

<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/data/depositor-guide#prepare-documentation>

## 1. Research Overview

Session notes are the forms that tutors (and sometimes clients, and sometimes both) complete at the end of a writing center session; these documents are also called “Client Report Forms” in the widely-used writing center appointment software, WOnline. Session notes can fulfill many purposes, such as providing summative, descriptive, and/or reflective reports about individual tutorials. Though nearly every center creates them, session notes have not been the subject of extensive research.

In order to learn more about writing centers and session notes, in the winter of 2020, we created and circulated a survey to writing centers to collect information about how (rather than why) writing centers conceive of, and use session notes. Our survey collected two types of data – survey data (about individual institutions’ use of session notes) and artifact data (blank session note forms and session note datasets).

Our repository includes the Session Note Usage Survey that we used to collect data, three session note data sets, the results of the survey, and a Session Note Question Bank.

### Researchers

Christine Modey - Director, Michigan Community Scholars Program, University of Michigan  
Genie Giaimo - Assistant Professor of Writing & Rhetoric, Director of the Writing Center, Middlebury College

Joseph Cheatle - Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center, University of Southern Mississippi

This research was funded with a \$1,000 Research Grant from the International Writing Centers Association.

## 2. Methods

We created and circulated a Qualtrics survey to writing centers in order to gather information about how (rather than why) writing centers conceive of, and use, session notes. Our survey collected two types of data – survey data (about individual institutions’ use of session notes) and artifact data (blank session note forms and session note datasets).

The survey was circulated through professional listservs, the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) members’ listserv, the WCenter listserv, regional writing center listserv, and the Small Liberal Arts Colleges-Writing Program Administrators (SLAC WPA) listserv in the winter of 2020.

Sixty-three (63) institutions responded to the survey. Identifying information (institution name, administrator contact) was removed from the survey results, otherwise we did not make any

changes to the reported data collected in the survey. Results were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

### 3. File Inventory

- Session Note Usage Survey (PDF): This survey instrument was created to assess how institutions engage with the usage, assessment, and research on session notes. It was created as a way to both collect data on specific institutional purposes for session notes in writing center tutorials but, also, to collect the forms and datasets of willing institutions. We collected “session note datasets 1, 2, and 3” from disseminating this survey. We also collected the “session note usage survey results” file from this survey and the “session note question bank” document.
- Session Note Dataset 1 (csv). This file contains session notes from a specific institution’s writing center. **This institutional data is from a liberal arts college.** These notes summarize the tutoring session and are frequently (but not always) written by the peer writing tutor. This is file 1 of 3 datasets provided by individual college-level writing centers of their post-session notes written by tutors.
- Session Note Dataset 2 (csv). This file contains session notes from a specific institution’s writing center. **This institutional data is from a regional comprehensive university.** These notes summarize the tutoring session and are frequently (but not always) written by the peer writing tutor. This is file 2 of 3 datasets provided by individual college-level writing centers of their post-session notes written by tutors.
- Session Note Dataset 3 (csv). This file contains session notes from a specific institution’s writing center. **This institutional data is from a liberal arts college.** These notes summarize the tutoring session and are frequently (but not always) written by the peer writing tutor. This is file 3 of 3 datasets provided by individual college-level writing centers of their post-session notes written by tutors.
- Session Note Usage Survey Results (Excel). This file includes the responses of ~63 institution’s writing centers on how they engage with session notes. These data were collected through the “session note survey” document.
- Session Note Question Bank (MS Word). This file includes the blank question forms that ~30 institutions use to collect session note data from their peer writing tutors in their writing centers. These data were collected through the “session note survey” document and aggregated here.

### 4. Definition of Terms and Variables

Client report forms - also known as session notes. These forms are completed after a tutoring session. They can be completed by the tutor, the client, or by the tutor and client together.

Session notes - also known as client report forms. These forms are completed after a tutoring session. They can be completed by the tutor, the client, or by the tutor and client together.

\*Terminology may differ based on the writing center. For example, some centers refer to people who use their services as students and others as clients. This also applies to how they refer to

their employees; some centers refer to them as tutors while others may refer to them as consultants. It is important, when analyzing this data, to be aware of differences in terminology between centers.

\*Changes made by researchers to de-identify data are indicated by square brackets.

\*Blank cells indicate items not completed by the writer or the writing consultant

Clarification of column headings used in datasets:

Session Note Dataset 1:

Columns A-D are responses recorded by the consultant; remaining responses are recorded by the student writer.

“Matched” (Column A): matched sessions are those that take place weekly between the same tutor and writer over the course of an entire semester.

“Please rate the overall helpfulness of the consultation” (Column N): scale ranges from 1 (“not at all helpful”) to 5 (“very helpful”). This item is completed by the student writer.

Session Note Dataset 2:

“Take-aways” (Column B): what the consultant wants the writer to take away from the session: what they worked on and suggestions for revision

Session Note Dataset 3:

“Is this a writing intensive course?” (Column G): a writing intensive course is a course in any discipline that uses writing as a vehicle for learning. Western Heritage is a required course taken in students’ first year. It emphasizes reading and writing.

## 5. Use and Access

- Session Note Dataset 1: Open via Excel or other spreadsheet. The best way to use this dataset is to conduct a corpus analysis.
- Session Note Dataset 2: Open via Excel or other spreadsheet. The best way to use this dataset is to conduct a corpus analysis.
- Session Note Dataset 3: Open via Excel or other spreadsheet. The best way to use this dataset is to conduct a corpus analysis.
- Session Note Usage Survey: Open via Adobe PDF Reader. The best way to use this survey is to use it as an instrument in your own analysis of how institutions use session notes.
- Session Note Usage Survey Results: Open via Excel or other spreadsheet. The best way to use these data is to conduct descriptive and other statistical analysis to determine institutional engagement with session notes.

- Session Note Question Bank: Open via MS Word. The best way to use the question bank is to view the questions and either conduct discourse analysis on these questions or apply them to your own session note form.

## 6. Informed consent

As part of an IWCA-funded research project, we are creating a shared repository for writing center session notes and the forms that individual writing centers use. This repository will allow writing center administrators to engage with a large and multi-institutional set of data that includes both completed session note forms and the attendant questions that these forms ask. These data are useful for conducting assessment, for pedagogical purposes, and for re-envisioning individual center's session note practices.

Because these data are aggregated and de-identified, and are currently collected for non-research purposes at many writing centers, our IRBs said that this project does not qualify as human subjects research and therefore no IRB approval is required. Indeed, BLANK session note forms/questions can be shared, as these do not involve human subjects but are artifacts. HOWEVER, please check with your individual IRBs before sharing completed session note forms. While we have been given a confirmed response that these data do not fall under human subjects research from our institutions, this may not be the case at other institutions. So, please share this information, as well as the Qualtrics survey with your IRBs before participating.