

MEASURING SUCCESS

According to our current mission statement, the goal of the DEWC is "to help Southwestern students improve their writing. Specially trained student consultants work one-on-one with writers of all levels, on all texts, and at all stages in the process. With attention to both the process and product of writing – both the writer and the text – consultants can help with anything from brainstorming to final editing."

How do we know when we've helped? This year, as you know, we've focused on collecting more data that documents & reflects the excellent work you have been doing in the center.

Through our check-in sheets & exit surveys, we've collected **usage data** to find out why students are coming into the DEWC. We've also gathered **visitor demographics** to let us know who's using the writing center. We've measured **student satisfaction** to see how our visitors feel about their experience in the center and we've asked questions designed to measure **student confidence** in their writing. Finally, we've asked students to **self-report learning** that they take away from the consultation.

But how do we know when we've ACTUALLY HELPED? When discussing our goals as a center, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- 1. What strategies or information do we hope to provide students who bring their work into the writing center? What are the **learning goals** we hope visitors to the center will achieve?
- 2. How do we want students, professors, & the Southwestern community to feel about the DEWC? What are the **affective goals** we as consultants and DEWC staff hope to achieve?
- 3. Who do we want to visit the DEWC? Under what circumstances/at what point in the writing process/their academic careers? What are the **process goals** we as a center hope to achieve?

Today we'd like to develop and more clearly articulate our center goals.

We hope to brainstorm **specific learning & affective goals** for DEWC users & the Southwestern community as well as **process goals** for the center itself. We'd like to also consider **how to achieve** these goals, as well as **how we know** when we've achieved them. Finally, we'd like to begin collaborating on a draft of a mission statement that reflects not only our values as a center (which our current statement certainly does) but also gives potential visitors a sense of both **what we do** and **what success looks like** for us in the DEWC.

Information on types of goals drawn from:

Hawthorne, Joan. "Approaching Assessment as if It Matters." Murphy, Christina, and Byron L. Stay, eds. *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. Print.