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Locating L2 English Writing Centers in German Universities

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Abstract

As L2 English writing support services, including writing centers, expand into different linguistic and national contexts, it becomes imperative for *literacy brokers* (Lillis and Curry 2006) and *literacy managers* (Bräuer 2012) to reflect on the uses and limitations of existing writing support models and teaching approaches. This paper presents the findings from a project that tracked the growth of L2 English writing centers in German universities from 2013-2015, locating their emergence within changes in the German academic landscape. Using data taken from questionnaires and interviews, this paper locates and explores ten L2 English writing centers in Germany, focusing on their aims; organizational models and teaching approaches; staffing and funding; key university partnerships; offers; and reflections on the future. It is hoped that these collated experiences could be of interest to other L2 English centers developing in different countries and language contexts.

Introduction

Over the last 25 years, there has been an increase in writing support services and centers worldwide. Introduced within an American university context (Murphy and Law 2013), the idea of a writing center has developed and changed over time, expanding beyond borders and languages.¹ Writing support services and centers are often billed as *individualized* and *reflexive* spaces (both physical and perceived, as in the case of online writing support) that function outside of the traditional and hierarchical structures found in academic departments and that are based on ground-up, grassroots initiatives. However, it has also been argued that this rather idealized and often repeated version of a writing center is a projection of how the community would like to see itself, or a 'grand narrative', rather than representative of the work that is actually being carried out (Grutsch-McKinney 2013, as referred to by Scott in Bromley, Scott, and Bonazza 2015). The majority of research on writing centers originates from Anglo-American spaces; therefore, the question of how writing centers are being used in different country and language contexts is increasingly important as countries with diverse academic traditions experiment with the uses and limitations of the general concept.

Within German-speaking countries, the German-language writing center, called *Schreibberatung*, *Schreiblabor*, *Schreibwerkstatt* or *Schreibzentrum*² has developed to support German language writers. Since 2005, and peaking in 2012, German universities have also been experimenting with L2 English writing support, both within specific departments and outside of the departments in spaces such as language centers and competency development centers. There are fewer L2 English writing centers than institutions

¹ For more information about the growth and development of writing center concepts, see Murphy and Law (2013) and Thaiss (2012).

² *Schreibberatung* can be translated as 'writing consultation', *Schreiblabor* as 'writing lab', *Schreibwerkstatt* as 'writing workshop' and *Schreibzentrum* as 'writing center'. Within this paper, I refer to the group as German Language Writing Centers.

in the German-language writing center community, but the number is growing as universities seek to internationalize their student populations and increase international research impact by encouraging, or in some cases requiring, multilingualism, and particularly, English language competency. Although they support L2 English writers, these centers are grounded within German academic structures, making rote reproduction of existing center models and teaching approaches that have been developed for predominantly English language contexts neither possible nor desirable. Hence the question of how these L2 English services can best support their L2 writers, while reflecting their national and institutional contexts, becomes relevant.

To date, there has been no study to map the services that are available to L2 English learners throughout German universities, let alone support for writing in particular. Following calls to critically examine the international reach of hegemonic approaches to writing support (Donahue 2009, Harbord 2010, Ganobcsik-Williams 2012) and in recognition of the diverse interpretations of writing center work throughout the world (cf. Thaiss et al 2012, Kruse 2013), this paper explores the various manifestations of L2 English writing support in Germany.

This research project located and explored L2 English writing centers in German universities, using questionnaires and semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with center directors and/or coordinators. In order to contextualize the emergence of L2 English writing support services at the tertiary level, I will first present a brief background of the growth of the German language writing support community and the increased need for L2 English writing support. I will then outline the methodology used in this work. Data classifying the centers into three groups will be presented, including their organizational models and applied teaching approaches, staffing and funding situations, key partnerships, offers, and reflections on the future.

Background

Bologna and the growth of the German-language writing center community

The 1998 Bologna Process, a non-binding agreement to promote European student mobility, has greatly affected the structure of European and German higher education. Changes brought about by this initiative, including the standardization of degrees and credit points and support for increased inter-European mobility amongst EU students, have altered the expectations of, and from, higher education in Germany (Witte, Van der Wende, and Huisman 2008). Focusing on mobility, employability and skill transferability through certain competencies and skills development (Secretariat 2009), this output-oriented conceptualization of higher education is considered by some³ to be a departure from the Humboldt discourse, which had previously been seen to characterize German higher education (Chitez and Kruse 2012, Kruse 2013, Macgilchrist and Girgensohn 2011). In particular, the emphasis on standardized education outcomes lies in opposition to the autonomy of academia that is emphasized in the Humboldt narrative.

A recent development in German higher education is the growing number of writing centers, which support German-language writers in recognizing and negotiating the writing in their discourse communities. Initially inspired by US writing center examples, these institutions have been repurposed to fit German-language universities' writing pedagogies and institutional realities (Bräuer 2002, Bräuer and Girgensohn 2012). Ruhmann (2014) has documented the growth and professionalization of writing support in German-speaking universities from 1993 to 2013, noting that an increasing number of universities have recognized their students' need for writing support, although in many cases, these services should be more integrated into university practices and structure. Dreyfürst and Sennewald have argued that there is no standard operational model to encompass all of these institutions

³For more information on the interplay between the Bologna Process and the Humboldt Approach and how they are seen to influence university structure and practice, please see Macgilchrist and Girgensohn (2011). For a dissenting opinion on the relevance of the Humboldt approach to German higher education, see Ash (2006).

(Dreyfürst and Sennewald 2014), although Bräuer (2012: 470) highlights certain 'tendencies' in writing support, including the facilitation of peer learning. The *Gesellschaft für Schreibdidaktik und Schreibforschung* (Association for Writing Pedagogy and Writing Research), an organization created in 2013 to support the teaching of, and research into, writing, has tried to unite those who are interested in the topic, keeping the group open to those working with writing processes, the support of writers and the negotiation of writing (Schreibforschung n.d.).

Lahm (2014) has estimated that there are over sixty writing centers within German-speaking countries. These institutions can support departments in integrating writing support into their programs and courses and/or work directly with student writers. Indeed, the German-language writing center community is growing in strength, both in a German-language academic context and within an international research context, as can be seen by the number of related conferences, organizations and writing journals within Germany and German-speaking countries. Despite the fear that German universities are losing their traditions in the face of the standardization of education due to internationalization (Pritchard 2006), the experiences of the German-language writing center community could be seen as the creation of situated and locally relevant educational spaces.

Internationalization and L2 English writing support at German language universities

The complex position of the English language in academic publications worldwide has led many to explore its explicit and implicit influences on other languages and academic cultures (Canagarajah 1999, 2001, Pennycook 2000, Phillipson 1992, 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Hanafi (2011: 302) writes that authors are forced to choose to 'publish globally and perish locally' or 'publish locally and perish globally', indicating that by publishing in their native language as opposed to English, academics can run the risk of being marginalized in the international research arena, yet by only writing for a global audience, local social capital can be lost. Emphasis on attaining a certain level of English competence, sometimes at the detriment of the L1, can also affect student experience, with increasing numbers of students being expected to write in English throughout their studies, regardless of their L1(s). Lillis and Curry (2006: 4) mention the growth and increasing power of *academic brokers*: 'editors, reviewers, academic peers, and English-speaking friends and colleagues, who mediate text production in a number of ways' and whose impact can partly be ascribed to those language learning needs. Focusing more on individuals in educational structures, Bräuer (2012: 472) mentions the unique and complicated positions of *literacy managers*, or 'change managers' who can facilitate and affect the relationships between 'the individual learner, the educational institution (including teaching faculty and administration), and the profession(s)'. The interplay between an academic or a student's needs and the support mechanisms in place to support them in achieving those needs is a topic that needs to be continually reassessed.

The Bologna process and subsequent focus on plurilingualism, 'the ability of an individual to function effectively in more than one European language' (Cook 2011: 144), has also led to an emphasis on 'internationalizing' higher education students and institutions within Germany. As part of often unclear and non-standardized internationalization strategies, universities are increasingly requiring international exposure and aptitude from their staff and students. English language competency is particularly emphasized, as seen with some university programs within Germany which offer English Medium Instruction (EMI). Although exact numbers are not available, in a 2014 OECD report, Germany is classified as having a number of English programs on a par with other EEA countries including Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, although with fewer programs than in other EU L2 English countries including Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden (346).

These linguistic expectations are reflected in secondary school curricula. Students studying English in their secondary education are expected to have B2 or higher level competency at the end of their schooling (Deutschland 2014: 11). Those not studying English as a core requirement are usually expected to have a minimum of B1 competency. These linguistic expectations highlight the importance of the English language in many universities'

internationalization strategies, although there is no standardized approach to show if required levels are actually attained.

In addition, despite expectations that students and researchers should be able to produce their work in English, there is no centralized approach to how they should be supported within their secondary or tertiary institutions. Consequently, second language writing support at the tertiary level can come from a variety of outlets including university departments, language centers and institutions that support academic skills development. Many of these organizations combine second language writing with other language competencies such as speaking, reading and comprehension, and can be heavily influenced by English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The research in this paper is concerned with exploring those services that work particularly with L2 English student writers.

Methodology

Research design and participants

To explore L2 English writing services at German universities, this descriptive research project employed mixed research methodologies, including both questionnaires focusing on the organization of the writing centers and qualitative in-depth interviews with coordinators and directors. This research focuses on centers offering only English L2 writing support and centers offering comparable support for English-language and German-language writers. Writing centers within Germany were screened for the project from January, 2014 - May, 2014. Some of the participating institutions were found online and, because many centers do not have well developed online presences, snowball sampling (Birnacki and Waldorf 1981) was also employed. In the first round of questionnaires and interviews in 2014, nine institutions, including the institute in which the author works, were found and contacted; in the second data collection period in 2015, a new center was founded and joined the project (see Table 1).

Questionnaire and interviews

Initial data collection, including the questionnaire and semi-structured in-depth interviews, was conducted between May 2014 and July 2014. The questionnaire was validated by two writing center professionals and two questionnaire specialists, focusing on both the content and the tool respectively. The questionnaire contains five thematic sections that address the organizational structure of the writing centers including: background of the centers; writing center staff; services offered; writing consultations and expert recommendations for new writing centers (see Appendix). As with the International Writing Center Project, which surveyed over 500 writing centers outside of the United States (Bromley in Bromley, Scott and Bonazza 2015), the questionnaire in this project was meant to gather information which could be useful to both developing centers and to more established groups who would like to reflect on their growth and identity within a wider context. The questionnaire included closed and open ended questions, with room for further comment. Follow-up questions were sent by email in June 2015, in order to track development.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted after receiving the questionnaires. Interviews lasted 45-90 minutes and focused on the models and approaches used in the writing centers, as well as the coordinators' own experiences of building their institutions. The interviews were recorded and partially transcribed. In one case, the respondent preferred to answer questions by email. Interviews were used to gather qualitative information that could not be included in the questionnaire, including thoughts and opinions about the development of the writing centers and their future goals. Although there was a set of common interview themes and some guiding questions covering the experiences of the participants when creating the center and their reflections on the future of their centers, discussions were fluid and largely led by the participant. This is a technique which stresses the 'knowledgeability' of actors (Giddens 1984: xxiii), by allowing them to focus on perceived

issues of importance. To encourage reflection, participants were guaranteed that the information from the interviews would be reported anonymously.⁴

Results

Using the collated data from the questionnaires, interviews and follow-up correspondence, I will outline the structural patterns found in the ten participating L2 writing support services, their stated organizational models and teaching approaches, their funding and staffing, key partnerships offers; and reflections on the future.

Table 1. L2 English writing support services in German universities divided according to affiliated institute, targeted departments, writers and language of texts addressed. Data acquired through questionnaires submitted to participating centers.

University	Name of center	Affiliation	Targeted departments	Targeted writers	Language(s) of texts
Department-specific Writing Centers					
Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen	Research and Writing Center	English Department	English department	Bachelor, Master	English
Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	Writing Center, North American Studies	North American Studies	English department	Bachelor, Master	English
University of Education Heidelberg	English Department Writing Center	English Department	English department	Bachelor, Staff	English
English-Language Writing Centers					
Heidelberg University	Writing Resources Center	Entire University	All	Bachelor, Master, Doctoral	English
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Writing Center	Language Center	All	Bachelor, Master, Doctoral	English
Technical University of Munich	English Writing Center	Language Center	All	Bachelor, Master, Doctoral,	Technical University of Munich
Bi-lingual Writing Centers					
Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences	Writing Center / Schreibberatung	Language Center	All	Bachelor, Master	German/ English
Justus-Liebig Giessen University	Schreibzentrum	Zentrum für fremdsprachliche und	All	Bachelor, Master, some	German/ English

⁴ Ethical guidelines from the author's place of work, Osnabrück University, were followed. A clear informed consent sheet was included in the questionnaire and a consent script was used at the beginning of each interview. Participants were informed that quotations from the interview could be referred to in future presentations and publications, although genders, institutions, names and other qualifiers would not be included.

		berufsfeldorientierte Kompetenz (ZfbK)		support for Doctoral and Staff	
Leibniz University Hannover	Multilingual Writing Center / Multilinguales Schreibzentrum (MSZ)	Language Center	All	Bachelor, Master, Doctoral	German/ English
Osnabrück University	Schreibwerkstatt	Language Center	All	Bachelor, Master, Doctoral	German/ English

Classification

To identify which centers focus on L2, and particularly L2 English language concerns, writing centers were first divided on the basis of whether they use the English name 'writing center', or a German term. They were then arranged according to which writing group(s) they target (see Table 1). Some German language writing centers have offers for L2 English writers; however, if these offers were not comparable with those for German language writers, the centers were not included in this research project. The ten participating L2 English writing support services, represented in Figure 1, can be classified into three groups: Bi-lingual Writing Centers (4); Department-specific Writing Centers (3); and English Language Writing Centers (3). Although the project initially intended to look at additional L2s, early research did not uncover any centers with comparable support for L2s other than English.

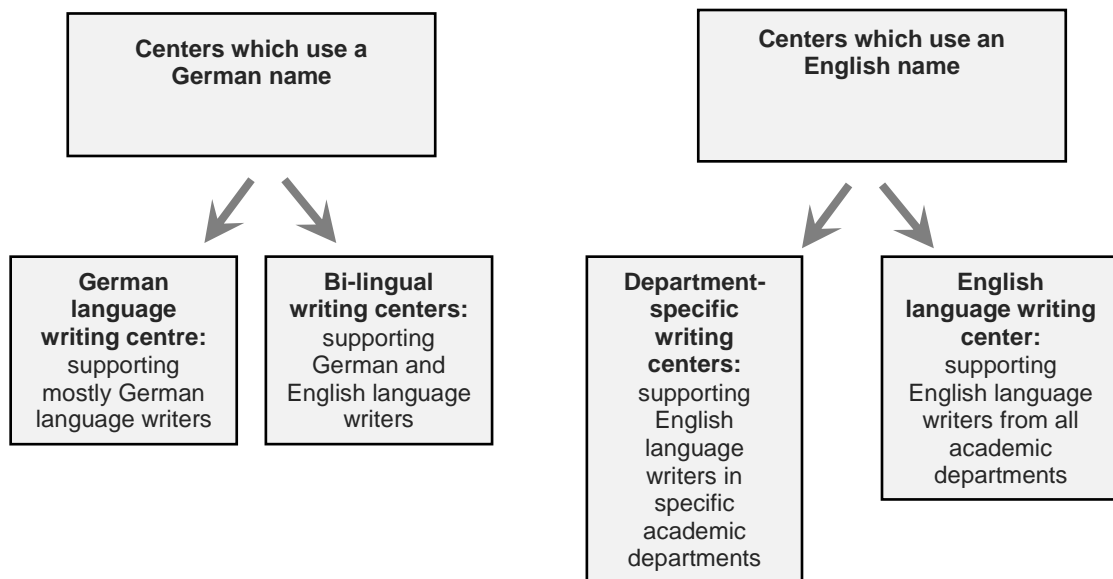


Figure 1. Classification of L2 (English) writing support services in German universities according to name and targeted audience.

Bi-lingual Writing Centers include writing support services with comparable English and German support. This was determined by the amount of support (offers, staffing, funding) provided for both languages. Centers in this group operate from Language Centers, as seen at the Writing Center/*Schreibberatung* at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, the *Schreibwerkstatt* at Osnabrück University and the Multilingual Writing Center/*Multilinguales Schreibzentrum (MSZ)* at the University of Hannover or within a competency development center, as can be seen at the *Schreibzentrum am Zentrum für fremdsprachliche und berufsfeldorientierte Kompetenz (ZfbK)* at Giessen University. This group has coordinators or directors for both German and English writing support. Workshops, courses and consultations are held separately, but events can provide support for writers in both languages. Writers may

come from all departments and their academic levels are not uniform, as can be seen in Table 1.

Department-specific Writing Centers refer to institutions that work with students from a particular department (see Table 1). This group includes the English Department Writing Center at the University of Education Heidelberg, the Writing Center, North American Studies, at the University of Munich and the Research and Writing Center at the University of Tübingen. The oldest center in this research project is the English Department Writing Center at the University of Education Heidelberg, which opened in 2005. As can be seen in Table 1, this group works predominantly with Bachelor students. In addition, the University of Education Heidelberg supports staff members, and the University of Munich and University of Tübingen support Master students. Writing center staff members, including directors and tutors, come from the specific departments.

English Language Writing Centers are L2 support services that address the English language needs of the entire university. Although they do not address German writing support, their structures appear similar to Bilingual Writing Centers. Both the Writing Center at Leuphana University of Lüneburg and the English Writing Center at the Technical University of Munich operate out of their universities' Language Centers. The Writing Resource Center at the Heidelberg University, originally placed within an English Department, now works with students from all academic areas. Because their target populations come from diverse academic fields (see Table 1), participants reported that writing consultants must be prepared to work with multiple disciplines and academic text types that are often from outside of their own academic area(s) of expertise. Each of these services works with Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students. The English Writing Center at the Technical University of Munich also offers writing support for faculty.

Applied organizational models and teaching approaches

During the in-depth interviews, participants were asked which organizational models they followed when creating their writing support services and which approaches they use in their day-to-day activities. Organizational models mentioned during the in-depth interviews were numerous and varied, including: academic literacies; autonomous learning models; writing across the disciplines; the writing fellow model; writing in the disciplines; and the German writing center model. Often, participants were uncertain of their models, mentioning two or three in a row. Nine out of the ten support services stated that they do not follow one particular organizational model or teaching approach in their center, as there are no existing models that entirely 'fit' their institutions.

Of the ten coordinators, nine reported having experience, either as a student or employee, in an American and/or UK university. This, they stated, influenced (to varying extents) their decisions as they developed their writing centers. As one participant suggested, '[When starting the center] I had [experience in UK and US universities] in the back of my mind.' However, this influence was not perceived to be far reaching and usually faded as the writing center developed. One coordinator explained, 'To be honest, [experience with US writing center models], was only the initial push, but we have been making the rest up as we go.' Another participant in a Department-specific Writing Center stated that although their center was designed on a US-based 'Writing Across the Curriculum' model, they are now working with colleagues to adapt to 'the German institutional context.' Further discussion revealed that this coordinator thought that one difference between US and German university contexts is that students in Germany do not have the same core requirements, such as a university-wide writing rhetoric course.

Teaching approaches that are used to work with writers included autonomous learning; academic literacies; contrastive language approach; ESOL/TESOL/EAP/ESP; systemic functional linguistics; genre approach; and translanguaging. This diversity of approaches was reflected in the questionnaire, where participants were asked for recommended reading materials for starting a center. The replies varied and, in some cases, included both German language and English language literature. Interestingly, some of the participants, who

reported being part of European writing center associations such as the European Writing Center Association (EWCA) or the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW), mentioned either meetings or papers produced from these events which had influenced their writing center development. No writing center associations or other professional writing associations outside of Europe were mentioned in the questionnaires or during the interviews.

When asked which materials are used in the centers, participants' responses were varied. One respondent reported that a challenge they face is a lack of materials to fit their students' needs. This participant reflected:

My feeling is that a lot of the literature on writing centers is either pseudo-scientific or very [pause] so specific that it is difficult to really transfer the ideas to the particular setting I work. I feel like there is not very much on second language writing center work and most of it is- at least what I've seen- attuned to a very special clientele. It is often geared to businesses or business students, people who are trying to function in the business world. Not at all what I am trying to do.

This comment is revealing, as it points to both a lack of identification with a perceived 'writing research community' and a frustration with a lack of relevant teaching materials. Another notable response was that non-directive approaches, often touted as a great strength of the writing center approach, do not always fit the centers' L2 English writers. As one participant stated:

What I learned as a writing center tutor [in the US], is that the author is always the owner of the paper and your job as a writing center tutor is essentially to encourage and to elicit suggestions, but that the writer... has to do the writing. And I find in a second language situation that that doesn't often work. Because often times it is not that they know it and they can't figure it out, they **really** don't know the word or they **really** don't know if these words are common or not. And it is completely understandable that they are asking. It requires a much more, much more hands on approach. [Bold represents emphasis]

The coordinator went on to repeat that this is one of the major differences between their experience with the US model and their experience in a German university context. Another coordinator echoed the idea that assistance strategies differ when used with 'native-' or 'non-native-' English speakers:

[The writers] are also non-native speakers, most of them, and that requires a much more involved approach, so the classical peer model in the US – sort of non-directive approach – where really as a consultant, you try not to insert yourself in the text at all and you really ask questions, that really breaks down (in the L2 context). It is not sustainable... As a consultant, I find myself needing to provide them with some language.

The approach in this case can be understood as more explicit than what the individual had used in an L1 English context. Responses indicate that these L2 English writing centers feel disconnected from the organizational models and teaching approaches that they were exposed to in English L1 contexts.

Staffing and funding

Replies about staffing and funding were as varied as the above mentioned organizational models and applied teaching approaches. Job titles and staff numbers vary between writing centers and can include directors, coordinators, tenure-track research contracts, freelance lecturers and student positions. Centers varied from having two to over fifteen employees with differing hours. Coordinators from Department-specific Writing Centers stated that they are expected to dedicate fewer hours to coordinating their writing centers than those in Bilingual or English Language Writing Centers, relying more on their tutoring programs. Tutors are remunerated as either research or student assistants, which was reported as both positive, as

it encourages the hiring of tutors from within targeted departments and encourages peer-to-peer support, but also problematic, as it is impossible to increase wages and difficult to increase hours.

Participating institutions reported that their initial funding came from departments (2), tuition fees or tuition compensation funds (6), an internal grant (1) or an external grant (1). As of July, 2015, the writing center at only one of the participating universities has permanent status. The need for continued or increased funding was a principle concern voiced by most of the participating institutions. Some participants mentioned that they would like to have more resources to expand their services or address additional study skills, including one Department-specific Writing Center that would like to extend their services to include writers from other departments.

However, not all participants voiced concerns about funding. Indeed, one coordinator stated that their service had overcome the money barrier and did not think that a lack of funding impacted the work that could come out of the writing center, likening the plight of a low budget writing center to a student with money concerns.

I want to show students what they can do with no money. Because that is what they need. Anybody can become a great writer with a six-week retreat in Tuscany learning how to write. But that is not realistic: that is not what any of us has access to, although we all want to be better writers. And we need to be. So really identifying free resources and methods and strategies is the way forward.

Key university partnerships

Partnerships and coordination of offers within universities were mentioned by most participants as being important to the continued success of the writing centers, particularly for Bilingual and English Language Writing Centers. Challenges that came with the initial introduction of the writing center concept to reluctant faculties were also mentioned. The following quotation expresses a challenge often faced when starting a new center:

Initially the big challenge was convincing professors who were sure that because they managed everything on their own when they were learning when they were undergraduates, that there is no idea of mollycoddling the students now. There are a lot of people who support that idea of a writing center as remedial help, as a way for student[s] to pad out their grades. It took quite a lot of convincing to show that the writing center is actually a place to test out the communicative capacity of your writing.

As one center coordinator explained, they first focused on locating and responding to staff perceptions of student writing needs. Another center works with staff members' writing, offering editing and tutorials. Once engaged, these staff members turned into ambassadors for the writing center, encouraging students to attend events and workshops and carrying the concept to the rest of the faculty. Other participants mentioned key relationships with institutes including the library or language center and two institutions highlighted the importance of student groups and unions; influential players in the educational landscape of Germany.

Collaboration and networking with German writing support services was also mentioned, not only by those in Bilingual Writing Centers, but also by English Language Writing Centers and Department-specific Writing Centers. Mentioned communication included: joint workshops and events, additional writing offers, professionalizing services through communication, joint tutor training and support, and general writing center development.

Offers at L2 English Writing Centers

Offers at participating writing support services can be found in Figure 2. Figure 2a depicts changes in the initial nine writing centers from winter semester, 2013 to summer semester, 2015. Figure 2b shows offers from all ten writing support services in the summer semester, 2015. All of the universities provide professional writing support including help with

CV/resume writing and letters of motivation. Following, I will discuss responses about offers including consultations, peer tutoring, online support, writing events and peer writing groups.

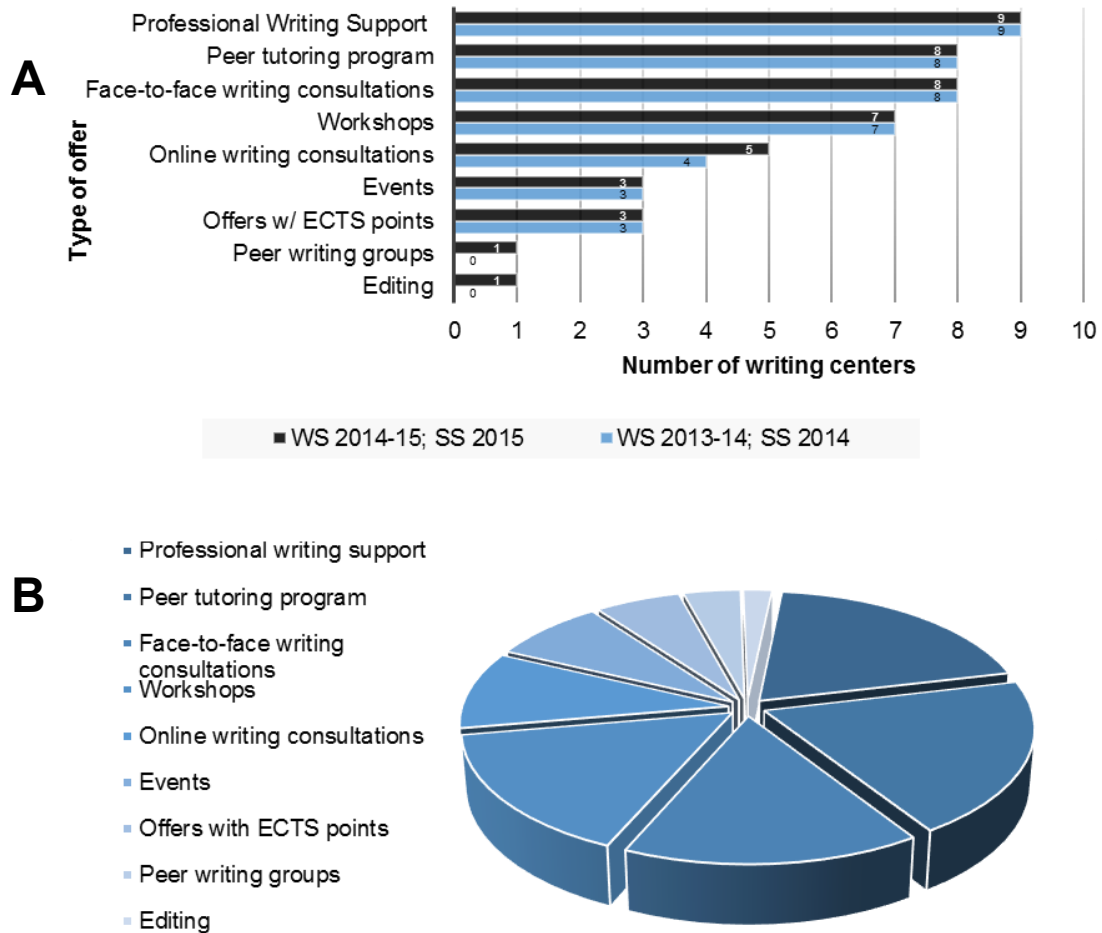


Figure 2. Offers at L2 (English) writing support services in German universities. A. Development of offers for nine L2 English writing centers from winter semester, 2013-14 to summer semester, 2015. **B.** Offers of ten participating L2 English writing centers in the summer semester, 2015.

Writing consultations, with peer tutors or writing mentors, make up the bulk of participating writing support services, with most centers accepting a portion of the document before the consultation. The Technical University of Munich has the largest tutoring program with the largest staff count and, in the Summer Semester, 2015, provided over 15,000 consultations. They, as well as the University of Education Heidelberg, offer online writing support including synchronous feedback and phone consultations. The Technical University of Munich also offers editing with corresponding consultations, for research staff members. All centers in this research group reported that they offer learning materials to their writers, both self- and ready-made.

Peer tutoring is also a common offer among participating institutions. Nine out of the ten centers have a peer tutoring program. Two of these centers prefer students to be native English speakers, while other centers do not recognize this distinction or even prefer multilingual tutors. All centers with peer tutoring programs mentioned that tutorials can take place in German or English, regardless of the language of the text. Support for peer tutors was mentioned as paramount including in-center trainings and professional and academic

support. Professional and academic support includes taking tutors to national or international writing center events or providing space for tutors to do their own research. Future work should explore consultations and peer tutoring programs in greater detail, as this could give further insight into the day-to-day workings of the centers.

Online writing support could include online consultations or guides and worksheets. Additional common offers include face-to-face writing consultations and peer tutoring. Face-to-face interaction with writers was present in every center except the University of Education Heidelberg, which uses an autonomous learning approach and offers writing support online. Writing events, such as the Long Night of Procrastinated Homework (*Lange Nacht der aufgeschobenen Hausarbeiten*), which is held in conjunction with the German-language writing center community, are offered at four universities. Seven of the nine services mentioned that they offer workshops or courses to students. The workshops can be divided into two groups: general writing support and writing for a particular genre or field. Most of the offers are without ECTS points, which is interesting, as it indicates that many of the offers are outside of the degree programs and non-compulsory.

Peer writing groups are facilitated by the University of Hannover and were mentioned by two others as a possible option for the future. However, it was recognized that keeping attendance stable in these groups is difficult.

The future

In the interviews, most participants mentioned 2016 as a looming deadline in German higher education when funding will be reevaluated. This, of course, weighs heavily on the centers. However, there is also a palpable excitement and growing sense of community among L2 English writing centers, as the centers use platforms such as EATAW, EWCA and the *Gesellschaft für Schreibdidaktik und Schreibforschung* to exchange resources and research. During the in-depth interviews, all participants stated that increased communication between L2 English writing centers would be beneficial to their centers, citing possible leverage within their university, institutional development and material exchanges. Some centers, particularly the Bilingual Writing Centers, also mentioned that working with German-language writing centers can be of great benefit for both didactic exchange and institutional recognition. Indeed, when looking at the offers and experiences, it is clear that there are many similarities between the German-language writing center community and the L2 English centers, indicating the importance of networking and collaborations across languages. The fourth 'Supporting L2 Writing at German-Language Universities' symposium will be hosted by Giessen University in 2017 and will continue to bring together researchers and practitioners supporting L2 German and L2 English writers. Finally, other challenges and opportunities raised include the question of where the centers belong within the wider institution, the importance of professionalizing the writing center and how to best support peer tutors.

Conclusions

The intention of this project was to locate and explore L2 English writing services at German universities by examining the centers' organizational models and teaching approaches; staffing and funding; key university partnerships; offers; and reflections on the future.

This study has found that:

- Participating L2 English writing support services in Germany can be classified into three groups (Bilingual Writing Centers, Department-specific Writing Centers, General English Writing Centers) according to their aims, targeted writing groups and language(s) addressed;
- Existing organizational models and teaching approaches, particularly those developed for L1 English contexts, do not entirely fit participating centers' L2 writer needs and institutional realities;

- The national L1 (German) is addressed through coordination and interaction with German-language writing support groups within the university, bilingual tutoring sessions and in some cases, multilingual workshops;
- Continued communication between L2 English, and increasingly, L2 German-language writing support professionals, is recognized as a way to enhance center offers and support development;
- National and European exchange at conferences and events can influence the centers' activities.

These L2 English writing centers are still quite young and are still developing their respective identities. However, this research has highlighted a group that is actively exploring different institutional models and teaching approaches to fit their unique writer populations. It has also shown some examples of situations in which research and practice from writing centers focusing on the national L1 are being integrated into L2 English writing support. Sharing practices and understandings of writing support in different contexts could help centers place their individual experiences within a wider context, which could then support further development and negotiation of identity.

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Appendix: Themes and abridged list of questions from questionnaires used to explore L2 English writing centers in German universities

Background of the center	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name; date established2. Name of director(s) / coordinator(s) of L2 writing center3. Position of center/lab within the university4. Language(s) of texts addressed5. Department(s) or institution (s) that the center works with6. Involvement in national and international associations7. 5-10 sentences explaining what led to the creation of the L2 writing center
Writing center personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Positions available (title and hours)2. Are there any personnel from other departments assisting the writing center?3. Has anyone in the L2 writing center studied or worked in the field of academic writing or writing in general within or outside of Germany? If so, please explain how.
Services offered	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Services offered (name of services; description; target audience)2. Events, seminars or workshops offered (title; description; target audience)
Writing consultations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number of writing consultations per semester2. Number of students involved in workshops per semester3. Does the L2 writing center collaborate with German writing support services? How?4. Describe the linguistic background of the students who use the L2 writing center5. What happens in a typical L2 writing consultation at the writing center6. What are three common concerns that are brought to the L2 writing center for each student population (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral, Other)7. Which languages are being addressed or used in writing consultations?8. During L2 writing consultations, do instructors or materials address students' L1? How?
Expert recommendations for new writing centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the writing center provide materials for those who come in for L2 writing consultations? If so, what kind of materials2. Three useful articles, books or resources that the L2 writing center recommends to students3. Three useful articles, books or resources that were used to start the L2 writing center4. Three useful articles, books or resources that you, as a writing center coordinator or director, would recommend to new or growing centers. Why would you recommend them?
