks.”

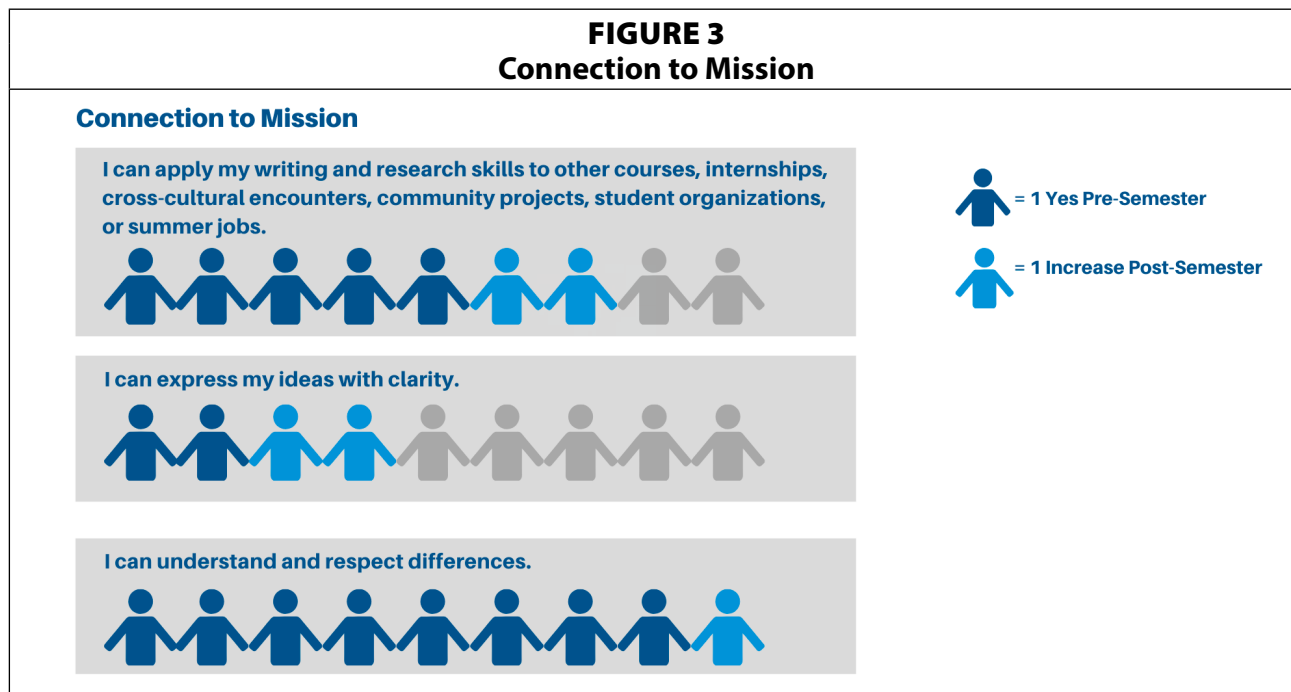
Tutors also commented, more than the students themselves, on the students’ growing confidence as writers and researchers; in identifying areas of students’ strength in the focus groups, tutors repeatedly observed their role in facilitating student confidence:

“For the majority of my students it was a lot of confidence building. I felt like the majority of my students felt a lot more happy when they were writing and less overwhelmed. So that was really exciting to see. And I think that came from a lot of brainstorming sessions and structure, like, talking through structure and then figuring out how to build a thesis. Especially for that big research paper at the end. Because that was probably the most overwhelming, but at that point my students were the most confident so that was kind of cool to see.”

While we hoped that pairing students with a tutor would create a sustained relationship, we were surprised by the volume of responses related to the depth of this relationship, as well as the importance of this relationship—in students’ and tutors’ minds—for academic improvement. The trust, in their minds, went hand-in-hand with students’ confidence and success as researchers and writers.

Connection to Mission

In addition to habits and relationships, students also developed skills and frames of mind connected to course- and institutional-level missions and goals. The self-efficacy survey, for example, included three direct references to the STOGGoals, and students reported positive change in each category. For “I can apply my writing and research skills to other courses, internships, cross-cultural encounters, community projects, student organizations, or summer jobs,” we had five respond affirmatively pre-semester and eight post-semester; for “I can express my ideas with clarity,” it increased from two to four students; and for “I can understand and respect differences,” it changed eight to nine pre- to post-semester (see figure 3).



Students’ final reflection essays explicitly invited them to connect St. Olaf’s mission statement and STOGGoals to the learning they accomplished with their tutor. Surprisingly, however, few students mentioned “expressing ideas with clarity” – which to us seemed the most obvious connection; instead, students more often mentioned “responsible engagement,” “critical thinking,” and “self-development”:

“Over the time I had I have broadened my knowledge and helped my critical thinking. The times that I was helped through making a[n] effective research question really broadened my knowledge letting me learn how to create a[n] interesting and informative paper. My critical thinking was also improved when I would get help with some of my wording to create a more eloquent sentence structure.”

“Working with a writing and research tutor has helped me to improve my self-development in terms of research and writing. They have help[ed] me become more aware of what sources are reliable and which is appropriate to the topic at hand. This has also given me a broad knowledge on topics I’m interested in. With that, I can even apply [this] research to other writing assignments assigned to me.”

While these quotes show varying levels of depth of understanding of the concepts referenced in the STOGGoals themselves, what is evident is that, for students, writing and research skills are linked to a variety of holistic academic skills and attitudes.

Interviews with former tutors surprised us too; like the students, tutors rarely mentioned “clarity of expression,” and instead identified more holistic areas of self-development in the STOGGoal categories of integration and application, and global engagement:

“I think the other one integration and application, being able to take something that you know about or that you’re researching and apply it to grow somewhere else. That’s something that writing helps you do because it helps you get organized. I think that’s the biggest benefit for me personally that writing has given ‘cause it gives you the organization, the need for there to be structure. And that really helps you understand something because knowledge and understanding are two very different things.”

“An obvious one for me is the ‘globally engaged community.’ And that’s because... the students that we were tutoring were mostly students who had a different language spoken at home... I think that the ability to work with someone who does not speak the same language that you did... or maybe thinks more in a different language than another one... to connect with that person on an academic level makes you, as a teacher, work harder and I think that that’s something very humbling and I think that is a skill that we can all gain to truly be able to be a globally engaged community.”

In sum, students and tutors were able to meaningfully connect their experiences with each other to larger institutional learning goals, but not necessarily in ways directly related to writing and research, and across a fairly broad and holistic set of categories.

Challenges

While many students and tutors expressed enthusiasm for the tutoring program within our assessment, we also explicitly asked about challenges and frustrations. Tutor focus groups revealed that students struggled in areas such as identifying topics and research questions, assessing sources, and addressing feedback—areas in which we may expect all first-year students to struggle:

“Students I worked with had the most trouble in the initial phases. Like, some of them really didn’t like the book, which is fine. You’re allowed to not like the book, but then it’s hard to connect with an idea that you then are motivated to find. And it can be hard to find sources to begin with. And it doesn’t help if you’re not interested.”

“I think formulating a research question was definitely a challenge. I probably spent two sessions with each student just standing with the board and being like, okay, this is your question and then let’s rewrite it. And it really takes time. So I

think definitely that was a big challenge, but then once they got to a good question, it was really easy to go from there, and then move on to an outline.”

“A lot of my students struggled when it came to doing research on their own.... Not in the sense that they didn’t know how to get certain sources but how to determine if the source was for them or not. Like they can find these sources easily, but determining whether they were going to use it or not is where they struggled a little bit more.”

These comments describe students facing new intellectual challenges like finding a topic, evaluating sources, and receiving feedback. They show some of the limits of what a tutor can do: when a student is not “motivated” or “interested,” or when they struggle to navigate “doing research on their own” or expand their research based on faculty feedback. But as retold by their tutors, we see these students struggling alongside someone who is there to help them; these continued challenges affirm the value of peer support.

We are conscious of other limitations in our program design beyond those identified in the assessment, including an intensive use of time and financial resources to serve a limited number of students, a risk of deepening imposter syndrome among underrepresented students by mandating tutoring services, and an inability to create equitable access to the program by scaling it to serve all first-year students. One theme conspicuously absent from our assessment data is a sense of students feeling shamed or ostracized by this requirement, but perhaps this is because we avoided asking directly whether or not students feel stigmatized—in part because we did not want to create that feeling by asking the question. As we shift from a pilot to a sustained program, we will work to include students and tutors in future assessment work that addresses these limitations.

Conclusion

While our assessment focused on student growth as writers and researchers, students also self-reported gains they made in relation to holistic institutional learning goals (STOGGoals) like responsible engagement, critical thinking, and self-development, even though we didn’t ask specifically about these learning goals. We wonder, then, did we ask the right questions as we conducted these assessments? In the future, we may broaden our training and our assessments to include even more of a focus on how the tutor/student relationship can support the development of a wide variety of holistic goals. In keeping with our commitment to use assessment as a tool for student learning and reflection, we also hope to include tutors more deeply in the future assessment design and analysis⁴⁴ and develop more intentional antiracist assessment practices.⁴⁵ The findings related to student-tutor relationship-building also speak toward the need for focused assessment related to belonging. Could a tutor connect students to the institution in a way that is more sustainable across their first year? How does tutoring facilitate a sense of belonging in tutors themselves? We know that our institution is looking for ways to instill this sense of belonging in students, so we are keen to dig deeper in this research area.

Traditional assessments and standardized metrics can sometimes fail to fully capture student learning, and especially that of underrepresented students. Our study demonstrates

the value of measures that factor in student growth and confidence and that connect explicitly to local and national measures of success. As budgets tighten and libraries learn to do more with less, strategic collaborations with other offices on campus become imperative. These collaborations create opportunities for creative, nimble, and deep assessment practices that more fully engage students in evaluating and reflecting on their own learning and also serve to demonstrate the deep and enduring value of the academic library.

APPENDIX A. Pre- and Post- Self-efficacy Survey Questions

Writing and Research Self-Efficacy* Survey

**Self-efficacy is your belief in your ability to succeed in something or capacity to accomplish a task.*

1. I can identify the intended audience for my writing.
2. I can locate sources in support of an opinion.
3. I can identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, who might produce information about a topic.
4. I can identify the best search tool to find different types of sources.
5. I can persist in finding sources even when it's not going well.
6. I can decide when I have enough information to complete the task at hand.
7. I can evaluate the credibility and relevance of sources.
8. I can identify potential bias in a source using clues about the context in which it was created.
9. I can use sources in support of an opinion.
10. I can synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources.
11. I can recognize that, when I write, I am putting myself in conversation with other writers who have also written about this topic.
12. I can give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation.
13. I can write using a process that involves a series of steps.
14. I can use different approaches for generating drafts in different situations.
15. I can think about research as open-ended exploration and engagement with information.
16. I can maintain an open mind about my original research question, maybe changing my argument based on what I learn as I research.
17. I can choose how I will respond to feedback.
18. I can identify different ways of revising, editing, and proofreading in different situations.
19. I can ask for help when needed (from librarians, my professor, my tutor, and others).
20. I can apply my writing and research skills to other courses, internships, cross-cultural encounters, community projects, student organizations, or summer jobs.
21. I can express my ideas with clarity.
22. I can understand and respect differences.
23. I can identify incomplete, or fragment, sentences.
24. I can articulate my strengths and challenges as a writer.
25. I can be recognized by others as a strong writer.
26. When I read a rough draft, I can identify gaps when they are present in the paper.
27. When I read drafts written by classmates, I can provide them with valuable feedback.
28. When I have a pressing deadline for a paper, I can manage my time efficiently.
29. I can attribute my success on writing projects to my writing abilities more than to luck or external forces.
30. Once I have completed a draft, I can eliminate both small and large sections that are no longer necessary.
31. I can write a paper without experiencing overwhelming feelings of fear or distress.
32. When writing papers for different courses (for example, Biology, English, and Philosophy classes), I can adjust my writing to meet the expectations of each discipline.
33. I can map out the structure and main sections of an essay before writing the first draft.
34. I can find ways to concentrate when I am writing, even when there are many distractions around me.
35. I can find and correct my grammatical errors.

APPENDIX B. Pre- and Post- Self-efficacy Survey Questions Mapped to National and Local Goals

1. I can identify the intended audience for my writing. (Wri110 ILO 2, Schmidt & Alexander; NSSE 1j)
2. I can locate sources in support of an opinion. (Wri110 ILO 3)
3. I can identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, who might produce information about a topic. (ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration)
4. I can identify the best search tool to find different types of sources. (ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration)
5. I can persist in finding sources even when it's not going well. (ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration)
6. I can decide when I have enough information to complete the task at hand. (ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration)
7. I can evaluate the credibility and relevance of sources. (Wri110 ILO 3, ACRL Frame: Authority is Constructed and Contextual; NSSE 1e.)
8. I can identify potential bias in a source using clues about the context in which it was created. (ACRL Frame: Information Creation as a Process)
9. I can use sources in support of an opinion. (Wri110 ILO 3, Schmidt & Alexander; NSSE 1g.)
10. I can synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources. (ACRL Frame: Research as Inquiry; NSSE 1d.)
11. I can recognize that, when I write, I am putting myself in conversation with other writers who have also written about this topic. (Wri110 ILO 1, ACRL Frame: Scholarship as Conversation)
12. I can give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation. (Wri110 ILO 3, ACRL Frame: Information Has Value)
13. I can write using a process that involves a series of steps. (Wri110 ILO 4)
14. I can use different approaches for generating drafts in different situations. (Wri110 ILO 4)
15. I can think about research as open-ended exploration and engagement with information. (ACRL Frame: Research as Inquiry)
16. I can maintain an open mind about my original research question, maybe changing my argument based on what I learn as I research. (ACRL Frame: Research as Inquiry)
17. I can choose how I will respond to feedback. (Wri110 ILO 4; NSSE 1b.)
18. I can identify different ways of revising, editing, and proofreading in different situations. (Wri110 ILO 4)
19. I can ask for help when needed (from librarians, my professor, my tutor, and others). (Wri110 ILO 4, ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration)
20. I can apply my writing and research skills to other courses, internships, cross-cultural encounters, community projects, student organizations, or summer jobs. (STOGoals)
21. I can express my ideas with clarity. (STOGoals)
22. I can understand and respect differences. (STOGoals)
23. I can identify incomplete, or fragment, sentences. (Schmidt & Alexander)
24. I can articulate my strengths and challenges as a writer. (Schmidt & Alexander)
25. I can be recognized by others as a strong writer. (Schmidt & Alexander)
26. When I read a rough draft, I can identify gaps when they are present in the paper. (Wri110

- ILO 4, Schmidt & Alexander)
27. When I read drafts written by classmates, I can provide them with valuable feedback. (Schmidt & Alexander, Wri110 ILO 4; NSSE 1c.)
 28. When I have a pressing deadline for a paper, I can manage my time efficiently. (Schmidt & Alexander, Wri110 ILO 4)
 29. I can attribute my success on writing projects to my writing abilities more than to luck or external forces. (Schmidt & Alexander)
 30. Once I have completed a draft, I can eliminate both small and large sections that are no longer necessary. (Schmidt & Alexander, Wri110 ILO 4)
 31. I can write a paper without experiencing overwhelming feelings of fear or distress. (Schmidt & Alexander)
 32. When writing papers for different courses (for example, Biology, English, and Philosophy classes), I can adjust my writing to meet the expectations of each discipline. (Wri110 ILO 2, Schmidt & Alexander)
 33. I can map out the structure and main sections of an essay before writing the first draft. (Schmidt & Alexander, Wri110 ILO 4)
 34. I can find ways to concentrate when I am writing, even when there are many distractions around me. (Schmidt & Alexander)
 35. I can find and correct my grammatical errors. (Schmidt & Alexander, Wri110 ILO 4)

Resources

Katherine M. Schmidt and Joel E. Alexander, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writerly Self-Efficacy in Writing Centers," *Journal of Writing Assessment* 5, no. 1 (2012).

ACRL Frames

1. Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
2. Information Creation as a Process
3. Information Has Value
4. Research as Inquiry
5. Scholarship as Conversation
6. Searching as Strategic Exploration

WRI110 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

1. engaged reading, writing, speaking, and listening as part of an academic conversation
2. the ability to identify intended audience when reading and writing and construct an argument for a specific audience
3. a developing ability to locate, to read, to evaluate, to use, and to document sources to support opinion
4. the ability to engage in writing as a systematic process, using flexible strategies for generating drafts, responding to feedback, revising, editing, and proofreading

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) - Experiences with Writing Module

During the current school year, for how many writing assignments have you done the following?

- [b] Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment
- [c] Gave feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline he or she had written
- [d] Summarized material you read, such as articles, books, or online publications
- [e] Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed
- [g] Argued a position using evidence and reasoning
- [j] Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, nonexperts, and others

***STOG*Goals**

- Integration & Application
- Communication & Collaboration
- Responsible Engagement

APPENDIX C. Final Reflective Essay Prompts

1. Please comment on whether your experience with your Writing and Research Tutor contributed to these college goals in any way. Please pull out one or two specific terms from the mission statement and STOGGoals list that resonate with you, and be as specific as you can about your experiences.
2. Think about your experience as a writer and researcher during the past semester. Have you improved? If so, in what ways? Please discuss specific strategies or habits you have learned. How did you learn these strategies and habits? Where will you use them in the future?

APPENDIX D. Focus Group Questions

Students:

1. Describe your research process. Did your research process change during 107/110? If so, how? Why?
2. Did you connect with your tutor? What did you most connect with? How do you think this affected your experience being tutored?
3. What advice would you give an incoming first-year about working with a Writing and Research Tutor?
4. Do you plan to use writing or research services on campus in the future? Which ones? Why?

Writing and Research Tutors:

1. What kinds of writing skills did you most often focus on in your sessions?
2. What kinds of questions did your students have? How did you answer those questions?
3. What were some of the improvements you saw over the course of the semester in the students' writing or writing habits?
4. What area(s) might the course expand to address student questions or challenges?
5. Where do you think students had the most success during the research process? Where did they encounter the most challenges?
6. How well prepared did you feel to help students conduct independent research?

7. What did you learn through the experience of being a writing and research tutor?
8. Do you think this experience may be valuable in your future at St. Olaf or beyond? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E. Former Tutor Interview Questions

1. Please describe your experience as a fellow/tutor. [They were called Writing and Research Fellows in 2017.]
2. What did you learn through the experience of being a writing and research fellow/tutor?
3. What do you think was most beneficial about this program for the students you tutored?
4. What was most beneficial about this program for you?
5. The St. Olaf mission statement reads, "St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition." The STOGGoals include: self-development, broad knowledge, specialized knowledge, integration and application, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, vocational discernment, and responsible engagement. **Please comment on whether your experience as a Writing and Research Fellow/Tutor contributed to these college goals in any way. Please pull out one or two specific terms from the mission statement and STOGGoals list that resonate with you, and be as specific as you can about your experiences.**
6. How do you think this job contributed to your postgraduation job or school applications?
7. How did this job contribute to your success in work/employment or school after St. Olaf?
8. How did this job contribute to your life outside of work or school (volunteer, social, other)?
9. Could you share a bit of advice with current Writing and Research Tutors from the perspective of an alum?

APPENDIX F. Selected Quotes

Selected Quotes from Student Focus Groups

Question: Do you plan to use writing and research services on campus in the future?	
Theme	Quote
Comfort with another student	"Yeah, I think I would use The Writing Desk. I would keep using it because sometimes when I also don't want to bother my professor I would go to the writing tutor. Because I get more comfortable, I think."
Saw results	"Yes. I'll probably end up using the writing desk quite a bit. And I'll use definitely the research services. I've gone in to see multiple people in the library for help so I don't see that stopping 'cause they help, they really get the good results."
Built habits	"I totally built a habit to go to the writing center and book an appointment and it just, it doesn't feel like it's something I have to do it just feels like a regular part of my writing process now, to go and get feedback."
Question: How did your research process change?	
Theme	Quote

Transfer to other courses	"It did change in the sense of, it really introduced me [to] the websites of the library. It really introduced me [to] the Rolvaag library, in general. And, how to get the sources from encyclopedias to academic writings. And of that process of going to each others' bibliography and finding better sources. That was pretty cool. That felt like, yeah, a good learning experience to write essays in general in college . . . for next school years."
Built habits	"I think for me, I think the most important thing is just to build a good writing habit, for sure, because right now, every time before I write I'm just, like before, I would just start writing, but now I actually know the process, know the steps to do. And then, the things that I learned, applied most, I think one of them is the use of The Writing Desk. Yeah, because we had our individual tutor . . . And that's helped me a lot."
More sophisticated research	"I feel like my research process did change, just because I would, before class, I would just go to Google and go off like, just articles that weren't the best articles for the subject. But when we went to the research tutor, he was like, oh, here, we have a whole database where you can go and make specific topics, and whatever you're wondering, whatever time frames you want. So I feel like that really did change, and even now I use it, just because it's like, oh, you need academic articles, academic journals? Here they are. Do you need peer-reviewed, so then I feel that really, I focused more on articles that really did help my writing."
Future courses	"We had to do our research so I know now at any point in the future when I'm doing a research I'll go to the Research Desk and just, the amount of time we spent in the library that was very helpful. I feel like now I know of resources that sometimes first-year students don't notice the first time they come here."

Question: Did you connect with your tutor? How did this affect your experience being tutored?	
Theme	Quote
Tutor as peer	"Yeah, I kind of connected with my writing tutor, because she[d] sometimes come to class and then start to participate together with us, and I feel like she's kind of the same level with us."
Tutor as guide	"Writing tutors they just helped, like, they also helped us to find the way to improve our papers, they didn't write our papers for us, because that's what I was afraid of. Because, sometimes when people, like, try to help you, they just do stuff for you, and you don't get the learning experience from that."
Tutor as translator	"We had fun times. It was great. It, it worked out really well, I think, just, it just matched and we worked on our assignments. The tutor was helpful the most when it came to understanding what [the] teacher really wants to say. Because, my professor had very specific, good feedback. And sometimes it was not clear in what she really wanted to say."
Tutor as peer	"I feel like I felt comfortable, and feeling comfortable is a very important part of having that relationship. Just because . . . at first, I remember the first few meetings, it was awkward. Of course it's gonna be awkward. But then as time went on, I was willing to ask questions. I wasn't afraid to be like, oh, what do you think about this, I didn't feel judged, it was more of a helping hand."
Tutor as guide	"What I found really helpful with my writing [tutor] was that she helped me express my ideas on a paper more clearly. Then she would also help me with my outlines and like organize my paper so that it flows."

Tutor as essential support	"I liked being tutored because I feel like without that help, I would've been stuck and at spots where I wouldn't be able to get out unless I had somebody else's mind to it. And [my WRT] really helped me find the words and find the things that I needed to research even help me pick out topics that I really need.... If I could have a tutor for every class, I would."
Tutor as inspiration	"When I'd go see my writing tutor, it was usually when I was totally drained and I had no idea what to write about, so going to go see people really gives me inspiration to write.... It's really nice to just get that inspiration and other minds on the paper and what you should write about."

Selected Quotes from Writing and Research Tutor Focus Group:

Question: Where did you see students have success in the writing and/or research process?	
Theme	Quote
Confidence	"A lot of my students felt a lot better with their writing. They didn't question it as much, and I saw that, instead of people coming in and being worried about their paper not being good enough, at the end they felt good about their paper. They were ready to turn it in."
Process	"A willingness to edit their own work, 'cause they come in and they're just like, well I'm just going to write it and turn it in, but I think as the semester went on, and given it's kind of built into the syllabus, you turn in a first draft, you edit it you turn in the second draft, but actually wanting to work on that first draft. I think that improved, for sure."
Confidence	"I think in general, for all the students, I think all of them just definitely became more confident in their writing."
Confidence	"I liked when me and my tutee really connected in their idea, and we both thought it was a great idea and we were confident about it, and we just kept on exploring areas of it. And I think that's when they felt confident, they were able to transmit that security to me. And then they were able to come back and be like, I did all of this research and let's talk about it."
Confidence	"For the majority of my students it was a lot of confidence building. I felt like the majority of my students felt a lot [happier] when they were writing and less overwhelmed. So that was really exciting to see. And I think that came from a lot of brainstorming sessions and structure, like, talking through structure and then figuring out how to build a thesis. Especially for that big research paper at the end. Because that was probably the most overwhelming, but at that point my students were the most confident so that was kind of cool to see."

Question: Where did you see students encounter challenges during the research process?	
Theme	Quote
Independent research/source assessment	"A lot of my students struggled when it came to doing research on their own. . . . Not in the sense that they didn't know how to get certain sources but how to determine if the source was for them or not. Like they can find these sources easily, but determining whether they were going to use it or not is where they struggled a little bit more."

Topic identification	"Students I worked with had the most trouble in the initial phases. Like, some of them really didn't like the book, which is fine. You're allowed to not like the book, but then it's hard to connect with an idea that you then are motivated to find. And it can be hard to find sources to begin with. And it doesn't help if you're not interested."
Research question development	"I think formulating a research question was definitely a challenge. I probably spent two sessions with each student just standing with the board and being like, okay, this is your question and then let's rewrite it. And it really takes time. So I think definitely that was a big challenge, but then once they got to a good question, it was really easy to go from there, and then move on to an outline."
Research as a process	"I think another difficult thing was once they were in a later draft and they got feedback but they would have met the word count already, or the page count, and they're like, oh I can just leave it like this. Because you're kind of scared to open a new door. Because that might start a whole week of researching. So it's kind of scary to go out of that comfort zone, I guess."

Question: What did you learn through the experience of being a WRT?

Theme	Quote
Tutoring as teaching	"It was an exciting roller coaster, because it was the first time I got into a teaching position, or something where I became basically a teacher to these students. And I got really invested into maybe why they didn't write their papers on time, or why they're struggling with certain topics. . . . I learned that I really like teaching people."
Transferable skills	"I think being able to translate listening skills and assertiveness, and all these great things like empathy, and translating those into academic writing and being able to help someone through the process, and understanding how to work collaboratively."

Selected Quotes from former WRT Tutor Interviews:

Question: Did your experience as a Writing and Research Tutor contribute to the College Mission or STOG goals in any way?

Theme	Quote
Engagement	"An obvious one for me is the 'globally engaged community.' And that's because . . . the students that we were tutoring were mostly students who had a different language spoken at home. . . . I think that the ability to work with someone who does not speak the same language that you did . . . or maybe thinks more in a different language than another one . . . to connect with that person on an academic level makes you, as a teacher, work harder and I think that that's something very humbling and I think that is a skill that we can all gain to truly be able to be a globally engaged community."
Critical thinking	"I think the other one that kind of stands out in the mission statement is 'examining faith and values.' And we can't do that if we're not organized and we don't know how to think critically, and writing is a huge part of being able to think critically because you can't see things objectively if you're not organized. . . . you can't really see the bigger picture or how specific areas contradict each other or if they [complement] each other."

Transferable skills	"I think the other one integration and application, being able to take something that you know about or that you're researching and apply it to grow somewhere else. That's something that writing helps you do because it helps you get organized. I think that's the biggest benefit for me personally that writing has given 'cause it gives you the organization, the need for there to be structure. And that really helps you understand something because knowledge and understanding are two very different things."
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Question: What do you think was most beneficial about this program for the students you tutored?

Theme	Quote
Comfort	"I would say early exposure to the writing desk, or just finding help, and how it works, and how it's available ... You have a tutor that's specifically for you, and you can feel comfortable building comfort I guess, questions and going to the Writing Desk, and that early exposure especially the first year really helps throughout the years."
Comfort	"Once the student is able to feel connected to the tutor the more they're open to sharing ideas and talking out loud during a tutoring session, and that's the biggest breakthrough for writing a paper. Because you know papers come from inside of you, are your thoughts, and sometimes you don't think that every thought you have is a good idea, but if you can break through that then students will feel comfortable saying anything, and everything, and the more you have . . . the more you can work with."
Relationship building	"I already knew what they were struggling with... and I could [home] in on specific tasks that they were working on in their class at their moment."
Relationship building	"Being a [WRT] . . . I was able to look at all of these different pieces of work students had completed or adapted or [were] in progress of writing over the course of a semester and think about like, 'Okay, so on these last two essays, I know this student really struggled with transitions so . . .' So how can I really help set them up for success on this next essay? . . . That I could provide that depth of feedback was a really valuable lesson over the course of the semester."
Confidence building	"Students hopefully come away with the sense that their voice is important and valuable."

Final Written Reflection Selected Responses:

Prompt: Please comment on whether your experience with your Writing and Research Tutor contributed to these college goals in any way. Please pull out one or two specific terms from the mission statement and STOGGoals list that resonate with you, and be as specific as you can about your experiences.	
Theme	Quote
Engagement	"One of the goal[s] is responsible engagement. For example, when I have [a] meeting with my writing TA, I always pay attention to her and we both respect each other[s] opinions. She also recommend[ed] . . . record[ing] during the meeting. After the meeting, I listen back to what we were talking about the essay then that is how I was able to [fix]my essay."

Critical thinking	"Over the time I had I have broadened my knowledge and helped my critical thinking. The times that I was helped through making a[n] effective research question really broadened my knowledge letting me learn how to create a[n] interesting and informative paper. My critical thinking was also improved when I would get help with some of my wording to create a more eloquent sentence structure."
Transferable skills	"My Writing and Research Tutor made a significant impact on these college goals. The material and information that was covered really helped me become a better writer because they challenged me like no one has ever done. I have honestly seen myself grow and develop more strengths with the help of them. Essentially, they were a great contribution to my writing and the STOGGoals because I have now developed new skills that will help me in the future."
Critical thinking	"I see myself as a work in action. I am always developing character and becoming better at anything I do. Having a writing and research tutor this [semester] I was able to increase my ability to write and think critically."
Transferable skills	"Working with a writing and research tutor has helped me to improve my self-development in terms of research and writing. They have help[ed] me become more aware of what sources are reliable and which is appropriate to the topic at hand. This has also given me a broad knowledge on topics I'm interested in. With that, I can even apply [this] research to other writing assignments assigned to me."

Final Written Reflection Selected Responses:

Prompt: Think about your experience as a writer and researcher over the past semester. Have you improved? If so, in what ways? Please discuss specific strategies or habits you have learned. How did you learn these strategies and habits? Where will you use them in the future?	
Theme	Quote
Research question development	Ya I had improved a lots, in many ways, like this is first time me writing a research paper and I don't know how to write a research question but with the help of my writing TA now I knew how to write a research question. I can use the strategies or habit for every writing class.
Process	I've learned that to write a good paper, you need [to] work on it a lot. Doing it before it is due will not get me close to a B. I also learned that in order to get a good grade in an essay, I need at least a second pair of eyes to make comments on my essay. I learned this by my mistakes in the beginning of class. I will use these skill[s] in every class that I have.
Process	I have improved as a writer due to my wonderful teacher and writing tutor. I learned my strategies and habits from my professor and writing books we used in class. These were consolidated in my mind by my tutor.

Notes

1. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), *Academic Library Impact: Improving Practice and Essential Areas to Research*, prepared by Lynn Silipigni Connaway, William Harvey, Vanessa Kitzie, and Stephanie Mikitish of OCLC Research (Chicago, IL: ACRL, 2017), available online at www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/publications/whitepapers/academiclib.pdf [accessed 9 August 2019].

2. The program was jointly funded by the Libraries and the Center for Advising and Academic Support:

six tutors were hired and each worked about six hours per week during the 12-week course. Tutors were paid for attending weekly training meetings, occasional class visits, and conducting 45-minute individual tutoring sessions.

3. St. Olaf College, "Mission" (2016), available online at <https://wp.stolaf.edu/about/mission/> [accessed 9 August 2019].

4. St. Olaf College, "STOGoals: College-Wide Goals for Student Learning," available online at <https://wp.stolaf.edu/outcomes/stogoals/> [accessed 29 July 2019].

5. Nathan D. Grawe, *Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018).

6. St. Olaf uses the term domestic students of color, or "domestic multicultural" as described on our website, as a more inclusive metric of racial and ethnic minority students; while "underrepresented minority" measures exclude Asian American students, domestic students of color includes, in particular, the Hmong students who are, like their Latinx and African American peers, often low-income, first-generation linguistic minorities.

7. Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, "Domestic Race/Ethnicity and International Student Profile" (2018), available online at <https://wp.stolaf.edu/ir-e/st-olaf-students-raceethnicity-profile/> [accessed 9 August 2019].

8. Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, "Enrollment Summary & Profile" (Fall 2019), available online at <https://wp.stolaf.edu/ir-e/files/2018/10/2019-Class-Profile.pdf> [accessed 2 March 2020].

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13. James K. Elmborg and Sheril Hook, *Centers for Learning: Writing Centers and Libraries in Collaboration*, ACRL Publications in Librarianship; No. 58 (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2005).

14. Elise Ferer, "Working Together: Library and Writing Center Collaboration," *Reference Services Review* 40, no. 4 (2012): 543–57, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00907321211277350>.

15. Trena Napier et al., "A Collaborative, Trilateral Approach to Bridging the Information Literacy Gap in Student Writing," *College & Research Libraries* 79, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.1.120>.

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