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PARTNERING UNIVERSITIES WITH THEIR NEIGHBORING HIGH SCHOOL WRITING
CENTERS: A LOCAL STUDY THROUGH INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

By

KATHERINE CARROLL

Under the Direction of Michael Harker, PhD

ABSTRACT

This study includes the interviews and observations of three secondary school writing centers in the metro-Atlanta area with a purpose to compare these centers to identify commonalities among them. My hope is to establish a generative context to explore partnership opportunities between these schools and the rhetoric and composition department at Georgia State University. The implications of this study directly benefit the professional status of writing scholarship as, despite decades of history, this field is still vying for a seat at the table of academia. Writing centers – specifically at the secondary level—need scholars at the forefront of their leadership; however, building continuity among these scholars is complicated due to their diversity as each center is fitted to work within its own school. Therefore, to prepare scholars for these directorships as another career opportunity, universities need to look directly at the centers geographically nearby, which is what this study entails.

INDEX WORDS: secondary education, writing centers, writing theory, exploratory research, interview, observations

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2020

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Katherine Carroll
2020

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CENTERS: A LOCAL STUDY THROUGH INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

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Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2020

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Michael Carroll, my husband, who inspires me to pursue my academic passions and will take on any role necessary - my colleague, my chef, and my editor – to make sure that nothing, including myself, stands in the way.

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I would like to express my gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Michael Harker, who always responded to my questions with nothing but enthusiasm for my endeavors and belief in my capabilities.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	EXPLANATION
CWC	Caldwell Writing Center
EPHS	East Paulding High School
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IWCA	The International Writing Center Association
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
SSWCA	Secondary School Writing Center Association
WAC	Writing Across the Curriculum

1 INTRODUCTION

Writing centers in theory and in practice have been a part of writing scholarship for decades; what feels like a recent resurgence comes from the lack of attention that this scholarship has received within its own field and academia. This lack of attention is not unlike what the rhetoric and composition field has experienced, and these two fields have more in common than just that. To combat that lack of attention, we need to first acknowledge the extensive role that writing scholarship has played over the years, dating back to the foundation of rhetoric. Once that history has been thoroughly acknowledged, it becomes clear that the issue is not a lack of foundation but a lack of communication between the stakeholders most effected by this scholarship: writing centers and writing center scholars. To increase this communication, rhetoric and composition departments should work directly with local writing centers to begin forming mutually beneficial partnerships. This new form of communication would allow both writing fields to earn more respect and merit more attention from the rest of academia, and what better place to start than Georgia State University's rhetoric and composition department and the writing centers at secondary schools in Atlanta.

The International Writing Center Association (IWCA) recognizes that secondary school writing centers are increasing in number, and while this organization wants to support these endeavors, it is also looking for consistency within the core philosophy, pedagogy, and beliefs among these centers. One such way the IWCA looks for this consistency is through the creation of its affiliate organization – the Secondary School Writing Centers Association (SSWCA), but another way is through the expectation that writing center directors will be qualified professionals within their field ("International Writing Centers Association Position Statement" 1). However, SSWCA has expressed concerns that this expectation is not being met primarily

because of how these centers are still viewed from people outside of the writing field, calling for more ways to improve the outside perception of centers' work just as recently as last February's digital roundtable ("February 2019" 1-2). As a result of these concerns, writing centers are still in need of qualified scholars to come in and take charge, but the issue that rhetoric and composition scholars – an otherwise fitting department to fulfill this call– face is understanding how to prepare for a future career within these centers. Each school has so much variance within its own institution that these differences are mirrored within the writing centers as well, and as will be further discussed, the published research is currently limited to individual case studies. These scholars, the future directors, need to know the ways that centers are staffed and financed; they need to understand the role of technology within each center, and they need to understand the misunderstandings and stigmas that still surround writing centers. Therefore, the solution is for research to be directly aimed at the centers in the geographical backyard of these future directors. With this preparation and with this research, rhetoric and composition scholars can bring their expertise to the centers, pushing both fields closer to earning the attention and respect that they deserve.

1.1 A History of Writing Center Scholarship in Higher Education

For as long as rhetoric has been around, so too has writing center pedagogy; thus, if we are willing to acknowledge the merit of looking back to the classics to understand rhetoric, we also need to be willing to study the origins and the subsequent history of writing center scholarship. Strategies employed in many writing centers today theoretically date back to Socrates (North 446). More formally, writing centers in higher education have a recorded history dating back to the writing practices of the late 1800s (Boquet 466). The conference method, still

employed in most writing centers and even in many writing classrooms, has a history of nearly 200 years, yet so much of the writing center world still feels foreign to the rest of academia. Even in the early 1900s, the “writing laboratory” was more akin to a method of teaching writing than a physical site or location (466).

Then, in a twenty-year period, from 1920 to 1940, writing labs finally became associated with a place that a student could go to for additional writing help. One of the earliest writing labs written about in published research is by Carrie Stanley and her work at the University of Iowa in the 1930s (North 436). Writing pedagogy was shifting so that courses frequently required students to attend one writing lecture throughout the week as well as one session at a writing lab where they would work out the errors and grammatical mistakes of their writing (Boquet 467). In Stanley’s time, these writing labs still employed the previously mentioned Socratic-like conference method where students would engage in conversations about their writing, but another issue arose as the collegiate writing lab moved from “method to site” (466). Since many students came to “[see] the light” (467) in correcting the errors of their writing within these sessions, the site itself came to be viewed as serving that purpose and that purpose alone – correcting the mistakes in remedial students’ writing (468). Despite not being the intended purpose of these labs, that role became the primary function of these sites and the only function that deemed their existence necessary.

Perhaps it is because of this disagreement between what the writing instructors imagined of the labs and what purpose educational institutions found for these labs that writing labs, also occasionally called writing clinics, seemed to quickly disappear in the 1950s (Boquet 471). Since writing clinics and labs were only deemed necessary to help remedial students that could not otherwise meet academic standards, when this population of students stopped coming to four-

year universities to pursue other vocational tracks, the labs no longer served a purpose (472). Yet, this disappearance did not last long because in the 1970s, some colleges began implementing open admission policies. In its truest-form, a college with an open admission policy would accept any student who had a high school diploma or a GED certificate; therefore, these colleges quickly saw an uptick in the type of students, from a lower income or other underprivileged background, that historically had been unable to attend (Grove 1). These policies changed the demographics of incoming classes and created a new “under-represented population” that writing centers could serve (Levin 24). Since this new population could not meet the public’s standards for literacy skills (Boquet 472), these colleges found themselves returning to writing centers in hopes they could once again serve as a “fix-it shop” (468).

These “‘new’ writing center[s]” have a shorter history, but this “documentable resurgence” allowed for the centers to attempt a new focus for writing pedagogy: writing as process-focused and writing as student-centered (North 438). Once again, the institutions’ goals for writing labs did not match those of the labs themselves. However, other theories of writing pedagogy still emerged within this resurgence, primarily, an advocacy for “auto-tutorials,” providing students space to work on their writing independently, at their own pace, and driven by their own desire to improve (Boquet 473). It was also in the 70s that writing labs began to see peer tutors for the first time, another writing technique frequently seen in the collegiate writing centers of today. Finally, in the 80s, writing scholars such as Stephen North began to find their voice in the academic field, or—more accurately—other voices began to listen to those of these scholars; however, this battle that writing centers are solely “grammar fix-it shops” for remedial students still exists.

In the 1980s, Stephen North wrote his canonical article “The Idea of a Writing Center,” and its message quickly took off. As North mentions, his complaints are not with those involved with centers but with those on the outside of the writing field. After fifty years of conference models within writing centers, the rest of academia still viewed these centers as a place to send students to clean up their paper priors to a submission or even afterwards as a disciplinary measure (North 433). North cites another scholar, Malcolm Hayward, who surveyed writing faculty and other faculty members on the purpose of writing centers to prove this point. To both Hayward and North’s relief, the writing faculty shared the same vision for these centers: “the development of general patterns of thinking and writing” (435). Unfortunately, and not surprisingly, the rest of the university faculty had a different – yet shared among each other – view for the centers, namely, dealing with grammar and punctuation (435).

North’s article received such praise and acclaim that it quickly became the most “quoted essay on writing scholarship” (Boquet and Lerner 171). Such frequent use of the article would seem to suggest that it impacted academia’s view of writing centers; however, these tributes came from North’s contemporaries. Writing scholars began using North’s argument to fight for the legitimacy of their jobs within writing centers; unfortunately, these scholars were not the intended audience of “The Idea of a Writing Center” as he himself states at the beginning of said article (171). Thus, even though North’s contemporaries gathered behind his words, writing scholars still found themselves fighting for “job security” and “institutional support” after its publication (Boquet 477).

The fight continued because in the late 1990s and early 2000s the higher education institutions that house writing centers were requiring staff to still focus on fixing skills and skills development. After nearly one hundred years of documentation of the writing center as a site and

a location, writing scholars such as Elizabeth Boquet were still pleading for other scholars to listen to the scholarship on writing and writing center pedagogy (479). At the end of “A History of Writing Centers,” Boquet begs for these stories to be written and to be shared (479). Despite such pleas, writing centers within colleges and universities are still fighting for time and space in academia. If writing faculty among college writing centers are still pleading for more research to be done despite the decades of history, how much more do secondary schools need scholarship on their writing centers, centers with much less institutional history? If scholars such as Elizabeth Boquet and Stephen North believe that writing centers are a “manifestation...of a dialogue about writing that is central to higher education,” then where is the dialogue taking place in secondary education (North 440)?

1.2 Writing Centers at the Secondary Level

Without the decades of scholarship and history behind them, writing centers in secondary schools seem to have just appeared, picking up where higher education has left off. However, educational scholars—regardless of field—can agree that what works at the collegiate level does not automatically work at the high school level (Childers et al 141). Therefore, secondary schools need their own scholarship surrounding writing centers. Not unlike higher education centers, high school writing centers frequently “tend to be pragmatic institutions,” providing their schools with a practical service to address remedial and mechanical writing concerns (Levin 23). Centers have found themselves in this position because they have had to put all their focus into proving that they are needed, and being a “fix-it shop” seems to be the only way to prove their worth at the moment (23). Without their own history, high school writing centers have tried to grow from the history of higher education centers, but as previously discussed, that foundation

has been built on unsteady and inconsistent ground. Due to that unsteady foundation, high school centers were fighting against preconceived misunderstandings and stigmas before they had even gotten started.

Unlike collegiate writing centers that were created after identifying a need and building off current research, writing center scholarship at the secondary level seems to occur as an afterthought. Once the center was up and operational, current directors conducted their own research to share their personal results. This method, however, means that most of the research on secondary school writing centers has been focused on specific schools and their individual case studies. For example, secondary education scholars Amy Levin, Pamela Childers, and Thomas Tobin tried to articulate the goals and philosophies of high school writing centers after they had already begun rather than in preparation for their creation.

Each of these scholars'—Levin, Childers, and Tobin—research provides a specific case study to show what their respective centers were doing, and while sharing practices can be a first step in collaboration, it is not enough due to the variance among centers. “No writing center or WAC program can simply be lifted from one institutional and used successfully in another” because changes would need to be made based off the school’s goals, population, space, and staff (Mullin and Childers 25). In addition to meeting its own pedagogical goals and philosophies, each center must find a way of fitting into its individual school’s needs to survive and hopefully even thrive (Levin 28). Therefore, the case study of one established writing center in Tennessee may not be beneficial to a start-up center in Illinois.

1.2.1 A Review of Secondary School Writing Center Case Studies

High school writing centers vary school to school—as they should—to properly serve their own institutions; however, within these individual case studies, which is the method of most of the published research on this topic, the researcher is frequently a high school teacher, and he/she records his/her own center. For example, Richard Kent completely overhauled his classroom to teaching writing through portfolios. He records his success in “Room 109’s Portfolios and Our High School Writing Center.” His writing center was student staffed, situated in his school’s library, and allowed for students to drop in before school, during designated class time, and after school (58). In his report, he advocates for the need of having an audience beyond the teacher; his student-tutors led discussions with his students throughout their writing process supplying that authentic audience (Kent 57). Kent’s case study shares similarities and differences with Jeanette Jordan’s, James Upton’s, and Pamela Childers’, all of which are spelt out in “Virtual High School Writing Centers: A Spectrum of Possibilities.” Unlike Kent’s center, these three centers are all based in schools with WAC programs; however, the similarities among these three case studies seem to stop there (Childers et al 137).

Jeanette Jordan directs a writing center that serves a public school with an affluent population (Childers et al 137). This center, named “The Write Place,” is also the home for the school’s literary magazine, newspaper, and yearbook (138). The center itself has multiple rooms with some computers available, but these computers are only a part of the school network and, therefore, without internet access. While it is affiliated with the English Department, the center is open to all and available for teachers to reserve as well as individual student workers. It is staffed by a computer technician, teachers across the subjects, student tutors, and writing coordinators (139). James Upton directs a writing center that is also at a public school, but his public school

works with more financial limitations and serves a more diverse population (137). His center operates as an *idea* of a writing center because it has no set location. While there are some student tutors, the idea relies on faculty offering their prep periods for this additional work. These volunteers offer four services: drop in periods for students, in-class presentations by request, faculty and curriculum development, and after school opportunities such as “Study Skills Night” (143). Since the center is a service rather than a location, there is no school-provided technology other than those belonging to the tutors and volunteers (143).

Finally, Pamela Childers’ writing center serves a smaller affluent population at a private school, and her school has already made many commitments to increase its use of technology in its education (137). The Caldwell Writing Center (CWC) is fully stocked with computers, portable word processors, and printers due to a personal endowment (145). The opportunities and staff are impressive at CWC with “a full-time director, part-time assistant director, and night writing assistants” (146). The center is available for individual appointments, either walk-in or scheduled, as well as class workshops (146), and it is open Monday through Friday during the school day, Sunday evenings, and Monday through Thursday on the evening as well to students, faculty, and even community members like parents (145, 147). The differences in philosophies, pedagogies, and logistics across these three centers reflect the differences in the schools and populations served.

These individual case studies show that high school writing centers can vary dramatically especially with respect to logistics—such as staff, community served, location, and even technologies—as well as in philosophies. The differences continue to emerge as other scholars are brought into the conversation. Thomas Tobin argues that writing centers should “play a vital role in assisting...schools to better prepare pupils for college and vocational success” (Tobin

230) whereas Amy Levin argues that all centers should “aim at making writing central in the students’ lives” and “will foster a positive attitude toward writing” (Levin 29). Sometimes, these centers find partnerships with writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs (Jordan 53), but other times, they are situated firmly within the English department. Some schools employ student-tutors (Levin 25) while others hire professional staff, rely on faculty members to tutor during their free periods, or even train parent volunteers to staff the centers (Jordan 54).

It may seem that more scholarship on individual schools would only inundate the field on more singular differences from school to school, but this study hopes to focus on the schools within a set geographical setting in a way that has not been done before. This study wants to align a specific collegiate department with its neighboring centers so that partnerships can begin to form. These reciprocal partnerships would allow a college to prepare its writing scholars to provide specific support to the local centers upon graduation. Ideally, this model will be replicated at other colleges, thoroughly preparing writing scholars for a new career opportunity while providing much-needed specific support and resources to their local secondary level writing centers. Additionally, as these mutually beneficial partnerships form across the nation, we can continue to fight for the professional status of writing scholarship and the field of rhetoric and composition.

1.3 The Search for Professional Status: A History and a Continued Battle

Because one hundred years of documented history and the creation of international organizations such as IWCA and SSWCA (Simpson 57) are still not enough for academia to show writing centers the respect they merit, in February of 2019, SSWCA spelled out what this organization would like to see high school writing centers receive as solidification of the field’s

status. SSWCA would like to see all secondary writing centers achieve the following characteristics to prove that they are being treated with professionalism: clear goals and support from a consistent administration, designated time for professional development on behalf of the center, an acceptance of the anecdotal data that centers provide, a shared common knowledge of the work that writing centers do, and a developed body of research specifically focused on secondary school writing centers (“February 2019” 1-2). Writing centers and writing scholarship both feel like the popular trend, both fight for their place in academia, and yet both have decades of history backing their existence. With this fight, scholars pose a variety of solutions to gain this professional and scholarship, one solution being that writing centers and the field of rhetoric and composition should work together to solidify both their relationship as well as their place in academia.

Gary Olson and Evelyn Ashton-Jones share this approach as they argue that writing programs should look towards the role of writing center directors in “The Search for Professional Status” (Olson and Ashton-Jones 47). Since writing centers can vary so much from school to school, the role of the writing center director has been difficult to define. However, finding similarities in those centers could lead to a “useful definition of the director’s role” (47). According to Olson and Ashton-Jones’ survey results, writing center directors are dealing with their own misconceptions, primarily that they are only administrators rather than writing scholars (48). And unfortunately, just like the misconceptions of the writing center lead to its frequent dismissal in academia, so too does “the center director’s status [reflect] and [represent] the status of the center itself” (50); writing centers need to have their voices heard in professional scholarship, and to do so, the center’s directors need to be a part of the conversations. Olson and Ashton-Jones provide one possible solution to achieving this goal: “the writing center director

should be required to be a rhetoric and composition specialist” (52). Even if all writing scholars agree with this solution, the next step is to figure out how to achieve this mission.

Jeanne Simpson in “What Lies Ahead for Writing Centers” poses another possible step to help writing centers and center directors achieve professional status. She presents a position statement that she argues should be the baseline for all negotiations between writing centers and their institutions. While she acknowledges that this statement is overly ideal in the guidelines that it presents, it is necessary for the field to demand this level of professionalism for it to be given. The beginning of this position statement states that “the directorship of a writing center is a professional position, one that requires specialized preparation and administrative experience” (Simpson 59). This requirement is consistent with Olson and Ashton-Jones’ goal, but besides demanding this professionalism, she still does not present how to establish this specialization.

Jackson, Leverenz, and Law may provide the information needed to fill in this gap in “(Re)shaping the Profession: Graduate Courses in Writing Center Theory, Practice, and Administration.” This article explores “the development of graduate courses devoted to writing center studies” through the case study of their own college programs as well as twelve other post-graduate degrees (Jackson et al 130). Their research looks to explain and analyze a recent uptick in courses and programs, and they argue that these programs can continue to help writing programs and writing center studies gain professionalism. Using their work in response to Simpson, Olson, and Ashton-Jones, requiring writing center directors to come from one of these programs may help the directorship gain scholarly respect and consequently may help collegiate writing center studies gain professionalism as well; however, as it has already been established, success, theory, or status does not automatically trickle down from higher education to secondary education. Even if these programs and these directorships do finally provide the professional

status that higher education writing centers deserve, it is not a guarantee that it will provide the same status to writing centers and center directors in secondary education.

1.4 The Future of this Research

Right now, scholarship surrounding secondary school writing centers is limited to secondary school researchers. High school teachers explore their own writing centers and hope to share this information with each other within their own community or even within SSWCA. While this collaboration is worthy within the field, these centers cannot gain additional professional attention if the research is limited to being shared among each other because in-house collaboration does not change the attitude of scholars outside of the writing center scholarship. These centers cannot gain a professional directorship if scholars are not being prepared to specialize in this field before finding themselves in this position. The field of rhetoric and composition would benefit from preparing its students—both undergraduate and graduate—for the world of writing centers within secondary education. Doing so will make possible the creation of a specialized secondary level directorship.

As previously established, secondary school writing centers tend to vary dramatically, but those differences are meaningful because each center makes the proper modifications it needs in order to serve its respective institution. Due to those differences, however, one rhetoric and composition program could not prepare its scholars for every writing center situation. Thankfully, that universal coverage is not necessary; instead, a rhetoric and composition program can focus on the writing centers in its own geographical backyard. Sticking to a local context would allow the scholars to gain a thorough understanding of a few centers—the centers in which they are most likely to be employed. In keeping with Jackson et al.'s claim, Georgia State

University would benefit from increasing “interest among [its] rhetoric graduate students in writing programs and writing center careers” by focusing scholarship on the secondary education centers right in its own background, which is where this study hopes to join the conversation (Jackson et al 130).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Having established the generative context to prove the need to build partnerships between collegiate departments and local writing centers, this study intends to begin the establishment of a partnership between the rhetoric and composition department at Georgia State University with three local high school writing centers in the metro-Atlanta area.

The formation of this partnership will have the following additional effects:

- Creating a shared common knowledge about the innerworkings of secondary school writing centers
- Expanding the body of research surrounding secondary school writing centers to continue working towards the acceptance of the field within academia

1.5.1 Research Questions

To establish a partnership between the rhetoric and composition department at Georgia State University and the local metro-Atlanta secondary school writing centers, this study hopes to gain answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent can collegiate writing center theory be applied to high school writing centers?

2. What do high school writing centers look like, and how do they operate?

These two questions will be answered by pursuing the answers to the more specific sub-questions detailed below:

1. In what ways are high school writing centers staffed, and how are these centers physically constructed?
2. To what extent are writing centers connected to WAC programs at the secondary education level?
3. To what extent is technology used in high school writing centers?
4. What misunderstandings around high school writing centers still exist? In what ways are these misunderstandings similar or different to the stigmas and struggles of collegiate writing centers?
5. What does the leadership of high school writing centers look like, and how could these teachers or staff have been better prepared for their positions?

2 EXPERIMENT

2.1 Method

As observed in the literature review above, most of the writing center scholarship, at both the collegiate and secondary school level, is in the form of case studies where the researcher is also the director or teacher in charge of the writing center that is being analyzed. This style of research is appropriate when the focus is to give an in-depth overview of one center, but this study aims to compile and compare information on three different centers. For that reason, an interview was chosen as the primary method for this study.

These interviews¹ were conducted at the centers themselves with the director in charge of each center. Being in the “natural setting” of each center allowed the study to have “multiple sources of data” by making observational notes about the physical set-up of each center (Creswell 185). Choosing an interview over a survey for this study allowed for an “emergent design” within this methodology; if information came up during the interview that I would like to dive deeper into, I could do so with immediate follow-up questions, rather than having to return to the interviewee for more information at a later date (186). The open-ended nature of interview questions also paved the way for the participants to add their own focus to the interview as opposed to the more objective question structure of a survey (186). Finally, the interview method was chosen for this study for its practicality; it can be difficult to get participants for a study because of possible time requirements, but an interview only requires one face-to-face meeting, which is the least time consuming for the interviewee. Once the interview has been scheduled and conducted, there is no additional burden on the interviewee.

2.2 Population and Sample

As previously stated, many times the researcher is intimately involved with the center being researched, and I too have had professional relationships with centers at both the higher education and secondary education level. However, for this study, I am intentionally working with centers that I have no previous knowledge of or personal connections to. My goal is not to advertise the strengths of these centers nor is it to point out specific weaknesses or critiques; my goal is to explore the similarities and differences among the chosen writing centers to prepare

¹ I applied for and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) under the Exempt Protocol Category 2 to conduct these interviews and observations. See Appendix F for the IRB Outcome Letter for Study Number H2041.

future writing scholars. My lack of personal connection is important to remain impartial in my presentation of the information.

In addition to not being personally involved with the researched centers, I also wanted to make sure that the centers studied are officially recognized as writing centers according to SSWCA; within this association, there are only three partnered secondary schools with active writing centers²: East Paulding High School, George Walton Academy, and Etowah High School. Since these three schools are a part of the writing center association, they share a legitimacy to their centers that will allow for a clear comparison. These schools have sought out a connection with SSWCA, presumably because they want to be a part of this community and would, therefore, be willing participants. Additionally, these three schools serve different populations that will allow the individualization of writing centers to be reflected; East Paulding and Etowah are both public high schools serving their districts, and George Walton Academy is a private independent school serving students from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

SSWCA also provides contact information for each of these centers, pointing me directly to the future participants of this study: Heather Barton from Etowah, Tommy Jolly from East Paulding High School, and Tricia Fissette from George Walton Academy.

2.3 Instrumentation

Within qualitative research, consistency is important to allow a valid comparison of the similarities and differences that are apparent within these centers. These interviews were conducted one-to-one and face-to-face at the sites of each center, and while open-ended

² After identifying and contacting each participant, the proper consent per IRB's requirements was acquired. See Appendix D for each signed informed consent form and Appendix E for each site permission letter.

questions allow for the interview to diverge into different directions based on the interviewee's own experience, I also came to the interview prepared with a list of set questions³ (see script in Appendix A). While these questions may be adjusted along the way, this script guaranteed that I received the same baseline level of information from all three centers. Therefore, this study has the flexibility that can come with an interview while still providing the necessary "control over the line of questioning" by the researcher (Creswell 191). For interview protocol, I took shorthand notes⁴ during the interview as well as requested permission from the interviewee to record the audio of the interview so that I could type up a transcript to refer to specific details and quotes. This transcript was recorded on my phone and individually transcribed after the interview.

Since the nature of qualitative research is to provide multiple sources of data, I hoped to gather observational data about the physical set-up of the center. Again, gathering observational data is rather open-ended as I did not know what the different sites will present, but I did want to make sure that I am looking for the same information at each site. Therefore, I also brought to the interview a short notes chart (see Appendix B⁵) to guarantee that consistency. I also took photos with the permission of the interviewee in order to return to the details of the set-up.

2.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The nature of this study's data analysis is narrative as well as exploratory. This study is trying to understand these specific centers, so most of the written interpretation will be in the form of a wholistic narrative. The first step of analysis took place "hand-in-hand with...the data

³ Appendix A, the interview script, was approved through the IRB application for this study (H2041).

⁴ The recording and transcribing process as described was approved through the IRB application.

⁵ Appendix B, the observation chart, as well as taking approved photos were both approved by IRB.

collection” (Creswell 195). Following each interview and visitation, I typed up the transcript of the interview. Once the transcript was complete, I spent time crafting a description of each specific center. This process took place for each of the three centers individually. The documents—transcripts, audio recordings, notes, and photographs—pertaining to each school were kept separately until all the visits and interviews were complete. Then, I was able to use these narratives to compare the centers in direct response to this study’s research questions. With a small number of participants, I could hand code the narrations myself as I determined which themes began to emerge as the focus of this comparison. (195). Due to the open-ended nature of the interview questions and the details of the observation by way of photographs of the center, I expected that there will be more information in the individual center descriptions than the final comparisons; as the information was coded and compared, I was able to see what themes emerge that should be focused on in the final report (195).

2.5 Outline and Timeline

This study took place over the spring semester of the 2019-2020 school year.

Week 1: I sought IRB Approval⁶ and once approved, reached out to potential participants by email.

Week 1 and 2: As I heard back from participants, I scheduled face-to-face interviews.

Week 3: I sent any necessary follow-up emails with the schools I had not heard back from yet and scheduled any remaining visits.

⁶ See Appendix F for the outcome letter from IRB for my research – number H20411. I received approval on January 22, 2020.

Week 4-6: I visited schools and conducted interviews. After returning from each interview, I manually transcribed recordings of the interviews. After each transcription was complete, I began coding individual interviews.

Weeks 7: If any follow-up visits were necessary, they could have taken place during Week 7.

Weeks 8-16: Once all visits were completed and all notes were coded and transcribed, I worked on comparing themes and trends to complete the data analysis and write the final report.

3 RESULTS

The three schools observed and interviewed for this research differ greatly from one another in regard to how the centers are currently operating; this range accurately reflects the wide variety in which secondary school writing centers often find themselves. Etowah High School has a thriving center, The East Wing, that has been operational since 2015 and is ready to share its experiences with the rest of the district. East Paulding High School has found its writing center in a one-year hiatus as the center lost its space due to the introduction of new programs as well as other administrative changes, and George Walton Academy has an inspiring novice program that has started strong and is looking for its next steps. These three schools do share similarities in their experiences, but they also represent the accurate variety among high school writing centers.

3.1 Etowah East Wing

Dr. Heather Barton⁷ and her student teacher from Kennesaw State University decided to open a writing center at Etowah High School in August 2015. Dr. Barton had recently heard of

⁷ Upon meeting Dr. Barton and before conducting the interview, she signed the IRB approved informed consent form (see Appendix D) and site permission letter (see Appendix E).

the concept of a writing center, and her student teacher was a current tutor at Kennesaw State's collegiate writing center. Prior to her own involvement at the director-level, Heather Barton was not familiar with a writing center at the high school level; in fact, she was only distantly aware that writing centers existed at the collegiate level. And, in her experience, they were geared towards students that needed extra help, and since she did not see herself as one of those students, she never went. While this may seem shocking to writing scholars today, a lack of an awareness of high school writing centers quickly emerged as a theme throughout this process. Therefore, Dr. Barton's student teacher and her experience at a collegiate writing center really provided the direction for the center because East Wing, named for the geographical location of the center on Etowah's campus, mirrors the setup of many collegiate centers.

When Barton and her student teacher pitched the idea of the center to their current principal, they were asked where they wanted to set up the center. Thankfully, there was an old media center that was no longer in use, and thus, East Wing had a space.



Figure 1 East Wing

Currently, East Wing serves the center, but it also operates as Barton’s classroom, which has “some benefits and drawbacks” (Barton). Now, Barton conducts her classes—AP Language, seniors on level, seniors honors, and the center’s elective course—in “The Hub” of the East Wing (see Figure 2), while the tables, couches, and conference rooms are used for the center’s tutoring sessions (see Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 2 The Hub



Figure 3 Tables and Couches for Tutoring Sessions



Figure 4 Conference Room in East Wing

When East Wing opened, it was only a writing center, but some of the tutors reached out to Barton and thought they could also offer their services in other subjects, so in 2017, East Wing transitioned into a tutoring service for all subjects. However, Barton argues that it is still “a writing center at heart” because it is writing center theory that is at the core of all their tutoring services (Barton). So currently, as a full-subject tutoring center, East Wing is open before school, the busiest time of the center’s day conducting 15-20 sessions each morning, during the lunch periods, and after school. The class periods in which Barton is teaching and the center is open for sessions can get a little hectic, but thankfully Barton can rely on her student tutors, staff, and directors to keep the center running smoothly.

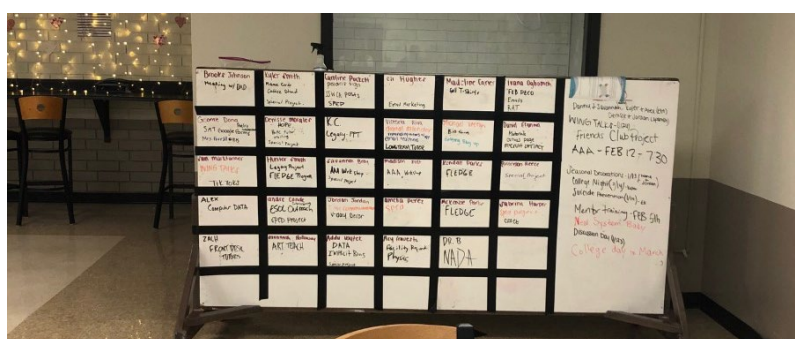


Figure 5 East Wing Schedule

East Wing is an exemplary study for a secondary center run by its students. Barton still stays plenty busy as the director of the center, but the students really run the show daily. In the fall of their junior year, students can apply to be on staff or leadership for East Wing. When these students apply, Barton does not want only the brightest students but those with “a willingness to serve and a good communication background” because she wants the students running the center to represent the clientele (Barton). The current staff run the interview process, and they take this role seriously. The process begins with team interviews, and from these interviews, the top ten candidates are selected for the two possible student director roles. Once that list has been narrowed down, the outgoing directors conduct one-on-one interviews to select the two directors

for the upcoming school year. Beyond the two student directors, there are nearly thirty other leadership positions, and these positions are filled from the initial first round interviews. Barton has her staff mirroring a “scrum master approach” from the tech field (Barton). These leadership roles are split into teams that have a certain focus. For example, there is an outreach team who works with teachers that may want a tutor to come into a classroom to help with a specific assignment; they’re currently brainstorming this “rent-a-tutor” approach now (Barton).

However, these thirty students are just those that run the center. The volunteer tutors come from the variety of service organizations around the school. East Wing works with Beta Club, the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, the National Spanish Honor Society, and the National French Honor Society among others to provide the student tutors. These students volunteer hours to serve as tutors, and Barton can certify these hours as service hours to fulfill their club requirements.

From its creation, it was important to Barton that Etowah students bought into the center, that emphasis—along with support from Etowah’s administration—has really allowed East Wing to flourish. Quarterly, the East Wing staff meets with Etowah’s principal to share data and hear his goals for the school year to see how the center and the administration can continue to work together. This school year, nineteen of the staff members have been preparing to present at SSWCA’s annual conference, and this is just the beginning of East Wing’s scholarship. Barton hopes that East Wing can expand into the district to help other schools start up their own centers, and she firmly believes it is the students’ leadership and buy-in that will allow this goal to happen.

3.2 East Paulding High School Writing Center

The East Paulding High School (EPHS) Writing Center began in 2013, but is currently in a period of transition as Tommy Jolly⁸, the English Department Chair at EPHS, and his students are trying to rebuild community and figure out how best the center can serve its school. At the time of the center's conception, Jolly had worked with the Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project for nearly ten years, and after he took part in a Leadership Institute with the writing project in 2012-2013, he decided to start the center at East Paulding with a current coworker. Prior to this involvement, Jolly was not familiar with writing centers at a secondary level. He, like Barton, was aware that tutoring centers existed at a collegiate level but had minimal experience with them; it was not until pursuing his doctorate degree and taking a course on composition pedagogy that he learned that research existed on writing centers. Yet even in that course, the focus was still on higher education.

When the center was fully operational, from 2013 until 2018, it operated as a tutoring center for all subjects with a writing focus. The primary tutoring subject was English, but the tutors would also see Career Tech students who wanted assistance on their portfolios, social studies students working on essays, and science students writing lab reports, among others. Tutoring sessions took place before school, after school, and during the lunch hour. One year, Jolly was able to offer a tutoring elective in the schedule, but primarily, training for the tutors, which were all students, took place as an extracurricular activity. However, those students involved in the center as tutors also took part in a variety of extracurricular events with the center such as writing contests and field trips to the Decatur Book Festival and the Shakespeare Tavern. While the center offered full subject tutoring, writing really was at its core.

⁸ Upon meeting Jolly and before conducting the interview, he signed the IRB approved informed consent form (see Appendix D) and site permission letter (see Appendix E).

From 2013 until 2017, the EPHS Writing Center was situated in an extra classroom that was unused and attached to the media center. This room provided large tables for workspace and five to ten permanent computers for students to pull up their work (see Figure 6).



Figure 6 Former EPHS Writing Center



Figure 7 Kennesaw State Upward Bound

However, in 2017, Kennesaw State University's Upward Bound Program earned a grant to start a tutoring service at EPHS. With that financial support, Upward Bound was able to provide more resources and services that the writing center could, so it quickly took off and became a highly sought-after service. As Upward Bound grew, they needed more space, so the writing center was moved to the Career Lab (see Figure 8), a much smaller space, still attached to the media center, but with only one desk and two cubicles. Unfortunately, this location change took place at the same time that Jolly's colleague left East Paulding to pursue another opportunity and in the same year that a substantial change in the school's administration took place. With all these changes

occurring and with a new location that was not as conducive for fostering community within the center, Jolly decided to take a step back with the writing center so that they could regroup.



Figure 8 Career Lab



Figure 9 Current EPHS Writing Center

Despite this hiatus, Jolly is not discouraged about the future of the EPHS Writing Center.

Kennesaw’s Upward Bound program has been able to provide excellent services to the East Paulding community, and Jolly is hopeful that a revamping of the center will allow it to focus on delivering the writing content that is at its pedagogical core.

Being a public school, East Paulding is also at the whims of its district, but the district is moving in a direction that Jolly sees as encouraging for his future endeavors. In the fall of 2019, the Paulding County School District made all the English Department chairs at the middle and high school level literacy coaches, which reflected a current push to “promote literacy in the school at the district level” (Jolly). In addition to directing the center and teaching his current course load—AP Language and SAT Prep, Jolly became heavily involved in the creation of professional development for other East Paulding teachers to assist them in literacy instruction.

As he prepares for the 2020-2021 school year, this literacy focus has transitioned into a WAC focus; Jolly is hoping that the revival of the writing center will pair nicely with this focus. The current plan for the EPHS Writing Center is to relaunch in his classroom at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, one day a week after school. From there, he will work with his student volunteers to see how the center can aid the district’s encouragement of WAC. He is hopeful for the future of the EPHS Writing Center.

3.3 The George Walton Academy Writing Center

The Writing Center at the George Walton Academy just opened at the start of the 2019-2020 school year with its brand-new director and academy new hire, Tricia Fissette⁹. Prior to Fissette’s application to work at George Walton, there was no director position as there was no writing center. Instead, when she applied to the academy, she was asked to “submit a plan or proposal for how [she would] go about opening up a writing center” (Fissette). Administration approved of her proposal; she was hired and gifted the space of the athletic director’s old office as the first writing center at George Walton Academy.



Figure 10 Fissette’s Desk



Figure 11 The Writing Center

⁹ Upon meeting Fissette and before conducting the interview, she signed the IRB approved informed consent form (see Appendix D) and site permission letter (see Appendix E).

Since Fissette and The Writing Center were new to George Walton at the same time, she was involved in designing the space. The students treated Fissette like a client, asking her what she wanted with her space, and thus, the writing center was designed. Students from the sewing club provided the chair pillows, students designed and built her desk as well as the printer's table, and students designed the posters (see Figure 12) and painted the cabinets.



Figure 12 Posters in The Writing Center, designed by students

In addition to designing the space, Fissette had the unique opportunity of developing the vision and practices of the center as well. She and her department chair have frequently discussed the concept of the center being in a “5-year growth mindset”; they expect a lot of changes in the first five years as they learn what role the center will play at George Walton (Fissette). Fissette’s graduate degree is a Master’s of Teaching Writing, focused on teaching to college students, so that background has provided the framework for how she has set up the center. Students from eight grade through twelfth grade at George Walton can sign up for a twenty minute appointment with either Fissette herself or her peer tutors to work on “anything within writing that they want to talk about”; most students come in for school assignments, but Fissette wants them to know that anything is fair game for a writing center session even personal poetry or songwriting (Fissette). If students want to come in to work on their college essays,

those sessions must be with Fissette, but otherwise, the peer tutors are trained to conduct these sessions.

Currently, the peer tutors take a dual-enrollment class that Fissette teaches one class a semester. This course includes learning writing theory such as rhetorical analysis and literacy narratives, but it also includes a research component. This year, the dual-enrollment class conducted their own case studies as each participant observed a ninth grader throughout a writing experience, developed a research question, and presented their results. On top of the pedagogy and the research, this class includes a tutoring practicum where they must tutor in the center for a set number of hours. According to Fissette, most of these sessions take place during the school day though they are available before or after school. The daily schedule at George Walton includes a study hall for every student, so most of the tutors conduct their tutoring during their study hall, and most clients come into the center during their study hall as well. In order to increase the number and availability of tutors for the 2020-2021 school year, George Walton will offer a semester-long English elective that will be based on tutoring. Like the dual-enrollment class, the training will take place within the course-load, but unlike the dual-enrollment class, the main goal will be to provide trained tutors that can be in the center during a designated class period each day.

In being open for less than one year, The Writing Center has already hit 500 sessions, and Fissette predicts it will hit at least 700 by the end of the school year. Despite not being a part of a larger WAC program, Fissette has already been able to work with many different teachers in order to integrate the writing center into their curriculum; for example, the ninth grade English teachers have made a visit to the center compulsory for each major assignment, and the eighth grade English teachers have started that mandate with the spring semester assignments. Other

than those two grade levels, the other compulsory visit is from the juniors who, at the request of the college counseling department, must have at least one brainstorming session at the center pertaining to college essays. Beyond those mandated visits, Fissette has noticed that most of the “self-selecting” clients have been the stronger students who are self-motivated and want to grow as writers (Fissette).

As Fissette comes to the end of her first year as the director of a brand-new center, she is already thinking about what changes and goals can come to fruition in their second year together. In addition to increasing the students that come to the center—in her words, “if you’re working on a piece of writing, then you should be in the center”—she is also hoping to grow the professional clout of George Walton’s center (Fissette). She wants her students and their center to be a trailblazer in the field, making sure that her students have a voice in how the center operates and making sure that her students’ professional voice gets heard, either in their own school-run literature journal or as a part of SSWCA’s vision to publish a journal with high school tutors.

3.4 Narrative Analysis

This research sought to answer two primary research questions: 1) To what extent can collegiate writing center theory be applied to high school writing centers? 2) What do high school writing centers look like, and how do they operate? To answer those two broader questions, this research looked for trends and themes in the current operations of secondary school writing centers.

3.4.1 Writing Center Staff and Location

All three schools interviewed, Etowah, East Paulding, and George Walton, use peer tutors as the primary staff for the center. East Paulding and Etowah both filled these positions through

partnering with honor societies and service clubs. Etowah, however, takes student leadership to another level as East Wing also has student directors and an entire student leadership team that run the day-to-day operations of the center. George Walton's peer tutors are all enrolled in a class within the center, which teaches tutoring pedagogy as well as requires a tutoring practicum. Both East Paulding and Etowah have dipped into having electives offered from time to time, but currently, only George Walton relies on the course for providing tutors.

Unlike a collegiate center, however, neither center can operate without heavy faculty oversight, so Barton, Jolly, and Fissette operate as supervisors to the centers as part of their director roles. Since Barton teaches in the same location that the center is housed, she is always in the same room and can supervise even while teaching if necessary. Jolly did not have that advantage, so he relied on other faculty volunteers, primarily English teachers, to supervise the center when he was unable to. Fissette's role is a full-time director, so apart from the one course she teaches in a traditional classroom, she is always stationed in the center. Unlike Jolly and Barton, Fissette is also involved in the tutoring as students can choose to sign up for a session with her at any point.

All three schools were careful to locate their centers in an area that was centrally located as an attraction for the students. East Wing at Etowah took over an old media center, and this media center is in the same building as the English classrooms, the computer labs, and one of the school's cafeterias—a prime location. East Paulding's location was slightly more limited, but they originally had a space attached to the media center, which is already an area on campus that students are drawn to. With the switch to Jolly's classroom, they will have to reassess what type of space they would want and where the center could eventually move to. Fissette was provided

a vacated office for the center, and this office is in the middle of the high school building, next to the upper-class library (The Commons) and The PARC (the tutoring resource on campus).

Barton and Jolly both emphasize the significance of the location of the center as well as its physical layout. They wanted spaces that the students already wanted to go to and layouts that would help foster community. Fissette did not have a say in where the center was located, but it is clear the location was intentional. The center is centrally located in an already populated area among the students. Comparing East Wing to EPHS' first location, both spaces have a variety of seating options. They provided couches and comfy chairs, large tables that were good for collaborating, and more private locations such as conference rooms or personal desks. The Writing Center at George Walton is in a bit of a smaller area, but it's an aesthetically pleasing room with two circle tables as the primary working area for the tutors and their clients.

3.4.2 School-wide Initiatives

Surprisingly, neither EPHS' original center, East Wing, nor The Writing Center at George Walton were founded as a part of WAC or any other school-wide initiative. East Wing and EPHS' centers came from the current directors' own interest and because the idea of a center sounded "cool" (Jolly) and "interesting" (Barton). Now, with the transition that EPHS' center and Jolly are going through, they are hoping to get their feet back on the ground because of a district-wide interest in literacy and writing across the curriculum, but that initiative should help the revival; it was not a part of its original conception.

Though it was still not a part of a school-wide writing initiative, George Walton Academy's writing center came at the request of the administration rather than from the interest or initiative of a current faculty member; uniquely, the administration at George Walton

intentionally put aside the money and the resources to hire a director to start the center. While most of the faculty have been “widely enthusiastic” about the work of the center, the center did not come about because of the teachers’ identifying a need but because of the administration’s desire to provide “the best” and the recognition that a writing center is one way to do so (Fisette).

3.4.3 Technology

None of the schools that participated in this research have a strong focus on technology within the classroom. Etowah High School is a one-to-one school, meaning that there is one computer for every student, but this designation is primarily accomplished through laptop carts. East Wing has one laptop cart at its disposal (see Figure 13), but students could also bring in their own handheld devices to work with as well.



Figure 13 Laptop Cart at East Wing

Similarly, the original EPHS Writing Center had computers in its room if students wanted to pull up digital work, or students could bring in their own devices (see Figure 6). At George Walton, the students have either an iPad or another personal laptop, so students may come in with their work pulled up on their computer. However, Fisette has provided a printer within the

center in case students would rather have a hard copy (see Figure 11). Additionally, if a teacher has already provided feedback on a draft, clients may bring in these printed and marked copies. At none of the schools involved in this study was working with or providing technology a central focus; if technology is used it is because of the preference of the clients in how they provide their work, and no one thinks about the use of technology past that second-nature use.

3.4.4 Misunderstandings and Stigmas

Anecdotally, collegiate writing centers often operate under the misunderstanding that the services are only for remedial students. In fact, both Barton and Jolly hinted at this misunderstanding in their own undergraduate experience with college centers:

“I kind of knew that at the college level there was this thing called the writing center for people that needed help, but I was never one of those people, so I didn’t really understand what that meant” (Barton).

“My college had a tutoring center that did everything, but I never went there. Actually, I went there once, I think, for a sociology study group when I was a sophomore in college” (Jolly).

Neither Barton nor Jolly were exposed to collegiate writing centers, but this stigma did not transfer to their experiences as directors at the secondary level. Fissette, however, comes at this misconception from a different perspective. Fissette worked with a college writing center in her master’s program and experienced this misunderstanding firsthand as well as through her research throughout the program; therefore, she wanted to be proactive in addressing these stigmas right at the beginning of The Writing Center’s existence at George Walton. When she visited each English class in the fall with her peer tutors, she made sure to discuss that the

writing center is for all students: “The excellent students will be there. The middle students will be there, and the students who struggle will be there because it’s great writing help” (Fisette). Addressing this possible stigma immediately has helped dissuade that reputation at George Walton.

Rather than dealing with the stigma that their centers were for remediation only, most of the misunderstandings that Barton and Jolly experienced are focused on the tutoring practices. Barton experienced some misunderstandings and reluctance among English teachers because of the personal nature that often comes with writings. Teachers were concerned that the tutors would judge the writing of the student or even the teacher’s assignment, and even the clients reflected this same hesitancy. According to Barton, East Wing’s clients are more likely to come in for help in science or math, and once they feel more comfortable with the session and with the tutor, they will ask for English help after the initial session is over.

Some of these misunderstandings come from faculty members, too. Barton has experienced concern from teachers that the assignments would be judged by Barton or the tutors, and she has also dealt with teachers who were concerned that assignments would be shared among the students. Barton realized that there was a large misunderstanding in how the tutors were trained and what level of standard they were already held to. While Fisette has not experienced this concern firsthand, she did echo Barton’s sentiment that faculty members will probably need to be retaught each year the role of the center and how the center can help their curriculum.

Jolly shared different concerns about the misunderstandings that he had witnessed though these experiences were also with his colleagues. When EPHS first initiated a literacy across curriculum program, teachers were hesitant to apply that approach to subjects outside of English.

As he moves into a more WAC focused approach, which is initially less intimidating than a literacy focus, he still feels that teachers could benefit from a larger understanding of what writing looks like. If a writing center is tutoring students in all subjects, then teachers need to understand that writing consists of more than proofreading for grammar. Jolly echoed Janet Emig's belief of "writing as a kind of thought" and believed that if teachers understood the role that writing could play in all classes, then his revamp of a writing-focused center would gain traction across the school. While Fissette has not experienced this hesitancy yet, she did echo the importance of teaching other faculty members what role writing can play as the foundation for learning in all subjects and the "integrated responsibility of reading and writing" across the curriculum (Fissette).

3.4.5 Leadership

Neither Barton nor Jolly could have foreseen that their career paths would have led to directing a secondary level writing center, and while Fissette did not foresee the directorship in her future, she was always driven by a passion for teaching writing. Despite the unexpected paths their careers may have taken, all three of these directors have found benefits and welcomed surprises in these roles. Barton came into teaching as a second career and always had the approach that teaching gives her the opportunity to make an impact beyond the classroom. She found her lack of knowledge surrounding writing centers prior to starting East Wing as a blessing because of just how much work starting and directing a center can be. Whether someone is starting or taking over a center, understanding the work and hours that go into it could be too daunting for some. Now that she is in the midst of it, Barton is grateful for the community that exists within the writing center world. Both Michigan and Virginia have exemplar examples of

how high schools can support each other, and she is hoping that Etowah can pave the way for that support, first in Cherokee County and then throughout Georgia.

Jolly began his professional career as a youth pastor and eventually found his love of reading and writing transfer into a new career. Now that he is fully in the scholarship of writing theory and pedagogy, he too is grateful for the current academic community. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), IWCA, and SSWCA have created international and national communities of teachers and programs that want to support one another. He has found a great support system within these programs and have found them necessary in order to stay immersed in the research at both the collegiate and secondary level.

Fisette always knew she wanted to teach English, and that career path started from a love for literature. In her first teaching job in California, she learned two new aspects of her teaching style: 1) she valued working at a private school and 2) her teaching philosophy was driven by the goal to form her students into strong writers. Lesson number two, a passion for teaching writing, drew her to her master's program where she could strengthen her skills as a writing teacher. In her program, her love for writing was fostered and grew to include writing theory and even writing centers. When interviewing for the job at George Walton, Fisette expressed concern that she did not want to spend her days solely in one-on-one tutoring sessions, which initially is why she worked to include teaching a course in her job description. Teaching the dual-enrollment course has kept her in the classroom, working to improve the writing of her tutors, while also working with students individually in tutoring sessions. Now, surprisingly, she has found that those one-on-one discussions have become her favorite part of the job, and she is grateful she has been able to marry her passions—even if she did not know that those individual tutoring sessions would become a passion at the time.

4 CONCLUSIONS

There are some logistical differences between writing centers in higher education and those at the secondary level. High schools are more likely to have limited facilities to start a center, and few can have a full-time director. Instead, directors are also operating as department chairs or full-time faculty members within the English department. However, despite limited spaces, few full-time faculty positions, and the inability to leave high school tutors entirely on their own, high school centers and their tutors should not be discredited for what they can accomplish. Writing center theory in higher education advocates for student-led tutoring by tutors with a training in writing theory, and both Etowah and George Walton Academy have proven that high school students can rise to this expectation, too. With allowances to provide for a different administrative hierarchy and an understanding that the spaces may look different at the high school center, center directors should feel comfortable applying higher education writing center theory to a high school writing center.

The inconsistencies between centers come to the forefront when looking at the operations of high school writing centers. There is so much variance in where these centers can take place; some schools have unused locations they can convert into a center, and some schools are given the opportunity to start an area from scratch. And while most high school centers are unable to have a full-time director without additional responsibilities, the director's responsibilities vary from school to school. Directors may also operate as the department chair, like Jolly, who has added administrative responsibilities with his duty as chair as well as his own personal course-load to teach. Sometimes, as in Barton's and Fissette's cases, that course-load may make room

for an elective course to train the tutors, but if not, this training needs to take place outside of standard school hours, adding yet another responsibility to the director's role.

According to these three writing centers, all at different phases and levels of success, writing center theory and pedagogy can trickle down from higher education scholars, but secondary schools still need to be better represented in this scholarship because each school has its own operational strengths and weaknesses. The more secondary school writing centers that are involved in this professional community, the more likely these directors can get outside support from schools that have at least some similarities in common, whether they are taking on a center that has already been operating for years, they are trying to restart a center after a brief hiatus, or they are creating a new center from scratch.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Script

Date:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Location:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I'll jot down a few notes while we talk, but do you mind if I also record the conversation? Thank you.

When the report is written, would you prefer going by your name, your title, or your initials?

Thank you.

1. Would you please state your name, your title, and the name of your writing center?
2. Would you mind providing a brief overview of the demographics of your school?

I'd like to start by asking you a few questions about yourself and your role here:

3. What was your career path up to this position?
4. What did you study in college? Do you apply that degree to your current position?
5. Did you ever foresee yourself working in a high school writing center?
6. Could you elaborate on your position here? What does your job entail?

Moving into a few questions about the operations of the center itself:

7. What services does the center offer?
8. What does a typical day in the writing center look like?

9. Where is the writing center situated?
10. What are the writing center's hours?
11. Who staffs the writing center?
12. Who is your primary clientele? Who would you like your clientele to be?
13. What technology does the writing center use?

And finally, if you're able to, a few questions about the role of the center within the school:

14. When did this center open?
15. Has the center undergone any drastic changes since its original opening?
16. Is this center a part of any other writing programs or school-wide initiatives?
17. Is it associated with any specific department or program?
18. How do you feel the rest of the school supports the center? Financially or programmatically?
19. Are there any misconceptions surrounding the role of the center within your school?

Two final questions:

20. Do you have any goals or visions you'd like to see come to life in the center in the next 5 or 10 years?
21. Do you think there is anything that could have better prepared you for your current role at this writing center?

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer these questions for me. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your center?

Appendix B

Observation Log

School:

Center:

Location	
Room set up (small rooms, conference rooms, within a larger center, etc)	
Seating Options (desks, chairs, couches, tables, cubbies, etc.)	
Technology provided (computers, printers, etc.)	
Anything else noteworthy about the space provided	

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Title: Partnering Universities with their Neighboring High School Writing Centers: A Local Study through Interviews and Observations

Principal Investigator: Dr. Michael Harker

Student Principal Investigator: Katherine Carroll

Introduction and Key Information

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to explore metro-Atlanta secondary writing centers.

Your role in the study will include one interview and one site visit, which can take place during the same one to two-hour visit.

You will be asked to take place in an interview explaining the origins, set-up, and current running of your school's writing center.

Participating in this study will not expose you to any more risks than you would experience in a typical day.

This study is designed to benefit you as it should begin a partnership with Georgia State's rhetoric and composition department if you would like to continue building this relationship. Overall, we hope to gain information about secondary writing centers in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore metro-Atlanta secondary writing centers.

You are invited to take part in this research study because your school is listed as a member school of the Secondary School Writing Center Association. A total of three schools will be invited to take part in this study.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will be interviewed about your school's writing center and your current role with it. This interview will coincide with a site visit to your writing center. This entire process can take place during one visit.

With your permission, I will take notes during the interview, and it will also be recorded, for audio only. During the site visit, with your permission, I will take pictures of the layout of the center, excluding any students or other personnel.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional consent from you.

Risks

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe you have been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to compensate for any injury.

Benefits

This study is designed to benefit you as it should begin a partnership with Georgia State's rhetoric and composition department if you would like to continue building this relationship. Overall, we hope to gain information about secondary writing centers in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may opt out of any interview questions or stop participating at any time. You may refuse to take part in the study or stop at any time.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- Katherine Carroll and Dr. Michael Harker
- GSU Institutional Review Board
- Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

If you prefer, we will use your initials rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored within my email and my google drive all account, all of which are password protected. If you prefer, when we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your name and rather can only refer to your title within the center.

Contact Information

Contact Katherine at carrollk@marist.com and 770-876-9100.

- If you have questions about the study or your part in it
- If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix D

Signed Scanned Informed Consent

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

<u>Heather Barton</u>	
Printed Name of Participant	
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>02/13/2020</u>
Signature of Participant	Date
<u>Katherine Carroll</u>	<u>2/13/2020</u>
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent	Date
<u>Katherine Carroll</u>	

Figure 14 Etowah Informed Consent

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

<u>Tommy Jolly</u>	
Printed Name of Participant	
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>2/24/20</u>
Signature of Participant	Date
<u>Katherine Carroll</u>	<u>2/24/2020</u>
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent	Date

Figure 15 East Paulding Informed Consent

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.


<u>Patricia Edmison</u>	
Printed Name of Participant	
<u></u>	<u>March</u>
Signature of Participant	<u>May 11, 2020</u>
	Date
<u>Kath Laull</u>	<u>3/11/2020</u>
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent	Date

Figure 16 George Walton Informed Consent

Appendix E

Signed Scanned Site Permission Letters

Researchers from Georgia State University have requested permission to conduct the research project named below at Etowah HS on 2/13/2020. This research will consist of one interview with ^{Heather}Barton and one observation site visit to East Paulding. By signing this letter, I am giving this research team permission to conduct research at the location listed below.

Research Project Title: Partnering Universities with their Neighboring High School Writing Centers: A Local Study through Interviews and Observations

Principal Investigators: Dr. Michael Harker and Katherine Carroll

Study Site Location: Etowah High School
6565 Putnam Ford Dr.
Woodstock, GA 30189

Permission granted by:

Heather Barton teacher
Name of Individual (print) and Title

[Signature]
Name of Individual (Signature)

02.13.2020
Date

Figure 17 Etowah Site Permission

Researchers from Georgia State University have requested permission to conduct the research project named below at East Paulding on February 24th. This research will consist of one interview with Tommy Jolly and one observation site visit to East Paulding. By signing this letter, I am giving this research team permission to conduct research at the location listed below.

Research Project Title: Partnering Universities with their Neighboring High School Writing Centers: A Local Study through Interviews and Observations

Principal Investigators: Dr. Michael Harker and Katherine Carroll

Study Site Location: East Paulding
3320 E Paulding Dr
Dallas, GA 30157

Permission granted by:

Tommy Jolly
Name of Individual (print) and Title

[Signature]
Name of Individual (Signature)

2/24/20
Date

Figure 18 East Paulding Site Permission

Researchers from Georgia State University have requested permission to conduct the research project named below at George Walton Academy on Wednesday, March 11th. This research will consist of one interview with Tricia Fissette and one observation site visit to The George Walton Academy Writing Center. By signing this letter, I am giving this research team permission to conduct research at the location listed below.

Research Project Title: Partnering Universities with their Neighboring High School Writing Centers: A Local Study through Interviews and Observations

Principal Investigators: Dr. Michael Harker and Katherine Carroll

Study Site Location: George Walton Academy
1 Bulldog Dr.
Monroe, GA 30655

Permission granted by:

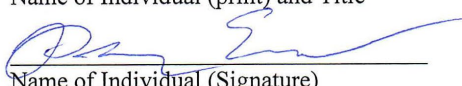
<u>Patricia Edmison</u>	<u>Writing Center Director</u>
Name of Individual (print) and Title	
<u></u>	<u>March</u>
Name of Individual (Signature)	<u>May 11, 2020</u>
	Date

Figure 19 George Walton Academy Site Permission

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Outcome Letter

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Mail: P.O. Box 3999
Atlanta, Georgia 30302-3999
Phone: 404/413-3500

In Person: 3rd Floor
58 Edgewood
FWA: 00000129



January 24, 2020

Principal Investigator: Michael Harker

Key Personnel: Carroll, Katherine R; Harker, Michael

Study Department: English

Study Title: Partnering Universities with their Neighboring High School Writing Centers: A Local Study through Interviews and Observations

Submission Type: Exempt Protocol Category 2

IRB Number: H20411

Reference Number: 358594

Approval Date: 01/22/2020

Status Check Due By: 01/21/2023

The above referenced study has been determined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to be exempt from federal regulations as defined in 45 CFR 46 and has evaluated for the following:

1. Determination that it falls within one or more of the eight exempt categories allowed by the institution; and
2. Determination that the research meets the organization's ethical standards

If there is a change to your study, you should notify the IRB through an Amendment Application before the change is implemented. The IRB will determine whether your research protocol continues to qualify for exemption or if a new submission of an expedited or full board application is required.

A Status Check must be submitted three years from the approval date indicated above. When

the study is complete, a Study Closure Form must be submitted to the IRB.

Any unanticipated/adverse events or problems resulting from this investigation must be reported immediately to the University Institutional Review Board. For more information, please visit our website at www.gsu.edu/irb.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kiki Sindad', is centered below the text 'Sincerely,'.

Kiki Sindad, IRB Member