# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep103 - Writing Center with Todd Battistelli and Jesica Galterio

* This episode references various Writing Center links – Please see the following links for Services and Tools Provided by the Writing Center.
	+ Writing Center homepage and contact information – [Click Here](http://writingcenter.wgu.edu/)
	+ Writing Center support options – [Click Here](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Writing-Center-Knowledge-Base/Writing-Center-Support-Options/ta-p/36457)
	+ Writing Center Learning Resource – [Click Here](https://lrps.wgu.edu/provision/257504146)
	+ [Professional communication](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Frequently-Asked-Questions/FAQs-About-Professional-Communication/ta-p/3874)
	+ For quick questions, we always welcome emails at writingcenter@wgu.edu
	+ [Multilingual Student Support](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Writing-Center-Knowledge-Base/Multilingual-Student-Support/ta-p/36919)
	+ [English Learners’ Exchange](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/English-Learners-Exchange/gh-p/englishlearners)
	+ How to use Grammarly [video](https://wgu.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=9c9fa6f9-c213-4626-bb1c-a8d0012044ae)
	+ Grammarly currently offers WGU students a [discount](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Writing-Center-Knowledge-Base/I-Need-Help-with-Professional-Communication/ta-p/23355) on the subscription
	+ The [similarity report](https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Frequently-Asked-Questions/What-is-a-Similarity-Report/ta-p/252) is another helpful tool. It highlights where a writer has directly quoted from a source.

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

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WGU's IT audio series. Flexible, portable, profound.

Welcome to the IT Audio Series. I am Jessica Galterio, and I've been a program mentor with WGU since 2015. Today I have with me Todd Battistelli with the Writing Center, who has been with WGU since 2017. Thank you for being with me today, Todd.

Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Today we are here to speak with Todd about WGU's Writing Center. Todd, tell me about some of the services that the WGU Center offers students.

The Writing Center helps out with several areas. Often we support students with source citation and professional communication, which includes style and grammar. When students submit performance assessments, citation and professional communication are usually two aspects that are part of that evaluation. The Writing Center also helps with getting started with the writing process and using sources so that the writer's own original voice is not overwhelmed by direct quotes. It's important to remember that the Writing Center's role is instructional.

We support students’ development of their independent writing skills. The evaluation process is separate, but the Writing Center can help students get on the right track to succeed with writing.

That's really good to hear. A valuable resource like the Writing Center can really go a long way. How do students access the Writing Center's resources?

First thing students should check out is the variety of self-service resources. Most questions related to writing had been asked before, so searching our discussion board is a good way to find guidance on those topics. Our learning resources, including videos, are also a good way to work independently, letting students focus on their own unique growth areas. The Writing Center hosts live events both weekly and monthly, where students can interact with Writing Center faculty and fellow WGU students. For quick questions, we welcome emails at writing center@wgu.edu

or messages sent through our live chat. If students have worked through those resources and still need additional guidance, they can call the Writing Center's helpline during its scheduled hours, schedule live phone appointments to speak with a Writing Center instructor, or schedule recorded feedback, where faculty will return guidance through email. To find these resources, students can click the "Success Centers" tab in their student portal, and select the Writing Center option to land on our main How Can We Help page. Looking a little down into the right, you'll see a View All button to see all of our resource articles

along with the Need More Help? section with information about our email, chat, appointments, helpline, and discussion boards.

That's fantastic. I love to hear all of the different ways that students can get in touch with you guys. That's really good news. Now, I know that your group is also a great resource for our multilingual writers here at WGU. Can you expand a little bit on the types of support that you offer those students?

One of our resource articles is titled Multilingual Student Support, and it provides learners access to resources targeted to multilingual needs, including in-depth self-study materials. The Writing Center also hosts an online English learners exchange where multilingual students can come together in a learning community. Our current multilingual writer specialists, Doctors Doe Kim and Robin Gbur, moderate the community as well as hold a live professional communication workshop.

Both the exchange and the live workshop provide an opportunity for students to come together to discuss and practice strategies and tools to help with proofreading their own writing. These tools include specialized dictionaries and search engines to help address the peculiarities of English grammar.

Wow, that's amazing. It can be really difficult to form a good community atmosphere when you attend an online university. Students with similar backgrounds can help each other learn and grow. Speaking of communities, social media can be a very knowledgeable, yet misleading community. Tell me about your experience with social media rumors.

Some of the rumors about writing on social media have existed long before social media media around. For example, there can be an expectation with grammar that you're writing needs to be perfect, but errors are inevitable, as you may have noticed when reading even professional publications that have gone through multiple rounds of proofreading and editing. The truth is that individual writers have patterns of errors that tend to occur in their writing. The goal is to become aware of what these patterns are, and what proofreading tools and techniques help you detect

those error patterns so that you can keep mistakes to a minimum, but not to the point of perfection. Another myth is that you should worry about grammar as you are drafting. But if you try to correct your writing as you go along, that's a good way to experience writer's block. Instead, the early stages of the writing process should be all about getting the ideas down on paper no matter how poorly worded. Our writing works best when we can put it through multiple rounds of drafting, review, feedback, and revision.

Finally, there is the rumor, or hope, that technology will be able to take away all the work of proofreading and editing for us. Technology tools can be helpful, but they are only some of the tools in a writer's toolbox, each of which has its own strengths that supplement the weaknesses in others.

Interesting, so that brings us to the tool Grammarly. Should students spring for the premium version, or is the free version sufficient?

My recommendation is to try out the free version of Grammarly first. The Writing Center has a video on how to use Grammarly effectively, keeping in mind its strengths and weaknesses. For example, Grammarly tends to do quite well detecting punctuation problems such as misused apostrophes or missing commas. However, Grammarly doesn't have our human understanding of language, so it can miss sentence phrasing issues. Grammarly should be used alongside other tools such as text-to-speech, and strategies like reading your paper,

starting with the last sentence, as writers experiment to find which proofreading methods work best for their own process. Grammarly selling points for it's paid version tend to focus on vocabulary and style recommendations that aren't the focus of the fundamental grammar areas that are considered in assessments at WGU. However, after trying to free version, students may choose to subscribe to the paid option, and Grammarly currently offers WGU students a discount on the subscription.

That's great. Like you said before, there's not going to be one tool, or one technological app that we can use to make these edits and corrections. But in combination with other tools and resources, they can help you get where you need to be.

Absolutely.

Now, that brings us to the topic of originality reports. They can be intimidating, but tell me how students can best use this tool to help them with their writing.

The similarity report is another helpful technology tool. It highlights where a writer has directly quoted from a source. At WGU, we want to hear how students apply the knowledge and competencies covered in their courses. The sources a writer cites should support the writer, not drown out the writer's own voice, even though it may be tempting to rely on a lot of directly quoted language from sources. In general, most assessments limit direct quotes from any sources to up to 30 percent of the paper,

and no more than 10 percent direct quotation from any one source. If a similarity report shows matches over those limits, it will helpfully highlight the matching language to help writers target their revisions. Based on the report, students can use the paraphrasing and summarizing strategies covered in Writing Center resources to help them revise to put properly cited source information into their own words.

Fantastic, so let's talk about some success stories. Share one with me, please.

Yeah, sometimes a student can go their entire program without any revisions for grammar until they get to their capstone project. When a capstone task is returned, it can be frustrating since you're so close to completing your degree. I worked with capstone student who had had his task returned three times for professional communication revisions. Even though the student had made progress with each resubmission, grammar errors tend to be things we can easily overlook,

especially in our own writing. After working with the Writing Center and experimenting with new proofreading strategies to help detect errors, the student was able to pass their capstone on the next attempt. In September 2021 alone, we worked with nearly 140 students in the College of Information Technology on source citation, professional communication, or both, so even though writing may feel isolating, writers are never alone in their work.

Absolutely. Now, with all the interactions that you've had with students, have you ever received some good advice from a student that you could share?

Good advice tends to come when students share their aha moments, often in live events where they recognized something about their writing process that they hadn't thought of before. Usually when we write, we aren't thinking consciously about how we write, which is good in terms of helping us get ideas down. However, to improve our writing, we have to think consciously about what we normally don't think about it all. As students experiment with different tools and strategies and reflect on their experiences talking with other students in Writing Center faculty,

they often have moments when something clicks for them, and they find new ways of succeeding with their writing.

That must be really powerful. I love to hear that we have that type of unity happening in different places like in Writing Center live events. That's great. I want to thank Todd today for taking the time to meet with me, and thank you to our listeners as well. Be sure to check out other episodes of the IT Audio Series.

Schedule time with your program mentor to explore more deeply. WGU, a new kind of you.