

# *The Write Space* Research Report



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# Introduction

A few months ago, we met with Dr. Liz Wardle, the director of the Howe Center for Writing. She expressed several concerns about the center, specific to the lack of students frequenting the center more than once, or even at all. Our overall goal was to identify why the amount of students utilizing the center is steadily decreasing even though the number of students at Miami is steadily increasing. We took a special interest in the design of the space, because this topic was a way to directly apply our knowledge of rhetoric from previous studies to something we could physically see within the rhetoric of the writing center space.

We researched the rhetoric of space in the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (HCWE). Specifically, our research question was as follows: How does the rhetoric of the space affect both the number of visitors and the success of their visits in the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (HCWE)? We identified elements of physical space in the HCWE's King location that are contributing to overall success of student writers and the center's mission to "ensure that Miami students excel as college writers and are prepared to excel as writers in their careers, roles as community and civic leaders, and personal lives. (Howe Center for Writing Excellence)" The writing environment should welcome students, with a focus on how the space is conducive to learning and practice.

In previous conversations, the HCWE's director Dr. Wardle has expressed concerns for the space as a comfortable environment for writers. The discussion also raised the point that writing appointments can sometimes be emotional, especially for students who are extremely frustrated or shy, according to student survey results. Since the HCWE has an open-spaced layout, students often do not recognize the writing center is its own entity.

From our research, we hope to uncover techniques and unique ideas to revamp Writing Center spaces to make them more welcoming. We also hope to obtain student opinions on what the writing center should look like, and what kinds of environments would be best for their writing and learning processes. This data on how students feel about the current space of the writing center could ultimately lead to recommendations for changes that would increase the number of student visitors and the quality of the space in the writing center.

## Background

### Philosophical and Conceptual Research

Before jumping into surveys, we had to do background research to determine how we would frame our questions, as well as justify how we framed them. We started with a philosopher named Michel Foucault, as he has written several pieces on the power of space stemming from its layout and design. From there, we chose to shift into more applied research, such as case studies related to office design. While offices are not writing centers, they are both spaces where many different kinds of people work on different tasks in the same space. This research allowed us to frame our questions in a way that addresses the physical space specifically, while being open-ended enough to get a better understanding of students' likes and dislikes of the space.

According to Michel Foucault's *Discipline & Punish*, a power shift in the second half of the 18th century occurred, discouraging public executions. This led to the need for a new punishment for those found guilty of crimes. In the 19th century, the penal system was created to replace public executions. Foucault believed this was the start of the power shift in society: a shift away from publicly performed punishment and to punishments carried out by institutional spaces.

While Foucault focuses on prisons, the psychology behind them is applicable to learning environment design. In a traditional classroom, especially those modeled in earlier decades or catholic schools, it is common to find students with respect and fear for their teachers. Students knew if they broke rules or misbehaved in class, there was punishment: detention, whippings, and extra chores cause students to view teachers as the ultimate power. They must submit to what they're told if they want to avoid punishment. Classrooms have power imbalance structures between teacher and student: instructors are the central focus in the front of the classroom.

Recently, there was a shift in education, a turn to cooperative learning environments and a change in the perception of authority. Many school systems have began setting up classrooms and learning spaces that encourage cooperative learning between students and teachers; teachers are partners in learning instead of ultimate disciplinarians. These ideals are being used in auxiliary learning spaces as well, in attempts to create an overall cooperative learning environment. The societal rules have been transferred onto other aspects of education, for example peer-to-peer learning or extra curricular learning and writing centers.

According to Jessica Bucholz and Julie Sheffler in their article "Creating a Warm and Inclusive Classroom Environment", the physical classroom environment affects the ownership students feel about their own schools. Classrooms should foster cooperation acceptance as instructional methods. This shift of pedagogy advances the idea of creating a low-stress learning environment that promotes the highest level of student learning (Bucholz & Sheffler).

### **Applied Research and the Concept of the Three Ps:**

From theoretical research, we moved into field examples and case studies to give ourselves more practical and applicable examples to create our own surveys and recommendations. We found a consistent emphasis on concept of the three Ps: permission, proximity, and privacy. While these studies were drawn from workplace environments, we felt they applied to our research due to similarity in space use. According to "Who Moved My Cube" by Anne-Laure Fayard and John Weeks, there must be a balance of permission, proximity, and privacy for a space to be useful to people. Permission refers to everything allowed in a space and its deciding authority. For example, if a company promotes brainstorming around the coffee pot, but the manager scolds people for lingering too long around the coffee, the power in the space is distorted. To balance the power, the manager would have to allow discussions without repercussions around the coffee pot (Fayard & Weeks).

Proximity refers to physical location in a space. Using the same example, if the coffee pot is located in the middle of all the offices on the floor, it's in a proximal location for everyone. If the coffee pot is in the far corner of the office, then it is only proximal to a select number of employees, and it will discourage those on the far side of the office from using the coffee pot as a place to brainstorm.

Privacy refers to how safe someone will feel talking in a space about any kind of topic. If the same coffee pot that is located in the middle of the office is in the middle of a wide, open room, people may refrain from private discussions or sharing tentative ideas, even though those are important steps in brainstorming. For the coffee pot to be a successful brainstorming area, it would have to be surrounded by areas that feel more secluded, such as little nooks or doorways. If all three of these are not equally balanced, a space will not function in the way that it was designed. Even if two of the three Ps are achieved, lacking the third P will still cause the space to function in a different manner than originally intended.

Fayard and Weeks further cite studies showing employees in open-plan spaces, aware they can be overheard, tend to have superficial discussions. This relates to the privacy aspect of a successful working space. In an open space like an open-plan office or the HCWE, a lack of privacy will prevent meaningful interactions. A space that promotes brainstorming and intellectual thoughts also has to allow for mistakes, and a lack of privacy does not permit that.

The senior editor of Fast Company, Jason Feifer, wrote an article in 2013 titled "Offices For All! Why Open-Office Layouts Are Bad For Employees, Bosses, and Productivity", highlighting different reasons why open-office layouts do not work for productivity. Feifer provides four reasons why open-office plans do not work, each relating to one of the ideas of three Ps.

Firstly, he states work in open office spaces is slower and worse. This point relates to privacy and proximity; working next to someone without physical barriers is too close for proper focus, and openness provides no privacy, leaving employees vulnerable to interruptions. Although HCWE is not an office, a space with many distractions--such as other students and a nearby busy entrance--can cause distractions and negatively impact a writer's ability to concentrate. On the other hand, an open writing center also lacks privacy for a task that is normally extremely personal, and students may not feel confident enough to ask for help.

Feifer states that open-office plans provide everyone constant permission to interrupt others, regardless of whether they are interrupted or not. There is no way to give a signal for privacy beyond being curt or putting in headphones, neither of which are helpful for productivity. The current set-up of the HCWE may provide some confusion for users on the flow of power, or permission, in the space. Since it's entirely open, it's often unclear where the center starts and the library ends, and a lack of power in a space does not accurately portray the permission of the space.

Feifer also states that working in open environments makes people more guarded (lack of privacy), challenging the idea that it allows better flow of knowledge and ideas. People struggle to find privacy and cut themselves off from the serendipity of openly working together. Without knowing the concept behind the open-plan of the HCWE, it's unclear as to whether or not it was designed to help promote group thinking. However, one-on-one consultations that happen in

the center don't necessarily fit this framework, and the current layout affects the privacy of the space, which is important for such a personal task like writing. By taking time to first research philosophical and practical examples and arguments of how the layout and design of a space can alter how it's used (regardless of its intended purpose), we created a foundation of knowledge we could use to format our own surveys. Our background research allowed us to find identifiable issues with the space of the current writing center and practically address how to fix them, instead of just recommending another alteration of the current space.

## Methodology

Our research methods were four-pronged. We separated our research into literature review and ethnographic research. Both categories were broken down again, resulting in four separate methods: theoretical and case study research, and student and consultant surveys. Our theoretical research yielded relevant practices of spatial design and provided us a basis for ethnographic research. The methods employed in the ethnographic part of the project are outlined in this methodology section. We used a web search engine to find articles from businesses, journals, and magazines that explored the rhetoric of space in a manner that was comparable to the HCWE. Physically comparable space does not refer to just the space, but also the environment established by the power source (i.e. a manager, a locked door, etc.), which is why we integrated businesses research with the writing center. While business work is different than that of a writing center, both aim to provide comfortable yet effective spaces for people to think, work, and communicate. From this research, we were able to identify and apply the idea of the three Ps to the layout and design of the current writing center.

### Student Surveys

To research the physical space of the HWCE, we surveyed 115 students of various years and majors. The survey was anonymous and posted online through Qualtrics, posted on Miami University verified Facebook pages, so access was limited to Miami students. Specifically, they were posted from September 30th through October 6th.

We posted the survey on the Miami Ballet Corps, Tri Delta Sorority, International Students & Scholar Services, Miami University Class of 2017, Miami University Class of 2018, and Miami University Class of 2019 Facebook pages. Surveys were only posted once per page as results from one round produced a satisfactory number of responses. In our survey, students were asked a total of nine questions. Students were asked basic questions about themselves such as their year in school and major. Next, they were asked if they had ever visited the HCWE, if so, how often and which location(s) they visited. Finally, students were asked to identify the writing center from a selection of images. Each time the survey was taken, the image orders were randomized to avoid order bias. Students were finally asked to pick a space they would like to work in. We selected images of writing centers from other universities with diverse layouts that displayed different elements such as open vs. private (lighting, structural design, etc.). The preceding question asked for reasons why a particular space was ideal for the student. Lastly, students were asked to describe a space where they would feel comfortable and welcome during a writing consultation.

The questions on the survey varied between multiple choice and short answers. When applicable, we chose to use multiple choice because it requires little effort from participants, yet still gives us



a response that benefits our data. Even with the multiple choice questions, we made the survey visually appealing by using more images, rather than having dense text blocks. Additionally, with only nine questions, our survey was relatively short. The advantage of this was to be sure students that took the survey would most likely complete it all the way through. Additionally, questions on the survey were required, so participants weren't allowed to leave any responses empty.

## **Consultant Surveys and Writer Feedback**

The HCWE at King library previously did research on the space of the writing center, before fall 2016 renovations. In the present study, we used a similar methodology; we drafted a layout of the writing center space, printed out physical copies of surveys and distributed them in the HCWE, asking writers and consultants to pick their most and least preferred consulting tables. We provided a stack of surveys in the consultants' room and another stack for the welcome staff to hand to writers interested in giving feedback.

The survey asked participants to pick their favorite location within the HCWE. We asked writers to order their preferences of tables in the writing center from 1 to 9, 9 being their least favorite location. We then focused on the top three favorite tables and bottom three, and asked them to give as much details as possible on why they felt that way. We updated the layout of the writing center to be an accurate representation of the current space in the library: we added adjacent offices and rooms and adjusted table positions. Finally, we asked participants to briefly describe their ideal writing space. This question was added from previous research because we wanted to compare results from the general student survey, as most of the students who took the other general survey had never been to the writing center before.

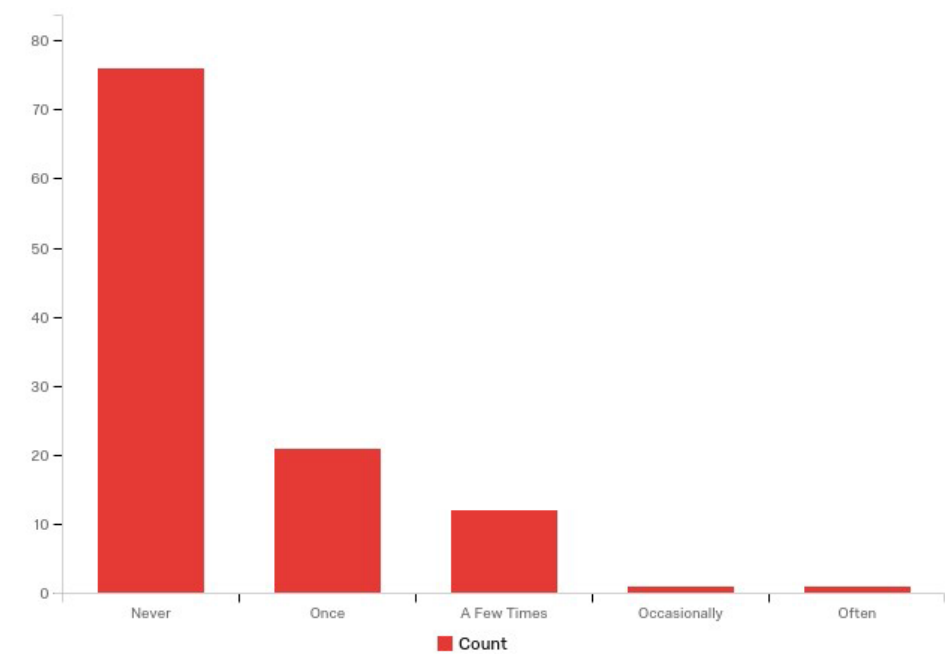
# **Results**

## **Student Survey**

The demographics of the students that completed the survey were as follows: 37.84% were sophomores, 32.43% were juniors, 26.13% were seniors, 1.80% were freshman, and 1.80% were other. When asked "how often do you visit the writing center?", over 68.47% of the students indicated that they have never been to the Howe Center for Writing Excellence. See Appendix B II.

When asked which locations on campus students have visited, answering none (57.94%) had higher results than the main location, King library (38.32%). (See Fig. 1 below). The final questions of the survey focused on how the space impacts students, both positively and negatively. Students were asked to correctly identify an image of the Howe Center for Writing Excellence. The images were randomized each time a student completed the survey, to avoid order effect. Of the 115 students, 90% were able to correctly identify the HCWE. Next, we selected images of writing centers from other universities with different layouts than Miami's and asked students which space they would prefer to work in. The survey results showed that 35.5% of students would prefer to work in the image that represented the space of the HCWE. In their responses of why they preferred the layout in King, students explained reasonings ranging from "the library is quiet, an easy place to focus" to "that's where I've worked before".

Figure 1: How often do you visit the Howe Center for Writing Excellence?



Students described a place where they would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation. In order to analyze the results, we coded the responses to determine what aspects were most preferred in the HCWE. We coded the data based on responses concerning privacy and openness, consultants/student interaction, space between students (proximity), comfort levels/ welcoming, lighting, technology, and background noise (see Appendix B II). We discovered a large majority were anxiety-related. The preferred space is a balance between open and private. For example, a student responded, “somewhere that is private, somewhere that is clean and update as well as open and welcoming”. While it’s hard to fit the needs of every student, the HCWE should be seen as “a space where you can openly and casually chat with someone deemed as an expert” as defined by a student response.

**Consulting Survey**

Consultants and writers at the King location were given physical copies of a survey (the same for both consultants and writers) asking for their table preferences at the writing center (see Appendix F). The original tables were numbered by their preferences from 1-9, 9 being their least favorite table for consultations. We have numbered the tables for discussion and results purposes only; tables were unmarked when surveys were distributed.

We received survey results from 8 current consultants. Of surveys received, 75% ranked table 7 as their least favorite table and 100% placed it in their bottom three. 50% indicated that the location was right in the middle of the center with lights that were too bright, and consultants felt exposed. Other reasons for disliking this table was that the space is too small, and with the awkward shapes and chairs, the consultants feel that they cannot be considered close to the

writer. 75% of consultants also ranked table 5 and 6 in their bottom three. Parameter tables such as those by the waiting area/welcome desk and rooms were identified as being either too far and/or too close (too far from the rest of the writing center--a feeling of disconnection vs. too close to writing center commotion/waiting area/noise from offices and desks).

Favorite tables were spread out more, with the most preferred table being table 4 (37.5% stating this table as their first preference) and 3 (25% stating this table as their first preference). Preferences for second and third tables varied from the front to the side and the back of the writing center.

Reasons for top three table preference also varied. Consultants who chose tables close to the welcome desk such as table 9 cited reasons like being closer to the rest of the library and being close to the welcome desk (able to anticipate writers) with a good line of sight. Consultants who preferred other tables cited structural support, for example the security of being by a wall with the windows (tables 1 to 4) or being next to a pillar (tables 6, 8, and 9) for more privacy. Window tables were also mentioned for the natural light they let in and the fairly secluded part of the center space they occupy. When consultants were asked to describe a space they felt comfortable consulting in, they identified the following traits as important: openness and lighting; comfort; privacy to talk quietly without feeling exposed; having an open line of sight.

We received two survey responses from writers. One preferred tables by the window because of structural support (wall) and light. The participant suggested these were preferable because they seem more silent which may help writers open up. The most disliked tables were cited as tables 7, 8, and 9. The other participant mentioned that an ideal writing space would be quiet, bright, with an outlet to charge a laptop, and personal distance so the writer isn't too close to the consultant. The tables by the windows were the most preferred and the tables in the very back and very front (by the rooms) were least preferred.

## Discussion

After reviewing responses, it was clear permission, proximity, and privacy are not balanced within the HCWE space. In the student survey, participants were asked to describe a space where they would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation. Of the 115 responses, several pointed out the space did not make them feel comfortable. One respondent stated, "It's important to not feel judged. Writing is a difficult skill to learn and a lot of the time when seeking help you can feel 'less than' the person you're working with... I've never gotten help [from HCWE] because I would feel dumb because I couldn't do it on my own." (see Appendix B II) This student highlighted a need for privacy. Writing is a personal process, according to several student responses, and in such an open space right at the main entrance of the library, there is no opportunity for students to have privacy within their consultation.

Another student said "somewhere not too close to others, but still an open space. That feels like a good setup for constructive conversation." (see Appendix B II) This touches on proximity, as the student is requesting a space that isn't completely isolated, but allows for private conversations and the opportunity to think out loud. In our current writing center, all tables are relatively close and conversation can be easily overheard. On permission, a student requested a "waiting area and different group desks." (see Appendix B II) In the current center, there is a welcome



desk, but it's often not recognized, and since students are often scolded for sitting in the wrong area, their discomfort might increase before their appointment even begins. The flow of power in the current space isn't clear, and defining it more precisely could help smooth the overall consultation, which could bring students back again. Please see Appendix D for more results supporting a lack of balance between the idea of the three Ps, or Appendix B II for the coded responses.

### **Consultant & Writer Survey**

Consultants were more varied in the tables they liked versus the tables they disliked. For the tables they liked, consultants who chose tables close to the welcome desk liked being closer to the rest of the library and the welcome desk (able to anticipate writers) with a good line of sight. Consultants who preferred parameter tables liked the security and privacy offered by the pillars and walls. Consultants who preferred window tables mentioned the natural light and the more private space they occupied.

Consultants all shared similar dislikes in table preference, notably the round table in the middle of the writing center. Consultants cited similar reasons--feeling too exposed with the lights too bright. Consultants also stated that parameter tables by the rooms in the writing center were too far from the rest of the writing center and/or too close to office commotion. In defining the perfect space, consultants seemed to want a moderate environment: not too quiet but not too noisy, not too cramped but not too exposed, good lighting but not too bright, not too close but not too far to the writer, not too close but not too far from others. These indicate a preference for limited exposure, a balance of permission, proximity, and privacy.

We received two survey responses from writers. One preferred tables by the window because of structural support (wall) and light. The participant suggested these were preferable because they seem more silent which may help writers open up. The most disliked tables were cited as tables 7, 8, and 9. The other survey mentioned that an ideal writing space would be quiet, bright, with an outlet to charge a laptop, and personal distance so the writer isn't too close to the consultant. The tables by the windows were the most preferred and the tables in the very back and very front (by the rooms) were least preferred. Compared to the fall 2015 survey before the renovation of the writing center space in King, we found similar reasons for liking and disliking certain tables at the writing center.

We did not get enough information from writers to interpret the data in a useful comparison. As such, our research also does not focus on the similarities and differences between consultants and writers, but rather the physical space defined by consultants. Future research can use a similar methodology with writers to measure the rhetoric of the renovated space. Our study only had 8 consultants and 2 writers. Small numbers make a big difference in our pool of people surveyed--the information provided by the writers is not as strong as the information provided by the consultants, and even that could be strengthened. In comparison with fall 2015, 24 consultants and 18 writers were surveyed.

Preference for tables may also be biased as different shifts have different number of consultants--they may pick a favorite space that they frequently consult at. One respondent preferred tables because "all consultants before me used to sit" there. Through this research, we hope to create a space that creates a positive experience between the consultants and the students. Our hope is that after being able to identify the writing center as a positive space, students will feel

comfortable enough to engage and continue to use the Howe Center for Writing Excellence to improve their writing, despite their skill level.

## Conclusion

Through our combined research, we have come across opinions of the physical HCWE space at King library and have some suggestions to make it more comfortable for both writers and consultants. Our theoretical research informed our case study research and established the three Ps: proximity, permission, and privacy, and also placed past research into an academic work environment. Our student surveys revealed that many students valued these elements and some had notable concerns for the privacy and proximity of consultation tables in the writing center especially. When asked to describe a space in which they would feel comfortable and welcome during a writing consultation, students, current writers being consulted in the writing center, and current consultants all cited moderate environment: a balance of openness, privacy, line-of-sight, lighting, and background noise. We recommend the writing center does further research to align the needs of writers and consultants, and to promote their services so more people can benefit from the HCWE. We also recommend the HCWE change its current layout based on the feedback provided by those interacting in the writing center, with suggestions for a glass door separating the center from the rest of the library and dividers within the center.

By installing a glass door, preferably one that's frosted, students would be offered immediate privacy from the rest of the library. While this doesn't provide privacy within the center itself, it would create an element of some privacy that wasn't there before, and begin to help address the lack of balance in the center between the three Ps currently. The frosted glass wall would also address the issue of permission - by providing a clear entrance that leads directly to the welcome desk students would no longer accidentally sit at the writing center tables. Although moving the actual center in the library would be a huge feat, a frosted glass wall would separate it from the entrance of King Library, which would give the illusion of a greater proximity to other students (not within the center, but within the whole building), and hopefully the anxiety of being seen by the general public in the library.

By working to balance the three Ps in the writing center, more students could be attracted to the space and the center itself, which could increase student visits. Overall, we hope that adjusting the physical space to the needs of all students would help support the overall mission of the writing center: "to ensure that Miami students excel as college writers and are prepared to excel as writers in their careers, roles as community and civic leaders, and personal lives." (Howe Center for Writing Excellence)

## Works Cited

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- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. Print.

### Survey Images:

All images were found with a Google Image search, below are the specific links:

1. <http://www.wlnjournal.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/7.jpg>
2. <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CdTLhH8W4AI-1Xo.jpg:large>
3. <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CdTLhIEWwAA6T6g.jpg:large>
4. <http://writing.wisc.edu/Individual/summer.html>
5. <http://www.trincoll.edu/academics/centers/writing/writingcenter/Pages/default.aspx>
6. <http://studio.eku.edu/insidelook/noel-studio-host-southeastern-writing-center-association-conference>
7. <http://blogs.lib.utexas.edu/textlibris/tag/alice-batt/>
8. <http://matters.madisoncollege.edu/articles/announcements/2013-11-08/4808/writing-center-professionals-gather-at-college-on-nov-18>
9. [http://www.blc.edu/assets/imagecache/major\\_minor\\_header/writing\\_center.jpg](http://www.blc.edu/assets/imagecache/major_minor_header/writing_center.jpg)

Appendix  
Appendix A.

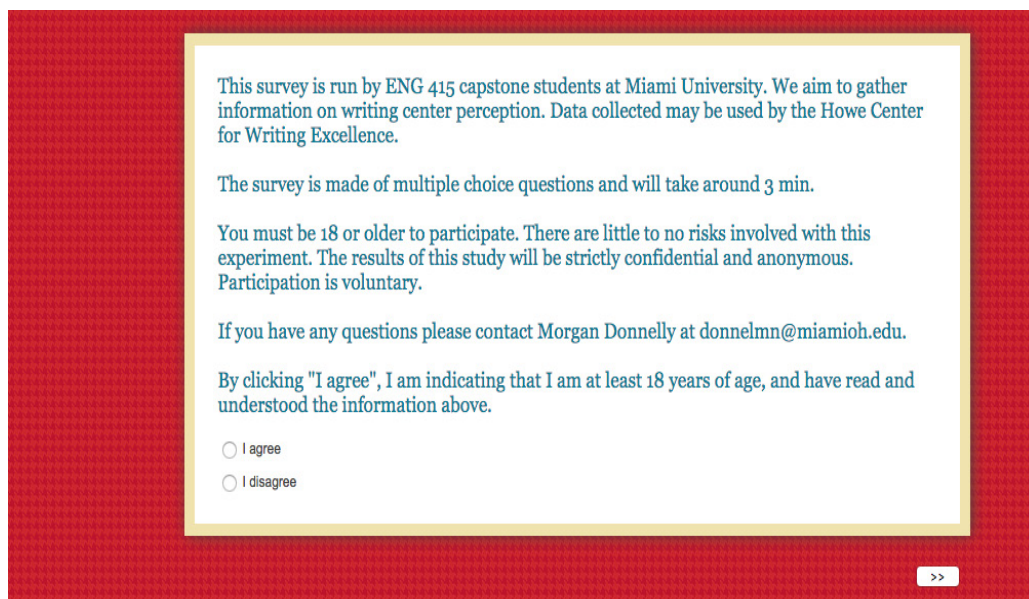
Student Survey Action:

- 9/30/16 - Scout posted the student survey on the Miami Ballet Corps Facebook group page, 11:15 am
- 9/30/16 - Scout emailed an ISSS advisor to have her post our survey on the ISSS Facebook group page, 11:22 am
- 10/4/16 - Morgan posted the student survey on the Tri Delta Sorority Facebook group page, 2:10 pm
- 10/6/16 - Morgan posted the student survey on the Miami University Class of 2017 Facebook group page, 9:54 am
- 10/6/16 - Morgan posted the student survey on the Miami University Class of 2018 Facebook group page, 10:02 pm
- 10/5/16 - ISSS advisor posted our survey to their Facebook page for international students
- 10/6/16 - Morgan posted the student survey on the Miami University Class of 2019 Facebook group page, 1:21 pm
- 10/6/16 - Scout posted the student survey on the Miami Ballet Corps Facebook page

## Appendix B.

### I. Student Survey

Link to the survey: [https://miamioh.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_oiz49gha2OBNHIp](https://miamioh.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_oiz49gha2OBNHIp)

A screenshot of the first screen of a survey. It has a red background with a white rectangular box in the center containing text. The text explains the survey is run by ENG 415 capstone students at Miami University, aims to gather information on writing center perception, and may be used by the Howe Center for Writing Excellence. It states the survey consists of multiple choice questions and will take about 3 minutes. It also mentions that participants must be 18 or older, there are no risks, results are confidential and anonymous, and participation is voluntary. Contact information for Morgan Donnelly is provided. A consent statement is followed by two radio button options: 'I agree' and 'I disagree'. A '>>' button is at the bottom right.

This survey is run by ENG 415 capstone students at Miami University. We aim to gather information on writing center perception. Data collected may be used by the Howe Center for Writing Excellence.

The survey is made of multiple choice questions and will take around 3 min.

You must be 18 or older to participate. There are little to no risks involved with this experiment. The results of this study will be strictly confidential and anonymous. Participation is voluntary.

If you have any questions please contact Morgan Donnelly at [donnelmn@miamioh.edu](mailto:donnelmn@miamioh.edu).

By clicking "I agree", I am indicating that I am at least 18 years of age, and have read and understood the information above.

☐ I agree

☐ I disagree

>>

A screenshot of the second screen of the survey. It has a red background with two white rectangular boxes. The first box contains the question 'What is your major?' and a text input field. The second box contains the question 'What is your year?' and five radio button options: 'Freshman', 'Sophomore', 'Junior', 'Senior', and 'Other'.

What is your major?

What is your year?

☐ Freshman

☐ Sophomore

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

☐ Other

How often do you visit the writing center?

Never  
☐

Once  
☐

A Few Times  
☐

Occasionally  
☐

Often  
☐

Which locations have you visited? (Select all that apply)  
(The writing initiative in Farmer is not a part of the center)

- ☐ King
- ☐ Best
- ☐ Bachelor
- ☐ Gross
- ☐ Peabody
- ☐ None

Which picture below is the Howe Center for Writing Excellence?



>>



What space would you prefer to work in?



Why? Please provide a brief explanation.

Describe a space where you would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation.  
What is important for you to have in this setting?

>>

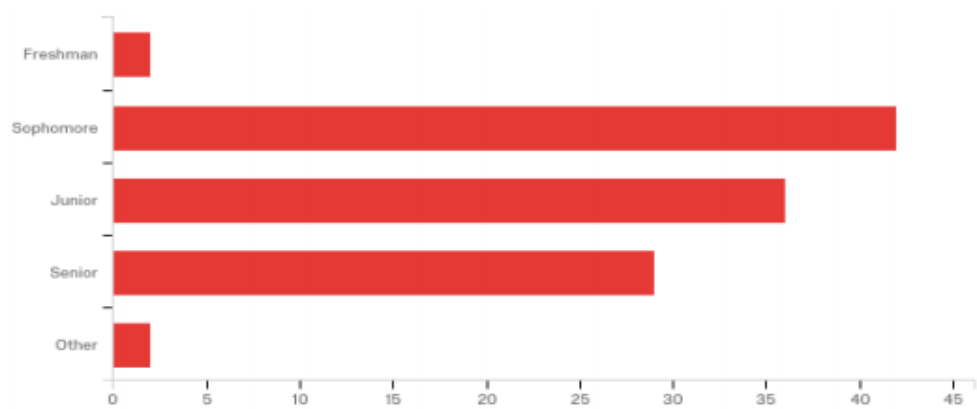
II. Student Responses

Q2: Word cloud of the most common majors



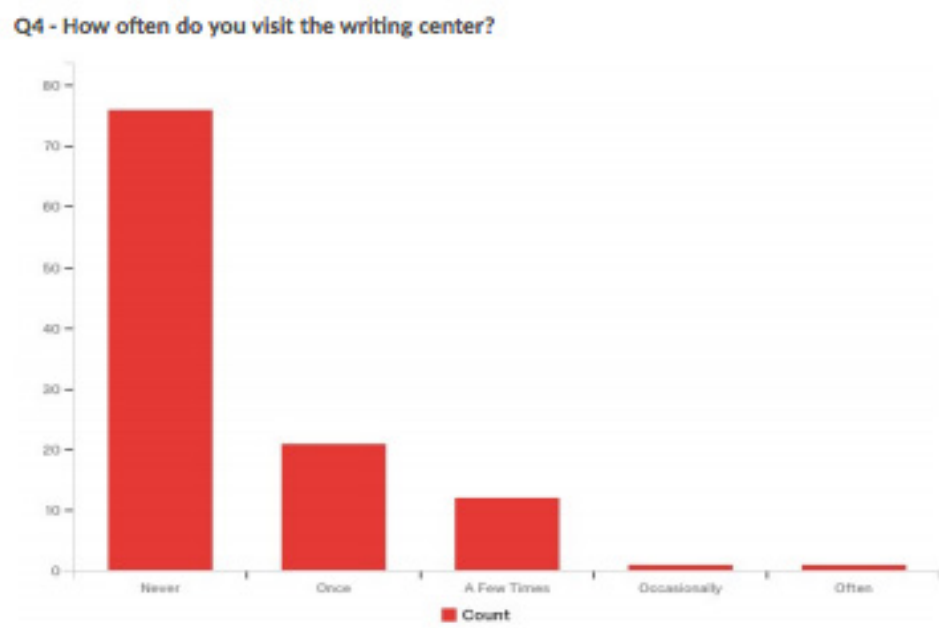
Q3 - Which is your year?

Q3 - What is your year?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Freshman	1.80%	2
2	Sophomore	37.84%	42
3	Junior	32.43%	36
4	Senior	26.13%	29
5	Other	1.80%	2
	Total	100%	111

Q4 - How often do you visit the writing center?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	68.47%	76
2	Once	18.92%	21
3	A Few Times	10.81%	12
4	Occasionally	0.90%	1
5	Often	0.90%	1
	Total	100%	111

Q5 - Which locations have you visited? (Select all that apply)  
(The writing initiative in Farmer is not part of the center)

Q5 - Which locations have you visited? (Select all that apply)  
(The writing initiative in Farmer is not part of the center)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	King	38.32%	41
2	Best	7.48%	8
3	Bachelor	4.67%	5
4	Gross	0.93%	1
5	Peabody	3.74%	4
6	None	57.94%	62
	Total	100%	107

#	Answer	%	Count
1	King	38.32%	41
2	Best	7.48%	8
3	Bachelor	4.67%	5
4	Gross	0.93%	1
5	Peabody	3.74%	4
6	None	57.94%	62
	Total	100%	107

Q6 - Which picture below is the Howe Center for Writing Excellence?

Report: 

Initial Report

 Add Filter

Add Report Breakout

Search Questions

Q3 - What is your year?

Q4 - How often do you visit the writing center?

Q5 - Which locations have you visited? (Select all that apply)  
(The writing initiative in Farmer is not a part of the center)

Q6 - Which picture below is the Howe Center for Writing Excellence?

Q7 - What space would you prefer to work in?

Q8 - Why? Please provide a brief explanation.

Q9 - Describe a space where you would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation.What is important for you to have in this setting?


#

Field

T Back to Top

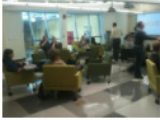
Choice Count

1




90.00% 99

2




0.91% 1

3



2.73% 3





4



6.36% 7

17

## Q7 - What space would you prefer to work in?

Add Report Breakout		#	Field	Choice Count
Search Questions				
Q3 - What is your year?		1		24.24% 24
Q4 - How often do you visit the writing center?		2		12.12% 12
Q5 - Which locations have you visited? (Select all that apply) (The writing initiative in Farmer is not a part of the center)		4		35.35% 35
Q6 - Which picture below is the Howe Center for Writing Excellence?		7		28.28% 28
Q7 - What space would you prefer to work in?				
Q8 - Why? Please provide a brief explanation.				
Q9 - Describe a space where you would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation. What is important for you to have in this setting?				

## Q8 - Why? Please provide a brief explanation.

### \*Coded Responses

**BLUE** - Responses concerning privacy  
**PINK** - Responses concerning openness  
**PURPLE** - Consultants / Student Interaction  
**RED** - Space between students  
**GREEN** - Comfort / Welcoming  
**ORANGE** - Lighting  
**GREY** - Technology  
**GOLD** - Background noise

Minimal distractions and **good distance between workers.**

**There aren't others around you so there is lots of privacy**

Library is quiet, easy place to focus

big tables, spread out, actually in King

**It's secluded enough to have a one on one conversation, but still open for people to work together if need be**

**It looks comfortable**

**A bit more privacy**

It's spread out and **separated from others by distance**

**Very welcoming**

It looks like a comfortable place to work
Open with the tables far enough away from other tables. I don't want to hear other conversations/ others to hear my conversations.
Combination of formal and informal
Open, warmer atmosphere
I like the modernness of the space
There is enough room for myself and a helper to sit and work, without feeling crowded. The tables are also spread out enough that I wouldn't feel as though I was disturbing other groups.
The tables are set up in a way to engage with the person assisting
That's where I've worked before.
Sectioned off to provide more privacy
I like that it's not too sterile of an environment so it feels comfortable. Also, the dividers between spaces creates a more focused area
It is less public and makes it clear that the discussion is between the consultant and the student seeking help
Clean and ordered
The lighting
I like the privacy
Spacious with good lighting
Looks quiet
More personal and quiet
It looks welcoming and comfortable
organized, clean, working alone
I do not want to be where others can see
there are private places to work but you're also not all alone. atmosphere is productive and there is not much to distract you
It's private enough that we can get the work done.
familiarity
No one is there
The space is open and flexible but there are still defined work spaces.
More opening, lots of places to sit and discuss, casual setting
Just don't feel confined
I like the windows and plant
There are people in it, it looks cozy and inviting
I like how each desk has a computer and the whole area looks modern



It looks the most creative and conducive to writing
It looks more intimate and less structured
it looks the nicest and most open, the computers look the best
The colors are neutral and not distracting, no one there, no TVs or other distractions
Relaxed, spacious, comfortable environment
Adequate interior lighting and daylighting offering natural light into the space
white walls. very open space. spacious between ppl.
Bright, open, computers
Access to natural light, desktop computers available, open and airy space
I like how each table has a desktop where someone could show you on your paper electronically what you're missing.
Still cozy but big tables and plenty of room to work
It looks for cozy and in a room by itself. Rather than out in the open
you are secluded
it seems bright and open, and not too distracting
I like background noise
I feel too exposed to express my concerns in the current writing center
It's simple, not overcrowded or distracting but it's still an open layout and a bright inviting environment
Clean, Bright
there are plenty of tables and its spaced out nicely from other work stations
It's open and comfortable
It's coziest
There are a variety of spaces to work in that offer flexibility in working styles.
Seems comfy
Spread apart and one on one attention
Very open
Clean, technology, space to work with others or by yourself
Seems a little more cozy and casual
Clean, no distractions, sunny
Private
it feels more relaxed
not too private that its weird but quiet enough to focus
More open space.

Looks inviting and comfortable
The stations are among others but also provide an individual setting to work. I work well with background noise that is not directly related to me as seen in this picture.
More spread out
More room
One-on-one to work on essay/paper, seems relaxed
looks most comforting
I like having my own space, but also having a table to put my work on. I don't like being crammed in a cubicle because it's confining.
I like the brightness!
Looks welcoming
With the individual tables, there provides a bit more privacy for the tutor/student interaction.
I like that there are dividers between the different groups- if I am asking for help with my writing, I might want it to be private.
Not many people
It appears to be good for discussion and collaboration.
Open w a sense of privacy
It's open and not intimidating but still partitioned off into my own space.
Openness, more light, space between workspaces
It still is spacious, but has a bit more spaces for more private work
It's the most private

Q9 - Describe a space where you would feel comfortable and welcomed during a writing consultation. What is important for you to have in this setting?

\*Coded Responses

Blue - private

Pink - open

Orange - lots of space

Purple - about people/consultants

Green - resources/food/drink requests

Highlighted - anxiety-related

---

Open table environment, casual seats, and my tutor next to me as opposed to in front.

---

Library, quiet, public

---

somewhere where I feel like people won't be listening in because i'm self conscious about my writing skills

---

It's important to not feel judged. Writing is a difficult skill to learn and a lot of the time when seeking help you can feel "less than" the person you're working with. Honestly, I've never gotten help from the writing center because I would feel dumb because I couldn't do it on my own.

Somewhere not too close to others, but still an open space. That feels like a good setup for constructive conversation

Open space but allow some privacy

Either an office or a spread out environment so I can concentrate on my work.

I appreciate an environment with a lot of available resources, such as the internet and a lot of room to work.

friendly people

Open and quiet, with really spaced out desks.

Open desks

Enough space to feel private without being boxed in

Slightly secluded, so there is privacy

Privacy

Waiting area and different group desks

I really don't know.

I don't want other ppl to hear me read my paper aloud other than my tutor

A desk with privacy

Open area with spaced out tables where tutors and students can sit across from each other.

People at desks and smiles

Small and reserved to be contained just to two people

quiet

A comfortable area that is not very open

large tables, quiet, not much to distract on walls or on tables

A large table to work on and a public place that is quiet enough to focus on my work.

open space with Windows, tables to have stuff spread out

Nice people who are willing to help. Comfy table

Comfortable chairs, no shared tables

It is important for it to not feel like a business meeting

Private bc if I don't understand something and need help I don't want the whole world to know

Where everyone didn't watch you if you wanted help

Cute and modern; many resources; snacks

Somewhere that is private, somewhere that is clean and update as well as open and welcoming

---

Couches, comfy chairs, non-steril looking

---

not a lot of people around, fairly quiet, one-on-one consultation, lots of light

---

A table with plenty of room for laptops, notebooks, etc., quiet but able to talk softly, a tutor who listens to what I need help on

---

Important to be comfortable, be able to sit across from the person

---

Spacious room so allow for that interpersonal setting and conversation. Natural light with varying desk stations.

---

---

Secluded space but open environment, privacy with comfort

---

Privacy

---

A space where you can openly and casually chat with someone deemed as an expert

---

Some privacy but not complete silence. Windows and comfortable seating.

---

alone with the instructor, with a two person cubicle, so we can both focus and accomplish the goals I have and came with

---

Appropriate table space, and not be crowded around other people

---

Smiling people

---

I would like it a little more closed off and less distracting

---

Something that looks inviting, not secluded or closed off. An area with little to no decorations to distract me

---

Somewhere quiet, clean, well lit

---

I would feel comfortable almost anywhere as long as the person was nice and welcoming. I don't think the location of it matters so much as the person I would be interacting with

---

Somewhere we can sit one on one and discuss with not a ton of people around

---

Comfort, quiet

---

Privacy, comfortable sitting, bright light

---

Privacy

---

Spread apart from other workers

---

Lots of space

---

Personal space away from other individuals being helped, technology so that we can look up info/paper together

---

A private space to talk

---

Educated help

---

Privacy, quiet

---

open

---

the place in king; quiet

---

Space in between other students. I'd rather them not be able to hear my conversations if I'm getting help.

---

---

A space where you are able to speak without everyone else hearing. In the writing center now it's in the middle of the library so it's kind of awkward to talk because it seems like everyone can hear you.

---

A large enough area for my materials in an open space.

---

More quiet areas

---

In a big open space but far away from others so I can have privacy

---

Private space to discuss, one-on-one time to discuss

---

places to sit, a comfortable atmosphere

---

A relaxed environment would be best. I don't like to be in a tight space.

---

comfy chairs and complimentary beverages

---

A laid back atmosphere

---

It is important to have a bit of privacy since you will be going through what can be fixed/what is wrong with your piece of writing.

---

Enough space between groups that no one will hear my consultation.

---

One on one, less people talking over each other

---

It is important for there to be little outside distraction and to be working with a knowledgeable consultant.

---

More than enough space

---

I like to be on the same level as my consultant. I don't want to be intimidated

---

Someplace comfortable, but also somewhat private and more quiet. It is important to be able to have a conversation with someone critiquing your writing, so the setting should be open enough for conversation, but private enough that the conversation is just between you and your writing adviser.

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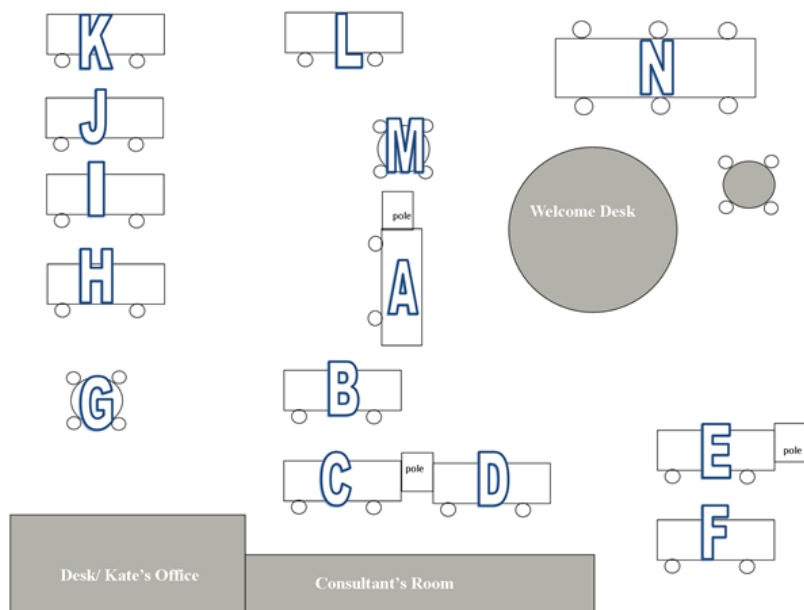
I would prefer a space that allows for privacy but isn't entirely closed off. I work best with minimal distractions from other people, so the privacy is important but I don't want to feel closed off entirely to make it too uncomfortable.

---

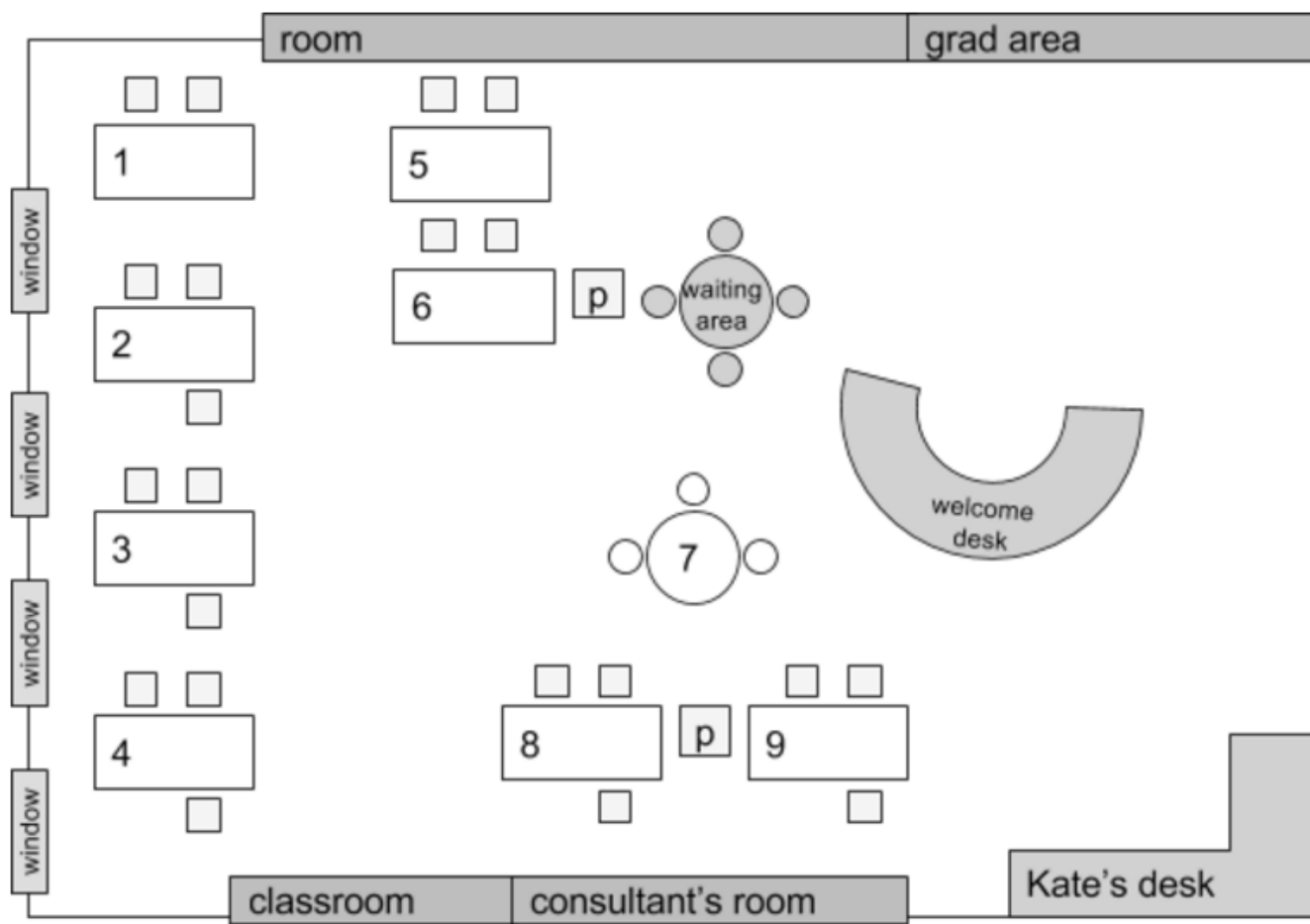
\*Q8 and Q9: Not all responses included

## Appendix C.:Consultant Survey

Previous layout:



New layout:





This survey is run by ENG 415 students to gather perceptions of space for the Howe Center for Writing Excellence. There are little to no risks involved. Results are confidential and anonymous. If you have questions please email [liangy3@miamioh.edu](mailto:liangy3@miamioh.edu). Please number the unshaded tables below from 1-9, 9 being your least favorite table for consultations. Answer questions with as much detail as you can.

Why do you prefer table 1? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you prefer table 2? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you prefer table 3? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you not prefer table 7? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you not prefer table 8? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you not prefer table 9? \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe a space you feel comfortable consulting in. What is important in this setting?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Appendix D.

This table includes open-ended student responses\* that help support the idea that there is not a proper balance of the three Ps in the space currently used for the Howe Center for Writing Excellence. \*not all student responses are included.

Idea	Survey Support
<i>Privacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There aren't others around you so there is lots of privacy</li><li>• It's secluded enough to have a one on one conversation</li><li>• A bit more privacy</li><li>• Sectioned off to provide more privacy</li><li>• It is less public</li><li>• I like the privacy</li><li>• there are private places to work</li><li>• It's private enough that we can get the work done.</li><li>• you are secluded</li><li>• Private</li><li>• w a sense of privacy</li><li>• but has a bit more spaces for more private work</li><li>• It's the most private</li><li>• somewhere where I feel like people won't be listening in because i'm self conscious about my writing skills</li><li>• It's important to not feel judged. Writing is a difficult skill to learn and a lot of the time when seeking help you can feel "less than" the person you're working with. Honestly, I've never gotten help from the writing center because I would feel dumb because I couldn't do it on my own</li><li>• Enough space to feel private without being boxed in</li><li>• Slightly secluded, so there is privacy</li><li>• Small and reserved to be contained just to two people</li><li>• Private bc if I don't understand something and need help I don't want the whole world to know</li><li>• Where everyone didn't watch you if you wanted help</li></ul>

<p><i>Proximity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good distance between workers</li> <li>• separated from others by distance</li> <li>• Open with the tables far enough away from other tables. I don't want to hear other conversations/ others to hear my conversations</li> <li>• There is enough room for myself and a helper to sit and work, without feeling crowded. The tables are also spread out enough that I wouldn't feel as though I was disturbing other groups</li> <li>• Somewhere not too close to others, but still an open space. That feels like a good setup for constructive conversation</li> <li>• Either an office or a spread out environment so I can concentrate on my work</li> <li>• Open and quiet, with really spaced out desks</li> <li>• Open area with spaced out tables where tutors and students can sit across from each other.</li> <li>• Appropriate table space, and not be crowded around other people</li> <li>• Spread apart from other workers</li> <li>• Enough space between groups that no one will hear my consultation</li> </ul>
<p><i>Permission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very welcoming</li> <li>• Combination of formal and informal</li> <li>• It looks welcoming and comfortable</li> <li>• There are people in it, it looks cozy and inviting</li> <li>• friendly people</li> <li>• Waiting area and different group desks</li> <li>• People at desks and smiles</li> <li>• Nice people who are willing to help</li> <li>• Smiling people</li> <li>• I would feel comfortable almost anywhere as long as the person was nice and welcoming. I don't think the location of it matters so much as the person I would be interacting with</li> </ul>